



FAO FORESTRY

Regional commissions address illegal logging, forest fire management and integration of forestry in national development plans

Three FAO regional forestry commissions held their biennial meetings in October 2004 to review their policies and programmes and to draw up recommendations for consideration at the seventeenth FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) to be held in March 2005. The reports of the commissions can be found on the FAO Forestry Web site (www.fao.org/forestry).

European Forestry Commission

The FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC), together with the Timber Committee of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, met from 5 to 9 October in Geneva, Switzerland.

FAO presented the recently finalized outlook study for the forest sector in the region in the next two decades, which will assist countries in their formulation of long-term policies. The study forecasts a shift in wood production to the east, with countries in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States expected to have a greater role in European forest products markets. In reaction to the prediction that demand for a wide range of goods and services from the forest sector would increase, EFC emphasized the promotion of sound use of forest resources for sustainable development of the sector.

Countries discussed a number of strategies to improve the economic viability of forest management, including marketing and promotion of forest products, development of wood energy and greater coordination among all the different interests in the sector. In particular, countries recommended that the forest sector be more proactive in addressing cross-sectoral issues of concern to forestry. The commission also highlighted the urgency of addressing illegal logging and the trade of illegally derived forest products.

Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission

Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, which met from 18 to 22 October in San José, Costa Rica, recommended that COFO underscore the contribution of sustainable forest management to the Millennium Development Goals and called for greater integration of forestry policies into national development plans and poverty reduction strategies.

Participants noted the need for improved forestry information systems and recommended that FAO continue to provide support to countries in harmonizing data and sharing information. They also recommended that FAO follow up on trade agreements related to wood and non-wood forest products, criteria and indicators and certification, in view of their importance in the region.

The Latin American Forestry Sector Outlook Study, also finalized

in 2004, was presented, forecasting an expansion of forest plantations and protected areas but an overall decline in forest cover.

North American Forest Commission

The North American Forest Commission, which met from 25 to 28 October in Veracruz, Mexico, recommended that COFO examine the links between forests and development and the contribution of sustainable forest management to the Millennium Development Goals. Fire management was another major topic discussed at the meeting. Countries stressed the importance of integrating fire management into general land, resource and forest management plans and the need for community-based approaches in national forest fire management plans and strategies.

The commission also examined the role of certification in North American forests; regional initiatives to monitor and assess forest resources; and payment for environmental services as a mechanism to promote sustainable forest management.

Regional synergies developed in the Americas to manage wildland fires collectively

On 23 October 2004, the Pan-American Conference on Wildland Fire brought together 27 heads of national forest agencies in North, Central and South America and the Caribbean to seek collaboration and synergies between the regions.

The conference, held in San José, Costa Rica, was sponsored by the FAO Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC), the FAO North American Forest Commission (NAFC) and the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC), based in Germany. It was the first time that the two FAO commissions had held such a joint meeting.

Expressing concern over the increasing frequency and destructive force of undesired wildfires in the Americas, the conference adopted the San José Declaration on Pan-American Cooperation on Wildland Fire Management, recommending that governments and international and non-governmental organizations:

- establish national centres for monitoring wildland fires and develop and standardize fire statistics that include common criteria;
- implement national laws and policies that promote integrated approaches to fire management, develop long-term strategic approaches to fire and strengthen the capacities of organizations responsible for managing fire;
- develop standardized classifications for fire statistics;
- support agreements between institutions within countries, as well as between countries in each region, and between regions;



- implement community-based policies and approaches to fire management;
- establish bilateral and multilateral agreements on cooperation in integrated fire management and facilitate the exchange of technical and human resources.

Three regional forest fire networks set up earlier in 2004 in South and Central America and the Caribbean, together with the NAFC Fire Management Working Group which serves as a network for North America, will be instrumental in this process. The networks were established as part of the Global Wildland Fire Network created under the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR). They will facilitate the practical training of personnel, exchange of information and knowledge gained in preventing and combating forest fires in the region and the establishment of regional databases on forest fires.

Private forestry in Central and Eastern Europe – more benefits to society

Since the restructuring of the former planned economies in Central and Eastern Europe to market economies, many private forests have been restituted to private owners. As a result, millions of new forest owners manage about one-third of the forest area in these countries. Many of these owners lack the knowledge of forest management needed to manage their small forest holdings efficiently. They may be able to benefit from economies of scale by managing their forests jointly or through marketing organizations.

To assist the development of the private forestry sector in these countries, FAO, together with the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF) launched a joint initiative in 2002. Policy experts and representatives of private and State forestry sectors identified as priority issues: the participation of the private forestry sector in national policy formulation; the strengthening of the sector's institutions; and the improvement of management and marketing skills, among others.

To follow up on the initiative, representatives from 14 countries in the region gathered at a workshop in Zamardi, Hungary, in September 2004. They adopted a two-year action plan and a declaration aimed at strengthening the capacity and position of private forest owners in policy formulation at the national and European levels. The Zamardi Declaration recommends the following measures:

- respect for constitutionally recognized land property rights, including hunting rights, in European Union and national forest policies;
- support to private forestry in European Union policy;
- establishment of mechanisms to harmonize other sectoral

- policies affecting forest land use with forestry strategies at the European and national levels;
- establishment of extension services and departments within governments for private forest sector development;
- capacity building of the private forest sector;
- adoption of rural development policies and programmes that reflect the important role of forests and forestry;
- financial and fiscal measures to support sustainable forest management.

The action plan calls for the following activities at the national and often at the international level:

- improving the image and public acceptance of forest owners;
- raising awareness and sharing information;
- increasing knowledge and skills of forest stakeholders;
- building synergy among stakeholders;
- enabling the institutional framework to meet the needs of forest owners;
- empowering forest owners in decision-making.

