

# COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

## Twenty-seventh Session

Rome, 22–26 July 2024

### Dialogue with Statutory Bodies in Forestry

#### Executive summary

The FAO Statutory Bodies in Forestry are established under Articles VI.1 and VI.2, as well as Article XIV of the FAO Constitution to carry out specific tasks in support of the work of FAO and its Members, and to provide specialist advice in high-priority areas or questions. This document presents progress reports on activities of the following bodies:

- a. Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions – *Silva Mediterranea*
- b. Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries (ACSFI)
- c. International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment (IPC)
- d. Committee on Forestry (COFO) Working Group on Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems
- e. Regional Forestry Commissions (RFCs)

#### Suggested action by the Committee:

The Committee is invited to provide guidance on the way forward by referring to suggested actions at the end of the progress reports of each of the Statutory Bodies (Annexes I, II, III, IV and V).

*Queries on the content of this document may be addressed to:*

Malgorzata Buszko-Briggs  
Secretary  
Committee on Forestry  
Tel. +39 06 57055762  
[Malgorzata.Buskobriggs@fao.org](mailto:Malgorzata.Buskobriggs@fao.org)  
Please copy: [COFO@fao.org](mailto:COFO@fao.org)

## I. Introduction

1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has a comprehensive system of Statutory Bodies in Forestry providing platforms for global and regional interaction and collaboration, and for consideration of specific topics of key relevance for forestry on multiple levels. These bodies were established in the early years of FAO's existence in 1947–1959, under Articles VI.1, VI.2 and XIV of the FAO Constitution, with the Committee on Forestry (COFO) Working Group on Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems being the newest body, established in 2016 under Rule XXXI, Paragraph 10 of the General Rules of the Organization.
2. The FAO Statutory Bodies, in addition to serving as platforms for policy and technical discussions in their geographical or topical areas, also provide important inputs to FAO governance through their contributions to the respective FAO Regional Conferences and the COFO. Their inputs are regularly considered by the Committee, in developing its Agenda and in discussing FAO's work on forestry under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 (Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda). Furthermore, the International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment serves as the governing body of the related convention, hosted by FAO.
3. This document presents progress reports from the following bodies in Annexes I to V:
  - a. Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions – *Silva Mediterranea*
  - b. Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries (ACSEFI)
  - c. International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment (IPC)
  - d. COFO Working Group on Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems
  - e. Regional Forestry Commissions (RFCs)
4. Information on the work of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources, established under the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, is provided separately in document COFO/2024/6.6.

## Annex I

## I. AFWC/EFC/NEFRC Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions – *Silva Mediterranea*

### A. *The 25th Session of Silva Mediterranea and the 8th Mediterranean Forest Week*

1. The Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions – *Silva Mediterranea* is preparing for its 25th Session to be held on 4–8 November 2024, in Barcelona, Spain, concurrently with the 8th Mediterranean Forest Week.
2. The Joint Organizing Committee (JOC) of the 8th Mediterranean Forest Week and the 25th Session of *Silva Mediterranea* agreed on the theme of the Week “*Working together for sustainable and resilient Mediterranean forests – Towards a collaborative roadmap*”. The session will focus specifically on successful landscape approaches in forest restoration for resilience and biodiversity conservation; efficient forest management for adaptation to climate change; and broader stakeholder engagement in integrated management of Mediterranean forests, with a focus on youth. The agenda of the 25th Session of *Silva Mediterranea* is currently being developed.

