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REPORT

Rome,
Italy,
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FAO Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources

Fifteenth Session

FO:FGR/15/Rep.

**Report of the Fifteenth Session of the
FAO PANEL OF EXPERTS ON FOREST GENE RESOURCES**

Rome, Italy

9 – 11 December 2008

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome, 2009**

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ACRONYMS¹

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity (Canada)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (Italy)
ICRAF	World Agroforestry Centre of the CGIAR (Kenya)
IUCN	World Conservation Union (Switzerland)
IUFRO	International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (Austria)

¹ Location of headquarters is given in brackets.

FAO PANEL OF EXPERTS ON FOREST GENE RESOURCES

REPORT OF THE FIFTEENTH SESSION

Rome, Italy 9 – 11 December 2008

I. INTRODUCTION

The FAO Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources was established in accordance with the directives of the Fourteenth Session of the FAO Conference (November 1967), which read as follows:

"244. Forest Tree Genetic Resources. The Conference requested the Director-General to take into account Recommendation N° 62 of document C67/AG/FO/1 in formulating the Programme of Work and Budget 1970-71. It recognized that, as development proceeds in the less as well as in the more advanced areas of the world, the reserves of genetic variation stored in the natural forests have been or are being displaced on an increasing scale. Moreover, efforts to explore and collect forest genetic resources were, on a world scale, inadequate and inadequately concerted.

245. The Conference requested the Director-General to establish a Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources to help plan and coordinate FAO's efforts to explore, utilize and conserve the gene resources of forest trees and, in particular, help prepare a detailed short-term programme and draft long-term programme for FAO's action in this field and to provide information to Member Governments."

The Director-General established the Panel in 1968. A list of current members of the Panel is shown in Appendix 1.

The Panel held Sessions as follows:

Session N°	Date	Place	Year of Report
1	October 1968	Rome, Italy	1969
2	March 1971	Macon, Georgia, USA	1972
3	May 1974	Rome, Italy	1974
4	March 1977	Canberra, Australia	1977
5	December 1981	Rome, Italy	1984
6	December 1985	Rome, Italy	1988
7	December 1989	Rome, Italy	1990
8	June 1993	Rome, Italy	1994
9	October 1995	Rome, Italy	1996
10	September 1997	Rome, Italy	1998
11	September 1999	Rome, Italy	2000
12	November 2001	Rome, Italy	2002
13	November 2003	Rome, Italy	2004
14	January 2007	Rome, Italy	2007

The Fifteenth Session of the Panel was held at FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, from 9 to 11 December 2008.

Participants in the Fifteenth Session of the FAO Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources were:

1. Panel members

Mr. P.Y. Kageyama	Brazil
Mr. A. Nikiema	Burkina Faso
Mr. Wang Huoran	China
Mr. C. Navarro	Costa Rica
Mr. F. Asmar	Lebanon (last minute apologies)
Mr. D. Baskaran K.	Malaysia
Mr. S. Pouli	Samoa
Mr. W. Dvorak	United States of America

Apologies received from

Mr. B. Kigomo	Kenya
Mr. L. Ackzell	Sweden

2. Observers

Mr. T. Christophersen	CBD Secretariat
Ms. C. García-Fernández	Bioversity International
Ms. H.R. Jamnadass	ICRAF
Mr. Y. El-Kassaby	IUFRO

3. Resource persons

Mr. J. Koskela	Bioversity International
Mr. Per Rudebjer	Bioversity International
Ms. B. Vinceti	Bioversity International
Mr. F. Ducci	Istituto Sperimentale per la Selvicoltura, Italy
Mr. T. Skrøppa	Norwegian Genetic Resource Centre
Ms. C. Palmberg-Lerche	Forest Genetic Resources Expert

4. Secretariat

Mr. O. Souvannavong	FAO, Forest Management Division
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Mr. J. Heino, Assistant Director-General, Forestry Department, opened the meeting, Mr. J.A. Prado, Director, Forest Management Division, Mr. J. Carle, Chief, Forest Resources Development Service, Mr. M. Achouri, Chief, Forest Conservation Service, and Mr. A. Toledo, Secretariat of the CGRFA, attended parts of the Session.

The Panel unanimously elected Mr. Daniel Baskaran Krishnapillay of Malaysia Chairman and Mr. William Dvorak of United States of America Vice-Chairman. The Agenda adopted is shown in Appendix 2.

