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SUMMARY REPORT OF THE
FIFTH SESSION

LATIN-AMERICAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

CARACAS, VENEZUELA

4 - 15 October 1955

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LATIN-AMERICAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

INTRODUCTION

1. The Fifth Session of the Latin-American Forestry Commission was held at Caracas, Venezuela, from 4 to 15 October 1955.
2. The following member countries were represented: Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Venezuela. Observers were present on behalf of the Holy See, the Organization of American States (OAS), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), International Union for the Protection of Nature, and the United States International Cooperation Administration (ICA). Mr. I.T. Haig represented the Director-General of FAO.

The participants are listed in the appendix.

OPENING ADDRESSES

3. The Head of the Venezuelan Delegation, Mr. Hernán Martínez Salas, welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Government and people of Venezuela. He said that the Fifth Session of the Latin-American Forestry Commission was being held under the noble auspices of the Pan-American Union which had been inspired by the Liberator and that the Government and people of Venezuela were proud to welcome to their land the distinguished delegates who had come to lend their efforts to solving problems of forest conservation. He referred to the political philosophy of General Marco Pérez Jiménez, the President of the Republic of Venezuela, who, with energetic will, had been able to arouse all the dormant forces of Venezuela in order to lead the country on to the road of progress, culture and national strength. He gave a full report on the advances made in the forestry program being undertaken by the Government of Venezuela through its Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, with special mention of the new Law on Forests, Soils and Waters passed by the Congress, incorporating all measures advised by modern science to achieve the best management of the country's renewable natural resources.
4. The Chairman of the Commission, Mr. Lucas A. Tortorelli (Argentina), in turn greeted the people of Venezuela and thanked the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock for graciously presiding over the opening meeting. He stressed the need for qualitative and quantitative inventories of the forest resources of the various countries of Latin America, with a view to their protection, improvement and expansion, and for comprehensive studies of the timbers and other forest products of the region so that these could be used most suitably according to their technological properties.
5. Dr. I.T. Haig, in the name of Dr. P.V. Cardon, Director-General of FAO, and of Mr. Marcel Laloup, Director of the Forestry Division, warmly thanked the Venezuelan authorities for having afforded the facilities for holding this session under such favorable circumstances. He expressed the hope that in the next decades there would perhaps start a new era in forestry in Latin America, since world conditions, new discoveries and recent progress indicated that this region was ripe for tremendous developments; although some progress has been made, its vast forest resources were still, on the whole, little utilized and undervalued.
6. He cited two matters of universal interest. First, that with the active cooperation of the governments of the region, and owing especially to the generous offer of the Government of Venezuela, the establishment of a Latin-American Forest Research and Training Institute now seemed assured.

Secondly, that a great step forward had been made in the promotion of forest industries, the basis for the proper development and management of the forest resources, by the convening of a conference of experts on the pulp and paper industry at Buenos Aires in October 1954. At the request of that conference, FAO in cooperation with ECLA and the United Nations Technical Assistance Board Administration, has set up in the region a technical advisory team whose help would be of considerable value in the planning and starting of new projects in this important field of forest utilization.

7. Finally, he emphasized the importance of framing sound, regional forest policies and programs, which was the main function of the Commission, and urged the members to concentrate their efforts along these lines and, perhaps, as a first step, to begin on the preparation of a broad regional development program in forestry for Latin America.

8. The Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Venezuela, Dr. Armando Tamayo Suárez, then declared the Fifth Session of the Latin-American Forestry Commission open and expressed his wishes for its success.

9. The opening meeting was also attended by Dr. Aureliano Otáñez, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Dr. José Loreto Arismendi, the Minister of Education.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

10. The provisional agenda proposed by the Secretariat (Document FAO/LATC-55/1), was adopted. The Commission decided to set up three ad hoc Sub-Commissions to deal with various items of the agenda, as follows:

- Sub-Commission I - item 3 (a, b and c) Forest Policy
- Sub-Commission II - item 4 (a and b) Forest Research
- Sub-Commission III - items 5, 6, 7, and 9, Technical Matters

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

11. The Commission elected as Honorary Chairman of the Session, His Excellency General Marcos Pérez Jiménez, President of the Republic of Venezuela, and as Honorary Vice-Chairman, Dr. Armando Tamayo Suárez, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Dr. Aureliano Otáñez, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Dr. José Loreto Arismendi, Minister of Education.

