



FAO FORESTRY



Twentieth Committee on Forestry held with second World Forest Week

The twentieth session of the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) convened from 4 to 8 October 2010 at FAO headquarters in Rome, to address FAO programme priorities and member countries' concerns in forestry. Attendance was high, with more than 480 official delegates from 115 member countries and the European Union (member organization) as well as other UN agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (IGOs/NGOs).

Under the overall theme "Forests and sustainable development: you are the key", the meeting addressed the following central topics:

- forest health, fire management, biodiversity and water in the context of climate change;
- emerging opportunities and challenges in forest finance and forest governance, including Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+);
- the role of forests in sustainable development.

Innovations in 2010 included seven panel discussions among top forestry officials on these main agenda items.

The committee agreed on programme priorities for FAO activities in forestry for 2012–2013 and beyond. Its recommendations to member countries and to FAO included the following:

- to include fire management in REDD+ programmes and in broader land-use and landscape policies and programmes;
- to strengthen efforts to address the challenges of forest governance, in collaboration with other sectors;
- to highlight forests' contributions to the global development agenda and to integrate sustainable forest management into development strategies;
- to participate actively in the International Year of Forests 2011.

The committee made a number of specific recommendations related to climate change and REDD+, inviting FAO to assist countries in:

- integrating forests in national climate change strategies;
- strengthening information exchange and cooperation;
- supporting forest and climate change related monitoring;
- implementing best practices in forest management to facilitate climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- overcoming deforestation and forest degradation, which are the root constraint to the expansion of carbon sinks.

The main report of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010 (FRA 2010) was released on 4 October (see "Books" section of this issue). The Committee agreed that the next FRA will be prepared by 2015 and that FAO should continue to strengthen country capacities to monitor forest resources.

In parallel to the meeting, many special events were held by FAO and its partner organizations as part of the second World Forest Week. Ten of these events were organized around the main topics of COFO, shedding more light on key issues and allowing for more detailed discussion. There were also 25 side events held during the week including panel discussions and presentations on phytosanitary standards; measuring forest degradation; forest restoration; remote sensing; green design; wildlife management; new developments in forest finance and governance; as well as the role of sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+). Among the notable events was a three-day international conference addressing emerging economic mechanisms and their implications for forest policy and governance (see below).

Further information and the full report of COFO are available at: www.fao.org/forestry/cofo.

Exploring implications of emerging economic mechanisms for forest policy and governance

Emerging economic mechanisms such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), the Clean Development Mechanism, certification schemes, payments for environmental services (PES) and voluntary partnership agreements hold promise for sustainable forest management while offering new investment opportunities. Directly or indirectly, they focus on valuing the environmental services of forests, which in the past have often been considered as non-marketable. They also tend to address forestry in the context of broader land-use issues at the landscape level and may foster better integration of forestry with other sectors. These emerging economic mechanisms will almost certainly influence policies and governance, not only in forestry but also in related sectors.

Under the umbrella of World Forest Week 2010, a conference was held at FAO headquarters to discuss how forest policies,



South Africa to host XIV World Forestry Congress

The next World Forestry Congress will be held in Durban, South Africa in 2015, hosted by South Africa's Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. The offer was presented at COFO in October and approved by the Council of FAO at its hundred and fortieth session, held in Rome from 29 November to 3 December 2010.

governance and institutions are being and will be affected by the new economic mechanisms. The forum Emerging Economic Mechanisms: Implications for Forest-Related Policies and Sector Governance was co-organized by the University of Tuscia, Italy and FAO with the support of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO). It was attended by 80 policy specialists, economists, managers and decision-makers from 30 countries. Discussions and presentations ranged from global policy and economic analysis to national and field-based case studies.

The conference envisaged that the new economic mechanisms will fundamentally change the framework of forest governance. It noted that while many of the mechanisms have been designed at the global level, their successful implementation will depend on coordination with and adaptation of national policies, which has thus far proved difficult. It was agreed that the best approach is to adapt both the specific mechanism and the national forest policy in tandem, where possible. The conference also discussed the need for greater integration between the State and markets and between various mechanisms and instruments (e.g. PES and REDD), as well as the need for involvement of non-governmental sectors. It was concluded that scientists and policy-makers should continue to work together to integrate rigorous, multidisciplinary scientific analysis with policy.

Implementing the Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests

In October 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests, also commonly known as the "Forest Instrument". Implementation of the Forest Instrument will boost sustainable forest management and contribute to reducing deforestation and forest degradation.

The 25 national policies and measures of the Forest Instrument represent a wide range of actions for achieving sustainable forest management. Most countries are already making efforts to implement at least some of these actions at various scales, mostly in the context of national forest programmes (NFPs) or similar forestry development strategies. However, the country activities may not be linked explicitly to the Forest Instrument, as many forest stakeholders are not yet familiar with it. In addition, many

countries lack capacity for monitoring progress and for collecting, analysing and reporting the necessary information.

Since 2009, FAO has been providing Ghana with technical support for implementation of the Forest Instrument, with funding from the German Government. A participatory multistakeholder assessment identified four of the instrument's 25 policies and measures requiring additional attention in the country:

- cross-sectoral coordination for sustainable forest management;
- law enforcement;
- financial strategies for sustainable forest management;
- implementation of the national forest programme and its integration in national development programmes.

In addition, science and technology, gender mainstreaming and education were identified as cross-cutting issues to be addressed.

