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European Forestry Commission

Thirty-eighth session

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Item 8(a) of the provisional agenda

FAO European Forestry Commission matters

**Follow-up to the decisions of the 37th Session of the
European Forestry Commission**

Follow-up to the decisions of the 37th Session of the European Forestry Commission

Note by the secretariat

1. The 37th Session of the Commission made several requests and recommendations to FAO. This document presents the actions taken to implement these requests and recommendations. These actions complement the ones presented in agenda item 6 (a) "Integrated Program of Work 2014-2017" of the ECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work (document: ECE/TIM/2015/7; FO: EFC/2015/7), and agenda item 6 (d) "Rovaniemi Action Plan implementation" (document: ECE/TIM/2015/INF.4; FO: EFC/15/INF.4).

Recommendations/Action Items	Follow up activities by FAO
<p>1. Strengthen work on boreal forests and suggested to continue reinforcing the focus on the landscape approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAO is developing a full size GEF project on "Russian Forests +: Enabling the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks and forest biodiversity conservation through sustainable forest management". The project is covering boreal forests in Russia and aiming, among others, to build the capacity of stakeholders to mitigate climate change, protect forest biodiversity, and improves land condition and productivity by adopting climate smart forest inventory, monitoring, and forest

	<p>zoning/management promoting sustainable forest management policies and practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAO is continuing to introduce landscape approach to forest and other lands through the implementation of full size GEF projects: (i) Sustainable management of mountainous forest and land resources under climate change conditions in Kyrgyzstan (GCP/KYR/010/GFF, ongoing project)”. Funded by GEF with USD 6.1 million; contribution to the sustainable management and enhanced productivity of mountainous silvo-agro-pastoral ecosystems and improved mountain livelihoods, with sustained flow of ecosystem services and enhanced carbon stocks at landscape level; (ii) Sustainable Land Management and Climate Friendly Agriculture in Turkey (GCP/TUR/055/GFF, ongoing project). Funded by GEF with USD 6.4 million; improving sustainability of agriculture and forest land-use management at landscape level through low-carbon technologies with benefits in land degradation, climate change, biodiversity conservation and forest productivity, and (iii) Integrated Natural Resources Management in Drought-Prone and Salt-Affected Agricultural Production Systems in Central Asia and Turkey (CACILM2). <p>The pipeline project will receive funding by GEF of up to USD 10.7 million.</p>
<p>2. Translate of SFM tools (SFM toolbox, voluntary guidelines and wild fire related risk) into other languages and for countries to make use of them as appropriate.</p> <p>3. Strengthen the work on the implementation of the voluntary guidelines on tenure as well as the development of the SMF toolbox</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Toolbox was developed in response to the request of the Committee on Forestry (see Annex I). • FAO is working in close collaboration with member countries and relevant organizations to prepare a set of voluntary guidelines on national forest monitoring, which takes into account the requirements for REDD+ reporting and is in line with the principles and goals of the Forest Instrument (See progress report, Annex II). • FAO is preparing The State of the World’s Forest Genetic Resources (SoW-FGR) including a synthesis paper on priority areas for action based on the information gathered for the SoW-FGR

	(See progress report, Annex III).
<p>4. Celebration of the International Day of Forests</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production and global distribution of 2 IDF video spots on the themes of “Forests Climate Change” in 2015; Multiple functions of forests in 2014; in 8 languages, distributed to Euronews, Deutsche Welle, France 24, CNN, Al Jazeera. • Dedicated websites with images and events from around the world, 3 languages were created. • Publication of documents linked with the theme of the day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Forests and carbon stocks, 2015 (ii) Satellite-based data on forest resources, 2014 • Organization of special events at FAO Rome headquarters, web-streamed in six languages • In 2015, with high-level speakers from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Ministry of Forestry, Turkey • In 2014, presentations and statements from key resource partners and countries, including Brazil, European Union, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, United States, Russian Federation, Belgium • Press releases – impact: over 200 articles in both 2014 and 2015 • An online IDF interactive forest quiz, was created in 7 languages in 2015 • IDF whatsapp message was launched in 3 languages in 2015

