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COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

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FORESTS, TREES AND PEOPLE TOGETHER IN A LIVING LANDSCAPE: A KEY TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

I. From a sectoral to a more integrated approach

1. Challenges related to food security, poverty, climate change, deforestation, ecosystem degradation and biodioversity loss call for integrated moves beyond single-track solutions that aim to solve one problem, but often exacerbate another. Integrated approaches to landscape management can increase synergies among multiple land use objectives and may require new policies, investments, market incentives, institutions and capacities to be introduced or implemented. The role of forests and trees[1], and the goods and services they provide, are better understood by all stakeholders, viewed from a broader perspective encompassing forests and forestry along with agricultural productivity, soil protection, water supply and distribution, biodiversity conservation, and others.

2. Tackling these challenges through an integrated approach that considers and involves the perspectives, needs and interests of all stakeholders including local communities and individual land users is an indispensable element in developing sustainable land use and livelihood strategies in rural areas. An integrated landscape approach should also link rural and urban environments, in response to the overall needs of society, given that more than 50 percent of the world population is living today in urban areas.

3. There is a general recognition that forests and trees are part of a broader landscape and contribute to the stability and vitality of the ecosystems and their ability to support societal needs in a sustainable manner. In practice, however, their management is often dealt with in relative isolation. This is at least partially due to the institutional structure and the lack of capacity of these institutions to cooperate closely in land use planning and management. At worst they might even act in a competitive manner or with incompatible objectives. There is a clear need – and real scope – for institutions dealing with ecosystem and land use issues to integrate the management of natural resources (in particular forests, trees, soil and water) through improved, multi-sectoral land use

[1] The term "trees" refer to other tree systems that are not classified as forests; commonly referred to the concept of "trees outside forests", and may be located in rural and urban environments. They comprise mainly agroforestry systems (sometimes referred to as "trees on farms" and "agro-silvo-pastoral systems"), trees in human settlements and cities, tree lines along water bodies, etc.

planning and management policies and approaches. Additionally, there is a need to clarify and enforce property and access rights if the concept of integrated, functional landscapes is to become a reality.

II. The potential to restore degraded lands

4. Recent estimates suggest that between 800 million and 2 billion hectares of the world's degraded forest lands offer opportunities for restoration. In September 2011, the "Bonn Challenge" was launched at a ministerial meeting that targeted the restoration of 150 million hectares of lost forests and degraded lands by 2020 – which would have significant value to national and global economies in terms of stored carbon, wood and non-wood forest products, and nature conservation. As high potential land becomes more and more scarce due to increasing competition from different land uses, and demand grows for food, wood, energy and other goods and services as the world's population and consumption increases; restoring degraded land to productive purposes becomes a priority. Experience has shown that restoration of degraded lands is best done by applying a landscape approach.

III. Growing support for a landscape approach

5. Political support for and the importance of cross-sectoral approaches at the landscape level is growing, as witnessed by the high level event "The Landscape: Transformative action through cross-cutting coordination", organized by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests at Rio+20. Institutions, networks and partnerships have emerged in recent years aiming to improve rural livelihoods, land use planning and management by adopting integrated approaches to land use. Examples include:

- The Global Partnership on Forest and Landscape Restoration (GPFLR[2]), that aims to catalyze support for the restoration of forests and degraded lands to ensure that forests, trees and the functions that they provide are effectively restored, conserved and employed to help secure sustainable livelihoods and ecological integrity for the future.
- The International Model Forest Network (IMFN[3]), which supports the establishment of Model Forests, based on an approach that combines the social, cultural and economic needs of local communities with the long-term sustainability of large landscapes in which forests are an important component. By design they are voluntary, broad-based initiatives linking forestry, research, agriculture, mining, recreation, and other values and interests within a given landscape
- The Landscapes for People, Food and Nature Initiative[4], a collaborative three-year process of research, discussion, knowledge-sharing and advocacy that aims to develop action agendas for policy, investment, capacity building and research and to support their implementation through action and advocacy within UN conventions and key regional platforms.

