



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
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

NEAR EAST FORESTRY AND RANGE COMMISSION

TWENTIETH SESSION

SECOND NEAR EAST FORESTRY WEEK

ANTALYA, TURKEY
29 JANUARY – 02 FEBRUARY 2012

Good Governance of Forests and Rangelands : Pillar of Food Security

**UPDATE ON CURRENT AND EMERGING INTERNATIONAL
ISSUES**

THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FORESTS 2011

1. The UN General Assembly declared¹ 2011 the International Year of Forests (IYF). The purpose of the Year is to recognize the significant contribution of forests and sustainable forest management to sustainable development, poverty eradication and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals. The General Assembly invited FAO, as the Chair of the CPF, to support the implementation of the Year.
2. For celebrating the Year, FAO has developed its activities in three main directions: cooperating with, and providing support to, its Member Nations; collaborating with members of the CPF and other international and regional partners; and the Organization's own actions.
3. To support national and international actions FAO has developed a communicators' toolkit as an open source online instrument² containing several components from guidelines to

¹ GA Resolution 61/193

² <http://www.fao.org/forestry/iyf2011/68425/en/>

ready-made outreach and information products. FAO also launched a specific IYF website to provide relevant information related to the Year, including reports on international events and an online calendar of international days recognized by the UN, directly or indirectly related to forests.

4. FAO cooperated with member Nations in organizing various events, including with Germany in organizing a conference on “Contributions of Forests to a Green Economy” and the “International Bonn Forest Days”³; with India on a global conference titled *Rediscovering wood: the key to a sustainable future*⁴.
5. At the request of COFO, FAO started working on strengthening communication capacities in countries and regions through establishing and/or strengthening regional forest communication. To this end a training for practitioners will be organized in Peru in November with participation of several countries in South America.
6. FAO has provided direct support to national actions through its Regional and Sub-regional Offices and by making available films, video trailers, posters and publications for regional and national events. It should be noted with regret that financial resources lagged far behind the demand from countries; therefore contributions often remained restricted to means without financial implications.
7. FAO had convened a meeting for CPF communicators in October 2010 to further the preparation for the Year. CPF members have agreed to assigning 2-3 forest-relevant topics to each month and developing specific programmes related to these topics. Altogether 26 themes⁵ were identified for the year, linked with the relevant international day whenever possible. FAO is the lead agency on 6 of the themes and a contributing agency on additional 8 topics⁶.
8. To support FAO’s own activities a large number of printed and audio-visual materials were prepared in Headquarters and the Regional Offices including SOFO, Forestry Papers, Nature and Fauna Magazine, working papers, journals and brochures. Video features cover various topics and continents and a global compilation is planned to mark the end of the Year.
9. Important meetings have taken place during the year, such as the 2nd Mediterranean Forest Week; meetings of two of the Regional Forestry Commissions; the International Model Forest Network Global Forum; the 5th International Wildland Fire Conference; and the 2nd World Landslide Forum.
10. Outreach activities have resulted in strong media presence, including major television networks, and appearance at public events, like rock concerts (e.g. the Lollapalozza in early April in Santiago, Chile, or the Earth Day Concert in Rome), theatre performances and others. FAO Goodwill Ambassadors also made remarkable appearances in support of the Year.
11. The 37th Session of the FAO welcomed FAO’s contribution to the Year and noted the important role of an International Day of Forests in promoting sustainable forest management and supported its establishment.

³ 4 - 7 October 2011, Bonn, Germany and 6 - 9 October 2011, Bonn, Germany, respectively

⁴ 19 - 22 October, 2011, Bangalore, India, <http://www.artjoywood.org/>

⁵ [HTTP://WWW.FAO.ORG/FORESTRY/IYF2011/68850/EN/](http://www.fao.org/forestry/iyf2011/68850/en/)

⁶ For details please visit [HTTP://WWW.FAO.ORG/FORESTRY/IYF2011/69194/EN/](http://www.fao.org/forestry/iyf2011/69194/en/)

COFO20 – OCTOBER 2010

12. The Twentieth Session of COFO (Rome, Italy, 4 - 8 October 2010), in conjunction with the 2nd World Forest Week, was organized around the theme Forests and sustainable development.

