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REPORT ON THE PROGRESS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY COMMISSION (APFC) AND FAO- SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES (including follow-up to the recommendations of the Twentieth Session of the Commission)

SECRETARIAT NOTE

INTRODUCTION

1. This note reports on progress in implementing Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) and FAO-supported activities and initiatives. It serves as a basis for reviewing follow-up to the specific requests and recommendations of the Twentieth Session of the Commission (listed in Annex A).

FAO GLOBAL INITIATIVES

2. The *Global Forest Resources Assessment Update for 2005* (FRA 2005) was implemented in accordance with recommendations of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) that forest resources assessments should be conducted at five-year intervals. Two regional workshops were organized to provide technical guidance for country-level information collection in the Asia-Pacific region.

3. The *State of the world's forests* reports every two years on the status of forests, recent major policy and institutional developments and key issues concerning the forestry sector. The sixth edition of the publication was released in 2005.

4. The *National Forest Programme Facility*, launched in February 2003, has remained active in supporting the development of national forest programmes in the region. New Facility partners in the Asia-Pacific region include: Palau, Viet Nam, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

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5. The second meeting of the APFC Executive Committee was convened in August 2005, in Hua Hin, Thailand. The Executive Committee reviewed the achievements and progress of work since the Twentieth APFC session, advised on future implementation of activities, identified priorities, and made recommendations on preparations for the Twenty-first APFC Session, including agenda topics and session organization.

6. APFC provides an important link between member countries and global dialogues, including FAO's Committee on Forestry and the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). Through the APFC secretariat, member countries were kept apprised of issues and debates within various international forestry fora, including developments within the UNFF process. Furthermore, FAO works increasingly in cooperation with many members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) in the region, as described in the section below. (See also FO:APFC/2006/7)

ASIA-PACIFIC INITIATIVES

a. Sustainable supplies of wood and fibre

7. APFC continues to promote the adoption and effective implementation of national codes of practice for forest harvesting in the region through various training and awareness-raising activities. A sub-regional workshop was held in Malaysia in September 2004, to assist countries (participants were from China, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar and Viet Nam) in planning for effective training to implement codes of practice. APFC, in collaboration with the Association of SouthEast Asian Nations (ASEAN), conducted a review of implementation of national codes in ASEAN countries in 2005. FAO supported a study tour for two Chinese forestry officials to Australia to provide insights into training for implementing the national code of practice. The preparation of the *Philippine code of practice for forest harvesting in community-based forest management areas* was also supported by FAO.

8. Reduced impact logging (RIL): APFC continued to support RIL activities, including operating RILNET – an e-mail list server to distribute information, synopses of research results and activities on reduced impact logging. Twelve national training workshops on RILSIM (software for financial analysis of reduced impact logging systems) were conducted in Fiji, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar and Viet Nam between November 2003 and January 2006.

9. The findings and recommendations of the regional studies on incentives for forest plantation development, presented at the Nineteenth Session of the APFC in August 2002 and the UNFF Intersessional Expert Meeting in March 2003, prompted several countries (including China, Indonesia, Philippines and Viet Nam) to initiate reviews of their forest plantation programmes. The complete report was published in late 2004 as *What does it take? The role of incentives in forest plantation development in Asia and the Pacific*.

b. Continuous improvement in forest management

10. APFC concluded the highly successful *In search of excellence* initiative. The initiative identified and documented exemplary forest management in the region and increased awareness of outstanding forest management practices and approaches; more than 170 nominations were received from 21 countries. The study culminated in a publication with 28 case studies, outlining common themes among well-managed forests including strengthening property rights, attention to people's livelihoods and appropriate institutional arrangements. The study and the publication has

received positive acclaim throughout the region and beyond. More than 4,000 copies of the publication have been distributed.

