

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES  
POUR L'ALIMENTATION ET L'AGRICULTURE

REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE LATIN AMERICAN COMMISSION  
FOR FORESTRY AND FOREST PRODUCTS  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - 23 May 1949

The first meeting of the Latin American Commission for Forestry and Forest Products of FAO was held on May 23rd, 1949 at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The following persons were present:

- BRAZIL
- R. Pimental Gomes, Director of the Forest Service.
  - Djalma G. de Almeida, Chief of the Section of Forest products technology.
  - Horacio Peres Mattos, Chief of the Section of Forest Protection.
  - Otavio Silveira Millo, Chief of the Section of Sylviculture.
  - J. Soares Pereira of the National Pine Institute.
  - Hannibal Porto, Commercial Association of the Amazon.
  - Luis Scuhami, Lumber Center of Espirito Santo.
  - Paulo F. de Souza, Chief of the Section of National Parks.
  - Lino Tatto of the Forest Service.
- COLOMBIA
- Dr. Fabio Estrada of the Colombian Embassy at Rio de Janeiro.
- FRANCE
- Louis Fougere, Commercial Attache of the French Embassy at Rio de Janeiro.
- NICARAGUA
- Jose Mercedes Palma, Consul General of Nicaragua at Rio de Janeiro.
- PARAGUAY
- Gildo Inafran Guerrero of the Inter-American Technical Service for Agricultural Cooperation, Ministry of Economy.
- PERU
- Jorge Succar Rahme, Chairman of the Peruvian Sub-Committee of FAO for Forestry and Forest Products.
  - Alberto Baureda Cuentas, Assistant Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station of Tingo Maria, Ministry of Agriculture.
- URUGUAY
- Julio Cesar Laffitte, Chief of the Sylviculture Division of the National Administration of Fuels, Alcohol and Portland (cement).
- UNITED STATES
- Guy L. Bush, Agricultural Attache of the United States Embassy at Rio de Janeiro.
- VENEZUELA
- Sebastian Anibal Romero, Director of Forestry of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock - Breeding.
  - Tobias Lasser of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock - Breeding.
- CEPAL ( ECLA )
- Francisco Aquino, Agricultural Economist of the Economic Commission for Latin America.
- I.L.O.  
(International Labor Office)
- Dr. Alfonso Bandeira de Mello of the National Labor Council.
- I.R.O.  
(International Refugees Organization)
- Dumon Stansby, Chief of I.R.O. in Brazil.
- COMMITTEE ON UNEXPLOITED FORESTS OF FAO
- Tom Gill, Chairman.
- FAO
- Egon Glesinger, Representative of the Director-General of FAO.

Messrs. Pierre Terver and Hans Scavenius of the Latin American Office for Forestry and Forest Products.

The delegates adopted temporary rules of procedure valid only for the first meeting, with the understanding that the Secretary-General of the Commission would draft a proposed set of permanent rules of procedure at the beginning of the second meeting.

In conformity with the terms of these rules of procedure, Mr. Sebastian Anibal Romero, Director of Forestry of the Ministry of Agriculture of Venezuela, and Mr. Julio C. Laffitte, Delegate of Uruguay, were unanimously appointed Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively for the first meeting.

Then the delegates adopted the Agenda attached hereto.

