

<b>NORTH AMERICAN FOREST COMMISSION</b>
<b>TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION</b>
<b>San Juan, Puerto Rico, USA 9-13 June 2008</b>
<b>ISSUES BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMISSION BY FAO</b>

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. This document introduces key events and processes involving the FAO forestry programme, including the XIII World Forestry Congress and the development of a new FAO strategy for forestry. Delegates are invited to provide guidance on the specific points outlined in the sections below.

### **NEW FAO STRATEGY FOR FORESTRY**

2. The forestry sector is affected by the rapid pace of global changes, including economic globalization, acceleration of climate change, and the dynamism of global communications. In response to these changes and at the request of the Committee on Forestry (COFO), FAO is updating its strategy for forestry. The review is carried out in the context of ongoing UN and FAO reforms, and the outcome of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO.

3. Following an extensive stakeholder consultation process between November 2007 and April 2008, including discussion by the three Regional Forestry Commissions that met in the early part of 2008, **a draft strategy has been developed (Annex)**. Comments on the draft strategy are being solicited from FAO Members and other stakeholders through the Regional Forestry Commissions; through direct mailing to countries and organizations; and on the FAO web site. Based on feedback, the draft strategy will be revised and presented to FAO members for consideration during the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of COFO in Rome 16 – 20 March 2009.

## GLOBAL FOREST RESOURCES ASSESSMENT (FRA 2010)

4. FRA 2010 will provide a comprehensive report on the extent of forests and other wooded land, their condition, management and uses, covering the seven “thematic elements of sustainable forest management.” Moreover, FRA 2010 will provide forest-related information for monitoring progress towards the *2010 Biodiversity Target* of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the *Global Objectives on Forests* of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the *Millennium Development Goals*, as endorsed by COFO. FRA 2010 was launched during a global workshop in Rome, 3 to 7 March 2008, in which all three NAFC countries participated.
5. In addition to the collection of country information through questionnaires and thematic studies, a complementary global remote sensing survey will be carried out in partnership with countries and other organizations. The remote sensing survey will provide additional knowledge about land use change dynamics, including deforestation, afforestation and natural expansion of forests. FAO will offer training to strengthen countries’ capacity to determine historical trends in rates of deforestation and to monitor future rates, thus helping readiness to benefit from a potential instrument of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to reduce deforestation in developing countries.
6. Within the FRA process, FAO is committed to strengthening the existing global and regional networks of national correspondents and to further harmonizing forest reporting with other organizations. ([www.fao.org/forestry/site/fra/en](http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/fra/en))
7. Members of the Commission are invited to support their national correspondents to FRA 2010 and supporting teams to enable preparation of country reports and participation in the remote sensing survey and any special studies that may cover their country. The NAFC Working Group on Inventory and Monitoring has been actively involved in the development of the FRA 2010 process and will coordinate North American inputs.

## STATE OF THE WORLD’S FORESTS (SOFO) 2009

8. The *State of the World’s Forests* (SOFO) is published by FAO every two years. The next edition, SOFO 2009, will be released at the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Committee on Forestry in Rome in March 2009. The theme of SOFO 2009 is “*Society, forests and forestry: adapting for the future.*”
9. Part I of SOFO 2009 will include summaries of regional forestry sector outlook studies prepared by FAO over the past several years, including the new Forestry Sector Outlook Study for North America discussed as a separate agenda item at the NAFC meeting in Puerto Rico (agenda item 3). Part II will include contributions from a number of countries, including several North American authors, related to the future of the world’s forests.

## STATE OF THE WORLD'S FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES

10. The FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture has approved the inclusion of forest genetic resources in its Multi-Year Programme of Work. A *State of the World’s Forest Genetic Resources Report* will be prepared for review in 2013, preceded by a scoping paper in 2009. COFO and the Regional Forestry Commissions will be involved in this process. The NAFC Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources will play a key role in North America. The report will draw on FRA and other existing information such as national reports and outcomes of a series of regional forest genetic resources workshops that have

been organized since the mid-1990s and that FAO and other partners continue to support (see [www.fao.org/forestry/site/fgr/en](http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/fgr/en)).

### **XIII WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS**

11. The next World Forestry Congress will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 18-25 October 2009. It will provide a forum for the exchange of experiences and for discussions on various topics related to the theme, "Forests in development – a vital balance." Congress sessions will include keynote speeches, round-table discussions, poster presentations, numerous information events sponsored by organizations, exhibits and study tours.

