

conference

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ROME

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REPORT ON THE TENTH WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS

INTRODUCTION

1. Following its review of action arising from the ninth World Forestry Congress held in Mexico, the FAO Council at its Eighty-eighth Session took note of several offers made to host the tenth World Forestry Congress and authorized the Director-General to initiate discussions with the countries concerned.¹ At its Ninety-fifth Session, the Council accepted the invitation of France to host the Congress.² The host country took immediate steps to prepare for the event and proceeded to convene the tenth World Forestry Congress in Paris from 17 to 26 September 1991. FAO collaborated actively by providing technical support through an associate secretariat during the whole preparation period and at the session itself.

2. This note summarizes the outcome of the Congress and its implications for FAO.

THE CONGRESS

Attendance, organization and theme

3. The Congress was inaugurated by Mr François Mitterand, President of the Republic of France, in the presence of Mr Louis Mermaz, France's Minister of Agriculture and Forests, Mr Jacques Delors, President of the European Economic Commission, and Mr Edouard Saouma, Director-General of FAO, all of whom delivered keynote addresses.

4. The Congress was attended by some 2 700 participants, including 30 ministers and 12 vice-ministers, from 136 countries; 14 intergovernmental and 7 non-governmental organizations were also represented.

5. In addition to the main meetings of the Congress, there were 14 satellite meetings including those on the Tropical Forests Action Programme (TFAP), Legal and Institutional Aspects of Social Forestry (FAO); forestry research (FAO/IUFRO); and the fifteenth session of the FAO

¹ CL 88/REP, para. 72.

² CL 95/REP para. 154.

Advisory Committee on Forestry Education. Briefing sessions were also held on programmes of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and on preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). A forestry exhibition was mounted with displays by 24 countries and intergovernmental organizations including FAO; an "international day of forestry films" was organized which featured films relating to forest conservation and development from all over the world. Study tours of professional interest were also organized to various regions in France.

6. Congress deliberations revolved around the general theme: **Forests, a Heritage for the Future**. The Congress programme reflected proposals made by a wide cross-section of international foresters and covered some 100 topics organized according to 25 themes and the following six discussion areas: (a) the forest, a protective heritage; (b) conservation and protection of the forest heritage; (c) trees and forests in land management of rural and urban areas; (d) management of the forest heritage; (e) the forest heritage, an economic resource; and (f) policy and institutions.

7. This range of topics enabled the Congress to address the major challenges facing forestry today and in particular the role of forests in the environment; the need to ensure conservation of forests while maintaining or enhancing their contribution to development; international cooperation to tackle issues such as deforestation, forest degradation, desertification, management of watersheds, resource monitoring, financing and research, the magnitude or transboundary nature of which require collaborative action.

Documentation

8. The Congress commissioned 129 invited papers from reputed experts in the various themes and sub-themes of its agenda, and received about 800 voluntary contributions from all parts of the world. In addition, some 100 national reports were produced which provided the basis for 6 regional reports. These geographical syntheses, together with the invited papers and some 200 selected voluntary papers were published in 8 volumes as the first part of the Congress proceedings, and were distributed to participants on registration. The timeliness of these documents was a "première" in the history of the World Forestry Congresses and was highly commended by the Congress. The final volume of the proceedings is currently being prepared and will record the Congress' discussions, conclusions, recommendations and the "Paris Declaration".

Discussion and conclusions

9. The Congress discussed the main issues confronting forestry world-wide: deforestation, degradation and desertification and their main causes; the interaction of forests with the environment with particular emphasis on the greenhouse effect and pollution; and the promotion of balance between forest conservation and development. The Congress underlined the need for increased international solidarity, cooperation and harmonization of action to assist developing countries in managing their forests.

10. The Congress made a series of detailed conclusions and recommendations presented by chapters according to the structure of the sessions. These complement the final Paris Declaration, which is attached as Appendix A.

THE PARIS DECLARATION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FAO

11. In the Paris Declaration, the Congress summarizes its conclusions and recommendations and makes a solemn appeal to decision-makers to take actions which are all in line with the decisions and declarations of FAO's own governing bodies. The attention of the Conference is particularly drawn to the appeal to decision-makers to commit themselves to the greening of the world through afforestation, reforestation and sustainable resources management; to control threats to forests, including pollutants; to increase funding for forestry, particularly for developing countries; to promote the utilization of forest products and the harmonious development of international trade in them in line with the GATT; and to promote and strengthen international cooperation, particularly in the context of the Tropical Forests Action Programme (TFAP), the Mediterranean Forestry Action Plan and other global and regional programmes.

12. The Congress also underlined the need for continuing the assessment of forest resources, for cooperation in research, and for promotion of public awareness on forestry issues. It strongly recommended that its conclusions and recommendations be taken into consideration in the preparatory process of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) to be held in Brazil in 1992. The Congress called for deliberate action to implement its recommendations so as to safeguard the world's forest heritage.

13. The Conference is invited to note that the Congress gave specific recognition to FAO's work in the field of global forest resources assessment and that the Organization is invited to monitor follow-up action and to inform other intergovernmental bodies and the eleventh World Forestry Congress thereon.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ELEVENTH WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS

14. During the closing session of the Congress, Chile, Senegal and Turkey offered to host the eleventh World Forestry Congress. Other countries may also, at a later date, wish to offer to host the Congress. In line with established practice, FAO would in due time consult all candidate countries and the Council will eventually decide on the venue of the next Congress to be held in 1997.

