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# COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

## Twenty-sixth Session

3-7 October 2022

### Multi-Year Programme of Work of the Committee on Forestry 2020-2023

#### Executive Summary

The document informs the Committee on progress in implementing its updated Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW). It presents its working method to achieve its objectives for 2020-2023, in due consideration of the need to adjust to new realities in a post-COVID-19 pandemic world.

#### Suggested action by the Committee

The Committee may wish to review the progress in the implementation of the MYPOW 2020-2023 as outlined in this document.

*Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:*

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## I. Background

1. The Committee on Forestry (COFO) adopted its Multi-Year Programme of Work 2020-2023 (MYPOW) at its 25th Session in October 2020 (COFO25). The MYPOW was subsequently endorsed by the 165th Session of the Council and the 42nd Session of the FAO Conference.
2. At its 25th Session, the Committee requested the adjusted MYPOW be presented at its 26th Session (COFO26), following the adoption of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 and the Medium Term Plan 2022-2025. The adjusted MYPOW is presented in Annex 1.
3. The current document was developed based on the guidance received from the Committee, the Council and the Conference, and intends to provide a progress report on the implementation of the MYPOW covering the period 2020-22.
4. The Secretariat provides regular updates to the Steering Committee, the Committee, the Council and the Conference. In addition, a full report on all actions undertaken in response to the recommendations of COFO25 can be found in document COFO/2022/INF/11. To highlight the main achievements of FAO's work in forestry, the Committee is provided with a summary in document COFO/2022/7.1.

## II. Progress report on the Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2020-2023: results for 2020-2022

### A. Strategy, priority setting and budget planning

5. The Committee organized COFO25 from 5 to 9 October 2020<sup>1</sup> in a virtual format because of the COVID-19 pandemic. With a view to address global and emerging challenges, the Committee held substantive discussions on matters related to:
  - Forests and biodiversity;
  - Forests and nature-based solutions for climate change;
  - Forests' role in transforming food systems, including:
    - Transforming Agriculture and Food Systems: Halting deforestation and promoting sustainable production and consumption of forest products; and
    - UN Decades: Family Farming and Ecosystem Restoration;
  - Terms of Reference of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture;
  - Report on progress, including the Implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests;
  - Dialogue with Statutory Bodies in Forestry;
  - Progress in implementation and follow-up on the recommendations of the 24th Session of COFO and other governing bodies;
  - Strategic directions, including FAO's work in forestry under the Strategic Framework.
6. The Committee reviewed the situation of the world's forests and forestry through the State of the World's Forests (SOFO) 2020<sup>2</sup>, focusing on: *Forests, biodiversity and people*. The Committee took note of the key findings of *SOFO 2020* and invited Members to take these into consideration in the negotiations of the post-2020 biodiversity framework, as appropriate, so as to reflect the critical role that forests and sustainable forest management play in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The key findings of *SOFO 2020* were presented to the Committee in document COFO/2020/4.1.

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<sup>1</sup> COFO25 Report: <https://www.fao.org/3/ne205en/ne205en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> COFO25 Report on SOFO 2020: <https://www.fao.org/3/nd452en/nd452en.pdf>

7. The Committee reviewed the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020: Key findings and ways forward, including digitalization. The key findings of FRA 2020 were presented to the Committee in document COFO/2020/4.2 Rev.1.

### *Intersessional activities*

8. During the intersessional period, the COFO Secretariat and the Steering Committee conducted the following activities:

**i. Briefing sessions for Members:** Following the Committee's request to regularly update Members on the development of initiatives in the forest sector in which FAO participates, FAO organized three virtual briefing sessions for Members through their Permanent Representations, in May and October 2021 as well as in July 2022.

- a) The briefing session held on 24 May 2021 focused on the following topics:
  - The Outcome of 16th Session of the UN Forum on Forests;
  - The Work plan of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests; and
  - The International Conference on Forest Education.
- b) The briefing session held on 7 October 2021 focused on the following topics:
  - The next edition of FAO's flagship publication "The State of the World's Forests" (SOFO) focused on the topic of "Forestry and Green Recovery, Building Inclusive and Sustainable Green Economies";
  - Update on progress of the work of the Regional Forestry Commissions (RFCs) as well as on the consultation process with the RFCs on ways to help facilitate their policy dialogues and to assist them in contributions to international processes; and
  - The International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment (IPC) and its 2022-2032 Strategy.
- c) The briefing session held on 11 July focused on the following topics:
  - Preparations for COFO26; and
  - The Outcomes of the XV World Forestry Congress.