### B. *Main activities under Silva Mediterranea*

3. Endorsed by Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Türkiye, *Silva Mediterranea* submitted a proposal for the Mediterranean region in response to the call of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030 (the “UN Decade”) for United Nations World Restoration Flagships.<sup>1</sup> The primary role of such flagships is to inspire other countries and regions to scale up successful restoration efforts, attract global attention and investments, and act as a basis for joint learning across the world.
4. During the 6th Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) in Nairobi, Kenya, held from 26 February to 1 March 2024, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and FAO, as lead agencies of the UN Decade, announced the recognition of seven new initiatives across Africa, Latin America, the Mediterranean and South Asia as United Nations World Restoration Flagships, with the proposal of *Silva Mediterranea* being one of these.
5. The Flagship Restoring Mediterranean Forests<sup>2</sup> spans an area covering Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, and Türkiye, which also act as pilot countries. The initiative represents a major effort to reverse degradation of forest ecosystems in the region.
6. The Flagship Restoring Mediterranean Forests has received targeted support from the Multi-Partner Trust Fund established in the context of the UN Decade. The activities funded with this support are centred on collecting effective best practices for post-fire restoration in the Mediterranean, to provide a knowledge-sharing and learning opportunity for all stakeholders dealing with wildfire management in the region. The best practices are collected through national counterparts, involving all relevant stakeholders, including local communities, youth, and women. The flagship is also expected to generate regional momentum for collaboration in post-fire restoration.
7. After several years of work, a key publication under *Silva Mediterranea*, the third edition of the State of Mediterranean Forests 2024, is planned to be launched during the 8th Mediterranean Forest Week. The publication provides an overview and update on the status and development of forest resources in the region, and showcases sound management practices, nature-based solutions and sustainable socioeconomic actions, together with key pathways for increasing the resilience of Mediterranean forest ecosystems to current and emerging threats.
8. To maintain the focus on Mediterranean forests, an issue of *Unasylva*, FAO’s international journal of forestry and forest industries, dedicated to this topic will be launched in July 2024 during

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/nominate-un-world-restoration-flagship>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fao.org/silva-mediterranea/resources/news/detail/restoring-mediterranean-forests--a-un-world-restoration-flagship/en>

the 27th Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO 27). This will be ten years after issue 242<sup>3</sup> focused on the Mediterranean region and prompted several new initiatives, notably on forest and landscape restoration. The new issue will present the status of Mediterranean forest resources, together with recent developments, and opportunities to contribute to the UN Decade and achieve regional and global objectives.

*C. Suggested action by the Committee*

9. The Committee is invited to:
  - a. encourage members of *Silva Mediterranea* to contribute to the development of activities related to the Flagship Restoring Mediterranean Forests initiative under the UN Decade; and
  - b. encourage FAO and its Members to continue taking note of key findings of the State of Mediterranean Forests reports and *Unasylva*, as key information sources on forests in the Mediterranean region.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/i3837e/i3837e.pdf>

**Annex II****I. Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries**

1. At its 64th Session, held virtually on 25 May 2023, the Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries (ACSFI) provided an update on the status of activities with regard to the recommendations from previous sessions. The next one, which will be the 65th Session of the ACSFI, will be held on 21 July 2024, in Rome, Italy, back-to-back with COFO 27 and the 9th World Forest Week.
2. The ACSFI, following the FAO Strategy for Private Sector Engagement 2021-2025,<sup>1</sup> the recommendations from the 26th Session of the Committee (COFO 26), and the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, continued to implement its strategic priorities according to its Strategic Framework 2020-2030,<sup>2</sup> namely by; i) building a forest-based bioeconomy to mitigate climate change while addressing biodiversity loss and food insecurity; and ii) enhancing the forest sector's engagement in ecosystem restoration.
3. In doing so, ACSFI members hosted several events at the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), to discuss the growing contribution of climate-smart forest products to the bioeconomy. The ACSFI and its members also discussed this topic in multiple international fora, including the latest sessions of the Regional Forestry Commissions (RFCs).
4. The ACSFI engaged with a range of key partners to further catalyse strategic partnerships among the private sector, FAO and other relevant stakeholders, in support of a forest-based bioeconomy, including the Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the World Bioeconomy Forum (WCBEF), the International Bamboo and Rattan Organization (INBAR) and the International Sustainable Forestry Coalition (ISFC).
5. On 1 October 2022, ACSFI members, in collaboration with The Forest Dialogue (TFD), hosted a round table to better understand how the forest sector could offer opportunities for contributing and driving restoration efforts worldwide, including through facilitating the development of a TFD initiative on ecosystem restoration.<sup>3</sup>
6. Further, a statement from the ACSFI on “Enhancing the engagement of forest-based industries in ecosystem restoration” was launched in January 2023,<sup>4</sup> calling for FAO and the forest-based industries to expedite work in support of ecosystem restoration.
7. In exercising its advisory function, the ACSFI has developed a set of key messages for the attention of COFO 27. The ACSFI, in particular:
  - a. underlines the commitment of its members to serve as advisors and catalyzers promoting strategic partnerships between the private sector, FAO and other relevant stakeholders to support country efforts to achieve the SDGs through the sustainable use of forest products;
  - b. encourages FAO to continue facilitating the integration of the forest sector with the global bioeconomy discussion, as a key contribution to agrifood system transformation;
  - c. acknowledges the full potential of harvested wood products (HWP) from sustainably managed forests, to contribute to climate change mitigation by storing carbon, increasing the availability of biomass for substituting more resource-intensive products and the production of biofuels;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/cb3352en/cb3352en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/cb4294en/cb4294en.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://theforestdialogue.org/initiative/ecosystem-restoration>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/cc4076en/cc4076en.pdf>