I

UTILIZATION OF THE FOREST RESOURCES OF LATIN AMERICA  
AND EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

1. The Commission examined the report on the utilization of Latin American forest resources and on the requirements for equipment, prepared by the FAO Latin American Office for Forestry and Forest Products, following consultations with Governments. Indeed, this study was the most important work of the Commission. The Commission proposed certain changes and adopted the conclusions of the report, appending them to the present resolutions as an expression of its viewpoint on this question.
2. The Commission requested that this report be submitted for study to the second meeting of the Economic Commission for Latin America.
3. It is clearly understood that this report is of a preliminary nature and that some of its chapters require further investigation. Such work should be undertaken by the Office and the respective Governments in the light of the discussions of the first meeting of the Commission and of the Havana meeting of ECLA. This report should then be considered at the second meeting of the Commission. At this time, the Commission shall decide:
  - (a) that the report be completed with studies on reforestation and forest and soil conservation.
  - (b) that this report be considered as a foundation for the formulation of five- and ten-year development plans for forest production.
4. While the aforementioned recommendations are accomplished, the Commission adopts the three following major principles, to which it wishes to call the attention of ECLA:
  - (a) The present objectives envisage not only increased production but also the modernization and diversification of production. In particular, they consider the development of industries such as pulp and paper, fiberboard and other products now being imported by Latin American countries.
  - (b) The interested countries should endeavor to obtain the necessary equipment in countries where conditions seem most favorable, giving preference in the following order to:
    1. Latin American countries.
    2. Countries offering favorable rates of exchange.
    3. Countries requiring payment in dollars.
  - (c) The development of saw-timber production should be undertaken simultaneously with the improvement of the quality of finished products and the finding of suitable markets, chiefly export markets. The latter work should be undertaken in close cooperation with the joint FAO-ECLA Timber Committee.
5. The Commission decides to include on the Agenda of its second meeting the question of saw-timber exports in order to determine clearly the quantity of timber that will be ready for export to other regions, particularly to Europe and the Far East, in 1950 and 1951. The delegates appointed to attend this meeting should have all available data placed at their disposal.

II

THE LATIN AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR FORESTRY RESEARCH AND FORESTRY EDUCATION

Interest in the establishment of such an Institute was brought forth for the first time during the Geneva meeting of the FAO Committee on Unexploited Forests. This idea was the subject of an official recommendation at the Latin American Conference on Forestry and Forest Products at Teresopolis.

The task of the first meeting of the Commission consisted in determining the precise significance of the general recommendation as regards technical and administrative plans, with a view to the preparation of a detailed and definite project.

Following a study of the working papers prepared by the Working Group and after hearing the opinions of the delegates and representatives of FAO, the Commission approved the following recommendations:

1. The Institute should be planned as a technical body, based in a complete forestry curriculum. Nevertheless, such a program of instruction could be divided into several stages, whose accomplishment would depend upon the financial and technical facilities available.  
Such a program should be accomplished as rapidly as possible, and in the opinion of the Commission, it is essential that Latin American countries have a good research organization at their disposal within a minimum period of three years.
2. As regards the educational aspects of this work, the Institute should confine itself to giving advanced and specialized training to technicians and professionals possessing a solid cultural background. FAO would then be able, in addition to furnishing the countries with any technical assistance and advice that they may request, to organize, reorganize or adapt forestry training to suit conditions existing in different localities. Technical training should be closely connected to research work and the programs should be planned with a wide scope, so that they may render the highest possible benefits to students and at the same time allow maximum economy.
3. The Institute should be organized along the following lines:
  - (a) A central body for advanced training with laboratories, Library, etc.
  - (b) Regional stations dedicated to research, each of them specializing in problems belonging to different climatic conditions and having at their disposal large quantities of raw materials for experimentation.
4. The Institute should be located, if possible, in a country having a high level of forestry research and education. Furthermore, it should be readily accessible. Provisions should be made for five regional stations, as follows:
  - (a) A station for Central America, servicing Mexico, the Central American countries and the northern part of South America.
  - (b) A station for the tropical Andes, which would undertake the study of problems peculiar to mountainous regions of the northern Andes range.
  - (c) A station of the Amazon for the Amazon River Valley as a whole.
  - (d) A station of the Rivers Plata and Parana, which would deal with problems peculiar to these sub-tropical or temperate regions.
  - (e) A station of the Southern Andes for the study of forestry and forest products of the mountainous regions of southern Chile and Argentina.
5. The Commission was pleased to note the following possibilities offered for the installation and financing of the Institute.
  - (a) Official offer made by the Peruvian delegation to place the Experiment Station of Pingo Maria at the disposal of the Institute. This station could serve for the tropical Andes region.
  - (b) The tentative agreement reached between the Director of the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences and the Chief of the Latin American Working Group, providing that the Station of Turrialba (Costa Rica) could eventually be utilized by the institute. This could be the station for Central America.
  - (c) The hopes expressed by the members of the Brazilian delegation that they may obtain facilities from their Government for the establishment of the Amazon River station in the near future.

