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منظمة  
الأغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

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### Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda

## THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON POPLARS AND OTHER FAST-GROWING TREES SUSTAINING PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT (IPC)

### Twenty-sixth Session

5- 8 October 2021

### SYNTHESIS OF COUNTRY PROGRESS REPORTS

#### Guidance sought from the IPC

The Commission may wish to:

- endorse the reports received;
- request that the next Executive Committee propose updated guidelines for future country progress reports, in light of the expansion of the scope of the IPC Convention.

*Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:  
the IPC Secretariat [IPC-Secretariat@fao.org](mailto:IPC-Secretariat@fao.org)*

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## Summary of synthesis of Country Progress Reports

### I. BACKGROUND

1. The International Poplar Commission (IPC) has been working since 2012 to reform its Convention and [organization](#) to maintain its relevance in addressing today's global challenges. In 2019, the IPC received a mandate from its Member Nations to work not only on species important in temperate and boreal climate zones (poplars, willows, and cottonwoods), but on any fast-growing tree species that can further the IPC mandate. The title of the Commission therefore became the "The International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment". To reflect this expanded mandate, the IPC will be updating its national reporting guidelines for Members for the next reporting period.

2. This synthesis report was compiled during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 from the available national progress reports. It highlights status, innovations, issues, and trends regarding cultivation, management and utilization of poplars, willows, and other fast-growing species during the period 2016 to 2019, as reported by Member Nations for the 26th Session of the IPC. In total, 22 Members of the IPC reported for this period.

### II. POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

3. The report highlights the fact that fast-growing species have a high potential to produce raw materials for renewable products, liquid biofuels and bioenergy, and that plantations with fast-growing species on agricultural land have threefold biomass production potential compared to forestland.

### III. TAXONOMY, NOMENCLATURE AND REGISTRATION

4. It was reported that programmes concerning the genetic modification of poplars and willows continue to be actively pursued, both in developed and developing countries. Members report significant progress in genetic characterization and manipulation to enhance resistance against pests, diseases and other stresses, namely drought or flooding, improve technical properties as well as growth and yield, particularly with the objective of biomass production.

5. Most Member Nations reported on their efforts to preserve the genetic resources of poplars and willows and to optimize the breeding and selection of fast-growing plantations. Work focused mainly on improving the attributes of planting material in terms of productivity, wood density, higher resilience to climatic conditions and diseases, phytoremediation and biodiversity conservation.

### IV. PLANT HEALTH, RESILIENCE TO THREATS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

6. It was noted that various research projects are underway to better understand the life cycles and infestation patterns of damaging pathogens, and to determine the most effective treatments. In the reporting period, historically extreme climatic conditions greatly influenced the phytosanitary situation of fast-growing plantations.

### V. ENVIRONMENT AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

7. Fast-growing species have been extensively used in many countries to establish shelterbelts and windbreaks to protect agricultural and horticulture fields and fruit orchards, to preserve coastal and riparian buffer zones, and to control erosion, sediment transport and desertification. The use of poplar and willow trees in environmental phytoremediation applications continues to be studied and explored in various research projects.

### VI. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

8. Concerning National Poplar Commissions and international cooperation, many Members reported that they had increased strategic cooperation with other countries, international organizations, and professional networks. Cooperation focuses particularly on the

transfer of knowledge and technology, and on the planning and implementation of joint research programmes.

#### **VII. OTHER SPECIES OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS**

9. Interest in the cultivation and utilization of other fast-growing species in recent years has significantly increased, based on the geographical position and climate conditions of each Member Nation, as well as the potential for wood and biofuel production. The most common other fast-growing species of interest for Members include alder, larch, birch, pine, spruce, black locust and eucalyptus, out of a total of 20 genera reported as of interest.