

	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	联合国 粮食及 农业组织	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture	Продовольственная и сельскохозяйственная организация Объединенных Наций	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura
ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY COMMISSION						
TENTH MEETING OF THE APFC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE						
Chiang Mai, Thailand, 21-22 October 2014						
REVIEW OF THE 25th SESSION OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY COMMISSION						

BACKGROUND

1. At the invitation of the Government of New Zealand, the 25th session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) was held 5-8 November 2013 in Rotorua, New Zealand. Delegates from 28 member countries and two United Nations organizations participated in the session, along with observers and representatives from 16 regional and international inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. All in, over 200 participants were present.
2. Eight pre-session workshops were held prior to the Session, organized by FAO and various partner organizations.
3. Delegates were welcomed by a traditional *Maori powhiri* conducted by the local Te Arawa iwi (Maori tribe). The opening ceremony featured addresses by the Associate Minister for Primary Industries, Government of New Zealand, the FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, and the FAO Director of Forest Economics, Policy and Products. The FAO Senior Forestry Officer for Asia and the Pacific offered the vote of thanks.
4. Innovative approaches were used throughout the session. A special in-session seminar was organized on building resilience in forests, landscapes and communities. A Heads of Forestry dialogue was conducted as a less formal facilitated discussion, and a “Speed Geeking” session featured 18 organizations presenting their activities and programmes and answering questions from audience participants within a short time frame (5 minutes).
5. Altogether, 11 agenda items were presented to the Commission. These included state of forestry in the region, forests for prosperity, forest financing, Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), and forests and climate change.
6. Prior to the APFC Session, eight pre-session workshops were held on the following topics: forest landscape restoration; gender mainstreaming in forestry; forestry strategic planning; REDD+ readiness for the forest sector; forestry college Deans’ meeting; sustainable forest management in the Pacific; forests and natural disasters; and tools for ecological and economic impact assessment from forest invasive species.

7. Overall, the Commission expressed satisfaction with the direction and performance of APFC/FAO in carrying out the recommendations of the 24th Session. It made further recommendations to guide the future work of FAO and APFC on a number of items, and it appreciated an expression of interest from the Philippines delegation to host the 26th session of the Commission.

8. Participants' evaluations of the Session were generally very positive. The rating for the overall assessment of the Session scored 4.36/5. Highest scores were given for: organization of the session; the usefulness and well-preparedness of the Secretariat Notes; the quality of the presentations; and the daily newsletters. Items that received lowest remarks in comparison were: time allocated for discussion of each agenda item; speed geeking; and the Head of Forestry dialogue.

9. Positive comments from the participants included the following:

- Well-organized and well-structured overall
- Good communications with member countries
- Good hospitality and personal touch, very good venue and accommodation
- Effective and interactive sessions
- Clear and informative materials (Secretariat Notes)
- Highly relevant agenda items and forestry issues discussed
- Very useful pre-session workshops
- Participants gained insights on forestry issues, programmes and priorities
- Timeliness of each session
- Provided a good environment for networking
- Involved and engaged in-depth sessions and discussions between countries regarding solutions and approaches to SFM
- Field trip provided a welcome break from the meeting and offered useful insights
- Speed-geeking was interactive, interesting and informative

10. The participants noted the following areas of improvement:

- Speed geeking was a new concept to the participants and it took time to understand the process. Time was very short and presenters did not have sufficient time to explain their topics.
- Individual ear phones should have been provided
- Comments from country delegates were sometimes difficult to hear and/or understand and some of the country interventions were not relevant to the topic of discussion
- Having too many agenda items resulted in lack of focus and limited time available for discussion.
- Fieldtrip was too short – not enough time to learn
- Presentations should share future strategy policies for countries that could be adapted by others
- Overreliance on one or two speakers to introduce agenda items

11. The APFC Secretariat would like to commend the New Zealand hosts for excellent work in preparing and organizing the 25th Session of the APFC. Collaboration between FAO and the host country staff was outstanding.

DISCUSSION

The Executive Committee is invited to:

- Provide an assessment of the 25th Session of APFC held in Rotorua, New Zealand in November 2013. This should include perspectives both on logistical and conceptual matters.
- Provide thoughts on the approach that the APFC should take in organizing the 26th Session of APFC, bearing in mind that this will likely be convened concurrently with the third Asia-Pacific Forestry Week.