- d. invites FAO to promote good recycling practices to support the efficient use of forest resources, as well as to gather accurate data for supply and demand scenarios of forest products production and trade at all levels to underpin appropriate policy and investment decisions;
- e. recognizes the crucial contribution of forest-based industries to the bioeconomy and to facilitate global efforts towards ecosystem restoration, as key stakeholders providing nature-based solutions to climate change;
- f. encourages FAO to further support capacity building and facilitate policy dialogues at all levels to strengthen the private sector and other stakeholders' commitment to conserving, restoring and sustainably using ecosystems, including forests;
- g. encourages FAO to ensure adequate presence of ACSFI in forest-related meetings, as well as to ensure its voice is considered and reflected; and
- h. invites FAO to foster public-private partnerships that i) promote the role of sustainable forest management to enhance sustainable production, use and livelihoods; and ii) increase the contribution of sustainable forest-based industries to the bioeconomy and the restoration of ecosystems.

*A. Suggested action by the Committee*

8. The Committee is invited to:
- a. consider the ACSFI's key messages when discussing related Agenda items, in particular Items 6, 7 and 8.3; and
  - b. encourage the ACSFI to continue fostering strategic actions and facilitating partnerships between FAO, the private sector and other stakeholders, to promote a forest-based bioeconomy and productive ecosystems while leveraging technology and innovation for sustainable forest management to achieve the SDGs, in particular in developing countries.

**Annex III****I. The International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment***A. Background*

1. The International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment (IPC) emerged from the revision of the Convention on the International Poplar Commission, approved by the 41st Session of the FAO Conference on 29 June 2019, together with the new name and mandate to cover all fast-growing species. At its 26th Session in June 2021, the IPC approved the Strategy for the International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment 2022–2032 (“IPC Strategy”),<sup>1</sup> with the following objectives:

- a. foster innovation in land production systems and provide ecosystem services involving fast-growing trees;
- b. comprehensively assess innovations to establish best practices for the management and utilization of fast-growing trees in rural and urban contexts;
- c. make recommendations to interested countries, FAO, international initiatives and working partners so that best practices in managing fast-growing trees achieve scale and effectively contribute to sustainable development; and
- d. deepen partnerships and cooperation to achieve these objectives effectively.

2. Since then, the IPC has been diligently working to implement the IPC Strategy, with the aim of guiding its efforts in contributing to the 2030 Agenda, the Global Forest Goals, the United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019–2028 and the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030. Sustainably managed fast-growing trees are highlighted as crucial components in combating deforestation and enhancing forest benefits.

3. The IPC’s 52nd Executive Committee meeting, based on the result of a consultative process, approved a new structure and governance for the IPC Working Parties to strengthen the role of the IPC’s mandate in supporting the sustainable provision of wood and ecosystem services, and advancing knowledge and policy on fast-growing species in forestry and agroforestry systems.

4. Accordingly, a Working Party on Genetic Resources will be formed from the merger of three individual IPC Working Parties, namely on “Taxonomy, Nomenclature and Registration”, “Domestication and Conservation of Genetic Resources” and “Plant Health, Resilience to Threats and Climate Change”, with the aim of promoting closer cooperation between breeders and the cultivar register experts. This will help maintain current poplar and willow registers and develop future registers for other genera. The merger also supports the important role of genetics in enhancing resistance to biotic and abiotic stress factors, including threats posed by climate change.

5. The focus of the Working Party on Sustainable Livelihoods, Land Use, Products and Bioenergy was partially changed to “Production Systems for the Bioeconomy” to consider the broad range of wood-derived products within a bioeconomy framework as renewable materials capable of replacing many fossil fuel-based industrial products.

6. The Working Party on Communication and Outreach (formerly the Working Party on Policy, Communication and Outreach) is a cross-cutting working party that facilitates the outreach of other working parties and helps bridge the communication gap between scientists, practitioners, and policymakers. The new Working Party on Policy and Livelihoods focuses on analysing and developing policies favouring the uses of fast-growing trees for the benefit of rural communities, and to improving the integration of National Commissions in the activities of the IPC.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/ng573en/ng573en.pdf>

7. Finally, urban forestry was added to the scope of the Working Party on Environmental and Ecosystem Services, the existing focus of which is agroforestry, ecosystem services and bioremediation, among other topics.