(d) The possibilities of obtaining financial aid from foundations and private institutions, as well as from the United Nations through its program for technical assistance to underdeveloped countries (known as Point IV).

6 The Latin American Working Group for Forestry and Forest Products shall be in charge of the preparation of a draft budget for the construction and functioning of the Latin American Institute for Forestry Education and Research on the basis previously outlined.

This budget should cover all technical, financial and personnel problems. In each of these fields, working groups should be set up to implement the work program attached hereto. This draft budget should stipulate, in particular, the general investment costs, annual disbursements and allocation of funds for domestic and international expenditures.

This report should be submitted before July 1st, 1949, to all Latin American Governments and to the Pan-American Union and UNESCO. These Governments and Organizations shall be requested to make a prompt study of this report and to transmit their approval, suggestions and criticisms in questionnaire form to the head of the Latin American Office for Forestry and Forest Products before September 1st, 1949.

These replies should clearly specify:

- (a) Whether the Government favors this project or whether there are certain changes it desires to make.
- (b) Whether the Government is willing to contribute with a quota under the obligation of maintaining its contribution for a minimum period of five years.
- (c) Whether the Government wishes to have either the Central Institute or one of its regional stations set up on its territory. In such a case, the proposal should include all the necessary data specified in the questionnaire and should state plainly: the location, site, buildings, local staff, technical facilities, means of access, etc. On the basis of the answers received, the Latin American Office would prepare a comparative analysis showing the respective advantages of each one of these offers, so that the Commission may arrive at a final decision at its second meeting. With this end in view, it will be requested that delegates attending this meeting be invested with necessary powers to engage the responsibility of their respective Government.

III

NEEDS FOR TECHNICIANS

In view of the urgent need for technically trained personnel in Latin America, and considering:

- (a) the evident lack of technical information generally existing in the Latin American countries;
- (b) that whereas these countries suffer from lack of technical personnel, there are technicians available in other continents, particularly in Europe;
- (c) considering the mutual interests of regions covered by two or more countries and the present lumber trade, whose future possibilities are yet unknown;
- (d) that it is necessary that each Government take immediate action in order to evaluate the forest resources of each country and of Latin America following a uniform plan and, further, keeping in mind the definite recommendations made at Teresopolis and the possible cooperation with the Economic Commission for Latin America, this Commission recommends

1. That in considering the best possible means of giving a rapid solution to the needs for Latin America, technical displaced persons should be employed.

Since it is understood that the recruiting of technicians involves a special survey by the interested countries and by the organizations having such personnel at their disposal, the Commission suggests:

- (a) that each country wishing to recruit technicians specialized in forestry or wood industries should communicate its needs to the Regional Office. Such reports should indicate approximately the number of technicians who can be employed by each country for each type of work, and should give full particulars and detailed information as to the qualifications required for each type of work. Each country will be requested either to establish a local office or to appoint an official to coordinate this work, so that an efficient liaison be established between public or private concerns and state or Federal immigration authorities.
- (b) FAO in collaboration with the IRO, on the basis of these quantitative figures and guided by the special needs of each country, should undertake an initial selection of technicians from among duly qualified people already listed by IRO.
- (c) All data pertaining to the specialists selected in accordance with requests received shall be sent to each Government. Public offices and commercial and industrial enterprises will then be in a position to make the final selection of the personnel they wish to employ. In each country all formal requests shall be collected by the agency organized to centralize such services and sent to FAO/IRO.

