

REPORT

of the

NINETEENTH SESSION

of the

LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Panama City, Panama,
17-21 June 1996

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RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

STATE OF FORESTRY IN THE REGION

1. Several delegations mentioned the important role of national forestry action programmes (NFAPs) in sectoral planning. These often incorporated reappraised perceptions of the role of forests in that, in addition the productive function, importance was also being attached to their social dimension and to their contribution towards maintaining environmental stability and safeguarding all forms of life. Consequently, the Commission recommended that national forestry planning and programming institutions be strengthened in the region (para. 11).
2. The Commission recognized that most of the rural population continued to depend almost exclusively on the forest for energy in the home and for small rural industries. As a result, it recommended that countries enhance forest management conditions and facilitate regular access of the rural population to sources of energy (para. 12).
3. Forest institutions in the region continued to undergo sweeping change and were often still accorded secondary status within state administrations. The Commission therefore recommended that Member States continuously reinforce their forestry institutions so as to raise management capability to the level needed. It also recommended that FAO organize a regional workshop to examine and merge positions and efforts in this regard (para. 13).

PROGRESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF UNCED FOLLOW-UP

4. The Commission considered that the issues addressed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) were of great concern to Latin America and the Caribbean and recommended that countries participate fully in the work of the Panel so as to effectively influence its outcome (para. 17).
5. The Commission recommended that, in addition to its permanent function, LAFC also serve as a forum for the consolidated country groups that had been, or were being, established in the region. The Commission was informed about the institutional progress made by certain countries towards sustainable development through changes in sectoral policies and legislation, the development of forest plantations, the study and use on non-wood forest products and the integration of civil society in these efforts (para. 19).
6. The Commission acknowledged the need to take advantage of all policy openings in the region to include forests among regional, sub-regional and national priorities, and considered it vital that steps be taken to have the regional summits of Heads of State and Government recognize the importance of forests, biodiversity and the environment as key factors in securing sustainable social and economic development. It therefore recommended that Member States employ existing mechanisms at Government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs level to incorporate forests as an input for development and environmental stability (paras. 22 and 23).

STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF REGIONAL FORESTRY COMMISSIONS

7. The Commission stated that new opportunities were arising in the region from socio-economic and environmental globalization and were leading to the formation of important sub-regional groups such as those of Central America, the Southern Cone, the Caribbean and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty. These were sometimes initiating significant environmental and forestry actions and could thus contribute towards bolstering the work of the Commissions. The Commission recommended that these groups be given ample opportunity in subsequent LAFC sessions to voice their overriding concerns so that regional forestry development programmes and actions could be jointly agreed and coordinated (Para. 27).

8. Recognizing that forestry development involved a wide range of social and institutional groups, the Commission recommended that governments encourage their participation in its discussions for subsequent channelling through governmental representations. To encourage such participation, the Commission recommended that the provisional agenda of its sessions be drawn up together with the groups invited to attend, and that apposite technical and policy aspects be included (para. 28).
9. The FAO Regional Office should be able to establish, at affordable cost, an intra-regional forestry information system that would facilitate participation in planned intersessional activities in accordance with its mandate. In order to energize its work, the Commission recommended that subregional work mechanisms be established as an integral part of its structure, not only to deal more closely with specific topics related to sustainable forest development but also to raise the level of cooperation, coordination and information between countries and to facilitate the participation of the region in other regional or global bodies. The Commission therefore recommended to Member States and FAO that subregional mechanisms be formally established for the purpose of effective LAFC intersessional activity through the following groups (paras.29 and 30):
 - (a) Central America and Mexico
 - (b) Caribbean
 - (c) Amazon
 - (d) Southern Cone

Aware that, for various reasons, some Members States had not attended the nineteenth session, the Commission recommended that the topics and activities listed in paragraph 32 be submitted at the earliest opportunity to all the Member States (para. 33).

IN-SESSION SEMINAR: FUNDING FOREST DEVELOPMENT

10. The Commission recommended that governments of the region:
 - revise national investment policies and pay due attention to the forestry sector;
 - instigate a change in attitude on the part of the economic authorities so that they promote investment in the forestry sector;
 - recognize forestry sector spillover onto other activities;
 - consider the positive environmental, social and economic externalities of the forestry sector;
 - establish mechanisms to absorb the negative impacts of intersectoral policies incompatible with sustainable forestry development (para. 45).
- that the international financial community;
- ensure that international investments were compatible with development and conservation;
 - take care that the changing role of the State did not continue to reduce the institutional capacities of services responsible for forest resource administration and that it facilitate the creation of new up-to-date capacities at national and local levels;
 - support the subregional integration processes that had been initiated to enhance their operating capacity and facilitate the sustainable development of forest resources (para. 46).

- examine the successful internal financial mechanisms used in some countries of the region and elsewhere for the forestry sector, and disseminate its findings;
- support regional and subregional studies and initiatives on the public and private funding of forestry development;
- organize a regional seminar or subregional seminars to examine the issue more closely, given its importance and relevance (para. 47).