**ii. Steering Committee meetings:** the COFO Steering Committee held two virtual meetings in December 2021 and in April 2022 to monitor progress in the implementation of COFO25 recommendations and to prepare the COFO26 agenda. The draft COFO26 agenda was prepared in a consultative process with contributions from NFO division, FAO Regional Offices, Steering Committee Members and the RFCs, under the overall guidance of the Steering Committee. The draft provisional agenda was approved by FAO Director-General on 27 May 2022.

**iii. Joint Bureau meetings:** since 2015, the FAO Technical Committees (TCs) have embarked on strengthening collaboration and coordination processes to respond to the recommendation of the Evaluation of FAO Governing Bodies. This includes discussion of common topics during their respective sessions with the aim of enhancing collaboration to provide coordinated inputs to the FAO Council and Conference. On 25 October 2021, an informal meeting of the Chairpersons of TCs with Senior Management was held and reconfirmed the continuing collaboration among the TCs.

**iv. Linkage between COFO and COAG:** At its 164th and 165th Sessions, FAO Council requested FAO "to showcase and promote existing and complementary practices between agriculture activities and the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of forests, avoiding deforestation and maintaining ecosystem services, noting that agriculture and forestry can synergistically support sustainable development". It also suggested that COFO "review the drivers of the expansion of agricultural land in the light of sustainable forest management" and "requested strengthening coordination between COFO and the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) on cross-sectoral matters, and recommended that future

papers dealing with interrelated issues between agriculture and forests be presented to both COFO and COAG”. On this basis, a discussion paper was developed on “Agriculture and Forestry linkages” to be presented to the 28th Session of COAG and COFO26, with the aim to highlight opportunities for closer integration between the agriculture and forest sectors to address global challenges, including ending hunger, halting deforestation, combatting climate change and biodiversity loss.

v. **Input to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).** In 2021 the Committee provided input to the HLPF 2021 with the theme “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”. In 2022, the Committee provided input to the HLPF 2022 with the theme “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” as part of FAO’s corporate submission<sup>3</sup>, presenting the main decisions of COFO25. FAO’s corporate input summarized policy deliberations related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of FAO TCs and other intergovernmental bodies hosted in FAO, including evidence, main gaps, key challenges and opportunities and recommendations stemming from individual bodies’ contribution.

vi. **Consultation with the Regional Forestry Commissions:** FAO - in close collaboration with the Bureaux of the respective Commissions - held relevant discussions during the respective Commissions’ sessions. Outcomes of these discussions are presented in document COFO/2022/6.6. These were organized as a follow-up to the Dialogue with Statutory Bodies in Forestry and in response to the request to FAO to consult with the RFCs on ways: (i) to help facilitate their policy dialogues and technical exchanges in support of Members’ goals and contributions to international processes and goals and; (ii) to explore options for further linking the work of these Statutory Bodies to the work of the Forestry Division and other policy areas with relevance for forestry to increase their relevance and efficiency and to create synergies and enhance participation.

## B. Advice on global policy and regulatory matters

9. The Committee presented its recommendations from the 25th Session to the Conference in a timely manner. The recommendations, including those related to FAO’s Strategic Framework, were fully endorsed by the Conference at its 42nd Session.

10. Close collaboration with and among the RFCs was maintained through the COFO Steering Committee, which also served as a platform for dialogue among the chairpersons. The Committee continued to provide guidance to the RFCs including by recommending topics for their consideration and requesting the RFCs input for COFO’s consideration. On this basis, the RFCs considered the following as common items:

- Regional cross-sectorial dialogue on forestry-agriculture matters, including to integrate forestry in FAO’s work on agrifood systems, promote synergies and address trade-offs between forestry and agriculture in initiatives and projects, including through COVID-19 pandemic recovery measures; and to enhance FAO’s cross-sectoral work to address impacts of certain agriculture production systems and related agrifood systems on forests; (COFO25 Report, paragraphs 23 and 34; CL165 Report, paragraph 22);
- Forest Resources Assessment 2020 – regional perspective;
- Options for further linking the work of Statutory Bodies to the work of the Forestry Division and other policy areas with relevance for forestry;
- Input to FAO governance; and
- Update on various initiatives and processes, including on SOFO22, Turning the Tide on Deforestation, the XV World Forestry Congress, the United Nations Forum on Forests and

<sup>3</sup> [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/29597Annex\\_2\\_COFO\\_inputs\\_to\\_HLPF\\_2022.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/29597Annex_2_COFO_inputs_to_HLPF_2022.pdf)

its 16th Session, and the updates on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP26 and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP15.

