



# ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY COMMISSION

## THIRTIETH SESSION

Sydney, Australia, 2 - 6 October 2023

### REPORT OF FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS OF THE TWENTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

#### Executive Summary

This document summarizes FAO's activities responding to the recommendations and decisions of the Twenty-Ninth Session of the Commission.

#### Suggested actions by the Commission

The Commission is invited to recommend countries to:

- welcome the progress made in implementing the recommendations; and
- provide guidance for positioning FAO to support members in further advancing the recommendations and decisions in the region.

The Commission is invited to recommend that FAO:

- continues to support members in implementing the recommendations and report on progress made at its next Session.

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

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Twenty-Ninth Session of the Commission produced fourteen recommendations for the attention of FAO. The APFC Secretariat has evaluated progress in implementation of the suggested actions and identified the sets of activities undertaken to substantively address these (listed below).

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TWENTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS TAKEN BY FAO

Suggested actions	Action taken
<p>1. Support capacity building and provide technical assistance to underpin national efforts to enhance, redesign and implement policies and actions to upscale forest and landscape restoration (including agroforestry) and reduce deforestation and forest degradation, including in the context of green recovery actions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● FAO is a co-leader of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. It leads Task Forces on monitoring and best practices. Standards of practice to guide ecosystem restoration are being developed. Seventeen World Restoration Flagships have been identified including five in Asia-Pacific countries (India, Nepal, Vanuatu, Indonesia and China).</li> <li>● FAO implemented a Regional Technical Cooperation Project on “Supporting upscaling forest and landscape restoration” in six countries (Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste). Outputs included: (i) Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) Days held in Bangkok in October 2022; (ii) preparation of national FLR Action Plans in Nepal and Pakistan; (iii) regional and national knowledge hubs developed to support FLR; (iv) resource mobilization supported through investment fora; (v) one regional and three national FLR investment roundtables planned to be held in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Timor-Leste in the second half of 2023; and (vi) a draft regional FLR programmatic framework building on the Regional Strategy and Action Plan (previously endorsed by the Commission).</li> <li>● In 2022, FAO convened a global roundtable on enhancing the forest sector’s engagement in ecosystem restoration. In October 2023, FAO and ANU are organizing a regional dialogue on FLR and Sustainable Wood Supply a pre-session event to the Thirtieth Session of the Commission. A dialogue, to be conducted in collaboration with <a href="#">the Forests Dialogue</a>, to improve understanding of engaging the private sector to increase ecosystem conservation and restoration, will be held in Southeast Asia later in 2023.</li> <li>● FAO and SIG conducted a rapid regional assessment of regional restoration suitability for Asia-Pacific was carried out using SE.PLAN, a spatially explicit online tool designed to support forest restoration planning decisions by restoration stakeholders. Similar national assessments are currently being carried out in three countries (Nepal, Fiji and Thailand).</li> <li>● Tools like TEER and FERM are being used to help advance FLR knowledge and monitoring.</li> <li>● FAO and IUCN are producing a report identifying fifteen promising FLR cases (selected amongst 150 cases across the Asia-</li> </ul>