12. It elected as Chairman of the Commission for the next term of office, Dr. Antonio José Uzcátegui (Venezuela) and Vice-Chairman for the same period, Mr. Ricardo Lavagnino G. (Guatemala). Mr. Manuel A. González Vals (Venezuela) was appointed Rapporteur of the Fifth Session.

13. The officers appointed to the Sub-Commissions were:

- Sub-Commission I Chairman, Mr. Ernesto Noriega C. (Peru)
Rapporteur, Mr. Hernando de Erzuay (Bolivia)
Secretary, Mr. Angel Francisco Luján (Venezuela)
- Sub-Commission II Chairman, Mr. Tobías Lasser (Venezuela)
Rapporteur, Mr. Frank H. Wadsworth (United States)
Secretary, Mr. Simón Álvarez (Venezuela)

Sub-Commission III Chairman, Mr. Jorge N.F. Carmelich (Argentina)
Rapporteur, Mr. Riccardo Lavagnino G. (Guatemala)
Secretary, Mr. Gustavo Pinto O. (Venezuela)

SECRETARIAT REPORT

14. The Secretary reported on the work undertaken by the Secretariat (Document FAO/LAFC-55/3). The Commission took note of this report and commended the Secretariat for its activities.

15. It made decisions in regard to a number of matters that had a direct bearing on FAO activities, as follows:

- a) The Commission invited the Governments of the countries of Latin America to assign forestry technicians to FAO forestry technical assistance missions working in their countries, so as to give these technicians an opportunity to gain wider experience. (Document FAO/LAFC-55/31 "Technical Assistance Activities in Latin America").
- b) The Director-General of FAO should communicate with countries that are members of the Commission, requesting lists of qualified forestry technicians interested in working with FAO forestry technical assistance missions.
- c) The Director-General of FAO should seek approval from the FAO Conference for the calling of a Regional Meeting on Poplar in Latin America in 1956.
- d) It suggested that the Director-General of FAO should convene a world Conference on Eucalyptus.
- e) Recognizing the importance of forestry statistics for the efficient implementation of forest policy programs, the Commission approved the procedures set forth in document FAO/LAFC-55/20 for improving forestry statistics in Latin America, and requested the Director-General of FAO to organize a Regional Seminar on Forestry Statistics.
- f) It recommended an early exchange among countries of the region of material relating to forest terminologies, and advised the Chairman of the Commission to include an item on Forest Terminology on the agenda of the Sixth Session. The Commission took note of the fact that various member countries in the region had already done a great deal of work on forest terminology. The Spanish-English Glossary of Forestry Terms mentioned in the report of the Commission's Fourth Session as being prepared in Puerto Rico, was ready and would soon be distributed.

FOREST POLICY

16. The Commission gave careful study to Documents FAO/LAFC-55/4 to LAFC-55/18 inclusive, covering the Progress Reports on Forest Policy submitted by Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela, and to the Secretariat paper analyzing these reports.

17. Member countries were urged to arrange the early submission of their future progress reports on Forest Policy which should follow as faithfully as possible the established outlines.

18. The Commission advocated that the forest laws in the member countries should lay down the procedures for defining clearly what were "forest lands" and how they should be demarcated.

19. As regards forest services, the Commission urged that they be given priority attention by governments and be provided with the necessary funds and staff so that, at the same time as Governments were working out programs for afforestation and reforestation, due attention could be given to the sound utilization and care of the natural forests and progress be made in setting aside or expanding national parks and forest reserves.

20. The Secretariat was requested, in consultation with the Governments of the member countries, to seek a revision of the terminology established in the Convention for the Protection of the Flora, Fauna and Natural Scenic Beauties of the Countries of the Americas, signed in Washington in October 1940, and to submit a report thereon to the next session of the Commission.