REPORTS OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION NETWORKS

11. The Commission acknowledged the important contribution of TCNs to the forestry sector and recommended that the Network on National Parks, other Protected Areas and Wildlife support the activities of the Central American Council on Forests and Protected Areas (CCAB-AP) to consolidate the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. It also recommended that countries belonging to the Networks contribute towards their funding and that the opportunities offered by the Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) programme be exploited to reinforce the work of the Networks and horizontal cooperation on the basis of the agreements reached between FAO and its Member States (paras. 50, 51 and 53).

FOLLOW-UP TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

12. The Commission was informed that, because of budgetary restrictions, it had not been possible to convene a regional meeting on forestry policy and legislation and the strengthening of strategic and operational planning systems. It therefore recommended that the appropriation of funds for this activity be considered in the budget for the 1998-99 biennium (para. 55).
13. The Commission was informed that, in compliance with recommendation 3 of its eighteenth session, FAO had signed an NFAP support project with the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The funds would be released when a Regional Forestry Officer had taken up office to coordinate project activities and support the strengthening of NFAPs at country level. The Commission therefore recommended and requested that FAO expedite matters in response to countries' expressed needs so that the project could be initiated (para. 56).

FORESTRY ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION

14. The Commission recommended that these priorities be included in the Organization's Regular and Field Programme activities and underlined the fundamental role that FAO should play in identifying and providing technical, policy and institutional instruments so that the region's forest resources could be appropriately developed for the benefit of society (para. 58).
15. The Commission noted that continuing budgetary limitations were one of the main obstacles preventing FAO from giving countries proper support and recommended that action be taken through their Representatives in Rome to seek a budgetary increment in support of the Forestry Department's activities in the region (para. 59).
16. The Commission was aware of the opportunities for cooperation that existed in the region on the basis of national capacities and welcomed the offers made by Brazil, Chile, Cuba and Mexico, in addition to other countries that would subsequently be in a similar position. It recommended that FAO provide appropriate mechanisms through its TCDC Programme to further the collaborative process and that actions be taken to reinforce the forestry sector and demonstrate the importance of forest resources as an instrument for national development and regional and subregional integration (para. 60).

17. The Commission recommended that delegates, for their part, do all they could to have their respective governments accord the forestry sector its rightful status; and that FAO pursue a similar course of action with governments. It further recommended that FAO continue to look into ways of cutting the

costs of TCP projects by resorting more to TCDC. This would increase the number of projects without adding to the budget. FAO and the countries should together seek alternatives for the formulation and negotiation of projects, to be financed from external sources, so as to improve and expand the field programme and have it correspond to countries' needs (paras. 63, 64 and 65).

OTHER BUSINESS

18. The Commission recommended that the present Executive Committee of LAFC attend the forthcoming session of the North American Forestry Commission (NAFC) in November 1996 (para. 68).

INTRODUCTION

1. The Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (L AFC) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) held its nineteenth session in Panama City from 17 to 21 June 1996, at the kind invitation of the Government of the Republic of Panama. The session was attended by delegates from 18 Member States, representatives of United Nations specialized agencies and observers from six international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The agenda is featured in *Appendix A*, the full list of participants is given in *Appendix B*, and the list of documents submitted for consideration by the Commission is included in *Appendix C*.

2. Mr David A. Harcharik, Assistant Director-General and Head of the Forestry Department of FAO, attended the session on behalf of Dr Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO. The session was inaugurated by Lic. Raul Arango, Minister of State of the Republic of Panama, who gave a keynote address before opening the proceedings. Also present on the rostrum were Ing. Rolando Guillén, Director of the National Institute for Renewable Natural Resources (INRENARE) of Panama, Ing. Atilio Ligrone, outgoing L AFC Chairman, and Ing. Carlos Vargas, Forestry Director of INRENARE.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA (Item 1)

3. The provisional agenda was adopted with the addition of working group discussions on sub-regional priorities.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS (Item 2)

4. In accordance with Articles II-1 and II-5 of its Rules of Procedure, the Commission elected a Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen and two Rapporteurs. The following members of the Commission were unanimously elected:

Chairman:	Roland Guillén (Panama)
Vice-Chairmen:	Helio dos Santos Pereira (Brazil) Víctor Venegas (Chile) Godfrey Marshall (Guyana)
Rapporteurs:	Ronald Vargas (Costa Rica) Marcos Nieto Lara (Cuba)

Mr K. Thelen, FAO Regional Forestry Officer, served as Secretary.

STATE OF FORESTRY IN THE REGION (Item 3)

5. The Commission reviewed the state of forestry in the region, drawing from Secretariat Note L AFC/96/2, the national reports prepared by the countries and the statements of each delegation. In the case of the Central America sub-region, a collective statement was given by the Secretariat of the Central American Council on Forests and Protected Areas (CCAB-AP).

6. The Secretariat outlined the state of forest resources in the region, drawing attention to the continuing unsustainable rate of deforestation. However, a number of countries indicated that they were taking steps to check the trend. It was noted that, in general and with the odd exception, management plans were not being applied to indigenous forests. The private sector was investing heavily in forest plantations in various countries, indicating that the forest sector was a viable economic option and was important for the corporate process.

7. It was recognized that the issue of land tenure and forest ownership often needed to be urgently addressed, so as to remove one of the constraints to sustainable forest development.

