

December 2006



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
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Organisation  
des  
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pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
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## COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

### EIGHTEENTH SESSION

Rome, Italy, 13-16 March 2007

#### MATTERS DISCUSSED BY FAO GOVERNING BODIES AT SESSIONS HELD IN 2005 AND 2006 OF INTEREST TO THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

### FAO Conference

#### 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the FAO Conference (November 2005)

1. The Conference approved several proposals by the Director-General for the reform of FAO, including a new programme structure (discussed in COFO document COFO 2007/10.2) and the establishment of new FAO sub-regional offices in Africa and Central Asia. As a result of the Conference decisions, Forestry Officer posts were established in Kazakhstan (Central Asia), Ethiopia (East Africa) and Libreville (Central Africa).

### FAO Council

#### 128<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Council (June 2005)

2. The Council endorsed the Statement of the Ministerial Meeting on Forests that called on FAO to develop a strategy for international cooperation on wildland fire; assist countries to improve domestic forest law enforcement and governance and, to this end, promote international cooperation to support international trade in timber and forest products from legally-harvested and sustainably-managed forests; expand capacity-building for sustainable forest management; and play a central role in the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF). The Council endorsed the Report of the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of COFO.

3. The Council requested FAO to strengthen the Regional Forestry Commissions in order to boost national implementation of sustainable forest management through action-oriented dialogue

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and regional cooperation, as well as the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF), the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) programme of work on forest biological diversity.

4. The Council requested FAO to continue its leadership role in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), and to strengthen its activities in the areas of monitoring, assessment and reporting on forests at the national, regional and international levels.
5. The Council expressed its satisfaction with the cooperation between FAO and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Steering Committee with regard to including forestry within the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme of NEPAD.
6. The Council requested FAO to initiate the development of Voluntary Guidelines on Wildland Fire Management; and to increase its contribution to country efforts in forest rehabilitation and landscape restoration, including in low-forest cover countries and in areas affected by the Tsunami in December 2004.
7. The Council requested FAO to enhance the contribution of sustainable forest management in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in alleviating poverty, and endorsed FAO's work to support national capacities to sustainably manage forests, including through the National Forest Programme Facility.
8. The Council noted with concern that resources allocated for forests appeared to be insufficient to cover new priority areas and emerging issues identified by the Committee, especially those related to the role of forests in fighting poverty.
9. The Council accepted the offer of Argentina to host the Thirteenth World Forestry Congress in 2009, noting that the Congress was a partnership between FAO and the Host Country, with financial support provided by the Host Country.

### **131<sup>st</sup> Session of the FAO Council (November 2006)**

10. The Council received clarification on the initiation of consultative multi-stakeholder processes to develop voluntary guidelines for planted forests and for fire management. The Secretariat stressed the voluntary nature of these guidelines. Some Members indicated that FAO had not been given a mandate to develop legally-binding instruments in these areas. It was explained that this work had been initiated at the request of countries and stakeholders in several of the Organization's technical committees. It was noted that this work was ongoing and would be brought to the attention of the 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Committee on Forestry in March 2007.
11. The Council recommended that FAO, as the Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), work in close collaboration with the United Nations Forum on Forests and other members of the CPF for the International Year of Forests (2011), within its mandate and in accordance with the decision that the Sixty-first Session of the United Nations General Assembly was expected to take on the matter. In that respect, the Council invited the FAO Secretariat to start planning the activities for the International Year, and to report to the Council and Conference, in due time, on its programme of implementation. The Secretariat indicated that the implementation of the International Year of Forests would need to be carried out largely through extra-budgetary resources.

## **FAO Regional Conferences**

### **24<sup>th</sup> FAO Regional Conference for Africa (January – February 2006)**

12. The Conference addressed the issue of fire in the agriculture – forestry interface in Africa. The negative impacts of fires in rural areas were stressed, noting that they often resulted in the destruction of trees, crops, pastures, livestock and wildlife. The Conference recommended that FAO develop guidelines and provide training to rural people in fire prevention and control. The Conference recommended that FAO and relevant partners should take steps to improve the understanding of the relationship between fire, carbon emissions and climate change. The Conference recommended the establishment of networks and working groups on fire in sub-Saharan Africa, and recommended FAO to facilitate the dissemination of information about successful national initiatives to other countries in the region.

### **28<sup>th</sup> FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (May 2006)**

13. The Conference addressed the role of bioenergy as a development option for agriculture and forestry in Asia and the Pacific. The Conference noted potential benefits from bioenergy, including clean and safe energy; potential cost savings; reduced dependence on fossil fuels; enhanced energy security; new markets for agricultural and forestry products; reduced greenhouse gas emissions; enhanced environmental conditions; and rehabilitation of degraded lands. The Conference recognized the risks associated with bioenergy production, including potential trade-offs between energy production and food production; increased competition for land and water; higher food prices; dominance of large producers to the detriment of small farmers; expansion of bioenergy production at the expense of native forests; and negative impacts of intensive biomass energy production on biodiversity. The Conference requested FAO to continue monitoring emerging issues, including the challenges for agriculture and rural development. It urged FAO to conduct studies and advise on the financial and economic viability of bioenergy development and the possible impacts on the prices and availability of food as a result of expanding bioenergy production.