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December 2015 FO:NAFC/2016/6

联合国粮食及农业组织
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture
Продовольственная и сельскохозяйственная организация Объединенных Наций
Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura
منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة

NORTH AMERICAN FOREST COMMISSION

TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Campeche, Mexico, 11 - 14 January 2016

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS OF THE GLOBAL FOREST RESOURCES ASSESSMENT 2015 FOR NORTH AMERICA

I. Regional summary

1. Forests are one of the most valuable ecosystems on the planet, their importance lies not only as great repositories of biological diversity, but also from the provision of multiple benefits to the environment and the human spirit. The economy surrounding forests plays an important role in the livelihoods of the population through a wide range of renewable goods and services.

2. The North American region comprises three countries: Canada, United States and Mexico, which together have 723.2 million hectares of forest, equivalent to 18.1 percent of the world total. This area is distributed predominantly in the temperate and boreal ecological zones. During the 25 years since 1990, the population of North America has increased by 30 percent while the forest area remained remarkably stable (0.4 percent increase).The net change in forest area is 108,840 hectares per year derived from the sum of the increase in forest area in the United States and the net loss recorded in Canada and Mexico in the period 1990-2015, although it is noteworthy that the latter shows a clear reduction in the rate of forest loss.

3. Of forest area in the region in 2015, 43.5 percent are primary forests, 50.7 percent other naturally regenerated forests and 5.8 percent are planted forests. Primary forests and other regenerated forests show a downward trend from 1990 to 2015 while the period 2005 and 2010 showed a slight increase, but still remains below the area found in 1990. Planted forests, on the other hand, show a clear upward trend with a positive annual rate of 2.5 percent.

4. The area of production forest in turn, shows an upward trend in the period 1990-2015, although no data for Mexico are recorded in the first reporting year, there is a difference of just over 31 million hectares for the most recent reporting year. Based on data for 2010, 16 percent of the forest area was designated for production, and 54 percent was designated for multiple uses, including wood

production. Total removals of industrial round wood and wood fuel from production and multiple use forests fell to 479.79 million cubic meters, 200. 25 million cubic meters less than those recorded in 1990. This is equivalent to a decreased in 29 percent. The decline was due to many factors, including the recent global recession which negatively affected the forest-related economies of all three nations.

5. The leaders of the region have recognized the importance of forests and have taken steps to increase protected areas, improve forest policies and programs to guide and determine decisions and actions for the benefit of future forest management and contribute to the development of national development policies related to the economy and society.

II. Change in Forest Area

6. According to the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015 (FRA), in the last 25 years, the forests of the North American have shown a positive rate of net change, with an increase of 2,721,000 hectares in the period 1990-2015. However, while there was an increase in forest area reported for the period 2005-2010 in the United States, Canada and Mexico reported annual losses, albeit with declining trend in the annual rate reported in 2015.

7. Overall, the region of North America reduced its annual forest loss rate of 0.05 percent in the decade of 2000 through 2010 to 0.02 percent during the period 2010 through 2015. Between 2010 and 2015 the region showed a loss of 691,000 hectares and a gain of 1,375,000 hectares, equivalent to a net increase in forest area of 684,000 hectares in this period.

Forest Extension													
Country	Forest area (1,000 ha)					Annual rate of change							
	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	1990-2000		2000-2010		2010-2015		1990-2015	
						1,000 ha/year	%	1,000 ha/year	%	1,000 ha/year	%	1,000 ha/year	%
Canada	348,273	347,802	347,576	347,302	347,069	-47.1	0.0	-50	0.0	-46.6	0.0	-48.16	0.0
United States	302,450	303,536	304,757	308,720	310,095	108.6	0.0	518.4	0.2	275	0.1	305.8	0.1
Mexico	69760	67,856	67,083	66,498	66,040	-190.4	-0.3	-135.8	-0.2	-91.6	-0.1	-148.8	-0.2

8. The natural forests in the region is comprised of primary forests and other naturally regenerated forests with 46.2 percent and 53.8 percent respectively; together comprising 680,969,000 hectares or 31.3 percent of the land area of North America according to data reported in 2015. Between 2010 and 2015, natural forests decreased at a net rate of 390,600 hectares per year (505,600 hectares lost and 115,000 hectares gained). In terms of annual net loss, this means a reduction of 679,800 hectares per year (1990 to 2015) to 390,600 hectares per year (from 2010-2015), this derived from an increase in the extent of primary forest, resulting from the reclassification of mature forests.

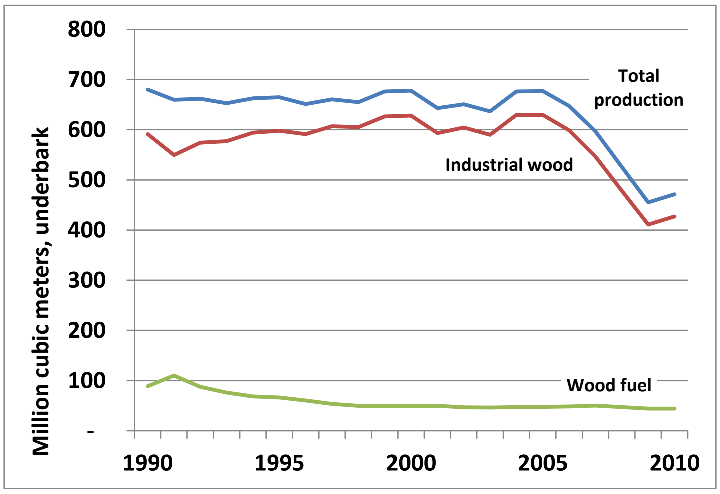
9. The area of planted forests has increased by just over 788,000 net hectares from 1990 through 2015, representing 0.11 percent of the forest area in the region. The annual rate of planted forests peaked in the1990-2000 period, with an increase rate of 3.4 percent, and then showed a downward trend until 2015 with an increase rate of 1.28 percent in the last five years.

