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LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda

TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION

Quito, Ecuador, 29 September – 3 October 2008

INFORMATION ITEMS: PROGRESS IN THE REGIONAL TECHNICAL COOPERATION NETWORKS

Secretariat Note

1. Regional Technical Cooperation Networks in the forestry sector were created by the countries as subsidiary bodies of the Commission (Article IX of LACFC Regulations) in order to enable the search for solutions to common problems at sectoral and intersectoral levels of regional interest, by exchanging experiences and knowledge, promoting programmes and projects and fostering horizontal cooperation.
2. The present note summarizes progress made by the afore-mentioned Networks over the 2006-2008 period.
3. At present the following Regional Networks for technical cooperation are active within the framework of the Commission:

Latin American Technical Cooperation Network of National Parks, Other Protected Areas and Wildlife (REDPARQUES)

4. The Latin American Technical Cooperation Network of National Parks, Other Protected Areas and Wildlife (REDPARQUES) was created in 1983 in compliance with principles proposed at the United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (Buenos Aires, 1978) and ratified at the 25th and 26th FAO Regional Conferences (Montevideo, 1978 and La Habana, 1980, respectively) which brought together Ministers of Agriculture and the Environment from Latin America and the Caribbean.
5. Likewise, in 2008 the REDPARQUES commemorates 25 years of activities and services for professionals responsible for protected areas in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its creation was a response to the need of progress in the management of protected areas in the Region and

willingness of the countries to share experiences and knowledge regarding their natural and cultural heritage.

6. Since 2005, the REDPARQUES has been organizing activities within the framework of the programme “Strengthening of sustainable management of natural resources in protected areas of Latin America” which is financed by the *Organismo Autónomo Parques Nacionales* (OAPN) from Spain.

7. The Programme includes the development of training activities for professionals of the protected areas and national parks systems from the 19 member countries of the Network, in the following priority items which were defined at the Network National Coordinators meeting held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, in December 2005.

- a) Decentralization of governmental management of protected areas.
- b) Protected areas under category VI of the IUCN.
- c) Protected areas and indigenous peoples.
- d) Financing of protected areas.
- e) Protected areas and payment for environmental services.

8. The first three items were developed between 2006 and 2007 through E-forums with the participation of professionals interested in these items, promoting a wide exchange of opinion; seminars/workshops with specialists and professionals from member countries in order to share experiences in these countries; and the development of distance courses in cooperation with the Regional Technical Cooperation for Training in Economic and Agricultural Policies for Rural Development in Latin America-FODEPAL (FAO-Spain). The Programme promoted training and know-how exchange for more than 435 professionals.

9. Technical documents and manuals have been published on these issues which gather the experiences provided by professionals and specialists who participated at the seminars/workshops, as well as case studies from several countries such as Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Peru.

10. In addition, the Programme supported the participation of REDPARQUES as part of the Organization Committee for the Second Latin American Congress of National Parks and Other Protected Areas held at San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina, from 29 September to 6 October, 2007.

11. During 2008 the Network will develop training activities and publish documents regarding the subjects referred to in item 7. A meeting was held with the National Network Coordinators in Puerto Morelos, Mexico, in May 2008 in order to agree on priority lines and strategies for the follow-up to the implementation of the recommendations of the Second Latin American Congress of National Parks and Other Protected Areas, as well as on the future programme of work of the network.

Latin American Technical Cooperation Network on Watershed Management (REDLACH)

12. The Latin American Technical Cooperation Network on Watershed Management (REDLACH) is a technical mechanism created in 1980 with the support of the FAO Regional Office, made up of public, private and autonomous watershed institutions from the countries of the Region which act within the framework of the LACFC. Its purpose has been to progressively increase technological capacity for watershed management based on exchange of experiences, knowledge and cooperation among countries.

13. In order to promote networking to strengthen REDLACH and to evaluate a new structure and a plan of action to be implemented, many technical activities were executed between late

2006 and mid 2008 by the Technical Secretariat in the FAO Regional Office. The results were as follows:

- a) It was agreed, within the framework of the Technical Secretariat, that synergies were to be created inside the FAO Regional Office among the Forestry and Agriculture Departments, to strengthen watershed management in order to promote and improve actions in countries of the Region by making more efficient use and empowering the Network's cooperation mechanism. The Technical Secretariat of the REDLACH was revised and is now coordinated by officers of both Departments, maintaining joint meetings and participating in activities which are scheduled and agreed to by members of the Network.
- b) Organization of an E-forum to discuss strengthening of REDLACH to improve and expand the exchange of information, encourage the execution and follow-up of collaboration and dissemination of experiences on integral watershed management among all countries of the Region. National network coordinators from 19 countries, technicians and specialists from technical, academic and non-governmental organizations associated to research and development of watersheds in the Region participated. In particular, active participation was promoted for those with experience in or interested in associating with the activities of the network for knowledge sharing. A Standard E-Forum Document called "Strengthening the Latin American Watershed Management Network (Draft for Discussion)" was drawn up and a new structure and functions to empower networking in the Region was proposed. Said document has been discussed, adjusted and validated by means of the Forum, updating the *modus operandi* of the Regional Network. Also, it was agreed that the feasibility of organizing the Fourth Latin American Congress on Watershed Management would be discussed as an action to be developed by the network. The Forum's Final Report has been distributed to member countries and participants; the Network's website has also been up-dated.
- c) During this period, the Network published Numbers 4 and 5 of its REDLACH E-newsletter with the publication of over 20 scientific and technical papers selected by a specialized Editorial Committee. Also, several authors and members of the Network which normally disseminate their experiences by means of the Newsletter, have requested that the Technical Secretariat obtains the ISBN number for the same in order to provide greater validation and registration for their publications.
- d) Intensive work was shared with the FAO Forestry Department in Rome in order to finalize and publish the Paper "The New Generation of Watershed Management Programmes and Projects: A resource book for practitioners and local decision-making" (FAO Forestry Paper 150), which was discussed by members of the Network during the electronic forum and subsequently distributed to all countries throughout the Region. The Paper provides a new and updated concept of watershed management and highlights the reproposal of certain management and development principles such as: the role of forests; citizen participation; institutional; interinstitutional coordination and integral management, proposing new challenges to be faced.
- e) In addition, the Network maintains contacts with the Secretariat of the Mountain Partnership Programme hosted by the FAO Forestry Department in Rome, as well as with its forestry and water programme. Through this "Partnership" maintain contacts with the Global Mountain Forum, implemented in Latin America by InfoAndina which is its regional node located together with the International Potato Center in Lima, Peru. Six countries currently participate in the watershed management initiative.

Subregional Forest Fire Networks

14. As a direct result of the Regional Project TCP/RLA/3010 of the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme, cooperation strategies were formulated for Fire Management in the Region. Three Subregional Networks for Forest Fire Management were established and

commissioned in South America, Central America and the Caribbean, and included into the Global Wildland Fire Network (GWFN), established within the framework of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR), as follows:

- The Central American Fire Management Working Group, within the institutional framework of the Technical Forest Committee of the CCAD. The country which presides over the Technical Forest Committee of the CCAD is responsible for coordination of the same.
- The Caribbean Fire Management Working Group, within the institutional framework of the LACFC. Coordination is executed by the Cuban Forest Ranger Department.
- The South American Fire Management Working Group, within the institutional framework of the LACFC. IBAMA/PREVFOGO Wildland Fire Protection Programme from Brazil is responsible for the coordination, and the *Corporación Nacional Forestal* (CONAF for its acronym in Spanish) from Chile is responsible for its joint coordination.

15. The latest LACFC Session held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, requested FAO's support to strengthening the activities of the different Latin American and Caribbean Subregional Networks and recommended that the bi-annual meetings of the Commission report on its progresses.

16. On this respect, by means of the Commission, the FAO Regional Office signed memorandum of understanding with the CCAD in Central America and with IBAMA in Brazil. This has enabled the beginning of a cooperation and exchange process.

17. In addition, these subregional groups were formally recognized by the UN/ISDR Global Wildland Fire Network and respective new spaces on the website of the Global Fire Monitoring Center have been created, publishing the corresponding Subregional and Regional Strategies .

18. The following are the main activities developed over this period:

a) The formulation and execution of an E-learning training course on the Formulation of National Policies for Fire Management and Ecological Rehabilitation in Latin America and the Caribbean, which was provided by the FODEPAL Project in the framework of the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean with financing from the *Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional* (AECI for its acronym in Spanish). The course attended by 30 students from different countries throughout the Region, was included in the framework of the Regional Cooperation Strategy on Fire Management and was taught by specialists from the FAO Regional Office and the *Universidad Federal de Paraná*, Brazil.

b) Over the period, FAO led the preparation of Voluntary Guidelines for Fire Management, a global strategy and a global evaluation of forest fire state-of-the-art, which considered aspects related to the strategies in Latin America and the Caribbean.

c) The South American Network Coordination in charge of PrevFogo, formulated a Biannual Action Plan for the Network with the approval by all other member countries.

