



## WORLD OF FORESTRY

### **The future of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management**

One of the most important international meetings of early 2003 was the International Conference on the Contribution of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management: the Way Forward (CICI-2003), held from 3 to 7 February 2003 in Guatemala City, Guatemala. The meeting was hosted by the National Forest Service of Guatemala (Instituto Nacional de Bosques, INAB), in cooperation with FAO, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the Governments of Finland and the United States. More than 100 participants attended, representing 73 countries, international organizations, criteria and indicator processes, the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Discussions at CICI-2003 were structured around four thematic areas:

- strengthening the elaboration and implementation of criteria and indicators;
- promoting political commitment for the use of criteria and indicators as tools for sustainable forest management;
- strengthening institutional capacity and stakeholder partnerships for implementing criteria and indicators, and facilitating the exchange of information among all stakeholders;
- contributing to the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and international initiatives on criteria and indicators.

CICI-2003 recognized the role of criteria and indicators in building a common understanding of sustainable forest management, coordinating data collection and dissemination, monitoring and assessing forest conditions, and influencing national policies and practices as well as international cooperation on forests. It also recognized that sustainability is a dynamic concept and that criteria and indicators will evolve to reflect experience gained, new scientific information and changing values of society.

The participants considered the potential benefits of a common set of criteria based on existing sets elaborated by regional and international processes. The meeting acknowledged seven common thematic areas: extent of forest resources; biological diversity; forest health and vitality; productive functions of forest resources; protective functions of forest resources; socio-economic functions; and legal, policy and institutional framework.

The meeting's conclusions and recommendations for "the way forward" included promotion of the following national and international actions, among others:

- integration of criteria and indicators into national forest programmes;
- enhanced political commitment to the development and implementation of criteria and indicators;

- promotion of participation of all stakeholders;
- keeping forestry education up to date;
- enhancing capacity for the implementation of criteria and indicators, especially in developing countries;
- adaptation of indicators to national- and subnational-level situations;
- research on criteria and indicators that are difficult to measure, including biodiversity, non-wood forest products, non-market values, soil and water conservation, carbon sequestration, and social and cultural aspects;
- incorporation of the main elements of criteria and indicators into national forest assessments and inventories, and improved cooperation among national and international organizations collecting forest data;
- consideration of the use of criteria and indicators to report progress on sustainable forest management to UNFF and to other initiatives;
- improved national and international coordination to help ensure that sustainable forest management contributes to and benefits from developments in other sectors, including sustainable development overall.

### **Fourth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe**

Ministers responsible for forests and high-level representatives of 40 European countries and the European Community attended the fourth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE-4) in Vienna, Austria, from 28 to 30 April 2003. Also attending were representatives of four observer countries and 22 international governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The conference, also called the "Vienna Living Forest Summit", provided an opportunity to discuss and take decisions on the future of the protection and sustainable management of forests in Europe.

Conference participants adopted the Vienna Living Forest Summit Declaration "European Forests – Common Benefits, Shared Responsibilities" as well as five resolutions for the region, relating to:

- strengthening synergies for sustainable forest management through cross-sectoral cooperation and national forest programmes;
- enhancing the economic viability of sustainable forest management;
- preserving and enhancing the social and cultural dimensions of sustainable forest management;
- conserving and enhancing forest biological diversity;
- climate change and sustainable forest management.



### **Resolution on enhancing economic viability of sustainable forest management**

In Vienna Resolution 2, the European Ministers noted that economic viability is a key pillar of sustainable forest management and is of crucial importance for maintaining forests and their multiple benefits for society, contributing to sustainable development and to human livelihoods, especially in rural areas. They acknowledged the economic challenges faced by the forest sector in many regions of Europe, and noted that sustainable forest management in Europe relies on millions of private owners, forest-related enterprises and public bodies as well as on a highly qualified workforce.

To improve the economic viability of sustainable forest management through income generated from marketable goods and services, as well as through revenues from currently non-marketed values, and to enhance the contribution of European forests and forestry to sustainable development and to human livelihoods, especially in rural areas, the Ministers committed to the following actions, among others:

- to “adjust policy and legal frameworks and instruments to support sound enabling conditions for sustainable forest management that encourage investment and economic activity in the forest sector”, including efforts to combat illegal harvesting and trade of forest products;
- to “promote the use of wood from sustainably managed forests ... and thereby contribute to sustainable production and consumption patterns”;
- to remove unintended impediments and set appropriate incentives to “improve enabling conditions for the market-based provision of a diversified range of non-wood goods and services from sustainably managed forests”;
- to seek common approaches for the practical valuation of the full range of goods and services provided by forests;
- to “enhance the competitiveness of the forest sector by promoting innovation and entrepreneurship among all relevant stakeholders”;
- to enhance collaboration of all sectors relevant to the economically viable management of forests;
- to promote the incorporation of the economic viability of sustainable forest management in rural development policies and strategies;
- to encourage voluntary cooperation of forest owners, especially smallholders, in developing opportunities for improving economic viability;
- to promote the development of associations of forest owners, forest workers and forest entrepreneurs, particularly in Central and Eastern European countries;
- to support improved research, education, training and

extension conducive to the sustainable and competitive development of the forest sector and to workforce safety.