III. Forest production (industrial wood, wood fuel, etc.)

Wood consumption in North America according to data reported for the period 1990-2010, shows a considerable decrease in the volume of removals since 2005, just before the global recession. Production declined from 677 million cubic meters to 472 million cubic meters between 2005 and 2010 or 30 percent. Prior to that, production had averaged 660 million cubic meters +/-3 percent since

1990. In 1990, North American had 38 percent of global industrial wood production which fell to 26 percent in 2010. Forest designated for production showed a rising trend from 1990 to 2010 with area increasing from 89.4 to 120.4 million hectares respectively for North America, while multiple-use forests continue to be managed for sustainable production of wood and ecosystem services.

Figure 1. Production of industrial wood and wood fuel in North America, 1990-2010



IV. Sustainable Forest Management

10. The loss of habitats worldwide has become a major threat to biodiversity in recent years. In North America, the annual rate of change in the extent of forest peaked between 2005 and 2010 with an increase of 3.1 million hectares, and suffered a decrease between 2010 and 2015, increasing only 684,000 hectares.

11. Of the 723,204,000 hectares of forest reported for North America in 2015, 116,736,000 hectares (16.1 percent) were designated for conservation of biodiversity; since 1990, this category has increased 28.3 million hectares, with gains primarily in the United States and Mexico.

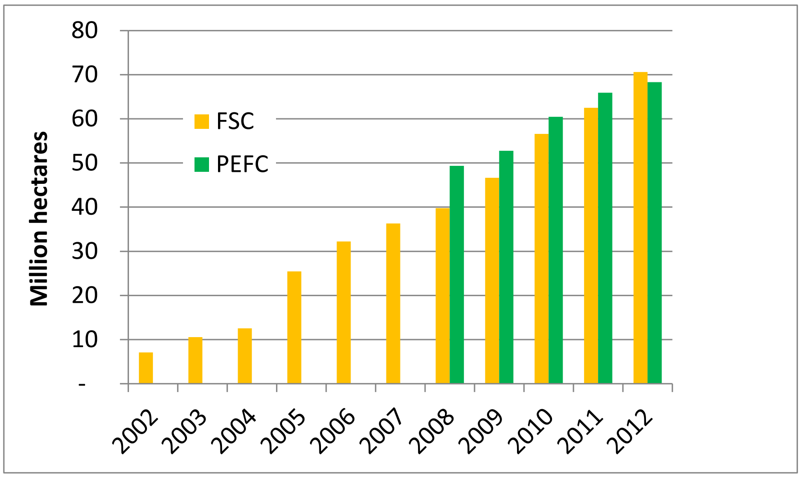
12. The area of protected forest has been steady for Canada, with an area of 23,924,000 hectares reported since 1990, however, the United States and Mexico have shown a rising trend resulting in an area increase of 1.6 percent from 1990 to 2015, and a further increase reported for 2000 to 2010 of 2.5 percent. In 2015, the area of forest in protected areas is 65,587,000 hectares, which represents 9 percent of the total forest area in North America. The area devoted to the protection of soil and water is equal to 73.8 percent of total forest area and the forest area designated or managed to provide environmental services covers a 638,339,000 hectares.

13. In 2010, 59 percent of the region’s total forest area had plans in place for sustainable forest management. The United States had plans for 66 percent of their forests, Mexico had plans for 27 percent of their forests; and Canada had plans covering 59 percent of their forests. Most forests designated as available for timber production had management plans.

14. Forest certification is becoming increasingly important in verifying the sustainability of timber being managed for use in both domestic and global markets. The North America region recorded certification for 2002 through 2012 in the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) for the three countries and Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) for Canada and the United States.

15. In 2012, North America had nearly 71 million hectares certified under FSC, nearly 10 times more than the 7 million hectares certified in 2002. PEFC certification was at 68 million hectares in 2012 for combined Canada and United States. Area in both systems continues to rise steadily.

Figure 2. Forest Certification in North America, 2002-2012*



*PEFC data are for only the United States and Canada and only for 2008 onward.

V. Points for consideration

The Commission may wish to consider deciding on appropriate actions to facilitate the following:

- Ensure regular updating of the main indicators of forest resources in a structured, objective, timely and accurate manner to meet the information needs of national and international communities.
- Improve the capacity of the countries in North America to carry out monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
- Harmonize the information databases based on national forest inventories in North America to meet the standards required by the global FRA to improve comparison of information and trends over time.
- Make FRA for the three countries available for projects related to monitoring changes in forests worldwide and other scientific projects designed to aid in development of effective forest policies focused on collaboration to promote the participation of different entities, government and NGOs alike, to report progress toward sustainable management.
- Strengthen capacities for establishing and managing systems to monitor the dynamics of forest North American forest resources in order to minimize forest loss and increase the health and quality of forest ecosystems.
- Promote sustainable forest management including the protection of soil and water resources and ecosystem services as well as forest production.
- Standardize the reporting of variables or indicators of secondary and tertiary production and adjust it in accordance with the regional reporting parameters.
- Effectively manage natural disturbances, including forest fires and insect damage epidemics.