IV. A landscape approach at FAO

6. FAO is currently undergoing a process of redefining its strategic framework, which aims to fulfill the Organization's mandate through a more cross-cutting and inter-disciplinary approach. In this new framework, FAO's forestry-related work can have greater overall impact through an integrated approach that looks at the broader landscape in which trees and forests are considered along with the other components and types of land use systems. The new strategic framework will provide an opportunity to not only enhance the productive and protective roles played by forests and trees –

[2] www.ideastransformlandscapes.org
[3] www.imfn.net
[4] www.landscapes.ecoagriculture.org

the traditional focus of forestry work – but also to allow a greater emphasis on the importance of forests and trees to nutrition, food security and poverty alleviation. The direct and indirect contributions of forestry to these major goals of FAO have not yet been sufficiently valued and visualized. Greater emphasis on a landscape approach in which key areas of the Forestry Department's work are fully promoted, linked with and integrated into the Organization's work related to food security and nutrition could significantly increase the overall impact of FAO's work.

7. FAO has already achieved some significant results in recent years through the development, promotion and extension of landscape approaches in agriculture, forestry, livestock and natural resources management.

8. Watershed management has been successfully used to restore and maintain the agro-ecological viability and production potential of various watersheds throughout the world, using land use management techniques that integrate across sectors and also address socio-economic concerns of local populations. Decades of strong technical support have led to increased awareness by decision makers of the importance of supporting watershed management programmes and projects. FAO has embarked on field-testing and implementing the recommendations from a recently completed FAO-led global review of watershed management experiences. Watershed management is also increasingly recognized as a very appropriate approach in disaster risk management, particularly related to landslides, avalanches and floods.

9. Fire management is another example of a technical area of expertise within FAO that has recently undergone a transition away from a sector approach to a broader landscape approach, in which agriculture, forestry and rangeland concerns are considered simultaneously in order to better identify the causes and ultimately prevent destructive vegetative fires that often cross the boundaries of different land use systems. An integrated approach of fire management supports building higher resilience and adaptive capacity of communities and ecosystems to the effects of vegetation fires.

10. FAO's work in agroforestry holds large potential to achieving more effective integration of forests and trees into other agricultural systems. Agroforestry systems have been successfully implemented at the farm level, with win-win gains to both tree production and cropping and/or livestock systems, through a combined agro-silvo-pastoral approach. Additionally, agroforestry has demonstrated cases of being effective at the commercial and industrial levels to increase and diversify overall production of wood and non-wood components of the rural production system, while bringing added environmental benefits and enhancing ecosystem viability and resilience. FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment currently includes the assessment of trees outside forests with a view to improve policies and institutions to promote and support the active management of agroforestry systems by farmers and pastoralists around the world.

11. A landscape approach has also been successfully utilized by FAO concerning forestry production, where both natural and planted forest management and restoration are carried out with a view towards their impact upon the broader landscape.

12. The various departments of FAO are working to promote the concept and practices of climate smart agriculture (CSA) -- policies and practices in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries that simultaneously contribute to food security, climate change adaptation and mitigation. FAO promotes a landscape approach to support CSA, in which synergies between land uses in mixed landscapes are captured and trade-offs are minimized. CSA also supports wider use of integrated systems, including agroforestry, to increase resilience and reduce vulnerability to negative climate change impacts. For example, trees integrated into farming systems can help protect against increased wind and water erosion and other forces brought by climate change and help reduce economic risks posed by climate change by diversifying income sources. FAO highlighted the effectiveness of the landscape approach in addressing the challenges of climate change to the agricultural sectors (agriculture, forestry and fisheries) in the Hague Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change (November 2010) and the follow-up, Second Global Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change (Hanoi, September 2012).

V. Main points for consideration by COFO

13. The Committee may wish to invite countries to:

- Consider the added value of addressing agriculture, forestry, fisheries and livestock management through a more integrated landscape approach and by strengthening inter-sectoral cooperation amongst various land management agencies.
- Support actions towards the achievement of the Bonn challenge, targeting the restoration of at least 150 million hectares of degraded forest lands by 2020.

14. The Committee may wish to recommend FAO to:

- collect and document the use of landscape approaches and inter-sectoral coordination around the world and analyze their benefits and costs;
- seek further cooperation with partners to promote restoration and rehabilitation of degraded forest lands in a landscape approach. The Committee may wish to invite all partners, and in particular the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, to help enhance such cooperation;
- promote the sustainable management of forests and trees in a landscape approach and their integration into agriculture and other land use systems, where appropriate;
- engage in more cross-cutting and inter-departmental work to support landscape approaches to achieve greater food security, poverty alleviation, climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources;
- seek support for its field programme to enable FAO to increase its support to member countries for capacity development in inter-sectoral planning, institutional development and application of landscape approaches on the ground.