The next joint workshop on assistance to private forest owners in the region will be held in autumn 2005 in Lithuania.

Small enterprises created to protect a World Heritage site in Uganda

When Bwindi National Park in Uganda was created in 1994, the people that previously depended on the area's forest resources for their livelihood no longer had access to them. Local communities relied on the forest for weaving material, medicinal plants, hunting, honey collection, fruit gathering and building poles. Deprived of the right to use these resources, communities came into conflict with park management.





From 2001 to 2004, FAO carried out a project on community-based commercial enterprise development to enable communities to earn cash income while conserving biodiversity in the park, which has been listed as a World Heritage site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The project, supported by the United Nations Foundation, used FAO's Market Analysis and Development tools to assist people in finding alternative livelihoods. Since the launching of the project, more than 300 small-scale natural resource-based enterprises have been set up around the park, with community members running them independently and earning income. Activities range from food production to guided tours.

One of the most successful activities is the Buhoma Village Walk, a guided tour of a number of natural and cultural sites, ranging from rural homesteads to the quarters of a local traditional medicinal healer. The number of visitors jumped from 94 in July 2003 to 148 in July 2004.

People who used to keep hives made from logs found in the park have now begun to make them from woven grasses gathered outside the park. Raw materials for traditional handicrafts are now mainly grown in home gardens, rather than harvested in the park. The cultivation and sale of oyster mushrooms by the communities has reduced their illegal collection in the park.

All these activities generate income and employment and at the same time provide incentive to conserve the park. Requiring less space than agriculture, they also have less impact on the land and make best use of existing local knowledge and resources.

The lessons learned from this project have been documented for sharing at other high-biodiversity sites.

Trends in forest extension communication

Extension in general and forestry extension in particular have been undergoing profound changes within the past few decades. Underlying orientations are changing from transfer of technology towards systems thinking and the facilitation of social and mutual learning among stakeholders. Extension has evolved to include multiple stakeholders in the development and delivery of educational programmes and technical assistance. Farmers and forest owners now often participate in research as well as in dissemination of the results. Communication among participants in extension is more important than ever.

To share experiences and ideas among extension practitioners and scientists, the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO) Extension Working Party initiated a Symposium on Communication Strategies for Multiple Partner Involvement in Forestry Extension. Held from 27 September to 1 October 2004 in Orvieto, Italy, the symposium was hosted by

the Italian National Research Council (CNR) and its Institute of Agro-Environmental and Forest Biology (Istituto di Biologia Agroambientale e Forestale, IBAF) with the close cooperation of FAO. Forty-two participants from 19 countries, comprising researchers, educators and practitioners in roughly equal proportions, addressed the following themes:

- learning processes and collective action in forestry extension;
- approaches, tools and methods of extension communication in forestry and agroforestry;
- information and organizational needs of small-scale forest landowners;
- balancing the public good and private interests in small-scale forestry.

The following are some of the conclusions reached.

- Conditions for learning include safe exchange of ideas, voluntary participation, a setting of knowledge exchange rather than knowledge transfer, awareness of needs and appropriate timing. Effective learning cannot take place if basic needs (food, water, shelter) have not been met.
- Strategies to support learning processes include organizational development (watershed councils, stewardship councils, etc.), policy development (incentives, tax reforms, etc.) and resource mobilization (community development grants, loan programmes, etc.).
- To maintain momentum, collective action needs to demonstrate measurable outcomes towards improved livelihoods; improved individual, family or community well-being; changes in knowledge, skills and behaviour; and continuing learning.
- Consideration must be given to the information needs of small forest owners (including information on policy issues, environmental issues and cross-boundary management) and the organization of information structures.
- Small forest owners need to see evidence of the benefits of associations that offer support in marketing, counselling and advocacy.
- Multiple partnerships, formal and informal networks and flexible cooperatives are all gaining credence for leverage in this sector.
- Changes in demographics, forest owner/user profiles and owners' and societies' priorities require adaptation.
- More cooperation among scientific institutions and field practitioners is needed to bridge the gap between research, service providers and end-users.
- The scope of forestry extension should be broadened to support multipurpose management and the range of stakeholders involved in a more complex information and organizational environment.



Integrated and participatory watershed management in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Since the mid-1990s, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has suffered from a vicious circle of extensive forest exploitation leading to soil erosion with negative impacts on agriculture and further forest exploitation to offset the reduced agricultural production.

Forests in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have been heavily exploited for fuelwood and forest products and for conversion to agricultural land, often on steep slopes and marginal lands. In total, about 450 000 ha of forest area in the country is considered as requiring reforestation and conservation measures and about one-quarter of the non-agricultural land on hills and mountains is now bare and vulnerable to soil erosion.

The country depends heavily on agriculture, which generally makes up 30 percent of its gross domestic product. Since 1994, however, upland and lowland soil erosion and sedimentation exacerbated by deforestation have compounded the effects of floods and droughts, repeatedly devastating the country's agricultural output. In 1995 and 1996, floods damaged 16 percent of the country's arable land.

In 2001, at the request of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, FAO initiated a watershed management project to reverse the degradation of upland resources. The project has collected data on the state of upland forest resources and degradation. Through activities in two pilot watersheds, the project has tested integrated watershed management approaches and technologies for demonstration and training, and has identified measures to conserve forest and other natural resources. In both pilot sites, an integrated watershed management plan was established through participatory approaches. Pilot interventions such as afforestation, agroforestry experiments, natural revegetation trials and pasture management interventions have been implemented. Nurseries damaged by floods in the 1990s have been rehabilitated and new ones established for afforestation and reforestation.

Capacity building on integrated and participatory watershed management approaches has been an important component of the project. The government is now applying lessons learned from the project in the development of a watershed management plan for the Taedong River, which flows through the capital, Pyongyang.