### **C. Work planning and working methods**

11. The Committee and the RFCs continued to maintain close coordination and worked with the Secretariat towards meeting calendars that allowed timely input to all relevant governing bodies. A unique situation needed to be handled in the case of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC), moving the session to autumn 2022, at the time of writing this document, scheduled on 22-25 August 2022. The Executive Committee of AFWC has been very influential in providing input to COFO.

12. Regular exchanges (emails and video conferences) were held between the COFO secretary and the secretaries of the RFCs to support the development of agendas and documents for the different sessions. When requested, logistical support was provided to organize and conduct the sessions. Regular meetings were held with the secretaries of other TCs to enhance cooperation and coordination and to further the implementation of related recommendations of COFO.

13. The Steering Committee had two virtual meetings to the date of this paper, and one joint meeting with the Bureaux of other TCs.

## **Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) for the Committee 2020-2023**

### **A. Overall Objectives for the Committee on Forestry for 2020-2023**

1. The key functions of the Committee have remained unchanged: the Committee periodically reviews the situation of forests and forestry worldwide; advises the Council on matters pertaining to the priorities, programmes and budgets of the Organization and the Conference on global policy and regulatory matters; and provides guidance for its Members on promoting the sustainable management of the world's forests. The Committee collaborates closely with the six Regional Forestry Commissions in order to facilitate policy and programme coordination between the global and regional levels, including through developing its agenda in close cooperation with them, and providing a forum for global-regional dialogue at its sessions. The Committee also maintains collaboration and coordinates closely with other TCs and pursues discussion of cross-cutting issues.
2. The Committee is willing to explore opportunities for increasing the efficiency of its work and to consider methods of operation that would enable it to better adjust to new realities in a post-COVID-19 world, including in strategy- and priority-setting, global policy advice and working methods.

### **B. Results for 2020-2023**

#### *Strategy, priority-setting, and budget planning*

3. Result
  - The Committee's recommendations provide a solid basis for the Council decisions on the Organization's priorities, programmes, the general organizational structure and budgets pertaining to the forestry programme under the Strategic Framework.
4. Indicators and targets
  - Analyses on the world situation on forests and forestry (Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020, The State of the World's Forests 2020 considered by COFO25 and The State of the World's Forests 2022 as well as the outcome of the XV World Forestry Congress considered by COFO26;)
  - Key global and regional developments identified by the RFCs considered and appropriate guidance provided;
  - Recommendations made in a timely manner to the FAO Council through the Programme and Finance Committees regarding FAO's priorities, programmes, organizational structure and budgets;
  - Recommendations relating to the Strategic Framework, the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) reflected in the Council reports;
  - Guidance on forest issues taken up by other relevant bodies, including other TCs, Regional Conferences and RFCs, as well as non-FAO bodies, such as the United Nations Forum on Forests, as appropriate.
5. Output
  - Report of the Committee containing clear, precise and consensual recommendations on strategies, priorities, organizational structure, programmes and budgets for Members and Governing Bodies, as appropriate.
6. Activities
  - Review the world situation in the Committee's areas of mandate;

- Address issues of high priority and emerging issues identified by the RFCs and the Steering Committee, giving due recognition to issues related to post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery and building back better as they relate to forests and forestry;
- Review decisions and recommendations from other global and regional fora relevant to forests and their implications for Members and FAO;
- Review decisions and recommendations from other FAO governing and statutory bodies and sub-committees;
- Review implementation of the PWB in areas falling within the Committee's competence;
- Formulate recommendations and guidance for areas pertinent to forests and forestry on strategies, priorities, organizational structure, programmes and budgets under the Strategic Framework.

#### 7. Working methods

- Close collaboration with the RFCs through the Chairperson and the Steering Committee, supported by the Secretariat;
- Inter-sessional work of the Steering Committee, review of progress and guidance for the preparation for the Committee's sessions;
- Consideration of the outcomes of the COFO Working Group on Drylands<sup>4</sup>
- Consideration of the outcomes of forestry statutory bodies;
- Collaboration with other relevant FAO governing and statutory bodies, in particular with the FAO TCs, contribute to the formal and informal coordination mechanisms;
- Inter-sessional work of the Steering Committee periodically reported to Rome-based delegations, and consultations arranged.

#### *Advice on global policy and regulatory matters*

#### 8. Result

- The Committee's recommendations provide a sound basis for decisions by the FAO Conference on global policy and regulatory matters, as well as for decisions and actions by Members.