13. COFO made the following recommendations for FAO requiring the attention of the Council:

- Complete the next FRA by 2015 based on a long-term strategy for the FRA programme. Continue streamlining international forest-related reporting while strengthening countries' capacity in monitoring their forest resources..
- Prepare the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources report and strengthen FAO's capacity to assist member countries in effectively integrating the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the management of forests.
- Distribute the Guide to implementation of phytosanitary standards in forestry and encourage countries to pay attention to the issue of forest invasive species.
- Review critical issues, knowledge gaps and lessons learned in relation to forests, water and soil.
- Support national efforts to strengthen public and private sector financial support; and to collaborate with the members of the CPF on forest financing.
- Support countries in strengthening domestic forest law enforcement and governance and propose, at the Committee's next session, an analytical framework for the assessment and monitoring of socio-economic and institutional indicators at country level.
- Assist countries to value and utilize the potential contributions of forests and trees outside forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation, including in reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD-plus).
- Strengthen synergies in FAO's work in areas such as agro-forestry, soil and water.
- Identified areas of emphasis within each Organizational Result of Strategic Objective E for the 2012-2013 biennium based on FAO areas of strength.

14. COFO took the following decisions requiring the attention of the FAO Conference:

- invited countries to include fire management in reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries (REDD-plus) programmes and in broader land-use and landscape policies and programmes;
- invited countries to strengthen their efforts to address the challenges of forest governance, in collaboration with other sectors;
- recommended that countries and FAO highlight forests' contributions to the global developmental agenda at the 9th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests and in the preparations for the Rio+20 Earth Summit (2012);
- recommended to countries and FAO to participate actively in the International Year of Forests (2011); and consider the strengthening of the idea and profile of the observation of an international day of forests.

15. The Council, at its 140th session, endorsed the report of COFO and further endorsed the offer of South Africa to host the XIV World Forestry Congress.

16. The Conference, at its 37th session also endorsed the report of COFO and the recommendations therein.

17. COFO, within its own sphere of competence, made the following decisions:

- Endorsed changes to its Rules of Procedure

- Requested the Secretariat to prepare, in consultation with the Steering Committee, a Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) for 2012-2015 for consideration at its 21st Session.

18. Implementation of COFO's decisions has started right after the session. While the Regional Forestry Commissions are being presented with some of the follow up actions, such as the FRA strategy, the recommendations related to forest fires or the preparation of the MYPOW, others have been incorporated in the priorities for the the 2012-2013 biennium and the work on emphases and de-emphases for FAO Forestry. The 21st session of COFO will provide an opportunity to review progress in a comprehensive way.

NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMMES (NFPS)

19. Eight countries in the Near-East Region (Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Pakistan, Sudan, Tunisia, Uzbekistan and Yemen) have established a partnership with the National Forest Programme Facility ("Facility") which is a multi-donor initiative to support nfps. The programme is hosted by FAO in Rome and reaches out to the partner countries through the FAO Representations and the FAO Regional and sub-regional offices. Each Facility partner country has a designated Facility Coach to provide advice on the process and to follow up the activities. These activities are related mainly to sharing of forestry related information among stakeholders, to enhancing stakeholder participation in the nfp process (especially civil society), and to building capacities of relevant stakeholders on nfp-related issues such as policy analysis, institutional issues or participatory forest management.

20. The second phase of the Facility ends in mid 2012 and the Facility Management is already drafting a new programme proposal leading (hopefully) to a third phase (2012-2017). The new programme builds on its experience in the first 2 phases (2002-2012) and its cooperation with the Growing Forest Partnerships (GFP). The proposed new title of the programme is "Forest Partnerships Facility" (from here onwards also called the Facility).

21. In its 10 years of existence, the Facility has made significant strides (which have been further strengthened by the GFP support during the last years), towards addressing fundamental power imbalances between local people and national and international actors. It has sensitized governments to the need for adequate participation, provided space for 'local policy dialogue' and 'community forest fora' and invested in local research to provide evidence on which sound decisions can be based. However, inadequate cross-sectoral coordination, the rapid pace at which new agendas have emerged (e.g. climate change) and frequently antagonistic relationships between government and civil society have undermined efforts in many partner countries.

