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FAO European Forestry Commission matters**Thirty-sixth session**

Antalya, 10-14 October 2011

**Report on FAO Climate Change Activities since the thirty-
fifth session of the European Forestry Commission****Note by the FAO secretariat***Summary*

This note recalls recommendations on forests and climate change made by the European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the Committee on Forestry at their previous sessions and informs EFC members about FAO's related activities. FAO's work on forests and climate change currently focuses on the following main objectives: stimulating regional cooperation; assisting countries to mainstream climate change into their forest sectors; supporting REDD+ development and implementation, facilitating exchange of experiences and information dissemination; and enhancing forestry content in cross-sectoral initiatives in climate change.

A. Introduction

1. The thirty-fifth session of the European Forestry Commission (EFC) included a special segment on forests and climate change, in which the implications of the meetings of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Copenhagen in December 2009 and adaptation of European forests to climate change were discussed.
2. The Commission recommended that FAO and UNECE: facilitate regional networking on climate change, using existing regional forestry networks, with a view to providing inputs to a global framework on climate change adaptation; help address information needs and communication gaps between the climate change and the forestry communities; continue to play active roles in generating and disseminating information on forests and climate change adaptation and to raise awareness of the need to create an enabling policy environment for forest adaptation measures by small forest owners in Europe; and facilitate the sharing of country experiences.
3. The Commission requested the Committee on Forestry (COFO), at its twentieth session held in October 2010, to consider developing a network and support service at global level to assist countries in implementing international commitments related to forests and climate change. COFO considered this request and the issues related to forests and climate change raised by other regional forest commissions, and “invited regional forestry commissions to promote the exchange of experience among member countries in order to consider the level of capacity and specific needs related to climate change adaptation and forest ecosystem resilience and to report to COFO about their work”.

B. FAO activities in forests and climate change

4. Over the past two years, FAO has intensified its efforts in forests and climate change. Its initiatives span sub-national, national, regional and international levels, and include both normative activities and field level support.
5. FAO continues to work to facilitate regional cooperation on forests and climate change through its regional forestry commissions. This is consistent with the Cancun Adaptation Framework, adopted by UNFCCC in December 2010, which invites Parties to strengthen and, where necessary, establish regional centres and networks to facilitate and enhance national and regional adaptation actions and improve the flow of information between the Convention process and national and regional activities. Regional forestry commissions can play key catalytic roles in regional networking and launching other cooperative activities on climate change.
6. In order to facilitate regional dialogue and cooperation, to date FAO has prepared three regional analyses – for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Near East and Asia – which outline climate change issues, opportunities, constraints and key areas for regional cooperation. These are intended to stimulate exchange of information and experience and to help identify priority areas for regional collaboration, *i.e.* in training and capacity strengthening, research, sharing of experience on policy development and field efforts, and information exchange. FAO, with support of the FAO-Finland forestry programme and the German (GIZ)-supported project, “Adapting the framework for forestry policy to meet the needs of climate change in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region” and Silva Mediterranea, is organizing a meeting in Cairo in September for Near East countries and potential donors to assess interest in further developing regional cooperation on forests and climate change. FAO plans to support a sub-regional analysis and activities on forests and

climate change for dryland African countries in the context of the Great Green Wall for Sub-Saharan Africa initiative supported by the African Union and the European Commission.

7. A major thrust of FAO's work on forests and climate change is supporting countries' efforts to integrate climate change into the forestry sector. It is developing two tools for this purpose, one aimed at forest policy makers and the other at forest managers. The policy level tool or set of guidelines will be published in late 2011 and the one for forest managers is due to be completed in early 2012. Together these will facilitate stakeholder processes for the development and implementation of strategies and plans for addressing climate change in the forestry sector. In conjunction with these efforts, FAO has supported workshops in five countries over the past two years. The development of these tools and workshops has been supported by the FAO-Finland forestry programme and by Denmark's contribution through the APO programme.

8. FAO is actively supporting international and national REDD+¹ efforts through the UN-REDD programme (a partnership of FAO, UNDP and UNEP supported by Norway as well as other donor countries) and through the FAO-Finland programme on "Sustainable Forest Management in a Changing Climate". Through these and FAO's National Forest Monitoring and Assessment Programme, FAO is supporting monitoring, verification and reporting (MRV) related to REDD+ in 13 countries. FAO is also supporting work relevant to REDD+ and governance, including the development of a "Framework for Assessing and Monitoring Forest Governance (jointly by FAO and the World Bank) and "Guidance for the Provision of Information on REDD+ Governance" (a joint UN-REDD and Chatham House initiative).

9. FAO continues to be active in communication and information generation and dissemination. CLIM-FO, an electronic newsletter on forests and climate change, is issued monthly. Over the past two years, FAO has published two books on wood energy and climate change in addition to the three regional analyses. A publication analyzing the relationship between forest data presented in FAO's global forest resource assessments and in Assessment Reports of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change is in progress. Others in preparation include publications on carbon markets and on forest-related international policy decisions in UNFCCC. FAO continues to provide strong support to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests' Forest Day events linked with the UNFCCC's Conferences of the Parties, including the fourth and fifth Forest Day events in 2010 and 2011 respectively.

10. The Forestry Department has contributed to a number of FAO's inter-departmental cooperative activities on climate change which seek to strengthen inter-sectoral linkages in climate change. Among these is the development of FAO-Adapt, FAO's framework programme on climate change adaptation. The Forestry Department also contributed to FAO's inputs to the Hague Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change, held in October/November 2010 and is involved in follow-up activities. Among the latter is a joint effort of FAO, the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme to develop a Sourcebook and Collaborative Partnership/Network on Climate Smart Agriculture covering the agriculture, forest and

¹ Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.

fisheries sectors. The department has also led or contributed to the drafting of FAO submissions to UNFCCC related to forests, agriculture or food security.

C. Issues for EFC consideration

11. Delegates to the EFC are invited to review and address the following questions during the session:

- Given COFO's invitation to regional forestry commissions (see paragraph 3 above), what are the priority areas for exchange of experience on forests and climate change among EFC members and how would EFC propose such exchange be optimally carried out?
 - Do gaps exist that prevent member countries of the Commission from effectively and efficiently addressing forests and climate change needs in their own countries or from assisting developing country efforts, and, if so, what roles might FAO play to help fill those gaps?
 - Are there areas of work on forests and climate change that EFC members would like to see FAO put more emphasis on?
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