11. FAO continued support for the development and implementation of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management and forest certification. In July 2004, in collaboration with the State Forestry Administration of China, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service and the Zhejiang Forestry Department, FAO organized a workshop on *Forest certification in China: Latest developments and future strategies*. The meeting exposed Chinese and regional participants to a broad range of certification initiatives at international and national levels. In June 2005, FAO published the proceedings of the workshop. In August 2005, a paper entitled *Challenges facing certification and eco-labeling of forest products in developing countries* was presented at the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) World Congress in Brisbane, Australia.

12. In collaboration with the Government of Canada, FAO continued to support the development of model forests in the region. New model forests were launched in Indonesia and India. Workshops and regional consultations were organized to strengthen implementation of the model forest approach and enhance the regional model forest support network.

13. FAO worked to enhance forest rehabilitation in the region, including the promotion of assisted natural regeneration. In July 2005, FAO co-organized a symposium on tropical rainforest rehabilitation and restoration in Sabah, Malaysia. FAO also published a booklet entitled *Helping forests take cover*, highlighting new approaches for reforesting degraded tropical landscapes in Asia and the Pacific.

14. Promotion of sound agroforestry practices: FAO continued to produce the Asia-Pacific Agroforestry Newsletter, *APANews*, in collaboration with the Institute of Agroforestry of the University of the Philippines Los Baños. Articles focused on agroforestry research, promotion of best practices, and agroforestry education and training.

c. Devolution of forest management responsibilities

15. Evolution of devolution (participatory forestry network): In collaboration with the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC) and other partners, FAO initiated work to establish a participatory forestry network (“community of practice”) in the Asia-Pacific region. The goal is to promote the effective sharing of participatory forestry approaches and experiences in the implementation of devolved forest management. National case studies were completed to describe efforts and experiences in devolved forest management. Results have been used to enrich a regional initiative on decentralized forest management being implemented under the umbrella of the Asia Forest Partnership (AFP) and will be presented at a workshop to be convened in Indonesia in September 2006.

16. Work was initiated to identify trends in forest ownership, forest resources tenure and institutional arrangements and to understand their implications for sustainable forest management and poverty reduction. National case studies described experiences in China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. A regional workshop was convened in Bangkok in October 2005 to discuss the preliminary results of the case studies, provide guidance to the case study authors on strengthening their work, and to draw tentative conclusions. The work was conducted in collaboration with the Asia Forest Partnership, with support from Tropenbos, The Nature Conservancy and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR).

17. FAO collaborated with ADB and CIFOR on a project aimed at reducing poverty among upland communities in the Mekong region through improved community and industrial forestry. Work focused on identifying forestry development strategies for smallholder farm families,

comparative studies on community forestry, potential for poverty reduction from industrial forestry, and the effects of forest products on rural livelihoods.

d. Cross-cutting initiatives

18. National forest programmes (nfps): FAO continued support for nfp development and implementation throughout the region. National workshops were organized in Malaysia (June 2005), Thailand (July 2005) and Pakistan (January 2006) to facilitate the nfp development and implementation and involve broad stakeholders in the country-led nfp processes. Workshops are also planned in Indonesia and Viet Nam in 2006. Nfps are supported through the National Forest Programme Facility (or Facility for short; refer also to paragraph 27), the FAO-Netherlands Partnership Programme (FNPP) and FAO's Regular Programme and Technical Cooperation Programme.

19. Reinventing forestry agencies: APFC launched this new initiative to provide countries with recommendations on appropriate national forestry institutional adaptation. It is intended to assist countries in re-aligning their forestry institutions to ensure their effectiveness and relevance in light of major and rapid changes in forestry and society's expectations. Case studies describing and analyzing efforts to restructure key forestry agencies have been undertaken in eight countries. The results of these case studies were presented at an expert consultation in Manila, 28 February – 1 March 2006.

20. Forest policy short course: In response to a crucial need to strengthen the capacity of policy makers in the Asia-Pacific region, a two-week forest policy course was designed and curriculum and teaching materials developed. The course, aimed at mid- to upper-level government forestry professionals, will provide a sound understanding of forest policies and relevant analytical tools for policy analysis across a broad spectrum of issues. The course will be conducted for the first time in mid-2006.