12. The first call for voluntary papers and posters was made in October 2007. The Congress Secretariat is seeking donors to provide financial support for the participation of experts who produce the most relevant papers, with a broad regional representation to ensure that this is truly a "world" congress (see [www.wfc2009.org](http://www.wfc2009.org)).

13. The Regional Forestry Commissions, through their Executive Committees, are encouraged to assist in organizing regional specific activities of the Congress programme. The chairs of the Regional Forestry Commissions have been invited to participate as members of the External Advisory Committee of the Congress.

### **CPF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK ON FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

14. In April 2008, all the 14 members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) convened at FAO and agreed to develop a "*CPF Strategic Framework for Coordinated Response of the Forest Sector to the Climate Change Agenda*." It aims to facilitate countries in the preparations for the post-2012 climate regime through information; contribute to the implementation of the UNFCCC, UNFF and other relevant agreements; and enhance coordinated action on the ground, including integration of relevant climate change aspects into sustainable forest management in cross-sectoral manner. The strategy will include both mitigation and adaptation. It will give particular attention to the specific needs related to reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) as expressed in the UNFCCC's Bali Action Plan. The strategy will be made available at the UNFCCC COP 14 (December 2008), COFO (March 2009), UNFF 8 (April 2009), as well as meetings of the governing bodies of other CPF member organizations.

### **INTERNATIONAL YEARS RELEVANT TO FORESTRY**

15. Three forthcoming international years declared by the United Nations General Assembly feature forestry-related themes:

(i) International Year of Natural Fibres 2009 aims to foster international partnerships among various natural fibre industries. It intends to emphasize the value of these fibres to consumers while helping to sustain the incomes of farmers. Fibres from wood as well as from non-wood forest products can be important inputs, particularly at the local level. FAO will facilitate implementation of the Year, together with partners.

(ii) International Year of Biodiversity 2010 will coincide with the 2010 biodiversity target. It aims to raise awareness of biodiversity for sustaining life on earth and to mobilize the international community for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from its use. The Secretariat of CBD serves as the focal point for the Year and has created an inter-agency advisory committee, including FAO, to guide and maximize the activities.

(iii) International Year of Forests 2011 aims to raise awareness of sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. Governments and other stakeholders are expected to promote related activities, including creating national committees. The Secretariat of UNFF serves as the focal point for the Year. FAO will collaborate with countries, the UNFF Secretariat and other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) to support the Year.

16. All of the International Years will have global awareness-raising campaigns with a number of activities and information materials. These can be adapted for regional situations and will also support the preparation of national actions. Delegates are invited to consider the ways their countries could support and link activities at all levels to these three years, and the type of support FAO could provide, especially to the International Year of Forests (IYF).

## FAO Strategy for Forestry

### Challenges ahead

The forest sector continues to be affected by the rapid pace of global changes. Globalization, through rapid expansion of trade and increased transnational investments and through world-wide introduction of improved information and communication technology, is opening new opportunities and challenges. Forestry has become more people centered, and society's perceptions on forests have undergone significant changes with increasing emphasis on the environmental, social and cultural values of forests.

Interactions between the forest sector and other sectors are increasingly understood to be the source of both problems and opportunities for forestry. In addition, the critical roles that forests and trees outside forests play in mitigation of and adaptation to climate change as well as a source of bioenergy are increasingly recognized, requiring careful consideration in national decision-making.

Commitment to enhancing the contribution of sustainable forest management to sustainable development is strong. More than ever, the significant contributions of forests and trees to sustainable livelihoods and eradication of hunger and poverty is appreciated. There is greater recognition of the linkages of forestry with agriculture, energy and water. However, progress towards sustainable forest management remains uneven and the potential of the cross sectoral dimensions, integrated management and landscape approaches is often underutilized.

The continuing loss of forests and forest degradation in many developing countries, especially in tropical regions, pose a critical challenge. Rural livelihoods often depend on productive forests that support employment and income, thus reducing poverty. Increasing demand for food, fibre and fuel can trigger substantial unplanned land use changes, including large scale forest clearance.