8. The IPC has enhanced its collaboration with other organizations and initiatives while also engaging with countries that are not yet members of the Commission. In this context, in September 2022, the IPC organized, in collaboration with FAO and TreeDivNet,<sup>2</sup> a workshop on the “Management of Mixed and Pure Planted Forests: Stocktaking of Science and Practice.”

9. The IPC also collaborated with FAO and other partners to publish the brief *How can fast-growing trees optimize agroforestry benefits?*,<sup>3</sup> launched in 2023. It also participated in conceiving and producing issue 254 of *Unasylva*, entitled “Towards more resilient and diverse planted forests”<sup>4</sup> in close collaboration with FAO, TreeDivNet and a variety of partners, as a contribution to the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) Taskforce on Resilient Planted Forests<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, the IPC participated in international events such as the Latin American Forest Congress (CONFLAT) in Mendoza, Argentina, in February 2023, and the International Conference on Planted Forests (ICPF), in Nairobi, Kenya, in November 2023, with a particular focus on reaching out to countries that are not yet members of the Commission.

### *B. Twenty-seventh Session of the IPC*

10. The Government of France kindly offered to host the 27th Session of the IPC in Bordeaux, on 22–25 October 2024 with the theme “Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation – Pathways to Climate Resilience and Carbon Neutral Societies”. The first results of the new IPC Working Parties will be presented at the Session, which will bring together experts of a range of fast-growing species.

11. The session will be preceded by a study tour on 17–20 October 2024, and a post-session study tour hosted by Italy on 27–29 October 2024.

12. The IPC continues its efforts to engage with FAO Members that are not yet members of the IPC, particularly countries from the global South, aiming to enhance knowledge exchange, technical collaboration and policy dialogue.

### *C. Suggested action by the Committee*

13. The Committee is invited to:

- a. take note of the progress in the implementation of the IPC Strategy; and
- b. encourage FAO Members to engage with the IPC for knowledge exchange, technical collaboration and policy dialogue, while also considering the benefits of becoming a member of the IPC.

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<sup>2</sup> TreeDivNet is a global research network on planted forests, see <https://treedivnet.ugent.be/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/cc8646en/cc8646en.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc8584en>

<sup>5</sup> [IUFRO’s Taskforce on Resilient Planted Forests Serving Society & Bioeconomy](#)



## Annex IV

## I. COFO Working Group on Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems

### A. Introduction

1. The Working Group held its 3rd Session<sup>1</sup> in parallel with the 26th Session of the Near East Forestry and Range Commission (NEFRC) on 10–13 September 2023, in Jordan. The two bodies came together for a joint session on forestry and agriculture linkages, underscoring the need to improve the synergies between the sectors and highlighting the potential role of a silvopastoral approach in addressing drought management and restoring dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral systems.
2. At this session, the Working Group acknowledged the progress made on the implementation of the Workplan 2022–2024, endorsed the progress report and invited members and observers to continue pursuing its Workplan subject to the availability of the necessary funds, and was encouraged to continue strengthening its collaboration with the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG) Sub-Committee on Livestock (COAG-CL).
3. The Working Group also considered the findings of the review<sup>2</sup> of the relevance and operational modalities of the Working Group on Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems. In this context, the Working Group took note of the key challenges and opportunities identified to strengthen the Working Group's operational modalities and acknowledged the guidance of the Working Group's Steering Committee and agreed to their proposed recommendations. Working Group members emphasized the importance of science, technology, innovation and the agrosilvopastoral approach in restoring dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral systems and recommended to continue the facilitation of technical collaboration between members, multiple stakeholders and across disciplines, including with other FAO statutory bodies, such as COAG-LI, to enhance coordinated responses to members' needs for an integrated dryland management approach. Further, the Working Group emphasized the need to strengthen partnerships and collaboration to better understand the status, trends and development of dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral systems and the people who depend on them, particularly through the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Collaborative Partnership for Forests (CPF), to support countries facing serious drought and desertification-related challenges<sup>3</sup>.
4. Further, the Working Group endorsed a Multi-Year Workplan, based on the three main work areas requested by the Committee, laid out as follows: review and report to the COFO on the status, trends, issues and developments in dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral systems, and make recommendations to the Committee on these matters; contribute to developing a comprehensive understanding of dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral systems and the people who depend on them; and promote scaling-up of the adoption of good practices for the protection, sustainable management and restoration of drylands forests and agrosilvopastoral systems while also enhancing environmental and socioeconomic resilience and sustainable livelihoods.