21. The Commission resolved to set up a working party to frame a long-term program for forestry development in Latin America, suggesting to the Director-General of FAO that he request the help of ECLA and any other appropriate organizations he deemed advisable, in working out such a program.

22. The Commission had regard to the following considerations:

- a) The extent of the artificially-established plantations that were being created would eventually result in a considerable source of income and employment in member countries;
- b) Such plantations allowed for a new financing method, using the savings of small investors;
- c) Private enterprise was interested in the development of such projects which would surely arouse an interest in forest planting amongst the people of Latin-American countries;
- d) In the planning and carrying out of planting programs, countries should take appropriate steps to gain the full social benefits that such activities could provide.

It therefore recommended to Governments that:

- a) they give support to private interests willing to undertake afforestation and reforestation programs financed with the participation of small investors.
- b) they take proper steps to derive advantage from the social benefits that can ensue.

23. Considering the serious damage caused by destructive agents such as fires, insect pests, fungi, etc., the Commission invited Latin-American governments to promote close cooperation between bordering countries for taking the necessary preventive and control measures.

24. Finally, at the instance of the delegate of El Salvador, the Commission discussed the desirability of cooperation between countries in supplying their requirements for forestry technicians, and the question of co-ordinating the work of the governments of various countries in the matter of vocational training, with a view to making the best use of technicians being graduated from existing schools. It suggested that such co-ordination could best be effected through FAO, and decided to refer the matter to FAO for study, with the recommendation that it be further explored by the Working Party set up to frame a long-term forestry development program for Latin America.

FOREST GRAZING POLICY

25. After studying the document "Forest Grazing Policy" FAO/LAFC-55/22 the Commission felt that it was not advisable to change in any respect the principles of forest grazing policy and other recommendations emanating from the Technical Meeting on Forest Grazing held at Rome at the beginning of 1954.

26. It invited the Governments of member countries to base their forest grazing policies on the above principles.

FOREST MANAGEMENT IN RELATION TO DEVELOPING THE PULP AND PAPER INDUSTRY

27. The Commission based its consideration of this topic on the document entitled "Latin-American Conference of Experts on the Pulp and Paper Industry" (FAO/LAFC-55/21). In the ensuing debate two opposite standpoints were taken by the various delegations. On the one hand, some held that forest policy in relation to expanding the pulp and paper industry in the region should be oriented towards establishing artificial plantations, while the others were heavily in favor of proper silvicultural treatment and management of existing natural forest to produce the raw material for industry. This difference of views was referred for reconsideration to the forthcoming session of the FAO Conference. At the same time, the Commission offered its congratulations to the Director-General of FAO on the progress made in developing the pulp and paper industry in Latin America and urged the continuation of this valuable work.

LATIN-AMERICAN FOREST RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE

28. The Commission, after having given consideration to item 4 of the agenda and thoroughly studied the note of the Secretariat (FAO/LAFC-55/23), adopted a revised plan for the "Latin-American Forest Research and Training Institute", set forth in detail in document FAO/LAFC-55/39, and agreed to transmit this revised plan to the Director-General of FAO, requesting that it be submitted to the FAO Conference for approval. The plan entailed the creation of a regional Committee on Research.

GRADING OF TIMBER

29. The Commission took note of the special paper submitted by the Delegation of Argentina (FAO/LAFC-55/29) "Grading of Timber (Plata Region)" and resolved to congratulate this delegation on its excellent work.

CONTROL OF FOREST FIRES

30. The Commission studied document FAO/LAFC-55/27 "Control of Forest Fires", which contained the results of a survey made in Latin-American countries in this connection and approved this report. It requested the Secretariat to arrange the exchange between countries of publicity material, the results of research or surveys and other relevant material on fire control. It also requested FAO's full support for national fire-fighting campaigns, considering that the furnishing of such advice as was required by member countries of the region, should be one of the most important functions of the program of that agency.

31. The Commission also took note of the special report submitted by the Delegation of Venezuela, entitled "The Problem of Forest Fires", and resolved to congratulate this delegation on its excellent work.