	<p>Pacific region) based on the 10 principles of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, as part of analyzing and disseminating good practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several training events (online and in-person), were conducted on FLR, including: (i) on conflict management in collaboration with the Consensus Building Institute and Regional Community Forest Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific; and (ii) a study tour highlighting best practices and innovative technologies in the Republic of Korea.</li> <li>• Several projects related to forest restoration have been developed and/or implemented, including those facilitated by the Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism. These include several projects funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) (e.g. in Cambodia, Fiji, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Vanuatu and Viet Nam) and by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) (in India and Nepal).</li> <li>• Terrestrial Forest Protected Areas establishment in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu have paved the way for halting deforestation in designated Protected Areas.</li> <li>• In June 2023, FAO published the Pacific Forest Sector Outlook Study.<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
<p>2. Support legal and sustainable forestry value chains with appropriate involvement of local communities, small-scale operators as well as women and youth, using innovative forest technologies and digital tools for improved transparency, monitoring and decision making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A training programme on "Sustainable forest management and legal trade of forest products: Pathways towards certification" was developed by RECOFTC and piloted at national and/or community levels, in Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Thailand with support of PEFC. It was also shared with wider stakeholders in the region. FAO has worked with both PEFC and FSC to help simplify their national and regional certification systems and standards to make these more accessible to smallholders (including in Thailand and Viet Nam).</li> <li>• In Myanmar, FAO facilitated training of plantation smallholders in registration of their plantations – a key constraint to full participation in markets and value chains. The training included preparation of business plans and silvicultural management plans, and using simple GIS technology to map plantation areas.</li> <li>• In Thailand, FAO supported the government's launch of an online application (e-TREES), which facilitates registration of plantation-grown species of trees that have otherwise been banned from trade because of their conservation status. Targeted species include teak, agarwood, and rosewood, among others – which are mostly grown by smallholders – and opens up an avenue for sustainable and legal trade.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> [www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc6201en](http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc6201en)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2022, FAO and CIFOR published the Asia-Pacific Roadmap on Innovative Technologies in the Forest Sector.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
<p>3. Strengthen the capacity of governments and relevant stakeholders as regards the sustainable management and use of forest biodiversity (including wildlife) and zoonotic disease prevention through the One Health approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2022, FAO and CIFOR published the Asia-Pacific Roadmap on Primary Forest Conservation.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• A briefing note entitled ‘the Wildlife-Livelihoods-Health Nexus: challenges and priorities in Asia and the Pacific Region’ was prepared to inform decision makers on the current situation, opportunities, challenges and gaps at the wildlife-livelihoods-health nexus in the Asia-Pacific region; and to provide a set of recommendations to strengthen the linkages at this nexus.</li> <li>• A policy brief on “How natural resource management sectors can contribute to reducing emerging infectious diseases: the example of forest ecosystems” was launched by FAO and EcoHealth Alliance in November 2022.<sup>4</sup> The brief specifically targets national government authorities in charge of natural resource management.</li> <li>• The first phase of a joint FAO-IUCN Human-Wildlife Conflict and Coexistence Specialist Group initiative involving preparation of case studies on human-wildlife conflict management and promoting coexistence was completed in 2022, including preparation of two case studies.</li> <li>• Under the Flexible Multi-partner Mechanism funded by the FAO Flexible Voluntary Contribution Fund, FAO is using the One Health approach to contribute to eliminating invasive species that threaten biodiversity, address transboundary animal and plant diseases, and address antimicrobial resistance by strengthening national biosecurity capacities.</li> <li>• With a dedicated allocation of EUR 2 million by the European Union, FAO, together with CIFOR, CIRAD and WCS, began in 2023, expanding the Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme to Asia with initial activities focusing on preventive measures in support of One Health in four countries.</li> <li>• FAO was awarded the co-leadership of the USD 42.3 million Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded regional GEF8 Indo-Malaya Critical Forest Biomes Integrated Programme, together with IUCN and three partner countries (Thailand, Lao PDR and PNG), which in June 2023 was endorsed by the GEF Council for full programme development. The programme will build on FAO’s work on primary forests and contribute to the implementation of several targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, notably Target 3 (protected and conserved areas) as well as Target 2 (restoration), Target 10 (sustainable management) and Target 14 (biodiversity mainstreaming).</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cifor.org/knowledge/publication/8515>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cifor.org/knowledge/publication/8540>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/cc2752en/cc2752en.pdf>

