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Food and Agriculture
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Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
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NORTH AMERICAN FOREST COMMISSION

THIRTY-SECOND SESSION

Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada

25 - 27 September 2023

**Report of the Forest Inventory, Monitoring and Assessment
Working Group**

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

NAFC Secretariat
Forestry Division

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I. WORKING GROUP COMPOSITION

Chairperson	Country	Organization
José Armando Alanís de la Rosa	Mexico	National Forestry Commission
Members' names	Country	Organization
Graham Stinson	Canada	Natural Resources Canada – Canadian Forest Service
Byron Smiley	Canada	Natural Resources Canada-Canadian Forest Service
Alex Song	Canada	Natural Resources Canada-Canadian Forest Service
Scott MacKinnon	Canada	British Columbia Ministry of Forests
Sonja Oswalt	United States of America	United States Forest Service
Renate Bush	United States of America	United States Forest Service
Rubí Angélica Cuenca Lara	Mexico	National Forestry Commission
Carina Edith Delgado	Mexico	National Forestry Commission
Sergio Armando Villela Gaytán	Mexico	National Forestry Commission

II. LIST OF ACTIVITIES COMPLETED DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS

Activity	Location	Date
Annual meeting	<i>Knoxville, Tennessee</i>	<i>November 2019</i>
Quarterly meeting	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>29 April 2021</i>
1st Latin American Primary Forest pilot study meeting	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>15 June 2021</i>
Boreal Primary Forest pilot study meeting	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>23 June 2021</i>
Latin American & Caribbean harmonization/book chapter	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>15 July 2021</i>
2nd Latin American Primary Forest pilot study meeting	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>19 July 2021</i>
Launch of the book <i>National Forest Inventories in Latin American & Caribbean</i>	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>12 December 2021</i>
Quarterly meeting	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>26 April 2022</i>
Quarterly meeting	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>22 August 2022</i>
1st meeting of the Latin American and the Caribbean National Forest Inventories Network (LAC-FIN)	<i>Panamá City, Panama</i>	<i>17-21 October 2022</i>
Quarterly meeting	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>24 January 2023</i>
Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) regional workshop	<i>Panamá City, Panama</i>	<i>26-31 March 2023</i>
In-person annual meeting	<i>Guadalajara, Jalisco, México</i>	<i>20-23 June 2023</i>

Activities:

1. Primary forest assessment
 - (a) A pilot assessment of primary forests in Mexico was conducted with the financial support of the Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) – Canadian Forest Service (CFS).
2. Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA)
 - (a) Members of the Forest Inventory, Monitoring and Assessment WG (in addition to Mexican and Puerto Rican/Virgin Island colleagues who are both members of the NAFC and the LAC) were invited to attend the regional workshop of FRA 2025, which was held in Panamá City, Panama, 26 - 31 March 2023.
 - (b) The regional workshop was the official launch of the FRA 2025 reporting process. The national reports are expected to be concluded by December 2023.
3. Annual meeting held in 2023:
 - (a) WG members met in person at the National Forestry Commission of Mexico's (CONAFOR) headquarters in Guadalajara, Jalisco Mexico, 21 - 23 June 2023. The meeting included joint sessions with members of the Climate, Atmospheric Change and Forests WG.
 - (b) The agenda included country updates on national forest inventory and monitoring; updates on the formulation of the national FRA 2025 reports; results of the primary forest assessment in Mexico; and the next steps in updating the North American Forest Database.
 - (c) A field trip to the “La Primavera” natural protected area was carried out to demonstrate the methodology for the assessment of wildfire severity in temperate forest ecosystems of Mexico.
 - (d) The WG meeting included joint sessions with members of the Climate, Atmospheric Change and Forest WG to exchange information and identify opportunities for collaboration, mainly related to the assessment of forest mitigation options in the forestry sector.
 - (e) FAO officials participated virtually and provided updates on the FRA 2025 process and work related to the Global Core Set of forest-related indicators; further information on the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) Forest program and the open forest data initiatives aimed to enhance transparency in the forestry sector was shared. Finally, updates on the work of the Latin America and the Caribbean National Forest Inventory Network (LAC-FIN), in which Mexico and the US are members, were provided.
 - (f) The chairpersonship of the Working Group was passed from Canada to Mexico.
4. The International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) World Congress 2024
 - (a) An abstract for participating in the session “Forest without borders: National Forest Inventory Networks and their potential for large scale monitoring and reporting” at the XXVI IUFRO World Congress was submitted.

III. PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS

Activity	Location	Date	Status (done/ongoing)
Working group (follow-up) meeting	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>October 2023</i>	<i>New</i>
FRA 2025 LAC regional workshop	<i>Quito, Ecuador</i>	<i>4-7 September 2023</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
Formulation of FRA 2025 national reports	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
North American Forest Database phase 2	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>2023-2024</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
Annual working group meeting	<i>USA (location TBD)</i>	<i>2024 (early summer, dates TBD)</i>	<i>New</i>
Working group (follow-up) meetings	<i>Videoconference</i>	<i>January and August 2024</i>	<i>New</i>
Primary forest post-reporting assessment	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>2024-2025</i>	<i>New</i>

IV. WORKING GROUP FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS AND/OR NETWORKING

Period September 2021 – 2023

Activity	Amount USD (cash)	Amount USD (in-kind)
Mexico's primary forest assessment	3,740*	
WG meeting expenditures		CONAFOR (room, internet connection, others) and ground transportation of participants (CONAFOR-hotel).
WG meeting participation costs		Canadian participants: \$8,701** US participants \$6,000 (approx.)
WG meeting interpretation services	3,500***	
WG meeting food and catering services	600***	

Notes:

* Contract amount was CAN 4,895

** Includes participation of Canada's National Correspondent for FAO FRA process

*** Provided by SilvaCarbon

5. Mexico successfully conducted an assessment of its primary forests, benefiting from the financial support provided by NRCan-CFS. This assessment has led to the development of a methodological approach, primarily influenced by the discussions held within the working group, for operationalizing the FRA definitions in the Mexican context. The focus was on determining the location and extent of primary forests in Mexico for the years 2015 and 2020. The need for further improvements in forest cover data sets was identified for adequately monitoring primary forests.

6. The National Forest Inventories Network in the Latin American region (LAC-FIN) published the book "National Forest Inventories of Latin America and the Caribbean" in December 2021 (available in English and Spanish); this book was formulated with the collaboration of CONAFOR and

the United States Forest Service (USFS). CONAFOR's Director General participated in the launching event of the book, held on 12 December 2021.

7. Experts from Mexico and the United States of America participated in the first LAC-FIN meeting held in Panama City, Panama, in October 2022, where the network's charter was formulated. Mexico formally joined LAC-FIN in April 2023. The first assembly of the LAC-FIN is expected to be held in August 2023.

8. Mexico and the United States of America have been continuing their collaboration with FAO and other Latin American countries to harmonize relevant forest definitions and indicators to produce a Latin American forest database following the experience developing the North American Forest Database.

V. CLOSING REMARKS

9. After thorough discussions during the last working group meeting, members have reached a consensus to highlight the importance of continuing the discussion within the FRA expert group with the goal of enhancing the forestry-related employment indicator, ensuring a more comprehensive representation of the various jobs associated with forestry activities, instead of solely focusing on primary sector forestry jobs, such as harvesting and logging. WG members considered it essential to capture a broader range of employment in the forestry sector, by doing so, the indicator will more accurately reflect the true extent of employment in the forestry sector.

10. WG members recognized the need to further discuss the definition of primary forests within the FRA framework, taking into account national circumstances, aimed to facilitate reporting by countries.

11. Recognizing the existence of varying definitions and the application of qualitative criteria by different countries in reporting forest degradation, the WG members emphasized the importance of further discussions regarding the definition of forest degradation within the framework of the FRA. By continuing these discussions, the WG aims to enhance the clarity and consistency of forest degradation assessments within the FRA context.

12. WG members recognize the value of the joint meeting with the Climate, Atmospheric Change and Forest WG, and suggest holding similar meetings with other WG, either in-person or virtually, aimed to identify collaboration opportunities.

13. WG members highlighted the relevance of national forest inventories and monitoring as a means to provide information for supporting decision-making in the forest sector. Although new tools and global datasets are available thanks to technological innovation and development, forest data collection and its analysis remains a key element of forest monitoring efforts. Therefore, capacities for collecting and analyzing data must be secured and strengthened by providing adequate human and financial resources at the country level as new information and indicators, such as primary forest monitoring, are requested by the global community.

14. Mexico would like to express its gratitude to the Government of Canada for providing financial support for conducting the primary forest assessment in Mexico, as well as to the US Government for providing financing for logistical support for the in-person WG meeting held in Guadalajara, Mexico.