8. The Commission noted that various countries were involved in actions such as the Processes of Montreal, Tarapoto and Central America to determine criteria and indicators for the conservation and sustainable management of forests. Similarly, progress had been made in refocusing forest policies and in the management of arid and semi-arid areas, in follow-up to UNCED and the Convention to Combat

Desertification and Drought. National plans against desertification had been, or were being, formulated in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru.

9. It was recognized that man-made fires damaged large tracts of forest land in the region and that national capabilities needed to be reinforced for better prevention and more effective control.

10. Protected areas had been increasingly introduced in many countries to conserve forest resources and biodiversity, and activities were being conducted within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

11. Several delegations mentioned the important role of national forestry action programmes (NFAPs) in sectoral planning. These were often influenced by a reappraisal of the role of forests in that, in addition to their productive function, importance was also being attached to their social dimension and to their contribution towards maintaining environmental stability and safeguarding all forms of life. Consequently, the Commission recommended that national forestry planning and programming institutions be strengthened in the region.

12. The Commission recognized that most of the rural population continued to depend almost exclusively on the forest for energy in the home and for small rural industries. As a result, it recommended that countries enhance forest management conditions and facilitate regular access of the rural population to sources of energy.

13. Forest institutions in the region continued to undergo sweeping change and were often still accorded secondary status within state administrations. The Commission therefore recommended that Member States continuously reinforce their forestry institutions so as to raise management capability to the level needed. It also recommended that FAO organize a regional workshop to examine and merge positions and efforts in this regard.

14. The Commission recognized that the organizations and fora set up in Central America, the Amazon Cooperation Treaty and the Southern Common Market were successful examples of integrated cooperation to secure the changes needed for the development of the region and its forest sector.

PROGRESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF UNCED FOLLOW-UP (Item 4)

15. The Secretariat introduced document FO:LAFC/96/3, "Follow-up to UNCED Agreement on Forestry: Progress towards Sustainable Forestry Development in the Region", and reported on recent forestry-related events within the context of UNCED, as the basis for discussion on sustainable forestry development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

16. The Commission took note of the principal initiatives that had been undertaken in the context of UNCED, as listed in the secretariat document.

17. The Commission considered that the issues addressed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) were of great concern to Latin America and the Caribbean and recommended that countries participate fully in the work of the Panel so as to effectively influence its outcome.

18. In the context of sustainable forest development, the Commission drew attention to the need to promote NFAPs. It also touched upon the underlying causes of deforestation, the conservation and sustainable management of forests, the promotion of sustainable patterns of production and consumption of forest products and services, and the participation of all sectors of society for institutional strengthening.

19. The Commission recommended that, in addition to its permanent function, LAFC also serve as a forum for the consolidated country groups that had been, or were being, established in the region. The Commission was informed of the institutional progress made by certain countries towards sustainable development through changes in sectoral policies and legislation, the development of forest plantations, the study and use on non-wood forest products and the integration of civil society in these efforts.

20. The Commission took note of a proposal on sustainable forest management put forward by CCAB-AP

for submission to IPF. It decided that the proposal should be disseminated and strengthened at regional level through the Central America Group of Diplomatic Representatives (GRUCA) and other policy-shaping bodies.

21. In this connection, the Commission welcomed the report of CCAB-AP on the development of forest issues within the Central American process and achievements to date. It also learned of and endorsed the proposal on sustainable forest management that CCAB-AP had formulated during its ninth session in Panama (13-14 June 1996) for submission to IPF.

22. The Commission acknowledged the need to take advantage of all policy openings in the region to include forests among regional, sub-regional and national priorities, and considered it vital that steps be taken to have the regional summits of Heads of State and Government recognize the importance of forests, biodiversity and the environment as key factors in securing sustainable social and economic development.

23. The Commission therefore recommended that Member States employ existing mechanisms at Government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs level to incorporate forests as an input for development and environmental stability.

STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF REGIONAL FORESTRY COMMISSIONS (Item 5)

24. In its presentation of Secretariat Note FO:LAFC/96/4, the Secretariat explained that this item was linked to the recommendation of the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) to strengthen this type of regional mechanism to serve as fora for the exchange of technical and policy information and promote FAO action and assistance for forestry development. Delegates were informed that COFO considered that the commissions had substantial potential and capacity to provide countries with greater access to localized know-how and information, to enhance the coordination of technical activities and to promote regional and sub-regional integration.

25. The Secretariat outlined a series of considerations to help steer discussion and determine member countries' views on the strengthening of the Regional Commission and on how to render it more representative of national and regional realities and forestry sector interests, bearing in mind all its stakeholders. They would also help define the operational mechanisms that were needed to make the Commission more functional, ongoing and effective in its efforts to facilitate sustainable forest development in the region.

26. Participants voiced their concern that the apparent decline in vitality of LAFC seemed to be linked, in some way, to FAO's reduced participation or presence in the region and to the fact that its resolutions and recommendations appeared to be more binding on FAO than on its member countries.