For each of the four priority areas, participants proposed actions, responsibilities and partners. Key catalytic activities are now being implemented in these areas. A monitoring and evaluation system has been developed, taking into account relevant existing systems. Detailed monitoring will focus on the priority areas. Progress on all 25 national policies and measures will be evaluated annually through a participatory process, using the assessment from 2009 as a baseline, and the results will be used in reporting to the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF).

Although this exercise is still in its early stages, the participants have already noted several positive effects. Because of its comprehensiveness, the Forest Instrument is seen as an important mechanism for coordinating forest policy with other national policy processes and for strengthening institutional capacities.

The approach used in Ghana has shown promise for application in other countries, and the pilot effort has recently been extended to Liberia, Nicaragua and the Philippines. With funding from the Japanese Government, FAO will also support a number of developing countries in monitoring implementation of the Forest Instrument and reporting on progress to UNFF.

Progress in improving forest law enforcement, governance and trade in ACP countries

Ineffective forest governance often results in a high level of illegal activities which have important social, economic and environmental consequences. Illegal forest activities threaten the livelihoods of forest-dependent people; cause loss of government revenue; discourage long-term investments; and promote deforestation, forest degradation and loss of ecosystem services of forests.

Through the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Support Programme for African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP-FLEGT Support Programme), funded by the European Union, FAO has been assisting ACP countries to address illegality problems since 2009. To date, the four-year programme has supported 21 countries and one regional organization.



The programme issues calls for proposals and provides grants to forest authorities, NGOs and private-sector organizations in areas they have identified as priorities for improving forest law compliance and governance. Support has been provided, for example, for capacity building and training, the development and management of timber verification systems, improving transparency and independent monitoring, community based FLEGT initiatives and reviewing and updating of relevant policies, legislation or regulations.

For instance, in Cameroon, industrial-scale logging is an important contributor to economic development but has often been associated with problems of illegality. Technical assistance provided by the programme is helping the Ministry of Forests and Fauna to review the current forest law enforcement procedures, improve them based on best practices and train its staff in a rigorous hands-on field programme.

In Jamaica, where shortcomings in the legal framework encourage deforestation and mismanagement of natural resources, support is provided to the Forestry Department to amend the Forest Policy and Forestry Act through a participatory process involving all relevant stakeholders.

Insecure tenure rights have prevented local communities in Papua New Guinea from benefiting from forest resources, and timber theft has been common. With support from the programme, the Foundation for People and Community Development, a local NGO, helps strengthen community tenure through forest certification. Communities will benefit directly from the sale of certified forest products.

For more information see www.fao.org/forestry/acp-flegt or contact: acp-flegt-info@fao.org

FAO awarded the Batefuego de Oro (Golden Fire Swatter)

In November 2010, the FAO Forestry Department received an important Spanish award in recognition of its assistance to developing countries in forest fire prevention and suppression. Each year, the Spanish NGO Asociación para la Promoción de Actividades Socioculturales (APAS) gives the Batefuego de Oro (Golden Fire Swatter) award to distinguished persons or organizations for outstanding merit in forest fire protection. In the international category for 2010, the jury of high-level experts from Spanish ministries, NGOs and civil society gave the award to FAO's Forest Assessment, Management and Conservation Division. "This is a great honour for FAO and an important recognition of our work in the field of fire management which has demonstrated over the years that well-established community based and integrated fire management systems can effectively protect human lives, livelihoods, forest and natural resources", said José Antonio Prado, Director of the division, after receiving the award in Madrid.

FAO coordinated the development of *Fire management voluntary guidelines* aimed at helping all countries develop an integrated approach to fire management, from prevention and preparedness to suppression and restoration. The guidelines advise authorities and other stakeholder groups that firefighting should be an integral part of a coherent and balanced policy applied not only to forests but also across other land uses in the landscape. The guidelines are now widely used all over the world by both industrialized and developing countries as a basis for formulating fire management policies, strategies and practices.

The guidelines are available online in seven languages at: www.fao.org/forestry/firemanagement/46135

National Forest Programme Facility update

The concept of national forest programmes (NFPs) was conceived as a framework for sustainable forest management 15 years ago in the international dialogue on forests. The framework comprises three clusters of core principles: national sovereignty and country leadership; consistency within and integration beyond the forest sector; and participation and partnership. NFPs provide a structure for integrating international commitments such as the Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests into national forest policy and broader intersectoral processes, and for building stakeholder consensus on national forest issues.

The National Forest Programme Facility was created in 2002 to support countries in implementing their NFPs according to their own specific circumstances. The NFP Facility is hosted by FAO and works in close collaboration with its Forestry Department, which provides leadership and support to international and national policy dialogue. The Facility's support to countries includes small grants to stakeholders (civil society, NGOs, government), knowledge-sharing activities and capacity development in the formation of national multistakeholder forest forums. The Facility helps to develop sustainable institutional mechanisms for more consultative and collaborative planning, implementation and monitoring processes.

Overall, the NFP Facility has allocated more than 600 small grants (70 percent to civil society and 30 percent to governments) based on national priorities agreed in a participatory manner in 80 partner countries and regional organizations. Grants are awarded through a transparent process of call for proposals led by a national multistakeholder steering committee. Studies, training and pilot activities are supported in a wide range of thematic areas – among others, agroforestry, climate change, national forest financing strategies, conflict resolution, timber industry, indigenous knowledge, governance and land use. The NFP Facility opens up the debate on forestry to a greater public and provides a platform and linkages for sharing lessons learned.

For further information on country activities, visit: www.nfp-facility.org