### **Spotlight on water**

The relation between sustainable forest management and water resources conservation has been receiving increased attention at the international level. The importance of sustainable forest management in the provision of freshwater was reaffirmed at the second session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) in March 2002, and the watershed protection benefits of both natural and planted forests and trees were noted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in August-September 2002. Two recent meetings in Japan spotlighted water issues.

### **International Expert Meeting on Forests and Water**

The International Expert Meeting on Forests and Water was held from 20 to 22 November 2002 in Shiga, Japan. Hosted by the Forestry Agency of Japan and the Shiga Prefectural Government in collaboration with FAO, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Water Forum Secretariat, the meeting brought together experts from all over the world to discuss issues surrounding forests and water, including water resources conservation. The meeting aimed to contribute to the development of relevant policies and/or programmes at the local, national, regional and international levels.

The Shiga Declaration, adopted by the participants, summarizes the key issues and recommendations of the expert meeting. Key issues included:

- promoting the development and wider adoption of holistic approaches to forest and water management that integrate the needs of people and the environment;
- improving understanding of the biophysical interaction between forests and water;
- improving understanding of the cultural and socio-economic impacts of different forest and water policies and management practices;
- developing better mechanisms for managing upstream/downstream linkages and interactions;
- enhancing knowledge and information sharing.

### **Third World Water Forum and Ministerial Conference**

The World Water Council (WWC) is an international water policy think tank established in 1996 to respond to pressures on the earth's freshwater resources. The World Water Forum, created



by the WWC, meets every three years to raise the importance of water on the political agenda and deepen discussions towards the solution of international water issues in the twenty-first century.

Jointly organized by WWC and the Government of Japan, the Third World Water Forum took place from 16 to 23 March 2003 in Kyoto, Osaka and Shiga, Japan. Representatives from more than 170 countries as well as participants from UN agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, academia, business and industry, youth organizations and the media attended.

The conference adopted a Ministerial Declaration, confirming

long-term commitment to water issues and development. In two points referring directly to forests, the Ministers and Heads of Delegation declared that they would:

- “protect and use in a sustainable manner the ecosystems that naturally capture, filter, store, and release water, such as rivers, wetlands, forests, and soils” so as to ensure a sustainable water supply of good quality;
- “in view of the rapid degradation of watersheds and forests ... concentrate ... efforts to combat deforestation, desertification and land degradation through programs to promote greening, sustainable forest management, the restoration of degraded lands and wetlands, and the conservation of biodiversity.”

### **Economic aspects of forests highlighted at UNFF-3**

Economic aspects of forests was one of three major thematic areas discussed at the third session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), held from 26 May to 6 June 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland. Long debates on this topic addressed, among other issues:

- the less competitive nature of sustainable forest management in comparison with other land-use options;
- the observation that economics, not technology, is the main reason for the lack of progress in achieving sustainable forest management;
- potential mechanisms for capturing the value of environmental benefits from forests and the need to strengthen the economic valuation and pricing of environmental services;
- ways of adding value to forest products and services, noting the importance of traditional knowledge and benefit sharing;
- means of addressing trade barriers, market imperfections and weak governance;
- the need for higher rent capture in forest utilization and better appreciation of forests' contributions to economies.

UNFF urged countries to make efforts, *inter alia*:

- to integrate sustainable forest management into their overall national poverty reduction and development strategies, especially through national forest programmes;

- to enhance market access for forest products and services (while understanding the special needs of developing countries and countries with economies in transition) by removing tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in ways that simultaneously promote trade and sustainable forest management;
- to foster, particularly through national forest programmes, the empowerment of women, greater involvement of local and indigenous communities, broad-based participation, and clarification of ownership rights in conformity with national legislation.

In addition, UNFF invited the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) to address such areas as the full cost internalization of wood products and non-wood substitutes; the development of financial mechanisms to develop new markets for environmental services; and voluntary certification and related voluntary labelling.