27. The Commission stated that new opportunities were arising in the region from socio-economic and environmental globalization and were leading to the formation of important sub-regional groups such as those of Central America, the Southern Cone, the Caribbean and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty. These were sometimes initiating significant environmental and forestry actions and could contribute towards bolstering the work of the commissions. The Commission recommended that these groups be given ample opportunity in subsequent LAFC sessions to voice their overriding concerns so that regional forestry development programmes and actions could be jointly agreed and coordinated.

28. Recognizing that forestry development involved a wide range of social and institutional groups, the Commission recommended that governments encourage their participation in its discussions for subsequent channelling through governmental representations. To encourage such participation, the Commission recommended that the provisional agenda of its sessions be drawn up together with the groups invited to attend, and that apposite technical and policy aspects be included.

29. Advances in communications made for easy contact between the members of the Commission. This should enable the FAO Regional Office to establish, at affordable cost, an intra-regional forestry information system that would facilitate participation in planned intersessional activities in accordance with its mandate. With this in mind and to energize its work, the Commission recommended that subregional work mechanisms be established as an integral part of its structure, not only to deal more closely with specific topics related to sustainable forest development but also to raise the level of cooperation, coordination and information between countries and to facilitate the participation of the region in other regional or global

bodies.

30. The Commission therefore recommended to Member States and FAO that subregional mechanisms be formally established for the purpose of effective LAFC intersessional activity. It recommended that the following groups be set up:

- (a) Central America and Mexico
- (b) Caribbean
- (c) Amazon
- (d) Southern Cone

31. Inter- and intra-group coordination and the operational practicalities would be the responsibility of the LAFC Executive Committee - the Chairman and respective Vice-Chairmen - together with the Secretariat of the Commission.

32. The Commission identified the following topics and common priority areas for action between the nineteenth and twentieth sessions:

- (a) Sustainable forestry development
- (b) Conservation and use of biodiversity
- (c) Criteria and indicators
- (d) Forestry planning
- (e) National Forestry Action Programmes
- (f) Forestry institutions
- (g) Technical cooperation among countries
- (h) Forest products and services

33. Aware that, for various reasons, some Member States had not attended the nineteenth session, the Commission recommended that the topics and activities listed in paragraph 32 be submitted at the earliest opportunity to all the Member States.

34. Specific topics and activities were identified by individual groups as reported in *Appendix D*.

IN-SESSION SEMINAR: FUNDING FOREST DEVELOPMENT (Item 6)

Main aspects related to the funding of forest development

35. The Commission recognized the importance of the seminar topic and expressed the need for follow up, as sustainable forest development would largely depend on the capacity of countries to secure sufficient funds to make it a reality.

36. It also recognized that, despite the opportunities that had been created in the forestry sector, the financial resources for environmental and forest development, in particular, would continue to be limited. Efforts should therefore be stepped up, particularly at national level, to identify new investment and funding mechanisms for the development of forestry activities.

37. The Commission took note of the internal and external economic, policy and social factors hampering forestry investment and inputs. However, this should result in a more efficient use of available resources and greater operational effectiveness on the part of the sectoral institutions.

38. Furthermore, the various sectors sharing responsibility for forestry development should also accept greater financial responsibility for the development process.

39. The Commission identified a series of social, economic and policy factors that were making it difficult for the forestry sector to attract public and private national and international investment. These included:

- marginalization of the forestry sector in national development strategies;
- absence of an integrated forestry development perspective that included management of forest

resources, the creation and development of industries, the mechanization and incorporation of technologies, infrastructural development and training;

- the need for a stable framework and clear regulations for development of the sector;
- the sector's low contribution to Gross Domestic Product;
- an inadequate quantitative and qualitative valuation of forest products and services;
- the fiscal crisis affecting various countries in the region;
- the incompatibility of intersectoral policies and the short-term optic of government management;
- the inadequate level of information on the sector.

40. The Commission contrasted these aspects with forest potentials in the region: the existence of large areas of forest and land suitable for forestry development; high unit yields; geographical location; abundant biodiversity; capacity to sustain a positive environmental and social impact. This corresponded well with the availability of skilled human resources, the process of democratization and political stability, the development of social and economic policies that facilitated free trade and protected investments, and the processes of subregional political and economic integration.

41. The Commission recognized that, if funding for the sector was to be strengthened, it was necessary to reinforce those technical, credit, fiscal and trade mechanisms that had so far contributed towards its development and to create new mechanisms to consolidate the process.

42. With this in mind, the Commission called on all the actors involved in forestry development to play their allotted role. The State should define sectoral policies that corresponded to the objectives of sustainable development and should promote strategies and facilitate the mechanisms needed for these to be achieved, defining an appropriate regulatory framework for the plans and programmes to be implemented by interested public and private parties. The private sector should channel resources and build upon the actions of the State. NGOs should attract national and international funding which they should direct towards actions for the common good. The international community should support long-term planning, horizontal cooperation, the identification of markets and investors and the establishment of trade agreements.

Conclusions and recommendations of the in-session seminar

43. The Commission noted that the seminar had been considered useful because of the relevance of its theme to all the countries of the region. However, it recognized the complexity of the issue because of the particular characteristics of funding mechanisms and of the forestry sector itself.