If such requests should be abnormally few in number, the competent authorities should undertake an investigation to ascertain the reason therefor. Technical and administrative measures should then be taken in conjunction with Governments, so that hiring of technical personnel may be carried out in accordance with the real forestry needs and existing trends.

2. That Latin American countries should activate interchange of forestry technicians. This could be accomplished between neighboring countries and countries having forests of the same type or having common interests in lumber trade.

IV

STATISTICS

The Commission studied at great length several measures conducive to the improvement of statistics of forests and forest products.

A differentiation was made at the outset between basic forestry statistics and statistics for production, consumption and commerce of forest products which, in order to be useful, should be compiled at least once every year.

The Commission agreed that the latter type of statistics is the most important one and that therefore the Commission should give its preferred attention to organizing it under a permanent and systematic basis.

Considering the above, three aspects of the problem were studied: the present, the immediate future, and the distant future.

1. At present, statistical data should be compiled from questionnaires recently sent by FAO to Member Governments, so that the Forestry and Forest Products Year-book for 1947-48 can be prepared. The Commission insisted that replies, although they might be only partially complete, should be promptly sent to the chief of the Latin American Office for Forestry and Forest Products of the FAO. It is thought that in this manner a more direct contact will be established, thus allowing a more rapid and efficient gathering of information.

The Commission was pleased to note that the representatives of Brazil, Peru, Uruguay and France promised to request their respective countries to send their statistics before July 1st. The representatives of Paraguay and Venezuela would try to obtain their information before July 15.

A copy of the present report shall be sent to those countries which have not yet set any definite date for sending their information, together with a note requesting them to inform Mr. Terver, Chief of the Regional Working Group, of the dates by which they will send their questionnaires or advise their impossibility of meeting the July 15 deadline.

2. The measures which the Commission deems necessary to have considered by Governments in the near future with the assistance of FAO are as follows:

(a) Recommend to all Governments not having specialized services for the compilation of statistical data on forestry and forest products to organize such services at their earliest convenience. The organization of such statistical services shall be the responsibility of each Government. Nevertheless, the Commission considers it of great value to have all statistical data on forestry and forest products assembled with the Central Office of the Division of Forestry and Forest Products of FAO.

In general, since difficulties are encountered in organizing statistical services, owing to the lack of specialists, the Commission requests the active assistance of FAO in training such specialized personnel. Such assistance could be given directly by the officers of the Latin American Office for Forestry and Forest Products during their trips to Latin American countries. The Commission particularly recommends that such trips be announced in advance, so that each country may prepare meetings of its competent officials to meet with the FAO representative.

In this way, specific problems could be studied and discussed with the assistance of FAO's technicians, making it possible to establish the best working methods and procedures.

It has also been suggested that whenever possible and convenient, Latin American countries should engage foreign statistical specialists and obtain the help of FAO for their selection.

The Commission requests that an immediate provision be made to include forestry and forest products statistics in the programs of the future Latin American Institute of Forestry.

(b) With reference to replies to the FAO questionnaires, the Commission recommends that they be kept within the scope of such questionnaires and that Governments have an expert to make their replies as complete and accurate as possible and to send them promptly.

The Commission also requests that the questionnaire forms be studied by each country with the aid of the staff of the Latin American

- Office, so that they may offer constructive criticism in its revision.
- (c) Finally, the Commission considering these problems of primary importance and of permanent attention, requests that the discussion of statistics be included in the agenda of the second meeting and that a report on this subject be prepared by the Latin American Office, containing all data and information obtained from the various countries during the period elapsed between the two meetings.

The Commission suggests that Governments include an expert on statistics in their delegations to the second meeting.

3. As regards o problems of the distant future, the Commission recommends:
- (a) That studies be made with a view to achieving a standardization of statistical methods, so that the statistics compiled in the various countries and those compiled and distributed by FAO can be easily coordinated.
- (b) In order to give such standardization an official recognition and also to provide a basis of comparison for statisticians of the various countries as to methods utilized and results achieved, a Latin American Conference on Forestry and Forest Products Statistics should be organized.