II. PROGRESS SINCE THE 14TH SESSION OF THE PANEL (January 2007)

The Panel was informed that the FAO Forestry Department was engaged in a participatory process to develop a new strategy for forests and forestry in order to better respond to country needs. The strategic objective was the sustainable management of forests and trees, which is based upon achieving six priority organizational results. Forest genetic resources activities will mainly contribute to two organizational results: “Sustainable management of forests and trees is more broadly adopted, leading to reductions in deforestation and forest degradation and increased contributions of forests and trees to improve livelihoods and mitigate climate change” and “Environmental values of forests and forestry are better realized; strategies for conserving forest biodiversity, adapting to climate change, rehabilitating degraded lands, and managing water and wildlife resources are effectively implemented”.

The Panel was presented with a summary of FAO activities related to forest genetic resources and biodiversity during the period 2007-2008.

Silva Mediterranea

A regional workshop was organized in June 2007, in Arezzo and Rome, in collaboration with the Italian Agricultural Research Centre, to review the status of conifer species and provenance trials established by *Silva Mediterranea* networks. Noting that these multi-locational trials, established with a common set of species and provenances, had regained interest for research in relation to climate change, the workshop agreed on a work plan to update the information and data available on the trials in the different countries. A database was being established to facilitate information sharing and research planning among countries.

At the 20th Session of *Silva Mediterranea*, held in February 2008, in Sofia (Bulgaria), the Working Group on Mediterranean Conifers was replaced by a new Working Group with a scope expanded to Mediterranean Forest Genetic Resources, coordinated by Italy. A programme of work was being finalised by the Group.

Biological diversity

Collaboration with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) had been very active. FAO hosted a meeting of the the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group on the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity of the CBD, in May 2007, and the 13th Session of its SBSTTA in February 2008. Several side events were organised by FAO during the 19th Meeting of the Conference of Parties of the CBD, in May 2008, in Bonn (Germany), including one on sustainable use of forest biodiversity. The COP welcomed the preparation of the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources.

A study on conservation of biodiversity in production forests in Central Africa had been undertaken.

Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and preparation of the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources

At its Eleventh Session, in June 2007, the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) acknowledged the urgency to conserve and sustainably utilize forest genetic resources to support food security, poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability, and approved the inclusion of forest genetic resources in its Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW). A **State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources** Report should be prepared and presented to the Fourteenth Session of the Commission in 2013. It requested the Secretariat to prepare a scoping paper on the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources for review at its Twelfth Session in 2009, in which existing information sources should be analysed, main gaps in coverage identified, and details of a proposed work programme and budget outlined. The CGRFA recommended that the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and the FAO Regional Forestry Commissions be fully involved in the preparation of State of the World Report, and that work be undertaken in synergy with relevant regional and global

programmes and instruments, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Forum on Forests.

The CGRFA agreed that a scoping paper on key issues in forest genetic resources, Analysis of key issues in forest genetic resources, for The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources, and the preparatory process would be presented and discussed at its Twelfth Regular Session (October 2009), with a view to considering The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources at the Commission's Fourteenth Regular Session (2013).

The document, Analysis of key issues in forest genetic resources, for The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources, will present:

- an analysis of key issues and information gaps in forest genetic resources;
- a proposal for the structure and contents of The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources, including an indicative list of thematic studies;
- a proposal for the preparatory process leading to The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources, including an indicative time-table and cost estimates for extra-budgetary resources required in support of the preparatory process; and
- a list of potential partners FAO should seek cooperation with in preparing The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources.

The Thirty Fourth Session of the FAO Conference welcomed the MYPOW adopted by the CGRFA.

All FAO Regional Forestry Commissions, organised between February and October 2008, were informed of the plan to prepare a SOW-FGR report.

In May 2008, the ninth meeting of the Conference of Parties of the CBD welcomed the preparation of the SOW-FGR Report by FAO.

Regional consultations/workshops were organised to get and consolidate national and regional inputs for the SOW-FGR Report, including proposals for the structure and contents of the report and the process for its preparation. Synergy with other initiatives was optimised for each event.

Latin America: the SOW-FGR process was presented and discussed in a meeting of the Latin American Forest Genetic Resources Programme (LAFORGEN), organised by Bioversity International, with the support of Spain, in CATIE, Costa Rica, 22-27 September 2008, with the participation of members of the Panel on Forest Gene Resources from the Region.

Asia-Pacific: a regional workshop was organised in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 14-15 October 2008, in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Association of Forest Research Institutions (APAFRI), Asia-Pacific Forest Genetic Resources Programme (APFORGEN), Bioversity International and the Forestry Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM), with the participation of Asia-Pacific members of the Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources.