44. The Commission recognized that, in spite of complementarity among funding sources, the main responsibility for funding the forestry sector should fall upon public and private national sources, with the support of international cooperation.

45. The Commission recommended that governments of the region:

- revise national investment policies and pay due attention to the forestry sector;
- instigate a change in attitude on the part of the economic authorities so that they promote investment in the forestry sector;
- recognize forestry sector spillover onto other activities;
- consider the positive environmental, social and economic externalities of the forestry sector;
- establish mechanisms to absorb the negative impacts of intersectoral policies incompatible with sustainable forestry development.

46. The Commission recommended that the international financial community;
- ensure that international investments are compatible with development and conservation;
 - take care that the changing role of the State does not continue to reduce the institutional capacities of services responsible for forest resource administration and that it facilitates the creation of new up-to-date capacities at national and local levels;
 - support the subregional integration processes that had been initiated to enhance their operating capacity and facilitate the sustainable development of forest resources.
47. The Commission recommended that FAO:
- examine the successful internal financial mechanisms used in some countries of the region and elsewhere for the forestry sector, and disseminate its findings;
 - support regional and subregional studies and initiatives on the public and private funding of forestry development;
 - organize a regional seminar or subregional seminars to examine the issue more closely, given its importance and relevance.

REPORTS OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION NETWORKS (Item 7)

48. The Commission took note of the activities that had been conducted, since its last session and with the support of the FAO Regional Office, by the Technical Cooperation Networks (TCNs) on Agroforestry Systems; National Parks, other Protected Areas and Wildlife; Watershed Management; Dendroenergy; and the Caribbean Technical Cooperation Network on Forestry and Related Environmental Matters. It also took note of the forestry activities undertaken through the Technical Cooperation Network on Arid and Semi-arid Lands.

49. The Commission recalled that some of its subsidiary bodies had been replaced by TCNs following a recommendation to this effect at its fifteenth session in San José, Costa Rica, in 1986.

50. The Commission acknowledged the important contribution of TCNs to the forestry sector and recommended that the Network on National Parks, other Protected Areas and Wildlife support the activities of CCAB-AP to consolidate the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor.

51. As regards the financial difficulties of TCNs, the Commission recommended that countries belonging to the Networks contribute towards their funding.

52. The Commission was pleased to note that the TCN work proposals would be considered in the Programme of Work and Budget for 1998-99.

53. The Commission recommended that the opportunities offered by the Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) programme be exploited to reinforce the work of the Networks and horizontal cooperation on the basis of the agreements reached between FAO and its Member States.

FOLLOW-UP TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION (Item 8)

54. The Commission expressed its satisfaction with the results of FAO follow-up to the recommendations made at its eighteenth session.

55. The Commission was informed that, because of budgetary restrictions, it had not been possible to convene a regional meeting on forestry policy and legislation and the strengthening of strategic and operational planning systems. It therefore recommended that the appropriation of funds for this activity be considered in the budget for the 1998-99 biennium.

56. The Commission was informed that, in compliance with recommendation 3 of its eighteenth session, FAO had signed an NFAP support project with the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The funds would be released when a Regional Forestry Officer had taken up office to coordinate project activities and support the strengthening of NFAPs at country level. The Commission therefore recommended and requested that FAO expedite matters in response to countries' expressed needs so that the project could be initiated.

FAO FORESTRY ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION (Item 9)

(a) Review of 1994-95 activities and Programme of Work for 1996-97

57. The Commission reiterated that, despite the Organization's budgetary constraints, its forestry programmes continued to be of the highest priority and fully corresponded to the will of the international community as expressed in UNCED and that all the priorities had been recognized as such by FAO's governing bodies. In this connection, the Regular Programme activities for the 1994-95 biennium and those planned for 1996-97 were submitted to the Commission for its consideration. The Commission acknowledged the efforts made by the Forestry Department to comply with the recommendations of the last LAFC session and to help member countries, within its possibilities, to achieve the objectives of Agenda 21.

58. The Commission recommended that these priorities be included in the Organization's Regular and Field Programme activities and underlined the fundamental role that FAO should play in identifying and providing technical, policy and institutional instruments so that the region's forest resources could be appropriately developed for the benefit of society.

59. The Commission noted that continuing budgetary limitations were one of the main obstacles preventing FAO from giving countries proper support and recommended that action be taken through their Representatives in Rome to seek a budgetary increment in support of the Forestry Department's activities in the region. It also recognized the need to maintain and build upon FAO's experience and knowledge of forestry in the region.

60. The Commission was aware of the opportunities for cooperation that existed in the region on the basis of national capacities and welcomed the offers made by Brazil, Chile, Cuba and Mexico, in addition to other countries that would subsequently be in a similar position. It recommended that FAO provide appropriate mechanisms through its TCDC Programme to further the collaborative process and that actions be taken to reinforce the forestry sector and demonstrate the importance of forest resources as an instrument for national development and regional and subregional integration.

(b) Forestry field operations in the region

61. The Commission was informed that the overall field programme budget had increased somewhat against the previous period (1992-93). The significant reduction anticipated for 1996 had not materialized thanks to the approval of a number of new projects with funding from the Government of the Netherlands. The threat of reduction had been put off until after 1997. However, several delegates expressed their concern over the continuity of the programme, especially as it was almost exclusively dependent on one donor.