21. Asia-Pacific Forest Invasive Species Network (APFISN): Inaugurated at the Twentieth session of APFC, the APFISN has focused its activities in four areas: stocktaking of national activities, capacity building, awareness raising, and information dissemination and database development. Network activities included regional workshops on *Development of an Asia-Pacific strategy for eucalyptus rust* (October 2004, Thailand); *Development of an Asia-Pacific strategy for forest invasive species: the coconut beetle problem – bridging agriculture and forestry* (February 2005, Viet Nam); and *Early warning systems for forest invasive species* (February 2006, India).

22. In collaboration with CIFOR, a publication entitled *Forests and floods: drowning in fiction or thriving on facts?* was published in early 2005. The publication provides scientific knowledge on upland-lowland interrelationships and effective options for flood mitigation and watershed management to policy-makers, media, development officials and others. The publication was translated into Chinese, Bahasa Indonesia, Thai and Vietnamese.

23. FAO executed the *Elephant care manual for mahouts and camp managers* project, funded by the International Fund for Animal Welfare, in collaboration with the National Elephant Institute of Thailand's Forest Industry Organization. Three publications were released in December 2005, and a national workshop was organized in January 2006 to launch the manual.

e. Other activities

24. Response to the 26 December 2004 tsunami disaster: In March 2005, FAO organized a *Regional coordination workshop on rehabilitation of tsunami-affected forest ecosystems: strategies and new directions*. The workshop recommended the establishment of a regional

partnership to foster collaboration and coordination of forest-related rehabilitation efforts. With support from the Government of Finland, FAO has begun a *Forest rehabilitation programme in tsunami-affected areas*. The programme supports work in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, and regional information dissemination. Additional support for rehabilitation studies in southern Thailand and Sri Lanka was provided by FAO, in collaboration with UNDP and the Government of Japan, respectively.

25. FAO and APFC websites: FAO upgraded its regional website to enhance information sharing on forestry activities, news, upcoming events, recent publications and partnerships: <http://www.fao.org/world/regional/rap/forestry.asp>. FAO also maintains the APFC website: <http://www.apfcweb.org/>.

f. Forthcoming Asia-Pacific activities

26. Work is under way to prepare for a new Asia-Pacific forestry sector outlook study to help guide forestry development in the region through the next decade.

27. Asia forest policy “think tank”: Responding to concerns that forest policies in Asia-Pacific countries have not kept pace with rapidly emerging issues and shifting demands, FAO is working with member countries and regional partners to explore options for the establishment of a forest policy network, or “think tank”, within the Asia-Pacific region. Expert consultations are being organized to assess the relevance and need for the establishment of such a policy network.

28. FAO, APFC, the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV), the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the Tropical Forest Trust (TFT), RECOFTC and the Department of Forestry in Viet Nam will organize a conference in October 2006 to review the experiences of small-scale forestry operations in Asia and the Pacific in generating income and employment and alleviating poverty. The initiative will provide insights into appropriate technologies, review current obstacles and explore steps to be taken to create supportive policies and frameworks for more equitable benefit sharing in forestry.

FAO FIELD PROGRAMME

29. Through its Field Programme, FAO provides direct assistance to member countries in policy development, forestry development and capacity building. The focus of field projects in recent years has been on: i) sustainable forest management through improved forest harvesting; ii) implementation of participatory approaches in forest management, including the model forest approach; iii) sustainable development of non-wood forest products; and iv) the improvement of forestry information and statistics. Significantly, both the number of projects and especially the total donor funding provided for FAO-supported forestry field projects in Asia and the Pacific have declined sharply in recent years.

PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE WORK

30. In reflecting upon the work carried out during the past two years, and considering the array of needs facing the region, delegates are invited to identify priorities for the future work of the Commission, FAO and partner organizations.