d) Considering work and efforts put forth by countries in the Region in order to establish networks and prepare a Regional Strategy for Strengthening Fire Management Cooperation, these networks were invited to participate at the 4th International Wildland Fire Conference held in May 2007 in Seville, Spain, where their respective work strategies and activities progress were presented. During the conference, FAO launched the Fire Management Actions Alliance, a global partnership to implement the Voluntary Guidelines and enhance international cooperation in fire management. Additionally, a meeting of coordinators of the three subregional networks where agreements for regional cooperation were established was held.

e) Two sub-regional workshops “Towards Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Fire Management” were organized within the framework of the Caribbean Network in November 2007. These were held in Cuba and in Trinidad & Tobago in order to discuss adaptation and implementation in Caribbean countries.

f) A knowledge sharing programme was executed with FAO’s support in 2007 between IBAMA and CONAF. At that time, a professional from PrevFogo paid a one-week technical visit to Chile in order to agree on aspects related to subregional network coordination, advance development of a bilateral cooperation agreement as well as to get acquainted with initiatives on methodologies used by the CONAF Forest Fire Protection Programme in the areas of monitoring, fire brigade establishment training courses, equipment used to fight forest fires and environmental education strategies.

g) In 2007, with FAO’s support and within the framework of the South American Fire Management Network, a Peruvian specialist supported Bolivia in the preparation of a study and assessment of forest fire status. Similar request for assistance was made by Paraguay.

h) In March 2008, PrevFogo initiated a technical cooperation process with Bolivia on “Forest Fire Alert and Monitoring Systems” and formulated a bilateral cooperation project. Subsequently, in May 2008, a team of Prevfogo instructors visited Colombia to deliver a training course on forest fire research. Finally, a videoconference on “Public Administration of Enforcement, Prescribed Burning, Wildland Fires and Agricultural Burning” was held in June 2008 with the participation of Brazil (IBAMA), Mexico (CONAFOR) and Argentina (Pollution Control and Compliance Secretariat) in June 2008 with coordination by Bolivia's Agrarian Superintendency and the same was disseminated to all Network member countries.

i) In June 2008, the *Universidad Nacional de Asunción*, together with the Secretariat of the Environment (SEAM for its acronym in Spanish) of Paraguay and The Nature Conservancy of Paraguay hosted the First Seminar-Workshop on Forest Fire Management, Monitoring and Control in Paraguay. The FAO Regional Office was invited to participate in the framework of the Regional Fire Management Strategy. The event has been disseminated throughout the South America Cooperation Network.

19. Finally, at the 30th FAO Regional Conference held in Brasilia, Brazil in April 2008, the countries highlighted the importance of LACFC developing lines of work for the prevention of forest fires.

20. Although initial advances and achievements have been highly positive, there is still a need to promote activities in order to ensure that the generated dynamic is not lost. Within this framework, the Commission is concerned by the fact that the international community has reduced its financial and technical support for forest fire management in the Region.

Southern Cone Countries Invasive Species Network

21. Aware of problems created by invasive forest species and based on countries' interest to regionally organize themselves in order to support the fight against effects of the same, several regions of the world (Asian Pacific, North America, Africa and the Near East) have come together and established different information exchange networks and working groups on invasive forest species. It is believed that these networks have already started to improve domestic and regional environmental sensitization, including the problem of invasive forest species, the development of databases regarding the issue, facilitating information exchange and improving institutional capacity of member countries.

22. At the 24th Session of LACFC member countries expressed their concern about increasing threats for the forest and trees outside the forests due to factors such as climate change which can

influence movement and the establishment of new pests, insects and diseases. The Commission recommended to discuss this item during the LACFC Executive Committee meeting held in Quito, Ecuador in June 2007. The Executive Committee also recommended that a meeting of experts be organized in order to discuss regional cooperation and strategies in the fight for forest health and against the problem of invasive forest species in the Region.

23. For this purpose FAO organized a meeting of experts (Asunción, 9-11 September 2008), with the support of the Paraguayan Forest Service and in collaboration with Association Guyra of Paraguay, with the participation of the government and private forestry sector of Brazil (South Brazil), Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Bolivia as member of the Southern Cone Plant Health Committee (COSAVE for its acronym in Spanish). The regional meeting established the Southern Cone Countries Network on Invasive Forest Species” in order to improve and enhance integral management of forest pests in participating countries. In addition, the Network will act as an access mechanism for quality databases for researchers and decision-makers, which in turn will make decision-making and the formulation of forestry policies more efficient. The success of the Network will depend on whether actors share and interchange information and data on forest pest management among themselves and with other actors on a regular basis.

24. The experts meeting identified the mandate, determined who would participate in the network and what its geographic coverage would be. In addition, the experts established information dissemination methods and prepared a working plan. The network will be responsible for distributing information and drawing up a budget.