22. Partner countries have much appreciated the collaboration between Facility and GFP, showing that there is the need to better coordinate similar programmes and to support forest dependent people in creating alliances that provide sustainable livelihoods in forest landscapes. The new programme will combine the initiatives' strengths (and those of core partners - FAO, IUCN, IIED and WB) while meeting new needs identified by both.

23. The proposed new Facility will act on two complementary fronts:

- It will facilitate strong and equitable partnerships amongst smallholders, communities and indigenous peoples, enabling them to make their voices heard in policy making process at local, regional, national and global levels on forest landscape issues. These partnerships will have improved access to financing and investments for forest landscapes.
- Such partnerships will also support national and sub-national governments to establish multi-sectoral platforms (through dialogues, information and capacity

building) to better-coordinate the various ministries, private sector and civil society stakeholders involved in, or affected by, policies and activities on forest landscapes.

24. Better coordination is needed to achieve efficiency, both in engagements with local people, and in the use of funds towards a more sustainable development (avoiding overlaps or starting from scratch over and over again). Improving cross-sectoral government platforms for deciding and implementing forest landscape policy is a vital corollary.

25. This more focused support at community level - compared with the previous 10 years of broad NFP implementation - will fill a much felt gap at national, regional and international level and will complement many forestry related initiatives, like FLEGT and REDD+.

COP 16 & 17: WAS THE VOICE FROM DRY LANDS ZONES HEARD?

26. Developments over the past two years in the negotiations of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) of interest to the members of the Near East Forest and Range Commission relate to decisions on climate change adaptation, mitigation and finance. While no decisions exclude drylands, none single out drylands as meriting special attention.

27. The outcome of COP16, held in Copenhagen in December 2009, represented a provisional agreement, one not formally adopted by UNFCCC but to which most parties to UNFCCC subsequently notified the Secretariat of their agreement. The key proposals set out in Copenhagen were adopted by UNFCCC at COP17 in Cancun, Mexico in December 2010.

The Cancun Agreement includes the following decisions:

- on REDD+: policy approaches and positive incentives for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks
- on Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions
- establishment of the Cancun Adaptation Framework
- establishment of the Green Climate Fund

28. REDD+ is being developed as an instrument to provide incentives to developing countries for forest-based mitigation actions. All developing countries are eligible for REDD+; arid and semi-arid countries are no exception. The scope of REDD+ was defined in the Cancun Agreements as including: reducing emissions from deforestation; reducing emissions from forest degradation; conservation of forest carbon stocks; sustainable management of forests; and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. This list encompasses all possible options for climate change mitigation from forest conservation and management. Countries that can verify contributions, at national level (and under some circumstances at sub-national level), to climate change mitigation would in principle be eligible for REDD+ incentives. The potential impact of REDD+ on arid and low forest cover countries remains to be seen. Key issues include the financial and operational modalities for REDD+ eventually agreed upon by UNFCCC; if the financial benefits from REDD+ activities outweigh the costs to the country and to forest owners/users engaging in REDD+; and the level of technical and managerial expertise that will be required to implement a successful national REDD+ programme. Dryland countries are at a disadvantage compared to countries with dense, moist tropical forests, because the carbon density of their forests is relatively low and the cost/benefit ratio of management interventions for forest carbon conservation and enhancement in drylands is often relatively high.

29. Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions are actions taken by developed and developing countries to contribute to climate change mitigation. Provisions are made for the registration of NAMAs and, in the case of developing countries, financial and technical support would

potentially be made available for the implementation of registered NAMAs. Discussion is still ongoing on whether a REDD+ instrument would stand alone or whether REDD+ action may be considered as NAMAs.

30. The Cancun Adaptation Framework invites parties to enhance actions on adaptation and makes provision for institutional arrangements under UNFCCC to support the framework. The decision recognizes the “urgent and immediate needs of those developing countries that are particularly vulnerable”. The decision does not specify what countries or areas are considered particularly vulnerable, but the preamble to the UNFCCC convention text says: “*Recognizing that low-lying and other small island countries, countries with low-lying coastal, arid and semi-arid areas or areas liable to floods, drought and desertification, and developing countries with fragile mountainous ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change...*” . Drylands are thus highlighted as being particularly important for immediate and concerted action to reduce vulnerabilities and enhance adaptation.