<p>5. The Commission took note of the key messages and recommendations from the Conference and the commitment by FAO to address the issue of forests and food security in a cross sectoral manner in its new Strategic Framework, noting the unique opportunities offered by the socio-economic conditions in the region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the context of the Living Standards Measurement Study- Integrated Surveys on Agriculture (LSMS-ISA) a forestry module has been prepared that includes food security issues in order to gain better data. The module is ready for uptake by national statistics offices.• FAO Forestry is collaborating with the Statistics Division on improving data collection methods for production and use of wood energy.• The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) has chosen “Sustainable Forestry for Food Security and Nutrition” as the topic of the 2017 report of its High Level Panel of Experts, which will be discussed by the CFS at its session in October 2017. This is a major achievement as the CFS has never discussed forestry before.
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2. The Commission is invited to give further guidance and address, in particular, the points for consideration contained in Annex 1 and Annex 3.

Annex I

SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT TOOLBOX

I. Background

1. The Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Toolbox was developed in response to the request of the Committee on Forestry. The aim of this note is to summarize the key issues in the further development of the SFM Toolbox.

II. What it is

2. The SFM Toolbox is a comprehensive technical package of knowledge tools, good practices, and examples of their application to facilitate the implementation of SFM under varied contexts. Its target audience is primarily (public and private) forest and land managers, and those who support them including extension services, civil-society organizations and non-governmental organizations as well as private sector associations.

3. The Toolbox has the following objectives: (i) increase capacities to effectively implement SFM by providing practical knowledge, tools and experiences at local and landscape levels; (ii) support forest managers and other stakeholders in progressing towards SFM with a more comprehensive approach; (iii) connect the different areas of FAO expertise related to SFM to facilitate its integration in a landscape approach to natural resources management; and (iv) identify and address knowledge and tool gaps, as well as possible incoherencies and conflicts.

4. The Toolbox is a user-friendly, interactive web-based platform, responsive to user's interests and needs. It includes:

- modules on SFM thematic areas, comprising (i) an overview of basic knowledge; (ii) more in-depth information; (iii) links to related tools; and (iv) links to SFM cases/examples and further references;
- a database of SFM tools and cases/examples that have been collated and arranged in an easy-to-access format; and
- a discussion forum.

5. The Toolbox uses knowledge references, tools and cases produced by FAO, Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) members, other partners and member countries. The scope of the Toolbox is global (for all types of forests) however it will be an evolving set that will also include regional and national resources.

6. The development of the SFM Toolbox aligns with FAO's mandate and role as a knowledge organization. FAO, in collaboration with its many partners, creates, compiles and shares critical information about SFM, and facilitates a dialogue between those who possess the knowledge and those who need it, aiming at "turning knowledge into action". The Toolbox is included in the Organization's Strategic Objective 2, outcome 1 under Products & Services 5 *Knowledge management: Participatory assessment, development, and promotion of mechanisms for collating, managing and sharing knowledge on sustainable production and natural resources management practices.*

7. The SFM Toolbox website has been designed with the intention of allowing best interaction with users. It is available at <http://www.fao.org/sustainable-forest-management/toolbox/>.

III. Current status and main issues

8. The SFM Toolbox is a work in progress so its further development between July 2014 and August 2015 continued with the preparation of 15 additional modules, the addition of tools and cases to the existing modules (it currently contains 620 tools and 524 cases) and the improvement of the web-platform (e.g., usability, simplified registration system, revision of module filters, video translation, etc.).

9. The testing of the website is ongoing (in early 2015, a heuristic evaluation focusing on the user experience and information architecture of the Toolbox; and during the XIV WFC a user interface testing with a broad spectrum of participants) and the results will contribute to the improvement of the accessibility and usability of the site (e.g. retrieving and utilizing tools, modules and cases on specific forest management issues) and to users' understanding of what it offers.

