



FAO FORESTRY

African Forestry and Wildlife Commission and associated meetings

FAO believes that regional approaches are often the best way to address forest issues. In this spirit, FAO brings its member countries together at Regional Forestry Commission meetings every two years to discuss common forest problems and policy issues, seek solutions and learn from each other's experiences. The regional commissions elevate those issues that have global importance to the Committee on Forestry, FAO's global forum for forest issues.

The fourteenth session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC) highlighted the position of AFWC as a unique regional forum and emphasized its role in fostering African contributions to international forestry processes. Delegates from 29 member and observer countries met in Accra, Ghana, from 18 to 21 February 2004. Also in attendance were representatives from four UN agencies and 22 international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

The extensive plenary discussions were complemented by side and satellite meetings to promote informal exchanges; these addressed, among others, forestry research and training in Africa; a platform strategy for FAO support to Congo Basin forests; and trade issues facing Africa's forest sector, including the need to promote intraregional trade.

An in-session seminar covered two forestry-related initiatives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD): the Environmental Action Plan and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). Participants expressed concern at the low priority initially accorded to forestry in CAADP.

In addition, two pre-session meetings were also held in Accra, on wildlife and protected area management and on the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) – see below.

The Commission discussed ways to enhance regional and subregional cooperation in forestry, stressing the potential of a greater role for regional and subregional organizations and the need to find innovative sources of funding for cooperative activities. The importance of bilateral, regional and global agreements on forest fires was especially stressed. Also highlighted was the need for FAO and other partner organizations to support the economic valuation of damage caused by forest fires and to raise political commitment and awareness of the need to combat them.

The Commission acknowledged the beneficial trends of decentralization, community participation and informal production and trade, and recommended that countries implement appropriate policies and actions to revitalize forest administrations so that they can deliver their crucial supervisory and regulatory functions.

The following were among the other main issues discussed:

- the importance of monitoring progress in sustainable forest management (including the implementation of criteria and indicators);
- the need to develop methodologies for the valuation of the economic and environmental services of forests to demonstrate the economic relevance of forestry in Africa and strengthen the political priority given to it;
- the role of forestry and forest resources in low forest cover countries (LFCCs) in Africa, most of which are also low-income and food-deficit countries;
- the need to strengthen the role of women in forestry in the region;
- the role, potential and constraints of plantation forestry, particularly in reference to water resources;

The Commission requested FAO's continued support to activities related to wood energy and research.

The fifteenth session of AFWC will be held in Mozambique in 2006.

Working Party on the Management of Wildlife and Protected Areas

Wildlife and protected areas are under considerable pressure in much of Africa. At the fifteenth session of AFWC's Working Party on the Management of Wildlife and Protected Areas, held from 16 to





18 February 2004, delegates from 16 countries and four non-governmental organizations (NGOs) reviewed current issues and how to respond to them.

Common issues emerging from country reports to the session included:

- the weakness of law enforcement;
- the need for policy, legal and institutional reforms (already ongoing in some countries);
- lack of adequate institutional arrangements and financial resources to support the management of wildlife and protected areas;
- potential for involving the private sector in the management of wildlife resources and protected areas;
- need for intergovernmental cooperation regarding cross-boundary movement of wildlife.

Delegates highlighted the urgency of the bushmeat issue in West Africa and identified four critical elements of the problem: law enforcement, sustainability of the bushmeat trade, species survival and poverty. A number of practical actions were proposed, including efforts to improve statistics on the commercial bushmeat trade and to document the full supply chain.

The Working Party noted the viability of breeding wild animal species to replenish depleted populations of heavily hunted species.