FOREST PROTECTION FROM INSECT PESTS

32. The Commission studied document FAO/LAFC-55/33a "Forest Protection from Insect Pests (Central America)", dealing with the research done in Guatemala on conifer pests in that country and agreed to request Guatemala to accept the Chairmanship of the Working Party on Forest Protection against Insect Pests (Central America), organized by the Commission.

33. The Delegation of Argentina also submitted to the Commission a paper entitled "Synthesis of Forest Entomology Studies in Argentina" (FAO/LAFC-55/33); the Commission resolved to congratulate the delegation on its excellent work.

PLANTATIONS

34. The Commission gave attention to document FAO/LAFC-55/28 "Plantations for Fuelwood and Pulpwood"; it commended FAO on its current project of compiling a "World Forest Planting Manual", and suggested to the Director-General of FAO that the completion of this manual speed up should be given sufficient priority. The Commission decided to set up a Working Party on Forest Plantings and recommended to the Governments of Latin American countries:

- a) The speeding-up of afforestation studies and planning, to determine which areas were ecologically and economically most suitable, so as to avoid dispersal of effort and financial failures of planters who are now, or may in the future be, interested in such work; and
- b) The study of appropriate governmental measures for promoting forest planting by supplying planting stock, advice, government credit facilities, etc.

35. The Commission also studied the paper submitted by the Delegation of Argentina, entitled "Planting of Certain Exotic Species for the Production of Pulpwood" (Document FAO/LAFC-55/34), and resolved to congratulate this delegation on its excellent work.

FOURTH WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS

36. The Commission studied the findings of the Fourth World Forestry Congress that had special application to the region (Document FAO/LAFC-55/30). It concurred with those sections of the report relating to special problems of tropical forestry, and the establishing procedures for obtaining comparable results from investigations and research on improving tropical forests. It favoured the setting up of an "International Commission on Arid-zone Forestry" and strongly supported the education of the public, and especially of young people, in the conservation of natural resources in general and of forests in particular.

37. It recommended that FAO undertake, with the help of competent experts, to draw up broad "Policy Principles of Soil and Water Conservation", which would constitute a larger framework for the principles of forest policy approved by the FAO Conference in 1951.

38. Finally, it requested FAO to compile, on the basis of enquiries, information on the experience of various countries with the planting of exotic species and that it later send an expert, or a group of experts, to areas requesting this service in order that a complete report might be compiled.

39. In the course of the discussions, delegates put forward a number of specific proposals which led to Commission: (a) suggesting to the Director-General of FAO that he establish a regional committee to study possible uses of tropical softwoods for pulp and paper making and that the committee's report be submitted to the next session of the Commission; (b) suggesting to the Chairman that the agenda of the next session include discussion on forestry and desert control in arid zones, and on exotic species suitable for widespread planting in the tropics.

FOREST CLIMATOLOGY

40. As the result of its consideration of document FAO/LATC-55/37 "Research on Forest Climatology", the Commission decided to recommend to its member countries (a) that suitable steps be taken to increase, insofar as possible, the existing knowledge of forest climatology, particularly by setting up meteorological stations in proper places in forested areas of each country; (b) that they promote liaison and secure the fullest cooperation between the members of their Forest Services and national meteorological bureaus.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION

41. The Commission noted with great appreciation the invitation of the Delegate of Guatemala, tendered on behalf of his Government, to hold its next session in Guatemala City.

42. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Commission, the Director-General of FAO and the Chairman of the Commission would finally decide the date and place of the next session.

APPENDIX - LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

DELEGATES

ARGENTINA	Lucas A. Tortorelli	Administrador General de Parques Nacionales
	Jorge W.P. Carmelich	Sub-administrador General de Bosques
BOLIVIA	Hernando de Irmay	Director General Forestal y de Caza
COLOMBIA	Andrés Holguín	Ministro Consejero Embajada de Colombia en Caracas
	Hernando García Barriga	Universidad Nacional, Instituto Ciencias Naturales
	Alfred A. Kotschwar	Facultad de Ingeniería Forestal de la Universidad Distrital de Bogotá
	Rudi Stein	Universidad Distrital de Bogotá
	Rudolf Stein	Universidad Distrital de Bogotá
	Eugene Reichard (Technical Advisor)	International Cooperation Administration (U.S.A.)
CUBA	Zoila M. Suárez	Delegado de Turismo en la Organización Nacional de Parques y Areas Verdes
EL SALVADOR	René David Escalante	Cónsul General en Caracas
FRANCE	André Aubroville	Inspecteur général des Eaux et Forêts
	Albert Cusin	Conservateur des Eaux et Forêts, Antilles et Guyane françaises
GUATEMALA	Ricardo Lavagnino G.	Director General Forestal
HONDURAS	Félix Canales Salazar	Director General de Recursos Naturales
NETHERLANDS	Barón O.F. Bentinck M.	Counsellor, Embassy in Caracas
	J.W. Wessels	Secretary, Embassy in Caracas
NICARAGUA	Ignacio Román	Embajador de Nicaragua en Caracas

PARAGUAY	Graciano Antúnez Vergara	Director General de Agricultura
PERU	Ernesto Noriega	Director de Colonización y Bosques
REPUBLICA DOMINICANA	H.B. Castro Noboa	Ministro Consejero Embajada en Caracas
UNITED KINGDOM	Alan F.A. Lamb	Conservator of Forest, Trinidad
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	Verne L. Harper	Assistant Chief, Research, United States Forest Service
	Tom Gill	Society of American Foresters
	Laurence J. Cummings	Forestry Adviser I.C.A.
	Samuel T. Dana	Former Dean of the Forestry School, Michigan
	Frank H. Wadsworth	Chief, Forest Experiment Station, United States Forest Service
	James Kempton	Agricultural Attaché, Embassy in Caracas
	VENEZUELA	Hernán Martínez Salas
	Ramón Pinto Salvatierra	Presidente del Instituto Agrario Nacional
	Carlos Medina Sánchez	Director de Agricultura, MAC
	Pedro Segnini	Director Planificación Agropecuaria, MAC
	Antonio José Uzcátegui	Docente Facultad Ciencias Forestales, ULA
	Gustavo González Draso	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
	Ricardo Gondelles	Jefe División Ejecución Programas, MAC
	Francisco Tamayo	Jefe División Investigaciones, MAC
	Jorge Schmidke	Jefe División Catastro, MAC
	William Rojas G.	Jefe Departamento Prevención y Extinción Incendios, MAC

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Tobías Lasser	Jefe Departamento Botánico, MAC
Víctor L. Fernández R.	Encargado División Manejo Administrativo y Fiscal, MAC
Raúl de J. Cabrera Parilli	Jefe Servicio de Recursos Naturales Renovables, MAC
Alonso Calatrava, hijo	Cámara Agrícola
Julio Trujillo A.	Cámara Agrícola
Mauricio Berrizbeitia	Cámara Agrícola
Antonio José Villegas	Cámara Agrícola y Colegio de Ingenieros
Manuel A. González Vale	Colegio Ingenieros, Universidad Central y Universidad Los Andes
David Altarac	Ministerio de Fomento
Tte. Enero González Médici	Ministerio de Defensa, FAC
Luis E. Castillo E.	Ministerio de Defensa, FAC - Asesor Técnico Forestal
Humberto Rumbos	Ministerio de Trabajo
Tulio Pérez Planchart	Ministerio de Relaciones Interiores
Carlos Pietri, hijo	Ministerio de Hacienda
Néstor Altuve G.	Colegio de Ingenieros
Héctor Hernández Carabano	Colegio de Ingenieros y Cámara Agrícola
Ezio Santaronita Paparoni	Colegio de Ingenieros
Julio Villarroel O.	Colegio de Ingenieros
Víctor Manuel Badillo	Universidad Central
Ludwig Schnee	Universidad Central
Gustavo Bruzual	Colegio de Profesores y Creole Petroleum Corporation
Marcelo González Molina	Universidad Central y Universidad Los Andes

OBSERVERS

ECUADOR	Jorge Villacrés	Encargado de Negocios
MEXICO	M.R. Rodríguez de San Miguel	Encargado de Negocios ad interim
HOLY SEE	Pbro. Rafael Angel Eugenio	
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