Africa: two sub-regional workshops will be organised in collaboration with Bioversity International, ICRAF, the Sub-Saharan Africa Forest Genetic Resources Programme (SAFORGEN) and the National Environment and Agricultural Research Institute (INERA) of Burkina Faso, with the participation of African members of the Panel on Forest Gene Resources, in Nairobi, Kenya, in January 2009, for Eastern and Southern Africa and in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in February 2009, for Central and Western Africa.

Inputs from Europe would be obtained through the close and regular cooperation with the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN) in collaboration with Bioversity International.

Inputs from North America would be provided by the Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources of the North American Forestry Commission (NAFC).

Activities of other institutions

Representatives of partner institutions reported on activities which had taken place since the last Session.

III. DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussions concentrated on key features and elements for the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources, in particular, the scope of the report, its outline and contents, and a tentative list of background thematic studies.

The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources

The Panel was informed on the inputs and comments by the regional consultations concerning the scope, contents of the report, as well as issues and trends that should be addressed in thematic studies.

Scope of the report

Taking into account comments recommendations made in this regard by regional consultations, the Panel noted that to perform all their functions at global and local levels, in very diverse ecological, economic and social conditions, for a wide range of categories of users, forest and tree resources were managed in different types of systems from natural forest management, industrial plantations to agroforestry systems. Therefore broad understanding of forest genetic resources should be adopted, recognising regional specificities and the diversity of needs of user groups.

Outline and contents

At its last Session, the Panel had prepared a proposed outline for the structure of the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources, which was presented in regional consultations for comments, and inputs concerning the scope of the chapters as well as issues they should address and elements they should include.

Integrating the inputs from the regional consultations, the Panel elaborated the structure and contents of the report, synthesised in a table in Appendix 3 giving the title, scope, and issues/elements of the chapters.

Tentative list of background thematic studies

Trends and issues affecting forest genetic resources, at global, regional and local levels, identified by regional consultations, were presented to the Panel. This input served as a starting point for the discussion and a framing work, which resulted a proposed list detailed in Appendix 4, giving the rationale and scope of each study.

Proposed process and timetable

The secretariat presented the proposed process of preparation of the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources (Appendix 5). The Panel took note of the time table and did not have particular comments at this stage.

General discussion and recommendations

As part of its discussion, the Panel took note of the important milestone achieved where the CGRFA had at its Twelfth Session approved in principle the preparation of the State of the World Forest Genetic Resources.

The Panel recalled the recommendations made at its 14th Session and noted that these recommendations were all still relevant. The Panel therefore reiterated its recommendation that FAO

should intensify its action in support to member countries in the management of forest genetic resources and that adequate resources be allocated from all identifiable sources to support the FAO programmes in forest genetic resources.

The Panel also emphasized that forests and sustainable forest management have a significant strategic role in achieving poverty alleviation, sustainable livelihood, economic development, combating land degradation, sustainable bio-energy production, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. Forest genetic resources have a key role in this framework as genetic diversity is the basis for adaptation and resilience to climate change. The Panel recommended that appropriate attention be given to forest genetic resources in FAO programmes and projects to address climate change and other global challenges.

APPENDIX 1
MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL OF EXPERTS ON FOREST GENE RESOURCES
Period 1 December 2006 - 30 November 2009

BRAZIL BRÉSIL BRASIL	P.Y. Kageyama Professor Department of Forest Sciences Escola Superior de Agricultura “Luiz de Queiroz” University of Sao Paulo Pádua Dias 11 13418-900 Paracicaba - SP
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KENYA	B. Kigomo Deputy Director Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) P.O. Box 20412 Nairobi

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MALAYSIA MALAISIE MALASIA	D. Baskaran Krishnapillay Advisor – Office of the Director-General Forest Research Institute of Malaysia Kepong 52109 Kuala Lumpur
SAMOA	T. Pouli Head of Research and Utilisation Section Forestry Division Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Meteorology Apia
SWEDEN SUÈDE SUECIA	L. Ackzell Senior Advisor, International Affairs Swedish Federation of Forest Owners Franzengatan 6 S-105 33 Stockholm
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ÉTATS-UNIS D'AMÉRIQUE ESTADOS UNIDOS DE AMÉRICA	W. Dvorak Director of Camcore, Research Professor of Forestry Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources North Carolina State University Campus Box 7626, 1110 Grinnells Labs Raleigh, NC 27695-7626

APPENDIX 2
AGENDA OF THE FAO PANEL OF EXPERTS ON FOREST GENE RESOURCES
Fifteenth Session
Rome, Italy, 9 – 11 December 2008

