

December 2015



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
Alimentación y la
Agricultura

E

ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY COMMISSION

TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION

Clark Freeport Zone, Pampanga, Philippines, 22-26 February 2016

BUILDING MOMENTUM FOR COMMUNITY BASED FORESTRY AND FOREST FARM PRODUCER ORGANIZATIONS

SECRETARIAT NOTE

Background

1. In 2015, five dialogues were convened regionally in Africa, Asia and the Americas, in which indigenous peoples, communities and family smallholders from widely diverse communities, forests and socio-political contexts participated or were represented. These included: The African Farm/Family Forestry Producer Organizations Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, in June; the Asia Community Forestry Network Workshop convened in the Philippines in July. The Pre-World Forestry Congress regional meeting on people and forests convened by RECOFTC in Thailand in July; Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development regional consultation in August also in Thailand; the Mesoamerican Alliance of People and Forests (AMPB) exchange on community land and territorial management, forest governance, and market linkages in Mexico and also in August; and, in September in Durban a meeting of the International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of Tropical Forests (IAITPTF). Statements and declarations were produced by each event.

2. The aim of these dialogues was to build a common agenda on community-based forestry, tenure rights and social justice that could be used to influence outcomes at the 14th World Forestry Congress (WFC) and the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP21) in 2015.

3. In the two days immediately before the start of the WFC, 114 people representing forest and farm producer organizations, indigenous peoples' organizations, family smallholders, international agencies, governments and donors convened in Durban, South Africa, for an event titled "Building Momentum for Community-based Forestry and Forest and Farm Producer Organizations".

For reasons of economy, this document is produced in a limited number of copies. Delegates and observers are kindly requested to bring it to the meetings and to refrain from asking for additional copies, unless strictly indispensable.

Research and publications

4. Research and publications released just before or during the WFC helped “build momentum for action”. These included: the Finance Alliance for Sustainable Trade (FAST) survey of investors and investment in sustainable tropical forestry: an edition of *ETFRN News*, produced by the European Tropical Forest Research Network: “Effective forest and farm producer organizations”; and *Democratizing Forest Business*, published by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF), FAO, RECOFTC and Forest Connect.

40 years of community-based forestry

5. For a better understanding of the extent and effectiveness of community-based forestry (CBF) globally and regionally FAO is currently completing a study, which will be published in 2016. It indicates that, after 40 years of CBF, the decentralization and devolution of forest management functions are now widespread, and there has been a substantial transformation in forest tenure and a significant increase in land under CBF. Of the 2.6 billion hectares of forest assessed in the study, about 26 percent (689 million hectares) is under local management.

6. Findings show that CBF is expanding and has often improved the condition of the forest while increasing social, human and institutional capital. After 40 years, however, it is still underperforming due to the lack of an enabling environment, and it is yet to realize its full potential.

7. Preconditions for successful CBF include: secure tenure; an enabling regulatory framework; strong governance; viable technology; adequate market knowledge and access; and a supportive bureaucratic culture. All these preconditions must be addressed to ensure that CBF delivers on its potential. A continuing challenge for CBF is to obtain the necessary political will to make it work.

Refining a collective message – the Durban Declaration

8. Based on these previous events and studies, the participants of the “Building Momentum” event agreed on a final declaration: “We know the forests and the forests know us” which was widely circulated at the WFC and formed a part of the Congress' final messaging. Specifically the declaration urges governments and other major actors to recognize the following, and to take the necessary corresponding action:

- Indigenous Peoples, local communities and family smallholders, which government and non-government actors, and international organizations must respect and secure, in accordance with all human rights covenants and treaties, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security.
- The enormous forest management potential of community-based forestry by Indigenous Peoples, local communities and family smallholders, which will only be unleashed if: communities have formal land titles that fully respect traditional institutions and customary laws and are negotiated in fully participatory ways, as well as full and inalienable rights of access, use, management, exclusion and alienation in their forests, lands and waters in their territories; the rules and regulations governing these rights are subject to principles of self-determination; and communities have access to sufficient technical, financial, legal and material resources to fully realize their rights.

- The strength and importance of customary authorities, with which governments, corporations and other outside actors must conduct legitimate processes to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and family smallholders when making decisions that affect the forests, ancestral lands or territories of such communities...
- The obstacles faced by forest and farm producers and their locally controlled enterprises in accessing markets, such as legislative barriers, lack of technical support, poor market information, insufficient finance, weak bargaining power in relation to big corporations, unfair competition from state forests and large corporations, and bureaucratic hurdles such as those related to registration, harvesting, transport and marketing is essential for levelling the playing field with corporate competitors.
- The unrecognized huge investment made by Indigenous Peoples, local communities and family smallholders in the sustainable management of their forests, lands and waters as cooperatives, community associations and producer groups, which require support to increase their access to finance and investment and their power in the market so as to capture more value from value chains.
- The need for governments and corporations to engage with Indigenous Peoples, local communities and family smallholders, and their umbrella organizations, through equitable partnerships, to: recognize and uphold sustainable traditional livelihood practices; provide technical and financial support for production, adding value to products, improving transportation, and obtaining greater access to markets for their products; and meet legal needs and effectively enforce laws.
- The need for governments and corporations to engage with Indigenous Peoples, local communities and family smallholders, and their umbrella organizations, through equitable partnerships.
- The need for governments and others to support Indigenous Peoples, local communities and family smallholders in developing capacity: by supporting training in technical and entrepreneurial skills; by providing access to research and appropriate technologies and by providing effective capacity development and support services for forest and farm producer organizations.
- The financial credibility of smallholders and forest and farm producer organizations, which must be equal partners in the participatory design, implementation and monitoring of affordable financial policies and instruments. Investors and governments must engage effectively with smallholders and producer organizations, acknowledging and building on their realities (formal, informal and customary), such as the lack of security and collateral.
- The absolute necessity of, and the value in, involving Indigenous Peoples, local communities and family smallholders, including women and youth, in national, regional and global policy development and implementation in managing forest landscapes, thereby meeting local needs and generating global benefits.

Points for discussion and consideration

9. The Commission is invited to endorse the Durban Declaration highlighting the importance of community-based forestry and forest and farm producer organizations in order to achieve food security and nutrition, respond to climate change, conserve biodiversity, reduce poverty and thereby contribute to the SDGs with a view to formulating recommendations to the 23rd session of the Committee on Forestry in 2016 to further strengthen FAO's work in this area.

10. The Commission may wish to invite countries to:

- take appropriate actions to respond to the call by Indigenous People, local communities and family smallholders by strengthening tenure security, improving access to markets, services and finance, building capacity and improving participation in policy making;
- fully acknowledge and incorporate Indigenous People, local communities and family smallholders into national action plans for climate change and for the implementation of SDGs

11. The Commission may wish to recommend that FAO supports countries by:

- continuing putting emphasis on social forestry and forest and farm producers in its programme of work;
- providing technical support for mainstreaming community-based forestry in forest policies and their implementation;