

**COFO session item 6.6 “Dialogue with Statutory bodies”, speaking points (M. Weih)**

Dear Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

I will first report on the 26<sup>th</sup> session of the International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment (or IPC), and then give an overview of the new IPC strategy and its implementation.

**1) The 26th Session of the IPC** was held from 5 to 8 October 2021 in an entirely virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Session was attended by 82 delegates from 33 countries. It was co-hosted by FAO and Italy. Italy also supported a technical scientific meeting held in conjunction with the IPC Session on 6 and 7 October 2021. The Session adopted the IPC Strategy 2022-2032, requested the IPC Executive Committee to take the steps necessary to implement it, and recommended the Secretariat to report back on progress at the next Session which will be held in 2024.

**2) The new IPC Strategy 2022-2032** recognizes the importance of fast-growing trees as a fundamental component of forestry and agricultural systems worldwide, as well as the broader geographical, biological and technical scope of the IPC after its broadened mandate as a consequence of the IPC reform process.

The new IPC Strategy outlines four objectives of work: First, to foster innovation in land production systems and provide ecosystem services involving fast-growing trees; second, to comprehensively assess innovations to establish best practices for management and utilization of fast-growing trees in rural and urban contexts; third, to make recommendations to interested countries, FAO, international initiatives, and working partners so that best practices in managing fast-growing trees achieve scale and effectively contribute to sustainable development; and fourth to deepen partnerships and cooperation in order to more effectively achieve the above IPC objectives of work.

To implement the Strategy, the IPC will continue to function as a knowledge and capacity building network and as a science-policy implementation platform, converting science-based approaches into practice to actively contribute to and

gradually expand the knowledge base on other fast-growing tree species beyond poplars and willows. The IPC will continue to foster the development and application of technical knowledge on fast-growing trees for sustainable development; and continue to expand its collaboration to new countries and to include fast growing tree species other than poplars and willows, as capacity allows. In particular, the IPC will promote collaborative approaches to research and use of fast-growing trees in the tropics and subtropics. By implementing this Strategy, the IPC seeks to make a global contribution to the 2030 Agenda and the Global Forest Goals, the UN Decade of Family Farming, and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, with a view to fully realize the potential of sustainable management of fast-growing trees to improve livelihoods and facilitate production of ecosystem goods and services.

In order to implement the new IPC strategy, the IPC Executive Committee endorsed a strategic paper outlining priority actions for the implementation of the IPC reform. These priority actions include for example a process of consultation across the Working Parties of the IPC, which included a workshop with all working party leaders last week. They include as well awareness raising actions on the new mandate of the IPC and its relevance to address today's global challenges.

To support the IPC in its new mandate, the Executive Committee approved already in April 2022 a Secretariat Work plan organized around four areas of work: (i) governance; (ii) normative work; (iii) communications and; (iv) resource mobilization. The IPC Secretariat work plan, to be delivered in close collaboration with the IPC Working Parties and under the guidance of the Executive Committee, will support the IPC to strengthen its positioning as a leading body of expertise on fast-growing forests and trees and to ensure cross-fertilization of IPC work with other statutory bodies of FAO. In line with these goals, the IPC co-organized a workshop "Management of mixed and pure planted forests: Stock-taking of science and practice" which took place last week here at FAO headquarters and is engaging with research and networks active in FAO member countries.

Thank you Mr. Chairman for your attention.