## V

### FIVE-YEAR AND TEN-YEAR PLANS

One of the most important recommendations made at the Teresopolis Conference was with reference to the urgent need that Governments draw up five and ten year plans for the development of their forest resources. The Commission wishes to draw special attention to this matter.

Since hardly any progress has been made in this field during the past year, the Commission resolved that:

- 1) This important matter should be one of the main points on the agenda of its next meeting.
- 2) That Governments should be requested to proceed without delay to the drawing up of such plans, and if necessary, that they make known the difficulties encountered in their formulation.
- 3) The Latin American Office for Forestry and Forest Products be requested to give these Governments any technical assistance they may need for the preparation of such plans.

Actually FAO should advise Governments on the orientation these plans must have so that they will ultimately fit in a coordinated Latin American Forestry and Economic policy.

To point 3 the following shall be added:

- 4) That FAO shall request each government of Latin America to appoint one or more technical men belonging to public offices to take charge of all matters related to the work of the Division of Forestry and Forest Products of FAO and its Latin American Office in order that the important objectives of this Organization may be achieved as promptly as possible.

## VI

### PROBLEMS OF SOIL CONSERVATION IN LATIN AMERICA

The Fourth Annual Conference of FAO, held in Washington, requested that an International Conference on Soil Conservation and Utilization in tropical and sub-tropical Regions be organized. The Commission wishes to make preparations for the participation of Latin American countries in such a Conference.

A very special aspect of conservation problems in Latin America is the fact that in this Continent there are vast mountain ranges, sometimes rising to great heights. The causes of soil degradation are intensified by the broken topography of these mountains. Furthermore, contrary to what occurs in temperate zone regions where mountainous areas are generally sparsely populated and agricultural activity



is concentrated on fertile plains, in Latin America, due to climatic reasons and unsanitary conditions in low lands, population is mainly concentrated in the higher altitudes.

After a discussion on problems and working programs of the different countries, the Commission drew the following conclusions, requesting FAO to make the work of the Commission known to Governments and to the Preparatory Committee of the Conference so that its suggestions may be duly considered by them.

- 1) The Commission believes that the proposed Conference is of great importance and interest to all Latin American countries. Therefore it urges that this Conference be held as soon as possible asking the full collaboration of all Latin American Governments in its organization and contribution of technical papers.
- 2) The Commission further requests that the organizers of this Conference be brought to consider that the problems of soil conservation present aspects of different nature and therefore should not be studied considering only their technical aspect. Many countries are already in a position to undertake such technical studies, while others have made great strides in this respect.

Certain major difficulties arise, however, in the practical application of these technical studies.

The Conference should therefore give its careful attention to the administrative, financial and political aspects of soil conservation problems in tropical and sub-tropical regions.

- 3) Among the best simplest and less costly measures which can be taken to prevent or combat soil degradation are 1) the fight against indiscriminate deforestation and 2) reforestation projects. Such problems are definitely within the competence of the Commission, which urges that the Conference afford them the place which they should normally occupy on its program.
- 4) An interest in proper legislation relating to soil conservation should also constitute one of the major aspects of the measures to be taken to achieve the desired results.

Such legislation should be supplemented with measures for propaganda, public education and training of technical experts. In the preparation and application of such measures, the Commission emphasizes particularly the need to create soil conservation services in each country to work in the closest possible relation with the Forest Services.

- 5) Problems of soil conservation and utilization do not only concern countries separately. They are problems which have a common interest and it is essential that all governments coordinate their efforts along these lines. Consequently, the Commission believes that FAO should play an important role in this work, helping to integrate for all Latin America the actions taken by individual countries.
- 6) Finally, the Commission urges that in addition to general problems of soil conservation, the specific problems of forest rehabilitation and stream control be duly considered and that they be placed on the agenda of the next Conference.