<p>4. Further strengthen cross-sectoral work through activities aimed at halting deforestation and land degradation, and promoting sustainable agriculture and forest management in ways that lead to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● REDD+ readiness support to member states across the region has continued, including policy support, strengthening national Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV), and support to access climate finance. For example, with support from FAO, both Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Timor-Leste were able produce and improve data which led to submission of Timor-Leste's first Forest Reference Level (FRL)/Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL) and PNG's second FRL. In PNG, FAO support has allowed the scope of the forest monitoring portal to be expanded to also include adaptation, agriculture and other environment variables and information.</li> <li>● Further support has been provided to connect forest and landscape restoration and reduced deforestation and forest degradation to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and climate actions. For example, the Swiss-funded UN-REDD ASEAN Social Forestry Initiative “Climate Change Mitigation through Social Forestry in ASEAN countries” is providing a vehicle to assess the potential contribution of social forestry management schemes towards climate change mitigation (see point 5 below). In several countries, work is starting on how long-term strategies and climate ambitions, in which forest-based mitigation plays a key role, can be implemented. For example, in Cambodia, Indonesia and Thailand, the forest sector will play a key role to offset other sector emissions.</li> <li>● A Global FRA RSS study on mangroves has carried out analysis and reporting on the extent and changes in mangrove areas over the past 20 years, including identifying drivers of land use change (see more under point 8 below).</li> <li>● A training workshop on forest degradation was held in Rome in May 2023; more than 50 participants, including around ten from Southeast Asia, attended the workshop.</li> <li>● In collaboration with the UN-REDD Sustainable Forest Trade in the Lower Mekong Initiative, a sub-regional analysis on selected agricultural commodities is being implemented. The study focuses on pathways towards forest-positive supply chains for the commodities.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Continue to provide support to capacity building, technology transfer and mobilization of resources, to ensure continuing food security and rural development and ongoing development of the role REDD+ plays in this.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● FAO has mobilized resources through the UN-REDD Programme to support ASEAN member states to strengthen capacities to assess the potential contribution of social forestry management schemes towards climate change mitigation.</li> <li>● Under the UN-REDD Mangroves Initiative in Myanmar, FAO has supported Community Forests User Groups (CFUGs) in the Ayeyarwady (Delta) region. This has included awareness raising, participatory mapping, collection of field data to establish baselines for REDD+, safeguards training, and development of draft management and business plans for establishing community forest-based enterprises.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAO has supported capacity building, livelihoods development, and enhanced market access for smallholders and micro-, small- and medium-enterprises in the Lower Mekong, including enterprise incubation opportunities (in collaboration with the UN-REDD Lower Mekong initiative). Activities have included smallholder and community group trainings and tools development to facilitate accessing forest certification.</li> <li>• The new CITES repository on timber identification was launched at the Nineteenth meeting of the COP to CITES, in November 2022. The repository was developed by the CITES Secretariat in partnership with the FAO, in the framework of the project “<i>Support to the implementation of the UN-REDD Initiative for Sustainable Forest Trade in the Lower Mekong project, with a focus on trade in CITES-listed timber species.</i>” The repository is an interactive platform of the best available timber identification resources for Parties in the form of manuals, guides, and identification keys; mobile applications and other software; databases; collections and xylotheques; institutions, organizations, networks, and consortiums; multimedia and infographics; and news and events. URL: <a href="https://cites.org/eng/timber/timber-ID-repository">https://cites.org/eng/timber/timber-ID-repository</a></li> </ul>
<p>6. Continue improving the FRA platform to support easy and transparent reporting on forest resources, their management and uses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAO’s Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) Platform has been revised to reflect changes made in FRA reporting content. It has further been improved by increasing the consistency of the data and reducing the reporting burden on countries by prefilling the Platform with data and metadata reported to FRA 2020. A new interface for FRA geospatial tools has been developed and integration with FAO’s hand-in-hand geospatial platform initiated.</li> <li>• To support FRA 2025 reporting, FAO staff met with FRA National Correspondents and collaborators in a regional workshop for Asia in Bangkok in April 2023. A similar subregional workshop for Pacific Islands countries was held in Fiji, in May 2023. The workshops provided National Correspondents with technical support for preparation of FRA 2025 Country Reports. It also gave guidance on how to use the online platform to compile country reports while applying FRA 2025 terms and definitions and guidelines and specifications. It helped Correspondents assess the information already entered in the FRA Platform and update it with any newly available national data. Country experts from 19 Asian countries and 12 Pacific countries participated in the workshops.</li> </ul>
<p>7. Continue the work on improved reporting on primary forests and report the first results of the work in the 26th Session of the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recommendations collected in a FRA special study on improved reporting on primary forests have been incorporated into the FRA 2025 Guidelines and Specifications, as well as into the FRA Terms and Definitions document.</li> </ul>