APPENDIX A

THE PARIS DECLARATION

THE TENTH WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS

Having assembled more than 2 500 participants from 136 countries from 17 to 26 September 1991;

CONSIDERING the theme of the eighth World Forestry Congress, held in Jakarta in 1978, "Forests for People";

CONSIDERING the theme of the ninth World Forestry Congress, held in Mexico City in 1985, "Forest Resources in the Integral Development of Society", and its manifesto which appealed to "all human beings of all nations and their governments, within the framework of their own sovereignty, to recognize the importance of forest resources for the biosphere and the survival of humanity";

CONSIDERING the International Conference "SILVA", held in 1986, which concluded with the "Proclamation of Paris on Trees and Forests";

CONSIDERING its own general theme "Forests, a Heritage for the Future" and the detailed conclusions and recommendations that it has adopted on all the themes discussed;

CONSIDERING the general concern about deforestation and degradation of the world's forests caused by competition for space, inadequate management and the emission of pollutants generated by human activities, all factors which have resulted in the depletion of the forest heritage to a degree of irreversibility varying with regions and eras;

CONSIDERING that the causes of deforestation in developing countries, much more than forest utilization, are poverty, debt, underdevelopment, and the need to meet the basic requirements of rapidly growing populations;

CONSIDERING that forest resources are an important factor of socio-economic development, and especially of rural development;

CONSIDERING the responsibility of our generation to future generations for the world's natural heritage;

ADDRESSES the public, political leaders, international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations of the world,

RECALLS

the importance of the renewable goods and services provided by trees and forests, in the face of growing demand for building materials, fuel, wildlife, food, fodder, recreation areas;

the wealth and diversity of world forests and their positive role in water and carbon cycles, in the protection of soils and the conservation of biodiversity;

the availability, often ignored, of methods of management of trees and forests which can sustain and even increase the amount of goods and services they provide;

the need to avoid irreversible damage to the biosphere, and thus the need for long-term planning in the management of natural resources;

AFFIRMS

that the real challenge is to reconcile the economic use of natural resources with the protection of the environment through an integrated and sustainable development approach;

that the solution to forest problems requires combined efforts to reduce poverty, increase agricultural productivity, ensure food security and energy supplies, and promote development;

that the very concept of forest management constitutes a real tool to manage their economic, ecological, social and cultural functions, thus broadening the notion of sustained yield;

that the integral conservation of particular forests for the protection of biodiversity constitutes a management objective;

AND RECOMMENDS

that communities be involved in the integrated management of their land and that they be provided with the necessary institutional, technical and financial means;

that the long-term use of lands be planned on the basis of their potentialities to determine those which are suitable for forestry; and, in so doing, that attention be paid to the needs of people concerned, particularly those who depend on forests for their livelihood;

that the continuity of tree and forest management policies be ensured, given the length of forest cycles;

that the designation of certain representative or endangered forests as protected areas be pursued and that they be organized in national or international networks;

that appropriate silvicultural techniques, increased planting and the perennial use of wood be developed to contribute to the absorption of carbon dioxide;

that development of agroforestry systems, afforestation and reforestation be intensified.

THE TENTH WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS

Aware of the gravity, the urgency, and the universality of developmental and environmental problems, but emphasizing the renewable nature of forest resources, and convinced of the soundness of solutions afforded by sustainable management of the world's forests, within the framework of national forestry policies,

SOLEMNLY CALLS UPON DECISION-MAKERS TO

COMMIT themselves to the greening of the world through afforestation, reforestation and sustainable management of the multiple functions of trees and forests in the form of integrated programmes, involving the participation of people concerned, in accordance with national land use planning policies;

REGULARLY ASSESS developments in the forest heritage at national and international levels, drawing on the "1990 World Forest Resources Assessment" carried out by FAO;

LIMIT all emissions of pollutants that damage forests, and CONTAIN emissions of greenhouse gases, including those produced by power generation;

ADAPT economic and financial mechanisms to the long-term requirements of forest management, and INCREASE national and international funding, particularly for developing countries;

WORK towards the harmonious development of international trade in forest products through the prohibition of any unilateral restriction not in conformity with GATT; and PROMOTE the utilization of forest products;

DEVELOP cooperation at the political level on forest issues of regional importance, such as desertification control, forest protection, management of major watersheds, etc;

STRENGTHEN and COORDINATE research and experimentation, training, exchange of information and cooperation in all disciplines related to sustainable management of forest ecosystems;

STRENGTHEN activities of, and coordination among, the relevant international organizations;

INTEGRATE its conclusions and recommendations into the process of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in order to define "A non-legally binding authoritative statement of principles for a global consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests"; and into the current negotiations on biodiversity and climate change being conducted under the auspices of the United Nations;

STRENGTHEN international cooperation, particularly in the framework of the Tropical Forests Action Programme (TFAP), of a Mediterranean Forestry Action Plan and of other future programmes;

RAISE the awareness of and INFORM the public, particularly the young generation, on forest issues so they will be better appreciated by all;

DEVISE ways of following up its recommendations and INVITE FAO to inform intergovernmental bodies and the eleventh World Forestry Congress thereon.