## VII

### STANDARDIZATION

On the agenda of the first meeting of the Commission was included the study of the following topics:

- 1) The standardization of the nomenclature of tree species.
- 2) The standardization of units of measurement for forest products.
- 3) The standardization of commercial grading of lumber and forest products.

The Commission has deemed it necessary to begin working towards such standardization. However, in view of the other important projects in hand, already being requested in the Regional Offices, and furthermore, in view of the expenses entailed in holding meetings of Standardization Committees, the Commission has decided to establish the following order of priority:

- 1) The standardization of nomenclature of tree species should be started immediately. This matter has already been studied in other regions (Africa and the Far East), and Latin American countries should not neglect this matter so that an international standardization can be achieved as soon as possible.

The Latin American Office of Forestry and Forest Products should immediately proceed to make an inquiry sending questionnaires to all countries in order to establish the scientific, common and commercial names of the most important tree species. On the basis of such information, the Office should prepare a project for standardization which would then be submitted for examination to specialists in botany, silviculture, wood technology and timber commerce in each country.

This project should also be discussed by local Commissions, whenever possible, during trips made by officers of the regional office. And finally, the project will be submitted to the second meeting of the Commission.

- 2) With regard to the standardization of units of measurement for forest products, the Commission has resolved:
  - a) That for the time being, the Office should restrict its activities to the study of the standardization of sizes of coniferous lumber products. The Commission should begin by consulting the producing countries of Latin America and other continents. The assistance of the experts of the Pine National Institute can be counted upon at Rio de Janeiro.

Following such consultation and taking advantage of trips made by staff members of the Office, a meeting of the local Commissions should be called, particularly those of Chile, Argentina and Uruguay. The Commission should draw a project which would be submitted to the Second Meeting of the Commission.

- b) Countries producing lumber from broadleaved species, particularly Brazil and Paraguay, should be requested to begin preliminary studies on standardization of sizes of sawn lumber. The results of such studies should also be presented at the second meeting of the Commission.
- 3) Finally, the study of commercial grading of forest products should be started by the Regional Office only in a preliminary form. A start might be made in collecting data, especially from the most advanced countries in this field.

The Commission recommends that the Regional Office undertake a preliminary study of Spanish and Portuguese forestry terminology.

## VIII

### ORGANIZATION OF THE SECOND MEETING

The Commission expressed its thanks to the Government of Brazil for the hospitality extended to the Commission on its first meeting, and for the efficient collaboration rendered the Secretariat in the preparation and the holding of this meeting.

The Commission requested that the second meeting be held before the end of the year by invitation from the Director-General of FAO.

The Commission recommends that these meetings be held by turn in different countries so that profitable contacts can be made between technicians.

Furthermore, it requests the Chief of the Regional Office to investigate during his trips and suggest the best site for the second meeting of the Commission.

Knowing this, the Director-General could then proceed to consult the Governments and set the date, place and agenda for the second meeting.

IX

REGIONAL ORGANIZATION

- 1) The Commission takes pleasure in joining the Director-General of FAO, the Director of the Forestry and Forest Products Division of FAO, and the Government of Brazil in their sentiments of gratification upon the establishment of the Latin American Office of Forestry and Forest Products within such a short period of time and upon the celebration of the first meeting of the Latin American Commission of Forestry and Forest Products in this month of May which has been of great benefit to all Latin American countries.
- 2) The Commission recognizes the strenuous work undertaken by the two technical officers of the Latin American Office of Forestry and Forest Products, not only in the Secretariat, but also, throughout their trips to the various Latin American countries. Notwithstanding, the economic difficulties which FAO is facing and the efficiency shown by the technical officers, it is considered necessary that either FAO increases its staff or assistance be obtained from Latin American countries asking them to send some of their technicians to collaborate with the staff of the Office for definite periods of time.