Committee on Forestry (COFO).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on biome-specific guidance for reporting on primary forests has been completed for boreal primary forests and initiated for other relevant regions.</li> </ul>
8. Complete the FRA Remote Sensing Survey and continue capacity development on remote sensing and data management, as well as facilitate related technology transfer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The FRA Remote Sensing Survey was published in May 2022 at the XV World Forestry Congress held in the Republic of Korea. It presented global and regional results based on analysis of high- and very high-resolution satellite images.</li> <li>• FAO completed a study entitled “The world’s mangroves 2000–2020”, using methods adopted from the Remote Sensing Survey, to capture the status and changes in mangrove areas, and to produce new data on the drivers of these changes. For many countries, this was an innovative approach to measuring mangrove areas, which helped develop technical staff capacities, and delivered a new database and mangrove statistics. The data will be useful for improving national climate change reporting because of the high carbon content of mangrove ecosystems, as well as helping to improve the management of mangroves and the ecosystem services they provide.</li> <li>• Considering that the Asian region has its largest extent of mangrove forests in the Indonesian archipelago, a national study for Indonesia was conducted jointly with Indonesia’s Ministry of Environment and Forestry. More than 35 staff were trained to analyze land use changes using remote sensing. The dynamics of the mangrove ecosystem and the main drivers of changes over the past 30 years were assessed.</li> <li>• A National Forest Monitoring Systems training was organized for the Samoa Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) with technical support from FAO to build capacity on country’s Land Use and Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) assessment using FAO's Open Foris Tools.</li> </ul>
9. Circulate the draft scoping report of the APFC governance review for comments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The draft scoping report was circulated to members for comments, which were incorporated into the final report.</li> </ul>
10. Convene an informal consultation with nominated representatives from APFC Members and other stakeholders to further discuss and refine proposed options, including budgetary implications, to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An informal consultation was convened in July 2022. A Co-Chairs' summary report of the consultation was completed and circulated to members.<sup>5</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/cc2318en/cc2318en.pdf>

reform the APFC governance structure to provide greater relevance, efficiency and effectiveness.	
11. Report on progress made in the APFC governance review at its next session as well as to next session of COFO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An update of progress made in implementing the APFC governance review was provided to the Twenty-sixth Session of COFO and an update will be presented to the Thirtieth Session of APFC under Agenda Item 9.<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>
12. Promote SOFO 2022 within and outside of the forestry sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOFO was launched in May 2022 with a press release in six languages, a video news release and a social media video. Following the launch, the publication continues to be widely promoted by FAO officers at relevant meetings, in opinion editorials, press releases and other communication products. A new <a href="#">SOFO flagship web page</a> was launched in April 2023. The #SOFO2022 hashtag had a reach of over 24 million views on Twitter. Seventy news outlets have featured 87 news stories and there are over 22 citations in blogs, policy documents and other publications. The publication has been shared on Twitter, Wikipedia and Facebook by over 1 600 users. Publication downloads have reached over 2 500. The '<a href="#">State of the World's Forests 2022</a>' videos drew more than 25 000 views across channels. A new animation video was launched in English, French and Spanish: <a href="#">Geya and the three forest pathways</a>.</li> <li>• FAO supported Indonesia to produce its 3rd State of Indonesia's Forests report, which was launched at FAO HQ in Rome during COFO in October 2022.</li> </ul>
13. Take an active part in advancing the UN Secretary-General's Initiative on Turning the Tide on Deforestation and related activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAO continues to provide tailored technical assistance to support country progress on REDD+ including focused thematic support in establishing baselines, strengthening data and information systems, support to member states in mobilizing climate finance, and identifying approaches to nesting initiatives under jurisdictional approaches to REDD+ to facilitate more ambitious and robust pathways towards reducing deforestation (particularly in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Nepal, PNG, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam).</li> <li>• Several countries made good progress in reducing their deforestation rates. For example, a progressive decline in deforestation has been recorded in Indonesia, where annual deforestation reached its lowest level in the last 30 years.</li> </ul>
14. Continue to take an active role as the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAO has continued to play an active role as Chair of the CPF. The CPF has enhanced advocacy on forests at several international</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> APFC/2023/8.



<p>Chair of the <a href="#">Collaborative Partnership on Forests</a> (CPF) and through this enhance advocacy on forests through relevant global processes and initiatives.</p>	<p>fora, including the United Nations Environment Assembly, the XV World Forestry Congress, the Stockholm+50 Conference, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, Sessions of the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO), the Global Landscapes Forum, Sessions of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the One Forest Summit and Sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAO released, in 2022, the CPF <a href="#">publications</a> “Status of, and trends in, the Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators”, “Global assessment of forest education”, “An assessment of uptake of the Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators”, and “Forests and trees for human health”.</li> <li>• In the context of the midterm review of the International Arrangement on Forests and the review of the effectiveness of the CPF, FAO and the UNFF Secretariat organized an Organization-Led Initiative on the Assessment of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests meeting (in February 2023), commissioned an independent assessment report, held a briefing for Member States (May 2023) and organized a CPF retreat (June 2023). Further the CPF released a joint statement by its Member Organizations on the <a href="#">Organization-Led Initiative on the Assessment of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests</a> (in February 2023).</li> <li>• Under the leadership of FAO as Chair, the CPF welcomed the Green Climate Fund as its 16th member at the CPF Members’ Meeting (in February 2023).</li> </ul>
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