### B. Progress of the Working Group

5. Over the last two years, the Working Group has raised awareness of the important role of drylands, informing decision-making and policy development on dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral systems at global, regional and national levels. As part of this, the Working Group has partnered with several entities inside and outside FAO on various initiatives.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fao.org/dryland-forestry/working-group/third-session-jordan/official-documents/en/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/cc7473en/cc7473en.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/cc8197en/cc8197en.pdf>

6. The publication *Grazing with trees – A silvopastoral approach to managing and restoring drylands*<sup>4</sup> launched in September 2022, gathered good practices in dryland countries that allow more sustainable management of drylands and enhance the multifunctionality of dryland agrosilvopastoral systems, but the challenge lies in implementing these practices and policies.
7. The Working Group also launched the *Grazing with trees – A silvopastoral approach to managing and restoring drylands with trees: Policy brief*<sup>5</sup> at the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) Climate alongside COP27 event “Frontiers of Change II” on 11 November 2022, which attracted more than 600 participants.
8. As a follow-up, a new “Grazing with Trees” global initiative is being developed to raise awareness of these good practices and build capacity for implementation across different regions, the aim being to help those working in the agriculture, forestry and tourism sectors to incorporate silvopastoral concerns in their work. To do so, the initiative will focus on two main activities: (i) promoting policy coherence on agrosilvopastoral management across countries through parliamentary consultations and knowledge sharing in the four dryland regions; and (ii) improving knowledge, understanding and global recognition of silvopastoralism as a valid way of restoring dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral systems.
9. Responding to the encouragement of the 26th Session of the COFO,<sup>6</sup> the Working Group supports the implementation of the United Nations International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026 (IYRP 26). In 2023, the Working Group – in collaboration with partners – launched a summer school programme to build practitioners’ capacities to implement transformational approaches to managing dryland areas. The first Drylands Summer School ran in parallel with the 3rd Session of the Working Group in Amman, Jordan on 12–15 September 2023. The second Drylands Summer School will take place in Kenya, in September 2024, in collaboration with CIFOR-ICRAF and with support from the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) G20 Land Initiative, while the third one will be held in Australia in 2025 alongside the International Rangeland Congress.<sup>7</sup>
10. Other major activities of the Working Group include:
  - a. Collaboration with Bioversity International on drafting an assessment on the potential use of silvopastoralism for re-carbonizing soils and de-carbonizing the economy. This assessment intends to gather evidence, detect good practices and promote enabling environments for silvopastoralism to fully deploy its decarbonizing potential.
  - b. Continued guidance on the implementation of the GEF-7 Dryland Sustainable Landscapes Impact Programme (DSL-IP),<sup>8</sup> which works to reduce and eventually reverse degradation, desertification, and deforestation of dryland ecosystems through the sustainable management of productive landscapes in 11 countries.
  - c. The launching of an e-learning course in March 2023, in close collaboration with the Forest Range and Watershed Management Organization (FRWO) of the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad, Islamic Republic of Iran, the FAO elearning Academy, and various research institutes, universities and international organizations. This will provide thorough understanding of how expected transformational results can interact, thereby supporting decision-makers in assessing trade-offs and benefits for dryland resilient systems.
  - d. Scaling-up the adoption of good practices for the protection, sustainable management and restoration of dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral systems while improving environmental and socioeconomic resilience and contributing to sustainable livelihoods. The “Making Every Voice Count for Adaptive Management” (MEV-CAM) initiative, for example, aims to document and disseminate knowledge resources in 19 countries<sup>9</sup> and publish them through the

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en?details=cc2280en>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/cc2903en/cc2903en.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> See COFO/2022/REP, paragraph 26, e) ii here: <https://www.fao.org/3/nk728en/nk728en.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://rangelandcongress.org/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.fao.org/in-action/dryland-sustainable-landscapes/en>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.fao.org/dryland-forestry/making-every-voice-count/en/>

MEV-CAM Knowledge Bank repository.<sup>10</sup> The WeCaN Nurturing Community of Knowledge Practice for Women in Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems<sup>11</sup> supports women in 28 countries to develop advocacy skills to be agents of change within the framework of sustainable forest and landscape management in dryland regions. Both initiatives are supported by FAO's South-South and Triangular Cooperation Division (PST).