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Progress since the 14th Session of the Panel (January 2007)
5. The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources Report Preparation Process:
 - (i) Content of the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources Report
 - (ii) Indicative List of thematic background studies
 - (iii) Proposed process including partnerships, indicative timetable and budget
6. Any Other Matters
7. Closure of the Meeting

APPENDIX 3: Report on the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources - Outline

Proposed Outline by the Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources, with inputs from regional consultations

<i>Chapter Title</i>	<i>Scope of Chapter</i>	<i>Issues and elements</i>
1 Overview of Forest Genetic Resources	Definition of FGR - their value and importance – Between and within species diversity - Threats, opportunities and challenges	Characteristics of FGR, differences and similarities between trees and other organisms – Context of FGR management - Main forest management systems (including agroforestry systems) – Concept of SFM - Economic, environmental, social and cultural values of FGR – Role of forest genetic diversity in ecosystem resistance, resilience, and vulnerability - Threats and risk status – causes of genetic erosion
2 The State of Forest Genetic Resources Management	FGR conservation and management – Strategies - Programmes - Implementation	Characterisation of genetic diversity - Conservation <i>in situ</i> and <i>ex situ</i> , genetic improvement programmes and their implementation – Delivery/deployment systems – Role of public and private sectors – Social and economic value of conservation and breeding activities
3 Trends Affecting the Forest Sector and their Implications on Forest Genetic Resources	Assessment of impact of global trends in FGR and their management	Internal and external drivers – Environmental, economic, social, political trends and outlook - Positive and negative implications - Threats and opportunities
4 The State of Capacities	Capacities of stakeholders and institutions involved in FGR management and conservation	Infrastructures, institutional and human capacities – Public and private sectors, including at local level – Capacities in: development and implementation of FGR conservation and management strategies, tree genetic improvement, information sharing and networking, mainstreaming FGR management into forest management and broader international, regional and national policies and programmes – Training capacity
5 Institutional and Policy Framework	Institutional, policy and legal framework for FGR management at national, regional and global level	Institutions responsible for FGR management, including coordination mechanisms – Legal framework and traditional use rights in FGR management - FGR in national forest programmes and other national strategies and policies (poverty reduction, biodiversity, land degradation and desertification, climate change, etc) – International and regional agreements/treaties – Frameworks for transfer of forest reproductive material
6 Status of Knowledge – Current and Emerging Technologies	Current knowledge and gaps in characterisation and improvement – Current and emerging methodologies and technologies	Characterisation – Technologies for conservation – Marker-assisted selection – Propagation and dissemination technology and methods - Participatory tree domestication – Applications of biotechnologies – Challenge of combining biotechnology tools and traditional tree improvement
7 Needs, Challenges and Required Responses for the Future	Synthesis and recommendation for action	Syntheses of needs and challenges identified in previous chapters – Priorities for future action

APPENDIX 4: The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources Report
Tentative List of Thematic Background Studies

Proposed by the Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources, with inputs from regional consultations

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Rationale</i>	<i>Scope</i>
1 Indicators of forest genetic diversity, erosion and vulnerability	Lack of indicators at global and national levels that are scientifically sound, realistic and policy relevant, for defining baseline and for monitoring	Review of existing knowledge, experience and efforts to suggest the way forward to develop appropriate indicators
2 Understanding genetic diversity of tropical species in natural forests	Knowledge on life-history traits and genetic diversity is lacking or inadequate for most species to define and implement conservation strategies	Review and syntheses of available knowledge and experience. Proposal of research programmes to improve knowledge on genetic diversity of priority species.
3 New technologies and approaches to support conservation of FGR	Many forest species are difficult to conserve <i>in situ</i> and/or <i>ex situ</i> , because of their biological characteristics (<i>i.a.</i> recalcitrant-intermediate seeds) and management context	Review of knowledge and experience. Assessment of technologies available and their effectiveness for conservation <i>in situ</i> and <i>ex situ</i> of genetic resources of priority species, and suggest the way forward
4 Use and transfer of FGR	Transfer and exchange are regulated under international agreements, which, in some cases, can result in constraints for programmes to improve knowledge on, and to develop FGR	Review of legal and phytosanitary frameworks, schemes for the transfer of reproductive material, their implementation and impact on transfer of FGR. Recommendations to facilitate safe movement of FGR
5 FGR role in adaptation to biotic and abiotic factors, with a focus on climate change	The role of FGR is generally acknowledged, but needs to be better characterised	FGR and vulnerability of species to biotic and abiotic events and process. Resilience and resistance. FGR in mitigation and adaptation to climate change
6 FGR in relation to bio-energy	Development of bio-energies brings to FGR management both threats and opportunities, which need to be reviewed and assessed	With focus on FGR, different types of bio-energy – current situation and opportunities offered by new technologies. Use/improvement of new species. Role of private sector; public-private partnerships
7 Use of FGR in decentralised development for poverty alleviation and livelihood improvement	Decentralised/local management of forest resources is gaining importance, involving new approaches and technologies in management of FGR. The experience gained in this new area is useful to synthesise	Experience and results in local, participatory conservation and improvement of species for different uses. Analyses of successes and failures. Role and capacity of stakeholders (public and private sectors, communities, etc). Identification of needs and gaps.
8 Biotechnologies	Biotechnologies are a quickly evolving field. Their application and potential contribution to FGR conservation and management should be regularly reviewed/updated.	Review of current and future developments and trends in biotechnologies and their application to conservation, management and improvement of FGR (include, but not limited to genetic engineering – threats and opportunities)