ANNEX A**Recommendations of the 20th Session of the Commission****State of forestry in the region**

1. The Commission recommended that member countries take further action to implement internationally agreed actions related to forests, especially the IPF/IFF proposals for action. It further recommended that FAO help convey member country experiences in working toward sustainable forest management, including successes and impediments, to the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) (para. 12).
2. The Commission urged FAO to expedite its efforts to help countries build capacity for sustainable forest management, especially by facilitating interaction among countries and by organizing workshops and training sessions at the regional, sub-regional and national levels (para. 13).
3. The Commission urged member countries and FAO to explore new avenues for obtaining finance for sustainable forest management, including through partnerships with the private sector (para. 14).
4. The Commission recommended more regional and bilateral collaboration among member countries in dealing with problems of illegal logging and associated illegal trade of forest products. FAO was urged to provide additional technical support to help member countries control illegal logging and associated illegal trade, and to assess the costs and impacts of illegal logging (para. 15).
5. The Commission recommended that FAO continue promoting the importance of conserving biological resources as a priority among efforts to achieve sustainable forest management (para. 16).
6. The Commission requested FAO to continue providing sound scientific information on relationships between forests and water, including flooding, and on successful watershed management approaches (para. 17).

Forestry activities of interest to the region

7. The Commission urged member countries, FAO and the National Forest Programme Facility to strengthen support for implementing national forest programmes (para. 21).
8. The Commission requested FAO to collect regularly and disseminate information on the Global Forest Resources Assessment, the Asia-Pacific Forestry Sector Outlook Study, and the *State of Forestry in Asia and the Pacific* in collaboration with APFC member countries (para. 22).
9. The Commission requested FAO to continue efforts to enhance national capacities for conducting forest resource assessments, including assessment of tree resources outside forests (para. 23).

10. The Commission requested FAO to continue promoting the development and use of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. It also recommended that the seven thematic areas of sustainable forest management, as acknowledged by the International Conference on Criteria and Indicators in Guatemala (February 2003), the sixteenth session of the Committee on Forestry (March 2003) and further discussed at the recent FAO/ITTO Expert Consultation in the Philippines (March 2004), be used as globally agreed criteria for sustainable forest management, for harmonizing purposes (para. 24).
11. The Commission recommended that FAO develop practical guidelines for the sustainable use of non-wood forest products, and work to improve marketing of such products (para 25).
12. The Commission requested FAO to continue providing support for the implementation of codes of practice for forest harvesting and the application of improved forest harvesting (para. 26).
13. The Commission endorsed the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Forest Invasive Species Network, under the auspices of APFC. It urged FAO and member countries to support the network as a mechanism for sharing information on existing and potential forest pests and approaches for combating such pests. FAO was requested to work with member countries to mobilize funds to effectively manage the network (para. 27).
14. The Commission urged FAO to continue providing strong support for the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), particularly its collaborating and coordinating functions (para. 29).
15. The Commission encouraged FAO and other CPF members to further simplify forest-related reporting in order to reduce the burden on countries (para. 30).
16. The Commission urged FAO, in collaboration with other CPF members, to continue work to harmonize concepts, terminology and definitions used in assessing, monitoring and reporting on sustainable forest management (para. 31).

In-session seminar: In search of excellence: exemplary forest management in Asia and the Pacific

17. The Commission recommended that the results of the *In Search of Excellence* initiative be widely distributed and promoted through media briefings, workshops, and the preparation of materials to help managers of nominated forests to promote a common message. The Commission also suggested that FAO consider organizing a side meeting at the next session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) to feature the initiative (para. 37).

Financing sustainable forest management

18. The Commission encouraged FAO to strengthen its work with donor countries and financial institutions to help facilitate the efforts of developing countries, especially during their transition to sustainable forest management (para. 40).