31. UNFCCC’s Cancun decision on adaptation also “*invites Parties to strengthen and, where necessary, establish regional centres and networks, in particular in developing countries, to facilitate and enhance national and regional adaptation actions...*” . As mentioned in the Secretariat Note on climate change adaptation for this session of the NEFRC, FAO is supporting an effort to develop regional/sub-regional cooperation projects on forests, range and climate change adaptation, proposing that the NEFRC play a role in reviewing progress, disseminating knowledge and extending the use of the outcomes from the project(s).

32. At Cancun, UNFCCC made a “*collective commitment to provide new and additional resources, including forestry and investments through international institutions, approaching \$US 30 billion for the period 2010-2012, with a balanced allocation between adaptation and mitigation; funding for adaptation will be prioritized for the most vulnerable developing countries, such as the least developed countries, small island developing States and Africa*”. The Green Climate Fund was thereby established as a financial mechanism under the Convention. The significant features of this decision to NEFRC members are: i) the call for “balanced” financing to support adaptation and mitigation actions (prior focus was weighted more heavily toward mitigation) and that ii) least developed countries and African countries be given priority. Given the recognition of the Cancun Adaptation Framework of the need to support adaptation in the most vulnerable developing countries and the Convention’s recognition of arid and semi-arid areas as being particularly vulnerable to climate change, many of the NEFRC member countries are well positioned to benefit from forthcoming adaptation support through the Green Climate Fund. It behooves countries to formulate national adaptation plans, including provisions for actions in vulnerable forests and rangelands or for vulnerable people dependent on these resources.

33. Of key concern in the on-going negotiations in UNFCCC is the question of the future of the Protocol, the first commitment period of which terminates in 2012. There is a risk of a regulatory gap between the Protocol and a second commitment period or another successor agreement. In relation to dryland zones in developing countries, this might influence afforestation/reforestation (A/R) projects under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). This is unlikely to have much impact in the Near East region, which does not have any A/R CDM projects.

REPORT ON THE FIRST AFRICA DRYLANDS WEEK 2011, 10-17 JUNE 2011, DAKAR, SENEGAL

34. FAO organized in collaboration with over 17 partners including the UNCCD Secretariat, the Millennium Development Goals Center for West and Central Africa, the Earth Institute, the

Government of Senegal, the European Union, the Walloon Region – Wallonie Bruxelles International, the First Africa Drylands Week, in Dakar (Senegal), under the theme “Towards a global vision and partnership on sustainable land and climate risk management for the Sahara and the Sahel”. This Week brought together over 200 scientists, technical specialists, development actors, NGOs, policy makers, and donors to explore the challenges posed by land degradation, desertification, climate change and poverty in the Circum-Sahara region. This first Africa Drylands Week was a contribution to the International year of forests (2011 -declared by the UN), and to the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification. The week was ended with a press conference involving high level experts and personalities, to celebrate the World Day to Combat Desertification (June 17), focused this year on dryland forests - “Forests keep drylands working”.

35. Building on Africa’s successes locally, nationally and regionally, participants stressed that efforts to address the current and future challenges must include an Africa-wide alliance, involving initiatives such as the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI), the CAADP, including MDG-based poverty-reduction strategies aimed at transforming local community livelihoods and environment through best practices such as farmer-managed natural regeneration and other agroforestry systems led by local communities.

36. The event underscored the need for a harmonized strategy for the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel integrating scientific, technical, social, economic and political areas of intervention. The First Africa Drylands Week found that a coalition of stakeholders and organizations should be established to ensure the effective integration of systems of crops, livestock, native fauna, forests, trees, pastoral systems and other woodlands and span rural, urban and peri-urban areas. There are many major successes that have already been achieved providing an excellent basis for scaling up and out. This First Africa Drylands Week demonstrated renewed solidarity and unity throughout the Circum-Saharan region and participants recommended the organization of a Second Africa Drylands Week to maintain the momentum and commitment to transform these ecosystems during the Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification. A statement was developed by participants and is attached in the annex (English and French).