10. The SFM Toolbox continues to be disseminated and promoted through (demo) presentations in international and national meetings, flyers (in EN, FR and SP), links with other online websites/tools and communications in various networks (e.g. TECA, NWFP, FRA, inFO news...). Since its launch in June 2014 there have been 14,500 users and over 55,000 page views.

11. The SFM Toolbox is being increasingly promoted as a key reference of FAO's work on several thematic areas as well as a learning source for project design and implementation.

IV. Points for consideration

12. The Committee may wish to invite countries to promote the use of the SFM Toolbox to support planning and implementation of SFM-related programs/initiatives, for institutional strengthening, capacity development and others; and to provide further feedback to the Toolbox, including new tools and SFM cases.

13. The Committee may wish to recommend FAO to continue support the development and dissemination of the TB.

Annex II

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON NATIONAL FOREST MONITORING

I. Background

1. During the Twenty-First session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO 21), member countries recommended that FAO continue to support countries strengthen national forest information systems and requested FAO to “work in close collaboration with member countries and relevant organizations to prepare a set of voluntary guidelines on national forest monitoring, which takes into account the requirements for REDD+ reporting and is in line with the principles and goals of the Forest Instrument”¹.
2. The preparation process started just after the request from COFO 21, with the route map and the definition of the structure of the document. A two phase approach was defined to divide the process, Phase I comprised the development of section I and II with the definition of national forest monitoring, the scope and the principles; Phase II comprising of a compilation of good practices and technical recommendations on national forest monitoring.
3. COFO 22 endorsement of section I and II prepared in Phase I was an important step and milestone in the preparation process and highly related with the final version of the document. These two first sections provide background, the definition of forest monitoring and the principles for a national forest monitoring system which are the key elements guiding the technical recommendations and further development of the document.
4. As defined in the first sections of the voluntary guidelines, national forest monitoring is viewed as a comprehensive process that includes the collection, analysis and dissemination of forest-related data and the derivation of information and knowledge at regular intervals to allow monitoring of changes over time, and which focuses on national level data and information on forests and trees outside forests, their condition, values and uses. The timely, relevant and reliable information obtained supports forest-related decision making at the national and sub-national levels.
5. Fourteen principles were introduced in these sections: country ownership and responsibility; legal basis; national forest monitoring needs a landscape view; national forest monitoring should be institutionalized; research infrastructure and capacity building should be taken in consideration; it needs to be a participatory discussion process among national stakeholders on the scope and objectives of forest monitoring; the national forest monitoring must satisfy national level information needs; there should be integration of and consistency with existing information sources; a flexible approach in order to integrate emerging issues and allow for periodic revisions; a national forest monitoring should follow a multi-purpose approach; the feasibility including cost-efficiency should be taken in consideration; it should include a well-defined data and information sharing policy; has

¹ FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). 2012. Report on the Committee on Forestry, Twenty-First Session: COFO 2012/REP paragraph 50, page 7. Rome, Italy. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/026/me988e.pdf>.

credibility through transparency and quality; and promote collaboration at international level.

6. This note provides an overview of the process up today and the next steps to finalize the document.

II. Progress to date and next steps

7. The development and dissemination of the voluntary guidelines on national forest monitoring was included in FAO's new strategic framework and the programme of work for the present biennium under Strategic Objective 2: Increased and improved provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner, output 2.4.2: methodologies, norms, standards, definitions and other tools for the collection, management, aggregation and analysis of data are formulated and disseminated.

8. The first two sections were endorsed by the COFO 22 during the last session. For the preparation of these two sections, inputs from FAO member countries and relevant organizations were included, based on discussions, feedback and exchanges during the last six Regional Forestry Commissions (2013-2014), the FRA regional meetings and different technical meetings held during 2013 and 2014, and inputs from several member countries during COFO 22.

9. The section III is currently being finalized by FAO in collaboration with international experts. The section is based on a thorough literature review as well as on inputs provided in international workshops and technical meetings, which have taken place in 2014 and 2015. Valuable contribution and advice has been received also from many institutional stakeholders.