19. The Commission requested FAO to continue providing information and advice on policies, legal resources and approaches for improved pricing and taxation of forest products and resources, strengthening measures for collecting royalties and fees and controlling illegal activities (para 41).
20. The Commission requested FAO to facilitate the exchange of information and experience related to the valuation and the development of markets for non-wood forest products, environmental services (e.g., carbon sequestration, provision of clean air and water) and ecotourism (para. 42).
21. The Commission urged FAO to continue raising awareness of the contributions that forests make to the environment, rural development, poverty alleviation and other economic sectors (e.g. tourism, water resources). It also requested FAO to maintain efforts to ensure that sound scientific knowledge on the actual benefits provided by forests and trees was readily available to policy makers and other decision makers (para. 43).
22. The Commission requested FAO to distribute information on available guidelines for assessing the magnitude of environmental services provided by forests and the impacts and repercussions of unsustainable forest management and forest clearing (para. 44).

In-session seminar: Alternative forest management models: alternatives for achieving sustainability and reducing poverty

23. The Commission urged FAO to continue discussions with donors to secure funding for a proposed regional model forest network in Asia and the Pacific (para. 50).
24. The Commission requested FAO to review the changing forest, demands and expectations placed on forestry agencies as a result of the transition to alternative management models and to assist forestry agencies in reorienting, retraining and restructuring, as appropriate (para. 51).
25. The Commission recommended that FAO continue monitoring experiences in implementing alternative forest management models, disseminate information on such experiences and support efforts to strengthen capacities for effective implementation (para. 52).

Forest conventions, treaties and more: are regional agreements the way to go?

26. The Commission recommended that member countries actively participate and provide forestry expertise in the intergovernmental negotiations related to forests, especially the UNFF and the conventions on biological diversity, desertification and climate change (para. 55).
27. The Commission requested FAO to examine the possibility of organizing an intersessional meeting for thorough regional preparations prior to the fifth session of UNFF in 2005, which will decide on future international arrangements on forests, or to provide other mechanisms to assist countries' preparations (para. 56).
28. The Commission urged member countries to strengthen their commitment to implement the existing regional forest-related agreements and initiatives, including the *Code of Practice for*

Forest Harvesting in Asia-Pacific. FAO and other international organizations were requested to continue support for the effective implementation of these regional mechanisms (para. 57).

Information items

Wildland fire agreements

29. The Commission encouraged member countries and FAO to intensify regional collaboration on combating and preventing forest fires. FAO was requested to further assist member countries in the formulation and implementation of effective training programmes to prevent, control and manage forest fires (para. 60).
30. The Commission encouraged member countries to provide strong support for the effective implementation of existing agreements intended to facilitate cooperation in managing and combating wildland fires, including the *ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution*, which entered into force in late 2003 (para. 61).
31. The Commission requested FAO to examine the potential strengths and weaknesses of regional and global arrangements on forest fires, including the feasibility of developing and implementing a global agreement on forest fires, taking into account the lessons learned from the development and implementation of existing bilateral and regional arrangements (para. 62).

Other business

Report of the Regional Workshop on Implementing IPF/IFF Proposals for Action through National Forest Programmes: Strategies, Initiatives and Tools

32. The Commission recommended that FAO, in collaboration with other CPF members, continue to facilitate the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, assist countries in sharing experiences, and help build capacity of countries to effectively participate and negotiate in international fora and follow their progress (para. 78).
33. The Commission endorsed the workshop report and encouraged member countries to effectively implement its recommendations (para. 79).

Report of the Workshop on Developing an Action Plan for Addressing Forest Invasive Species in Asia and the Pacific

34. The Commission endorsed the workshop report and encouraged member countries to effectively implement the action plan and related activities within the framework of the Asia-Pacific Forest Invasive Species Network (para. 82).

Report of the First Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission Executive Committee

35. The Commission endorsed the report of the meeting and its recommendations. It recognized the valuable contributions of the Executive Committee in reviewing and guiding the work of the Commission and recommended that regular meetings of the Executive Committee be convened between the main sessions of the Commission, giving due consideration to budget implications (para. 85).