62. They also agreed that it would be timely to concentrate more on South-South cooperation which tended to reduce the cost of technical assistance. There were now greater opportunities for such cooperation with the increasing availability of technical skills in the region and the willingness of certain member countries to provide funds for this purpose.

63. The Commission recommended that delegates, for their part, do all they can to have their respective governments accord the forestry sector its rightful status; and that FAO pursue a similar course of action with governments.

64. It further recommended that FAO continue to look into ways of cutting the cost of TCP projects by resorting more to TCDC. This would increase the number of projects without adding to the budget.

65. It also recommended that FAO and the countries together seek alternatives for the formulation and negotiation of projects, to be financed from external sources, so as to improve and expand the field

programme and have it correspond to countries' needs.

MATTERS TO BE REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY (Item 10)

66. The Commission welcomed the recommendation of the Committee on Forestry on strengthening the functioning of the regional forestry commissions and wished to inform COFO that it had taken significant steps in this direction.

67. The Commission requested that the attention of COFO and through it, of FAO'S governing bodies, be drawn to the recommendations that might fall within their fields of interest.

OTHER BUSINESS (Item 11)

68. The Commission recommended that the present Executive Committee of LAFC attend the forthcoming session of the North American Forestry Commission (NAFC) in November 1996.

69. The Secretariat informed the Commission about the eleventh World Forestry Congress that would be held in Antalya, Turkey, from 13 to 22 October 1997.

70. The Secretariat informed the Commission about the information note on the global fibre supply study up to 2010 (L AFC/96/Inf.5) and requested that the forest services of the region lend their support.

71. On learning that Mr Henry Willstedt of FAO would be retiring next year, the Commission expressed its deep gratitude for his selfless dedication and invaluable collaboration in forestry projects in the region for so many years and agreed that this session of the Commission bear his name.

72. The Commission unanimously thanked the Government of the Republic of Panama for having hosted the session and for the extensive cooperation received from INRENARE and its Panamanian colleagues.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Item 12)

73. Several delegations urged Cuba to host the next session of LAFC. The delegation of Cuba expressed its appreciation of their request which it would refer to the Cuban Government. As regards the date, it would be convenient to combine the next LAFC session with the Cuban Forestry Congress scheduled in the first week of July 1998. The delegation of Mexico offered to host the twenty-first session of LAFC.

AGENDA

1. Adoption of agenda
2. Election of Officers
3. State of forestry in the region
4. Progress towards sustainable forestry development in the context of UNCED follow-up
5. Strengthening the role of regional forestry commissions
6. Funding forest development (in-session seminar)
7. Reports of Technical Cooperation Networks
8. Follow-up to the recommendations of the eighteenth session of the Commission
9. FAO forestry activities in the region:
 - (a) Review of 1994-95 activities and Programme of Work for 1996-97
 - (b) Forestry field operations in the region
10. Matters to be referred to the Committee on Forestry
11. Other business
12. Date and place of next session
13. Adoption of report

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APPENDIX C

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Agenda item	Code	Title
1	FO:L AFC/96/1	Provisional agenda
3	FO:L AFC/96/2	State of forestry in the region
4	FO:L AFC/96/3	Follow-up to UNCED agreements on forestry: Progress towards sustainable forestry development in the region
4	FO:L AFC/96/3/Supp.1	Extract from the report of the third session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development
5	FO:L AFC/96/4	Strengthening the role of regional forestry commissions
6	FO:L AFC/96/5	Survey on funding for forestry development in Latin America and the Caribbean
6	FO:L AFC/96/5/Supp.1	Survey on funding for forestry development in Latin America and the Caribbean: List of Tables
7	FO:L AFC/96/6	Technical Cooperation Networks in the forestry sector supported by the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
8	FO:L AFC/96/7	Follow-up to the recommendations and conclusions of the eighteenth session of the Commission
9	FO:L AFC/96/8	FAO forestry activities in the region: Review of 1994-95 activities and Programme of Work for 1996-97
9	FO:L AFC/96/9	Forestry field programme in the region

Information documents

FO:L AFC/96/Inf. 1	Information note
FO:L AFC/96/Inf. 2	Provisional timetable
FO:L AFC/96/Inf. 3	List of documents
FO:L AFC/96/Inf. 4	Forestry publications 1994/95 of interest to the Latin American and Caribbean region
FO:L AFC/96/Inf. 5	The global fibre supply study

Country reports received from:

Argentina	Honduras	Venezuela
Bolivia	Jamaica	British Virgin Islands
Brazil	Mexico	
Chile	Nicaragua	
Colombia	Panama	
Cuba	Peru	
Dominica	Trinidad and Tobago	
Guatemala	Uruguay	
Guyana	United States of America	

*APPENDIX D***REPORT OF THE CARIBBEAN GROUP**

Participants: Delegates from Cuba, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, United States of America.

Suggested topics for application, clarification and addition in the subregion.