FAO activities on wildlife and protected areas in Africa

- **The Central African World Heritage Forest Initiative, a partnership of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), FAO, NGOs and Central African governments to support protected area management and combat illegal hunting and unregulated bushmeat trade**
- **A Technical Cooperation Project in Ghana aimed at improving food security by resolving human-wildlife conflicts**
- **Assistance to the development of bushmeat action plans in Cameroon, the Congo and Gabon, with support from the FAO-Netherlands Partnership Programme (FNPP)**
- **Documentation of ecosystem services provided by the Mount Kenya forest ecosystem to surrounding farms, also supported by FNPP**
- **A project on captive breeding of mountain sheep in Morocco, with the ultimate aim of generating income from trophy hunting, funded by the Czech Republic**
- **A project on range management and sustainable use of biodiversity, funded by Italy**

It called on FAO to help countries develop networking on protected area issues. It drew attention to the magnitude and seriousness of human-wildlife conflicts and recommended that this issue should be the subject of the next in-session seminar.

Regional workshop on implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action

A regional workshop on strengthening country, subregional and regional action towards sustainable forest management in Africa, particularly through the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, was held from 16 to 18 February 2004. Organized by FAO and co-sponsored by the United States, the workshop was attended by experts from all subregions of Africa, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and representatives of other international, regional and subregional organizations, NGOs and the private sector.

The workshop specifically highlighted exchange of country experiences related to trade and sustainable forest management and the rehabilitation of degraded forest lands.

In regard to trade, participants recognized certification as a tool for promoting sustainable forest management and highlighted the need to strengthen mutual recognition among certification schemes. They stressed that good governance is essential to curbing illegal logging and associated trade and to attracting foreign investment. They recommended that countries should strengthen linkages between trade and forest policy, starting with increased collaboration among ministries and between the public and private sectors.

The participants noted that the rehabilitation of degraded forest lands is best promoted through national development strategies and action plans, national forest programmes and strategies of other sectors (e.g. water). They also encouraged more private-sector and community involvement and advised countries, in collaboration with international institutions, to establish national funds for rehabilitation, to be replenished partially from forestry revenues.

Participants noted the insufficiency of institutional capacity and financial resources for full implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action and the decisions of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). They stressed the need for information – especially printed information and information on potential funding sources.

Despite limited capacity, many countries are struggling to implement their commitments through their national forest programmes. To boost the implementation of the proposals for action, participants stressed the role of stronger subregional organizations. In addition, CPF members were urged to develop coordinated and simplified approaches for implementation.

The workshop also provided an opportunity for country and regional representatives to discuss how they might become better prepared to participate in the international forest dialogue, including



meetings of UNFF. They noted the lack of an effective African voice in negotiations, and recommended that AFWC, as a forum for regional forest policy dialogue, should facilitate the presentation of a common African position at UNFF-5.

Update on activities of the National Forest Programme Facility

Operational since June 2002, the National Forest Programme Facility is an innovative partnership between developing countries, leading international partners and FAO to facilitate the implementation of national forest programmes (nfps). It focuses especially on knowledge sharing and capacity development to ensure the informed participation of a broad range of stakeholders in the nfp process.

The Facility helps countries strengthen their national forest programmes to be better able to:

- integrate sustainable forest management into poverty reduction strategies and other intersectoral processes;
- build consensus on how to address forest issues at the national level;
- translate commitments made at the international level into national forest policy and planning.

The Facility is hosted by FAO and operates under the guidance of a Donor Support Group and a Steering Committee which includes representatives of funding partners, beneficiary countries, the World Bank, research institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), foundations, the private sector and FAO.

Country support

Facility funding – which is only available to developing countries – is intended to support workshops, fora and in-service training; policy analysis and specific studies; and information and knowledge management initiatives.

To participate, a country enters into a Partnership Agreement with the Facility; this agreement defines the framework for the proposed activities and the main stakeholders. Countries must also submit an indicative three-year budget and specify how Facility support will be managed and monitored. Country eligibility, priority and funding are determined by the Facility Steering Committee based on factors such as the national importance of the forestry sector, the degree of commitment to the national forest programme process, the clarity of the strategy, the expected impact of the activities supported, and the integration of national forest programmes into poverty reduction strategies.

Countries that have established a Partnership Agreement select a national nfp Focal Point, who publishes a national Call for Proposals to stimulate grant applications from a wide range of stakeholders.

