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COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

Twenty-sixth Session

3-7 October 2022

Progress in implementation

Executive Summary

The Committee on Forestry (COFO) is the main technical Governing Body of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) providing overall policy and regulatory guidance on issues relating to forestry. COFO plays a key role in guiding and providing strategic advice on the challenges FAO faces in assisting its Members to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Progress in implementation of specific FAO's work in forestry related to the agenda items to be discussed at the current Session are provided in documents: COFO/2022/6.1, COFO/2022/6.2, COFO/2022/6.3, COFO/2022/6.4, COFO/2022/6.5 and COFO/2022/6.6. Major achievements of FAO's work in forestry during the 2020-21 biennium are presented in document COFO/2022/7.1.

An update on the implementation of the recommendations of the 25th Session of COFO is presented in document COFO/2022/INF/11.

In addition, specific information documents are provided COFO/2022/INF/6, COFO/2022/INF/7 and COFO/2022/INF/8.

Suggested action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to take note of the report on progress in implementation and to provide guidance as deemed appropriate.

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

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Decisions and Recommendations of FAO Bodies of Interest to the Committee

1. Document COFO/2022/6.1 provides a report of the decisions and recommendations of the FAO Bodies of interest to the Committee on Forestry.

Progress report on the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors and its 2021-23 Action Plan

2. The Council, at its 163rd Session, adopted the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors (Strategy). At its 166th Session, the Council approved the 2021-23 Action Plan for the Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors (Action Plan). It is foreseen that the Action Plan will be further developed in the light of new developments and agreements, including those reached under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), and experiences with the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan. The document COFO/2022/6.2 provides an overview of progress in the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan. It also presents a draft Action Plan for the period 2024 to 2027.

Global Forest Resources Assessment and Remote Sensing Survey

3. Document COFO/2022/6.3 presents the results of the latest Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA), which were published in 2020 and have reached altogether at least 140 000 users. As part of the FRA 2020 process, FAO also conducted an independent participatory global remote sensing survey. The results of the survey supported the main findings of the country reporting process and produced novel information on the drivers of deforestation and other matters. The FRA Expert Consultation on the scope and other technical aspects of FRA 2025 will take place in the second half of 2022, and the data collection and related training and capacity development will start in early 2023. Along with country reporting, FAO plans to support selected countries in using remote sensing to improve the estimates of key FRA attributes, further refine the remote sensing survey methodology and, financial resources allowing, and update its results. A flexible country reporting process, allowing voluntary updates when new data become available, will start in 2024.

Finance and Investment in Forest Pathways

4. The document COFO/2022/6.4 draws on the latest evidence and data, in particular from the last edition of FAO's flagship report, The State of the World's Forests (SOFO) 2022, and the XV World Forestry Congress. It provides an overview of key issues, priorities, and opportunities to scale up finance and investments for the forest pathways identified in SOFO 2022. It highlights four priority actions that have the potential to deliver both higher financing flows for the forest pathways and increased impact:

- increase climate finance for sustainable forestry, including restoration, for example by including them in climate finance strategies and seizing opportunities from developing carbon markets;
- allocate more finance to Indigenous Peoples, Local communities (IPLC) and small producers, recognizing their key role as key agents to protect and restore forests, and support sustainable forest value chains;
- strategically use public finance to engage the private sector, including smallholders, and better monitor domestic public finance to curb subsidies and incentives leading to deforestation and to create opportunities for forestry within sustainable agrifood systems; and

- address finance issues for forestry and agriculture in an integrated way, promoting complementary practices between agriculture and the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of forests.

Restoration and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030

5. The document COFO/2022/6.5 presents an update on the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030, with particular reference to the restoration of forested landscapes and obtain guidance of the 26th Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO 26) on the implications of addressing the restoration of these ecosystems for FAO policies and programmes. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), through resolution A/RES/73/284 on 1 March 2019, “with the aim of supporting and scaling up efforts to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide and raise awareness of the importance of successful ecosystem restoration”¹. FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) are co-leading the implementation of the Decade worldwide, ensuring strong cooperation with countries, other UN agencies and partners. FAO framed a vision for the implementation of the Decade from the perspective of its mandate to make agricultural systems (crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture) more productive, efficient and sustainable, while managing and protecting the environment and the natural resources base that these systems depend upon.

Dialogue with Statutory Bodies in Forestry

6. The document COFO/2022/6.6 presents progress reports on activities of the Forestry Statutory Bodies and the Working Group of the Committee on Forestry:

- Regional Forestry Commissions (RFCs);
- Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions *Silva Mediterranea*;
- Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries (ACFSI);
- International Poplar Commission (IPC); and
- Working Group on Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems.

¹ 1 A/RES/73/284 (undocs.org)