10. During the first three weeks of October 2015, an online consultation on the final section will be open for a wider number of experts for a drafting process allowing them to contribute and share opinions which will be taken into consideration during the final stage of preparation of the document. This process will allow broader awareness raising and buy in on the voluntary guidelines by national stakeholders. The online consultation and the draft version of the document will be available at <http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/forum/discussions/forestry>.

11. As a final step of the preparation of the document, a face-to-face meeting will be organized by the beginning of 2016 to gather feedback from international experts and potential users of the voluntary guidelines.

Annex III

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABLE USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES

I. Introduction

1. In 2007, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) requested FAO to prepare The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources (SoW-FGR)² and established, in 2009, an Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources (ITWG-FGR) to guide the preparation of this report. In 2011, the CGRFA also requested FAO to prepare a synthesis paper on priority areas for action based on the information gathered for the SoW-FGR and the ITWG-FGR to review it. In April 2013, the CGRFA agreed the identified priority areas as the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources (GPA-FGR)³ and in June 2013, the FAO Conference adopted the document⁴.

2. The GPA-FGR identifies four priority areas for action: 1) Improving the availability of, and access to, information regarding FGR, 2) Conservation of FGR (in situ and ex situ), 3) Sustainable use, development and management of FGR, and 4) Policies, institutions and capacity building. Under these areas, the GPA-FGR includes a total of 27 strategic priorities for action at the national, regional and international levels. The relative priority of each strategic priority and associated actions may differ significantly in different countries and regions. The GPA-FGR is a voluntary and non-binding document that can be updated by the CGRFA. The implementation of the GPA-FGR will strengthen sustainable management of forests and contribute towards the post-2015 development agenda and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

3. Activities on FGR are an integral part of the FAO's work in forestry and they are regularly reported to the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and the Regional Forestry Commissions. At its 22nd Session in June 2014, COFO welcomed the SoW-FGR and the GPA-FGR, and acknowledged the importance of FAO's work in this area. The COFO recommended FAO to support the implementation of the GPA-FGR, finalize the draft strategy for the implementation of the GPA-FGR for review by the CGRFA, encourage continued cooperation in addressing the global priorities of the GPA-FGR, and support countries as appropriate to address the strategic priorities of the GPA-FGR. This document presents information on follow-up to the GPA-FGR since the 22nd Session of COFO.

II. Follow-up to the Global Plan of Action

4. At its 3rd Session in July 2014, the ITWG-FGR considered the draft implementation strategy for the GPA-FGR and made several recommendations⁵. The ITWG-FGR recommended that FAO encourage its Members to develop national plans of action for the conservation, sustainable use and development of FGR. It also stressed the need to create

² SoW-FGR. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3825e.pdf>.

³ GPA-FGR. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3849e.pdf>.

⁴ C 2013/REP, paragraph 77. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/028/mh093e.pdf>.

⁵ CGRFA/WG-FGR-3/14/Report, paragraphs 13-15. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-ml401e.pdf>.

linkages between these national plans and the National Forest Programmes, the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and other relevant planning processes.

5. At its 15th Session in January 2015, the CGRFA further considered the draft implementation strategy for the GPA-FGR and adopted the implementation strategy⁶. It includes seven areas of action: 1) Advocacy and international awareness on FGR, 2) Development and support of relevant global and regional networks, 3) Supporting countries in the development of national and regional strategies for the implementation of the GPA-FGR, 4) Supporting countries in securing adequate and sustainable funding for the implementation of the GPA-FGR, 5) Development of international technical standards for FGR and support to implement them, 6) Funding strategy for the implementation of the GPA-FGR, and 7) Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the GPA-FGR and the status and trends of FGR. The CGRFA stressed that the strategy is fundamental for achieving the goals of the GPA-FGR and called for the implementation of the strategy in coordination with the COFO and relevant international organizations.