#### 9. Indicators and targets

- Clear, precise and consensual recommendations made in a timely manner to the Conference regarding global policy and regulatory matters in its areas of mandate;
- Recommendations made on global policy and regulatory matters are reflected in the Conference Report;
- Members and the RFCs benefit from the deliberations of the Committee, using its recommendations in developing national and regional policies;
- Recommendations of the Committee taken up by other international fora, in particular the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Rio Conventions, other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, as well as relevant regional processes and instruments, as appropriate.

#### 10. Output

- Clear, precise, consensual and actionable recommendations, for decision and appropriate action, for the Conference, for Members on policy and regulatory matters; and for other relevant international processes and instruments on policy measures pertaining to forests and forestry.

#### 11. Activities

- Consider the recommendations of RFCs, other FAO governing and statutory bodies;

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<sup>4</sup> COFO Working Group on Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems, established by the 23rd Session of the Committee

- Consider developments in relevant international processes and instruments pertaining to forests and forestry;
- Identify and review new and emerging issues in areas pertaining to forests and forestry, giving due recognition also to issues related to post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery and building back better;
- Develop recommendations and guidance, for areas falling within the Committee's competence, for the consideration of the Conference;
- Formulate recommendations with a view to support actions by Members and RFCs;
- Provide input to other international processes and instruments, as appropriate.

12. Working methods

- Consideration of global and regional trends in sectoral policies and regulations;
- Liaison with FAO Governing Bodies as well as forestry and other relevant statutory bodies, and consideration of the outcomes of their deliberations;
- Collaboration with the RFCs;
- Regular contacts between the Chairperson of the Committee and the chairpersons of other relevant bodies, in particular the FAO TCs, as well as FAO senior management
- Activities periodically reported to Rome-based delegations, and inter-sessional consultations arranged.

*Effective work planning*

13. Result

- The Committee works effectively and efficiently, in an action-oriented, inclusive way, according to established work plan and improved working methods.

14. Indicators and targets

- The Committee agendas are focused, responsive also to emerging needs;
- Agendas are coordinated with other TCs, as appropriate;
- Committee reports are concise and contain specific, action-oriented recommendations to Council, Conference and Members, as well as to other international processes as appropriate;
- Regular review of progress by the Steering Committee in the inter-sessional period and reporting and/or consulting with Rome-based delegations, in order to improve inclusiveness.

15. Outputs

- Progress report on implementation at COFO sessions;
- Multi-Year Programme of Work, to be adopted in 2020;
- Progress report to the Council at its request and progress report on the Committee's work in 2022;
- Reports of Steering Committee meetings and coordination meetings with FAO TCs available to all COFO Members.

16. Activities

- Develop draft agendas for the Committee through a consultative process with input from RFCs and collaborate closely with other FAO TCs in coordinating agendas;
- Search for new ways and innovative approaches to improve efficiency of sessions; build strongly on opportunities offered by the World Forest Week to establish proper balance between policy and technical dialogues;
- Regular review (at Committee sessions and during inter-session periods by the Steering Committee) of the status of implementation and assess the impact of the recommendations of the Committee;
- Regular review of methods of work, including through indicators and targets specified in the MYPOW;



Continue inter-session coordination and collaboration with other TCs to appraise emerging challenges.

### *Working methods*

17. The Committee shall have two sessions in the 2020-2023 period. The Committee shall consider holding both sessions in conjunction with a World Forest Week. The Committee will give due consideration to implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and develop working methods according to new realities, including consideration of the role and extent of virtual events in consultation with COFO Members.

18. The Committee shall maintain close coordination with the RFCs including in aligning agendas, identifying common items and developing meeting calendars to allow for timely input to the Regional Conferences and to the Committee.

19. The Committee shall have the following standing items on its future agendas:

- Adoption of the agenda;
- Designation of the Drafting Committee;
- State of the World's Forests;
- Progress in implementation of the recommendations of past sessions of the Committee and other FAO Governing Bodies:
  - Decisions and recommendations of FAO Bodies of interest to the Committee;
  - Progress in implementation of the recommendations of the XX Session and the Multi-year Programme of Work of the Committee;
  - Statutory Bodies.
- FAO's work in forestry under the FAO Strategic Framework;
- Election of officers;
- Date and place of the next session;
- Adoption of the report.

20. Recommendations for specific issues for the agenda for the sessions will be developed by the Steering Committee, in consultation with Members, the RFCs; as well as other TCs, with due consideration to the decisions of FAO Governing Bodies as well as to developments in relevant international and regional processes and instruments relevant for forests and forestry.