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Rationale</i>	<i>Scope</i>
9 Effects of silvicultural practices on genetic diversity	It is generally acknowledged that silvicultural practices influence the genetic diversity of the species. Knowledge available on some species and silvicultural systems should be synthesised and efforts expanded to cover a broader array of key species and situations.	Review and synthesise available experience and knowledge. Identification of gaps. Proposals for action concerning key species and management systems.
10 Use of native species	There is a renewed interest for the use of native species in <i>i.a.</i> ecosystem and landscape restoration, agroforestry systems and spatial combination with high yielding planted forests for maintenance of overall biodiversity. The experience gained is useful to review and synthesise for further development.	Review and syntheses of experience and results. Analysis of successes and failures in the different systems. Definition of best practices. Identification of needs and gaps.
11 History of use and management of forest resources and impact on FGR	There are many cases, where geographical distribution and genetic patterns of forest species were influenced by human activities and policies, which are interesting to present to illustrate the historical dimension of FGR management (contribution to Chapter 1).	Case studies on <i>i.a.</i> human pressures on Mediterranean forests and their impact on FGR, African agroforestry parklands, <i>Pinus pinea</i> , etc.
12 Trends in management of FGR by the private/corporate sector	The role of the private sector (from local communities and smallholders to corporate companies) in management of FGR is increasing. Current and potential impact of this trend should be analysed to define actions needed.	Corporate priorities and policies and their consequences: <i>i.a.</i> short term vs. long term, productivity vs. diversity, short life span, volatility of corporate investment and potential threats due to discontinuity. Management of FGR by local communities. Capacity. Role of public sector. Recommendations.

APPENDIX 5
The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources Report
Indicative Timetable for the preparation process

<i>Time Frame</i>	<i>Processes</i>
2009	<p>COFO: Consider the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources Report proposal including a proposed structure, a tentative list of background thematic studies, a proposed preparation process with indicative timetable and budget.</p> <p>CGRFA: Consider the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources Report proposal including a proposed structure, a tentative list of background thematic studies, a proposed preparation process with indicative timetable and budget.</p> <p>Consider establishment of an Intergovernmental Technical Working Group (ITWG) on Forest Genetic Resources</p>
2010	<p><u>FAO:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite countries to nominate a National Focal Point to prepare country reports for the SOW-FGR - Send letter to National Focal Points on the preparatory process leading to Country Reports; - Assist countries to prepare their Country Reports, in collaboration with partners and regional networks, including through Global and Regional workshops for National Focal Points - Further develop the FAO global information system on forest genetic resources (REFORGEN) - Initiate preparation of thematic studies <p><u>Countries:</u> Initiate preparation Country Reports (submission deadline March 2012)</p> <p><u>International Organizations:</u> Initiate submissions Reports on their activities, data and possible areas of cooperation in relation to the <i>State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources</i></p> <p>Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources or ITWG (if established): Review progress in preparation of the SOW-FGR</p>
2011	COFO and CGRFA: Review progress in preparation of the SOW-FGR
2012	<p><u>FAO:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalize gathering Country Reports and Reports from International Organizations - Prepare Draft <i>State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources</i> <p>Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources or ITWG (if established):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review Draft SOW-FGR Report - Review possible follow-up to the first SOW-FGR Report
2013	<p>COFO and CGRFA - PRESENTATION OF THE SOW-FGR Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider follow-up to the first <i>State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources</i>, including holding regional consultations to identify priority areas for action