*C. Suggested action by the Committee*

11. The Committee is invited to:
  - a. acknowledge the substantive contributions of the Working Group to promoting activities related to drylands;
  - b. request that the Working Group continue and strengthen the collaboration with the COAG-CL, including through the Grazing with Trees global initiative, and inform both the COAG and the COFO on progress made; and
  - c. invite the Working Group to continue developing actions recommended at its 3rd Session.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.fao.org/dryland-forestry/making-every-voice-count/knowledge-bank/en/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en?details=cc1910en>

**Annex V****I. Regional Forestry Commissions**

1. The current biennial sessions of the RFCs were held as follows – the outcome reports and related recommendations are available in the respective reports:
  - a. 33rd Session of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC), 26–30 June 2023, virtual session, Ecuador;<sup>1</sup>
  - b. 32nd Session of the North American Forest Commission (NAFC), 25–27 September 2023, hybrid session, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada;<sup>2</sup>
  - c. 24th Session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC), 30 October–3 November 2023, hybrid session, Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania;<sup>3</sup>
  - d. 26th Session of the Near East Forestry and Range Commission (NEFRC), 10–13 September 2023, hybrid session, Amman, Jordan;<sup>4</sup>
  - e. 30th Session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC), 3–6 October 2023, Sydney, Australia;<sup>5</sup> and
  - f. 42nd Session of the European Forestry Commission (EFC), 20–23 November 2023, San Marino, San Marino.<sup>6</sup>
2. At its 26th Session, the COFO stressed the need for RFCs to have a more policy-relevant role in the FAO Regional Conferences<sup>7</sup> and invited FAO to support further integration of important regional forest-related matters.
3. The Committee invited FAO to continue to review and consult with Members on ways to improve the RFCs as well-established mechanisms for technical and policy dialogue, including through consideration of the ongoing governance reviews, as appropriate, and invited FAO to support further strengthening of the cross-sectoral work of the RFCs, especially on forestry and agrifood systems.<sup>8</sup>
4. Following the above guidance, the RFCs addressed the relevant issues at their last respective sessions and provided detailed recommendations, as summarized in the following points:
  - a. Continue and improve the synchronization of the calendar of future RFC meetings with the timetable of the relevant FAO Regional Conferences, to provide inputs from the Commissions to the Regional Conferences in a timely manner.
  - b. Invite the Chairpersons of the RFCs to attend the respective Regional Conferences and enhance intersessional activities by improving interactions between RFCs and Regional Conferences Members, including Rome-based delegations, to strengthen cross-sectoral policy dialogue and to ensure that important regional forestry-related matters are integrated in the themes of the Regional Conferences.
  - c. Strengthen the cross-sectoral work of the RFCs, especially on forestry and agrifood systems by providing relevant and useful inputs to their Members, to FAO and other international processes on forest-related issues; consider ways to further enhance the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the RFCs and other FAO Statutory Bodies

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the 33rd Session of the LACFC: <https://www.fao.org/3/cc7316en/cc7316en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Report of the 32nd Session of the NAFC: <https://www.fao.org/3/no122en/no122en.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Report of the 24th Session of the AFWC: <https://www.fao.org/3/cd0548en/cd0548en.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Report of the 26th Session of the NEFRC: <https://www.fao.org/3/cc9772en/cc9772en.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Report of the 30th Session of the APFC: <https://www.fao.org/3/cc8556en/cc8556en.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Report of the 42nd Session of the EFC: <https://www.fao.org/3/no556en/no556en.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> See COFO/2022/REP, paragraph 26, a) i here: <https://www.fao.org/3/nk728en/nk728en.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> See COFO/2022/REP, paragraph 26, a) ii here: <https://www.fao.org/3/nk728en/nk728en.pdf>

including ensuring that the COAG and the COFO consider the same background documents relating to forestry and agriculture.

*A. Suggested action by the Committee*

5. The Committee is invited to:
  - a. continue to provide guidance on strategic issues to the RFCs;
  - b. stress the importance for the RFCs to have a more policy-relevant role in the FAO Regional Conferences;
  - c. encourage Members to continue to actively support the RFCs as the main instrument in forestry for linking the global and regional levels under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31; and
  - d. encourage the RFCs to continue to consider ways to further improve their efficiency and broader policy relevance as well-established mechanisms also for cross-sectoral policy dialogue and exchange, and to strengthen coordination and collaborative action across sectors and stakeholders in order to achieve the SDGs, the Paris Agreement and the Global Forest Goals.