1. Clarify the need to recognize the benefits of biodiversity to each country and the global community.
2. Recognition that the Caribbean subregion is, for the most part, a net importer of forest products.
3. Recognition that technical cooperation among the developing countries is generally available at lower cost than from developed nations.
4. While there is an established mechanism within FAO to match TCDC, there is a lack of understanding of how to take advantage of it.
5. A weakness within the subregion (except Cuba) appears to be cross sectoral communication and collaboration within the countries.
6. Established forestry networks within the Caribbean subregion include the FAO Caribbean Forestry Network and the Caribbean Foresters Association. The major political network in the subregion is the Association of Caribbean States (CARICOM). Care must be taken to harmonize the agenda of these networks and that of LAFC.
7. The subregion would benefit from a process which identifies the commonalities as well as the differences among member nations.
8. While sustainability is a global concern, the commitment of global communities to developing countries to support sustainability is declining in real terms.

Recommendations

1. Seek to elevate the status of forestry cooperation on subregional forestry issues. Member nations should take steps to keep FAO informed regarding information and technology needs.
2. Initiate a process within the subregion to identify the commonalities and differences among member nations as a basis to establish common direction for the Caribbean group.
3. Through FAO, press the international community to provide the support necessary to reach sustainability. Emphasize lower cost alternatives in providing technical cooperation.
4. Member countries with FAO assistance should work to update national forestry action plans in light of the current realities, especially financial.
5. Member countries seek to improve cross sectoral communications at the national level and move aggressively to mobilize domestic resources to promote consensus building.
6. Member countries will pursue a professional forestry education program in the Subregion.

REPORT OF THE AMAZON GROUP

Participants: Delegates of Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Venezuela and the IICA.

Present and future situation

The present state of forestry in Latin America is the result of developments shaped by national and international macroeconomic policy decisions.

The decline of development based on industrial and agricultural growth and strong protection against international competition, soaring external debt and chronic fiscal and balance of payments deficits have obliged the Latin American countries to introduce a series of economic and institutional measures that are affecting their respective socio-economic structures.

Most countries are also pursuing a policy of decentralization of administration and therefore decision-making which, coupled with the absence of a clear, realistic forest policy, is undermining sectoral management capacity.

At the same time, the worsening socio-economic conditions of most of the rural population (small farmers and indigenous peoples) and private forest industry have accentuated the pressure for possession and economic exploitation of forest resources.

This pressure has also led to manifest environmental degradation which has in turn spurred national and international hostility towards forest activity.

The forestry sector in most countries needs to come to terms with such a situation and find an appropriate response.

The Amazon Group believes that matters can be reversed if FAO focuses on the following priority areas:

The role and remodelling of the L AFC

- The Group considers that the L AFC is both important and necessary as a forestry forum for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- It recommends that regional meetings be held before the L AFC sessions to discuss common problems.

Trade in forest products

- Support for the study of national and international market opportunities.
- Support for the study of investment opportunities.

NFAP implementation

- The FAO Representations should be more closely involved in monitoring and reinforcing the NFAPs. Related activities should therefore be decentralized from FAO Headquarters to its Regional Office.

Technology transfer

- Consolidation and application of the recommendations of the UNCED forest principles.

Funding

- FAO should encourage consumer countries to play a greater role in funding and technology transfer for forestry activities and sustainable forest management, thus partly offsetting the

necessary research and investment costs.

Environmental degradation

- Development of parameters for precise indicators of environmental impact.
- Support for the regional determination of criteria and indicators, particularly the so-called "Tarapoto Proposal", that will serve to reverse the process of environmental degradation.
- Implementation of the mechanisms needed to execute Chapter 11 of Agenda 21, particularly those aimed at reducing poverty in the subregion.

Protection and use of biodiversity

- Development of a programme for the appraisal and use of genetic resources.
- Support for the implementation of national mechanisms to protect, conserve and make use of biodiversity resources under shared responsibility, taking care to respect the traditional knowledge and genetic resources of local populations and provide adequate compensation.

Institutional and forestry policy aspects

- Development of regional support programmes for government forest institutions.
- L AFC should promote the establishment of the mechanisms needed to strengthen national capacity to implement forestry policies, stimulating the formulation of regional strategies geared towards accomplishing Item 1-A of the Rio Declaration, as regards forest principles, and Item 5 of the Programme of Work and Budget, related to institutional strengthening.

Horizontal cooperation

- One of the key concerns of the L AFC regional subgroups is to secure greater coordination for the exchange of experiences among the countries of the region.

Forest management

- L AFC should try to identify international sources of funding to set up the Latin American Technical Cooperation Network on Forest Management and look into ways of establishing three demonstration sites for commercially-oriented forest management.

REPORT OF THE CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO GROUP

Participants: Delegates of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama.

Identification of priority areas

It was agreed that key priorities should be based on the CCAB-AP regional proposal, with the ancillary inclusion of other country or regional experiences.

Related areas include:

- The role and remodelling of the L AFC
- Forest product trade and environment
- NFAP implementation

- Criteria and indicators

Operating mechanisms

Subregional operating mechanisms should permit strong horizontal cooperation, with the CCAB-AP playing a lead role in the case of Central America. Mexico is included under the framework of TUXTLA II to broaden scope and constitute a more representative subregional bloc. The national and regional levels are seen as ideal for L AFC activity. Civil society should be horizontally integrated in the execution of forestry commission and subcommission actions. The L AFC should play a policy-setting and dynamic role, following up and consolidating presidential agreements, particularly, as regards Central America and Mexico, the TUXTLA II Agreement signed by the Presidents of the Central American countries and Mexico. The L AFC should serve as a policy advisory body to governments.

The L AFC has an important role to play in guiding and coordinating the region's forestry sector. It should function as the coordinator of regional actions and have the acknowledged authority to recommend forestry policies in support of the national forest services.

In view of the Central American experience with the CCAB-AP, the role of the L AFC should be to:

- Function as a results-oriented body, recommending and following up forest policies for consideration at the highest national level in support of national forest services.
- Promote the involvement of civil society and its attendant regulatory framework.
- See that national and regional projects implemented through FAO correspond to L AFC recommendations and the criteria of integrated regional and subregional actions, in conjunction with the CCAB-AP.

NFAP

The NFAP in the subregion should be reviewed with FAO assistance and governments should be urged to revitalize the process and align it with the developments and specifics of each country, subregion or region.

The regional NFAP project endorsed by the countries and approved by FAO should establish mechanisms to define a strategy that will enable the project to function in tandem with activities of existing regional bodies. Its immediate implementation is recommended.

The NFAP process should continue to promote the participation of civil society and should monitor commitments undertaken at country or subregional level. The NFAP is an important mechanism for the attainment of L AFC objectives.

REPORT OF THE SOUTHERN CONE GROUP

Participants: Delegates of Brazil, Chile and Uruguay.

Identification of priority areas

1. Advance towards sustainable forest management

The Southern Cone countries have given the forestry sector an important productive and economic role. Production is oriented mainly towards the international market where entry and retention are dependent on achieving forest sustainability. This calls for the successful management and stewardship of natural forests and plantations.

Criteria and indicators - markets and trade - plantations and deforestation - protection (pests and fire).

2. Consolidation of systems to protect and conserve renewable natural resources.

Alongside their focus on sustainability, countries should guarantee society at large that they will safeguard biodiversity by consolidating protected wildlife areas. Mechanisms and instruments are also needed for the sustainable use of renewable natural resources outside such protected areas.

Development of protected wildlife areas - inclusion of new ecosystems - development of programmes for the sustainable management of renewable natural resources.

3. Forestry policy

Forestry policy components need to reflect the above priorities. Forest-related laws, rules and regulations will have to be revised and updated so that the proposed objectives can be achieved. Similarly the institutional framework will have to be improved and the structures and professional, technical, financial and material resources consolidated so that the new mandates can be executed. The institutional framework will need to be compositely consolidated so that both the public and the private forestry sector are included.

4. Status of the forestry sector.

The forestry sector should be given higher policy status and the Southern Cone region should draw up a common position vis-à-vis initiatives arising from the forest principles of the Rio Summit and other international fora. One urgent priority is to define of a common position in the MERCOSUR negotiations. A vital step would be for these groups to be formally institutionalized within the LAFC and for countries to ratify their commitment by signing a letter of agreement.

Policy status - Southern Cone proposal - letter of agreement.

5. Forestry planning and subregional forest development.

A common operational orientation needs to be determined for forestry planning and the formulation of a subregional forest development strategy. The operating mechanism will be based on existing project financial instruments and country contributions.

Forest planning - Southern Cone forest development strategy.

6. Participatory forest development.

Measures should be introduced to provide for participatory and socially equitable forest development. This means developing programmes that will also enable indigenous populations, peasant farmers and the rural community in general to enjoy the benefits of the forest sector.

Rural development.

7. Forest products and services.

The production of forest goods and services should be strengthened and alternatives to timber production should be pursued (ecotourism, leisure amenities, water harvesting, and the utilization of forest ecosystem wildlife).

Promote other forest goods and services.

LAFC

The Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission should be maintained given the present trend towards forming trade blocs and the globalization and internationalization of countries. The existence of a regional forestry bloc is both coherent and necessary in the new world order. At the same time, advances in communications are shortening distances and time, thus permitting ongoing, timely contact, communication and exchange of information and making it easier to get results.

From the forestry perspective, Latin America and the Caribbean is the forest region *par excellence* of the world today and particularly tomorrow. It accounts for over 50% of the world's tropical forests and has the largest stretches of industrial plantations that will help meet the future demand of the world's industrial sector. It is also important for biological diversity and the global atmospheric balance.

The role of the LAFC needs to be revised and consolidated with the existence of the subregional groups. The Commission needs to be given a new mandate and objectives, and its duties need to be defined so that these can be carried out.

A new flexible structure is needed so that the Commission can adapt to changing situations and interests and respond within an appropriate timeframe.

At present, the countries participate in this regional forum through their directors of forest services or of institutions responsible for administering the forest sector. The free access of observers should also be envisaged.

Civil society should be able to participate at national level, with the various sectors and operators involved in forestry voicing their demands, interests and ideas, which should be recorded and included in the national reports. The LAFC should not be converted into a loosely-structured forum as this would prevent it from functioning properly.