Interested stakeholders may include national and local government agencies, other institutions, NGOs, community-based organizations and non-profit civil society actors. The Steering Committee evaluates the grant applications against predefined criteria (specified in the Call for Proposals).

The Facility is currently supporting activities in 36 countries – 20 in Africa, eight in Asia and the Pacific, and eight in Latin America and the Caribbean – as well as supporting two subregional organizations in Central America. The following are the main areas of activity that the Facility is supporting:

- intersectoral coordination;
- integration of nfps into broader strategies;
- community empowerment for forest management;
- strengthening private-sector and civil-society involvement in the forest sector;
- policy reforms and institutional strengthening;
- financing mechanisms and forestry fiscal policy;
- raising public awareness and consensus building;
- developing new systems for information collection, management and sharing.

Information services

In addition to direct country support, the Facility is developing services to facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge relevant to national forest programme processes worldwide.

The National Forest Programme Facility Web site (www.fao.org/forestry/nfp-facility) synthesizes information on how to design and implement national forest programmes and on the support available from the international community.

The *nfp Update* Web site (www.fao.org/forestry/nfp-update) provides country profiles outlining the organization, content and status of strategic planning processes in forestry around the world. The site currently includes 13 profiles; the target is 130 countries by late summer 2004.

Nfp Digests (www.fao.org/forestry/nfp-digests) compile online documents from various international organizations on specific topics related to national forest programmes – to date, forests and poverty, stakeholder participation, strategic planning, cross-sectoral planning and forest finance.

The Facility is supporting the development of the Sourcebook on Funding for Sustainable Forest Management (www.fao.org/forestry/cpf-sourcebook), an initiative of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), to help users efficiently locate global funding sources for sustainable forest management projects.

The Facility also funds the Community of Practice on Enhancing Stakeholder Participation in national forest programmes (www.fao.org/forestry/site/14690/en).



Forestry Outlook Study for West and Central Asia under way

Effective forestry planning requires not only attention to prevailing issues, but also a long-term vision for the sector. To contribute to the development of such a long-term perspective, FAO has recently launched the fifth in its series of regional forestry outlook studies, carried out in collaboration with member countries to examine the direction of forestry development in the context of economic, social, institutional and technological changes.

The Forestry Outlook Study for West and Central Asia (FOWECA) aims to identify future options for forestry sector development in West and Central Asia to the year 2020. The study will cover 23 West and Central Asian countries: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Georgia, Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Yemen.

The study will analyse the trends and driving forces that will shape the sector during the next two decades and identify policies, programmes and investment options that can enhance the sector's contribution to sustainable development. FOWECA is designed to complement other forest-related strategic planning initiatives, including national forest programmes.

FOWECA will be spearheaded from the FAO Regional Office for the Near East in Cairo, Egypt, and the FAO Subregional Office for Central and Eastern Europe in Budapest, Hungary. It will rely on national and regional expertise in West and Central Asia, complemented by information from other sources. The approach is two-pronged. At the national level, a country focal point, with FAO support, will coordinate the preparation of a country forestry outlook paper focusing on likely changes in the sector. This effort will involve key stakeholders such as government, the private sector and civil society. At the regional and subregional levels, FAO, with country support, will coordinate seminars and workshops to identify and discuss key issues.

In addition to country, subregional and regional outlook reports, FOWECA will also produce thematic papers providing in-depth assessments of emerging issues, trends, opportunities and challenges in the region.

The study will help meet future challenges in forestry by providing long-term perspectives for national forest programmes; improving country capacities in strategic planning; and promoting regional collaboration and networking among people and institutions responsible for natural resources management.

FOWECA is proposed as a participatory initiative, and national, subregional and regional organizations active in natural resources management and utilization in the region are welcome to take part in the study. Partnership is particularly being sought with academic

institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

FAO has already completed outlook studies for Asia and the Pacific (1998) and Africa (2003). Studies for Europe and Latin America are currently nearing completion.

For more information on the Forestry Outlook Study for West and Central Asia, please contact:

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