There is a need to improve the quality of forest management, reforestation and forest rehabilitation for effective preparedness, mitigation and recovery related to natural and human induced disasters. Furthermore, a strategic approach is needed to ensure forest health, so as to optimize their capacity to help to mitigate climate change, conserve biodiversity, safeguard wildlife habitat and protect land and watersheds.

As the quantity of and access to information about forests and forestry continue to rapidly expand, the need to manage knowledge more effectively is becoming more urgent.

FAO stands ready to make a significant contribution to strengthen country capacities to overcome the obstacles to sustainable forest management through reliable information, policy advice, and technical assistance.

## **Context for the *FAO Strategy for Forestry***

In 1999 the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) approved the *FAO Strategic Plan for Forestry*. In 2007, COFO requested that the plan be reviewed and updated in consultation with member countries and other stakeholders. The present version of the draft is a result of rounds of consultations with FAO members, other stakeholders and FAO staff. The Regional Forestry Commissions provided guidance for its preparation. A proposed strategy will be presented to COFO for consideration in March 2009.

The *FAO Strategy for Forestry* has been prepared within the context of the broader reform of the United Nations and FAO. In particular, the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (IEE) recommended that FAO should undertake a strategic review of its work in Forestry using logical framework principles with a focus on desired Outcomes to be achieved as the result of FAO's work in Forestry. This document is consistent with the broader review of FAO strategic objectives and organizational outcomes, and the preparation of a new Strategic Framework and programming model for FAO. The *FAO Strategy for Forestry* will be directly linked to the FAO medium-term plan and programme budget process.

For the purposes of this strategy, *Forestry* is broadly defined to include forest management, livelihoods, social aspects, goods and services, policies and institutions, as well as economic and market considerations related to forests and trees outside forests.

The *FAO Strategy for Forestry* supports the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the FAO Goals for Members, and the Global Objectives on Forests agreed by the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). It also contributes to the implementation of the international agreements, in particular the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests adopted by UNFF and subsequently by the United Nations General Assembly.

The core values of FAO will guide its work in forestry, including: commitment to cooperation among nations; independence, in which Members seek to broaden consensus; partnerships within the UN family; competence; equality, especially the full participation of women in development; diversity; and unity of action when carrying out the decisions of Members.

The time frame of the strategy is 10 years. However, it will be dynamic so that it can be regularly updated to reflect new priorities and changing expectations of society.

## Strategic Objective for Forestry

*Sustainable management of forests and trees, ensuring substantial contributions to food security, livelihoods and poverty alleviation, mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, conservation of biodiversity, and reliable water resources.*

### Vision

for the world's forests and society as a whole:

**Decision-making is informed, better coordinated across sectors, transparent and participatory**, enabling to respond quickly and effectively to change both within and from outside the sector. Forest-related decisions are based on timely and accurate information, interdisciplinary approaches and stakeholder participation at all levels.

**The benefits from trees, forests and forestry are increasing, widely recognized and appreciated.** Their contributions to society are increased, including the role of forests in livelihoods, poverty alleviation, food security and sustainable supply of raw materials and energy. Investments in forestry are increased, and forestry is accorded a growing priority in wider development strategies.

**Forest resources are increasing in a majority of countries, and ecosystem services are increasingly recognized and valued.** The vitality and area of forests show a stable or increasing trend in most countries and ecosystems, thereby increasing the contribution of forests and trees to mitigating climate change, combating desertification, conserving biodiversity, and ensuring water quality. Good management practices are implemented, including integrated land-use approaches.

## Desired Outcomes of FAO work in Forestry

During the next 10 years, FAO seeks to promote best practices in a number of areas. These will form the core of FAO's work in forestry which is intended to produce the following outcomes based on country leadership:

- Decisions affecting the forest sector at all levels are based on timely and reliable information.
- An increasing number of countries establish effective forest policies and laws through broad stakeholder participation. Capacities of forest institutions and participatory processes to effectively implement national forest programmes are strengthened and governance is improved thus also enhancing an enabling environment for private investments in forestry.
- Countries implement effective and integrated approaches in their planning processes that consider forests and forestry as integral to the overall social and economic development, with particular attention on the interface between forests and agriculture, livestock, and other land uses including the production of bioenergy.
- An increasing area of forests, including planted forests, is under sustainable forest management and deforestation and forest degradation are significantly reduced.
- Social and economic factors that affect forests are understood and incorporated into strategic planning for the sector resulting in increased investments in forests and forestry and improved market access for forest products and services, including non-wood forest products and wood fuels.
- Markets for forest products and environmental services contribute to making forestry a more economically viable and environmentally sound land-use option.
- Forest-based enterprises of all sizes are effective in promoting livelihoods and reducing poverty.
- Countries implement effective policies and programmes related to conservation of biological diversity, rehabilitation of degraded forest lands, and management and use of water and wildlife resources, including in the mountain ecosystems and arid zones.
- Countries successfully integrate disaster risk management including fire, pests and diseases, storms, landslides and flood mitigation into national forest programmes.
- The potential of forests in mitigating climate change is widely recognized and realized; strategies for reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation as well as adaptation to climate change are integrated in the national forest programmes and implemented in close collaboration with other relevant sectors.
- Global and regional dialogues have made increasing contributions to sustainable forest management and demonstrable progress is made on the ground.

## FAO Implementation Strategies

To achieve the desired outcomes FAO will:

- Assist member countries to strengthen policies, institutional capacities and technical skills of human resources and support national forest programmes based on participatory processes.
- Collect, analyze and disseminate timely and reliable information on forest resources, products (including non-wood forest products), policies, economics and institutions world wide including national, regional and global assessments, statistics and outlook studies about forests and forestry.
- Promote the exchange of knowledge, facilitate linkages between knowledge and policies and improve dissemination of information products.
- Provide technical assistance to member countries to implement sustainable forest management, including by developing best practices standards and guidelines through consultative processes.
- Help mobilize more diversified and increased resources for the implementation of sustainable forest management.
- Make best use of and enhance the development of multidisciplinary approaches and modern technologies.
- Provide a neutral forum for exchange of views and experiences on topical forest issues. Facilitate dialogue and action, including through decentralized offices. Provide a venue for identifying and acting upon significant emerging issues in forestry through the Committee on Forestry and the Regional Forestry Commissions.
- Work in partnerships and continue to enhance their outcomes, including the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, the National Forest Programme Facility and other multi-partner programmes and processes at all the national, regional and global levels.

## What makes FAO unique in Forestry

The challenges that forestry will face in the future are multi-faceted. Many national and international organizations deal with forest issues, in addition to actors in the private sector and non-governmental organizations. With more than 60 years of experience, FAO's role in forestry continues to evolve. FAO comparative advantages and assets in forestry include:

- Intergovernmental organization tasked to assist countries in all aspects of Forestry – social, economic and environmental – including the sustainable development and conservation of all types of forest ecosystems.
- Authoritative global source of information on forests, including data on forest resources, deforestation, forest health, carbon storage, forest products and trade, and forest policies and institutions.
- Experience, large institutional memory, knowledge and credibility in supporting national efforts to develop capacity in forest policies and institutions.
- Leadership in developing best practices, standards and guidelines for sustainable forest management and forest utilization based on worldwide lessons learned from over more than 60 years of field experience.
- Expertise to address forest issues from a cross-sectoral point of view, including in the context of food security and taking into account the interface between forests and other natural resources and land uses.
- Expertise to address forestry issues in the context of food security and overall livelihood systems.
- Technical expertise located in country, sub-regional and regional offices around the world that focus on direct support to member countries and implementing field projects.
- FAO provides a forum for governments and other stakeholders to address the policy and technical issues of the day, including Ministerial Meetings, the Committee on Forestry (COFO), the World Forestry Congress, Regional Forestry Commissions, expert consultations, global and regional networks, and national, regional and global workshops.

**The FAO Strategy for Forestry is developed within the broader framework of:**

### **Millennium Development Goals**

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

### **FAO Members' Global Goals (Strategic Framework for FAO 2000 – 2015)**

1. Access of all people at all times to sufficient nutritionally adequate and safe food, ensuring that the number of undernourished people is reduced by half by no later than 2015.
2. The continued contribution of sustainable agriculture and rural development, including fisheries and forestry, to economic and social progress and the well-being of all.
3. The conservation, improvement and sustainable utilization of natural resources, including land, water, forest, fisheries and genetic resources for food and agriculture.

### **UNFF Global Objectives on Forests**

1. Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation.
2. Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest dependent people.
3. Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests.
4. Reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management and mobilize significantly increased new and additional financial resources for the implementation of sustainable forest management.