6. FAO has continued cooperation with relevant partners, such as Biodiversity International and the World Agroforestry Centre, in addressing the global priorities of the GPA-FGR. This cooperation was crucial for the preparation of the SoW-FGR and related thematic studies, and it will be also crucial for the implementation of the GPA-FGR at the international level. In December 2014, the results of the earlier collaboration were published in a special issue of *Forest Ecology and Management*⁷. The global reviews on various issues related to FGR provide valuable information for the implementation of the GPA-FGR in addition to the SoW-FGR. FAO is also strengthening its collaboration on FGR with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other relevant members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), as well as various international and regional organizations.

7. Regional coordination is necessary for effective implementation of regional and national priorities of the GPA-FGR as the distribution ranges of forest trees and their genetic resources typically extend beyond individual countries. Regional networks on FGR play a crucial role for this purpose by providing a platform for countries to share experiences, exchange information and develop collaborative actions. In September 2014, the Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutes (APAFRI) and Biodiversity International organized, with technical inputs from FAO, a regional workshop in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for the national coordinators of the Asia Pacific Forest Genetic Resources Programme (APFORGEN). The workshop prepared a strategy for regional collaboration to implement the GPA-FGR. In October 2014, Biodiversity International organized a similar workshop in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia in collaboration with the Latin America Forest Genetic Resources Network (LAFORGEN), and with financial and technical support from Spain. FAO and its partners are planning to organize similar planning workshops in other regions, subject to the availability of financial resources. In Europe, FAO will continue its long-lasting collaboration with the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN) which has already agreed to contribute to the implementation of the GPA-FGR during its Phase V (2015-2019).

8. FAO has also contributed to the work of regional networks dedicated to combat invasive species affecting FGR. These networks aim to facilitate sharing of information and mobilizing resources, raising awareness and bringing together experts, institutions and other stakeholders concerned with forest invasive species. In November 2014, FAO

⁶ CGRFA-15/15/Report, Appendix E. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mm660e.pdf>.

⁷ Global Forest Genetic Resources : Taking Stock (special issue of *Forest Ecology and Management*) (open access). <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/03781127/333>.

organized, in collaboration with the Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Chinese Academy of Sciences, a regional seminar in Beijing, China for the national focal points of the Asia-Pacific Forest Invasive Species Network (APFISN). FAO and its partners intend to rejuvenate the Forest Invasive Species Network for Africa (FISNA), the Near East Network on Forest Health and Invasive Species (NENFHIS) and Red de Países del Cono Sur sobre Especies Exóticas Invasoras a Ecosistemas Forestales which includes the South Cone countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay) and Bolivia. Furthermore, FAO organized a regional seminar in Budapest, Hungary in June 2015 for European and Central Asian countries to promote the implementation of the phytosanitary standards in forestry. As a follow-up to this meeting, FAO is planning, in collaboration with its partners, to establish a network on forest invasive species for Europe and Central Asia. In addition, FAO and its partners are considering initiating a similar network in the Central American and Caribbean region.

9. Biodiversity International organized, with technical inputs from FAO, a side event on the GPA-FGR during the IUFRO World Congress, held in Salt Lake City, USA in October 2014. In May 2015, the Brazilian Agricultural Research Institute for Forests (EMBRAPA Florestas) and FAO organized an International Symposium on Forest Biotechnology for Smallholders in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil. FAO will continue, together with its partners, contributing to this type of events to facilitate sharing of information and raising awareness on the conservation, sustainable use and development of FGR, subject to the availability of financial resources.

10. FAO is continuing to explore the interest of different donors to support countries in implementing the GPA-FGR. In collaboration with selected countries and partner organizations, FAO has developed and submitted project proposals to donors and is now waiting for their response. Countries can also seek financial support for relevant projects through the decentralized FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP).

III. Points for consideration

11. The Regional Forestry Commissions may wish to:

- Recommend that countries take action, as appropriate, to implement the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources;
- Recommend that countries support, as appropriate, the regional networks on FGR and forest invasive species, and contribute to the activities of these networks to strengthen regional collaboration in these areas.

12. The Regional Forestry Commissions may wish to recommend FAO to:

- Continue supporting the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources.