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Organización
de las
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para la
Alimentación y la
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LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Georgetown, Guyana, 9 – 13 September 2013

FAO'S REPORT ON FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUESTS OF THE 27th SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

Secretariat Note

Forest Resources Assessment (FRA)

1. *Several countries valued FAO's support and requested it to continue providing support to countries in this topic (1 - para. 17) and, in this regard, highlighted the work carried out by FAO and requested its support to countries in this task. (3 - para. 37)*
2. FAO has developed two types of training in the countries as part of the forest resources assessment, which has been carried out in some countries and planned in others:
 - In Ecuador, Mexico and Peru¹, on remote sensing to produce figures on forests cover and change over the time, for FRA 2015.
 - In Paraguay, Peru² and Guyana³ promoting the strengthening of national networks to bring together different actors to the FRA in order to improve the process, the knowledge about the FRA and identify options for a better use of the report and spread it nationwide.
3. Additionally, in October this year, a regional workshop will be held in Mexico for Latin America and Caribbean countries. (LAC).
4. Likewise, it was also stressed that the budgetary support remains vital to the success of the FRA and a close communication and collaboration with donors was recommended as a key aspect to ensure the sustainability of this programme. (2 – para. 36)
5. FAO is implementing the GCP/GLO/218/MUL Project “Support to Global Forest Resources Assessment Process” that, in general, aims to improve forest management and, specifically:

¹ Planned for end of September 2013

² Planned for end of September 2013

³ Planned for October 2013

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- The harmonization and effective forest assessment, monitoring and the report at national, regional and global level.
- The increasing capacity of developing countries to assess, monitor and report on forest resources according to a common working framework and methodology.

6. FAO has contributed about USD 4.7 million as part of its technical cooperation programme and the European Commission an additional Euro 3.1 million. The project will end in December 2013.

7. FAO also organized the "Seminar/Workshop of experts on national forest inventory: a platform to support future challenges". Delegates from 15 countries of the region shared their experiences, challenges and need for information as regards forest inventories. Participants support the idea of the regional inventory and monitoring network and supported the establishment of a computational platform of gradual technological evolution which will depend on users demand. An exchange platform facilitated by the National Forestry Institute (INFOR) of Chile was established.

State of World's Forest Genetics Resources

8. *FAO was requested, in close collaboration with other institutions, to continue providing direct support to countries in preparing their reports, in order to ensure the integration of said information into national strategies for conservation and management of forest genetic resources and biological diversity (4 - para. 42). The Committee expressed thanks for the support in the formulation of national reports and recommended FAO to work in the definition and standardization of criteria (5 - para 45) based on the process used in the FRA.*

9. More detailed information on this item is presented in Document FO:LACFC/2013/10. FAO provided technical support to countries for the preparation of their reports, including through TCP Facility projects. Eighty country reports had been received in January 2013, which were analyzed for the preparation of *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*.

10. From July to October 2012, eight regional consultation workshops were organized worldwide to share findings of country reports and to identify needs and priorities for action in follow up to *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*. The Latin American workshop was held in Santiago, Chile, from 15 to 17 October 2012 and attended by delegates from Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay, as well as experts from Biodiversity International and the Latin American Forest Genetic Resources Network (LAFORGEN).

11. A draft of *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources* was presented to the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) at its 14th Session in April 2013. The report will be finalized during the year 2013 as recommended by the CGRFA. Results of the regional consultations and information from Country Reports, on needs and priorities for action, served for the preparation of draft Strategic Priorities for Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use, and Development of Forest Genetic Resources, which were approved by the CGRFA and adopted by the 38th Session of the Conference (June 2013) as the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources. (Please see also document FO:LACFC/2013/10).

Forest fire management

12. *According to FRA 2010, forest fires reached nearly 500,000 ha in 2005 for Latin America and Caribbean (FAO, 2010). The Commission stressed its concern about this outdated information. Commission requested FAO to update regional statistics on forest fires. (6 - para. 48)*

13. Fire data for the Global Forest Resources Assessments in the past were only based on country reporting. For the year 2005 many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean did not or only partly report, which explains the low total figures for Latin America. The almost 500,00 hectares include for instances only five countries from South America which only represent 14% of the forest cover of South America. The next Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015 will include trends of fire incidence and areas burned over the last 12 years as measured from satellite data. This analysis will provide information on the total area burned and on forest area burned. Data will be made available to countries for revision as part of the FRA 2015 reporting process.

14. ***The Commission thanked FAO for its support on issues related to forest fires and requested it to continue with it. (7 - para. 52)***

15. The Committee on Forestry (COFO) of FAO has established that forest fires are a major source of greenhouse gases and requested the countries to include forest fire management in their programmes to reduce deforestation and forest degradation (REDD). Actions will be taken with the FAO technical cooperation in countries where REDD+ Programmes are being redesigned and implemented.

16. FAO is strengthening its Fire Management Programme. To this effect, the *Smart Fire Framework Programme* has been prepared: landscape and fire management and climate change. It is expected to coordinate the implementation of this programme through a multi-donor fund. There are discussions about the possibility of linking it to potential GEF projects, considering that the new GEF 6 cycle, which will begin in June 2014, has included "Disasters Reduction and Fire Management" as a working area.

17. Furthermore, based on the Voluntary Guidelines for Fire Management and Fire Prevention, FAO has initiated the development of a set of tools for managing the risks associated with fire at landscape level, including cross-border fires.

18. The forest fires problem should be included in the new FAO Strategic Framework, in the proposals for the Strategic Objective 5 which refers to strengthening the resilience of means of living facing threats and crises.

19. Finally, FAO is involved in the preparation of the forthcoming International Wildland Fire Conference, which will take place in 2015, in the Republic of Korea. (Please see also document FO:LACFC/2013/9).

Forests and climate change

20. ***The Commission requested FAO to continue the collaboration with countries directly or through the UN-REDD program, to integrate aspects of adaptation and mitigation to policies, strategies and programs for sustainable forest management. (8 - para 57)***

21. In 2008, the United Nations established the Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD), which considered three pilot countries from Latin America and the Caribbean: Panama, Bolivia and Paraguay. Later, Ecuador was incorporated as beneficiary country in 2010 and Colombia in 2013, with a total direct contribution of about USD 22 million for the five countries. FAO cooperated with Argentina, Costa Rica, Chile, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Peru and Suriname. FAO is also working on REDD in Mexico, Peru and Ecuador with funds from donor countries and, through the FAO Subregional Office for Panama, is accompanying the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD), supported by GIZ, to implement the Regional REDD Programme together with eight Central American countries and the Dominican Republic for a total amount of about 12 million Euros.

22. REDD Action Plans and/or Strategies should be prepared in the framework of the national UN-REDD+ Programmes. In principle, they should include mitigation and adaptation measures according to country requirements.

23. *The Commission referred to the need of recognizing the forest sector as a relevant player in the climate change issues and requested FAO to support national forest institutions to strengthen their capacities in order to have more decision and negotiating power at international forums on climate change. (9 - para. 59)*

24. FAO cooperates with countries to strengthen sustainable forest management in the context of climate change and increase the extension of forests as carbon stocks, while considering the multiple forest functions and dimensions. In addition, FAO works in promoting good management practices with a view to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

25. In this context, FAO has developed the document "Climate change for forest policy makers", which is an approach to the integration of climate change into national forest programs in support of sustainable forest management. Workshops for the implementation of this approach in Latin America have been developed in Paraguay (21 to 22 December, 2009), Ecuador (14 to 15 November, 2011) and Peru (6 to 7 December, 2012).

26. FAO has also developed "Climate Change guidelines for forest managers" to assist forest managers integrate climate change considerations into activities at the forest management unit level. National consultations to support the preparation and validation of the guidelines in Latin America were held in Peru on 8-10 November 2011 and 7-9 November 2012. The first phase of implementation of the guidelines of three pilot areas in Peru – Piura, Cajamarca and Pucallpa – is currently underway.

27. At the request of six Caribbean countries, FAO approved the TCP/SLC/3401 Project for the development of a regional strategy and project devoted to forest management adaptation to climate change. The project is at the implementation phase.

28. *The Commission expressed its concern about this situation (the lack of visibility of forestry on the Summit agenda and in the document 'The Future We Want'), which had already been noticed by some countries and recommended that this concern is presented in the FAO Regional Conference to request a better positioning of forestry in Rio +20. (10 - para. 62)*

29. The Secretariat worked with the Chairperson of LACFC in preparing a presentation that was made during the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 26 to 30 March 2012. Three main recommendations agreed by the countries at the last meeting of the LACFC were presented:

- **Forests, ecosystem services and food security.** Consider the strategic objectives of FAO in a more visible way, the importance of forest ecosystems to ensure the sustainability of rural productive activities and the ecosystem services provided by forests, contributing to the welfare of their populations, food security, and poverty alleviation.
- **Forestry integrated to the rural family farmers (and agroforestry).** Promote the incorporation of trees, natural and planted forests in the productive activities of rural family farmers, valuing the provision of multiple goods and services they provide.
- **More visibility of forestry in Rio +20 Summit.** The Commission was advised of the lack of visibility of forestry in the program and in the document 'The Future We Want' (zero draft) of Rio +20, which has recently been made available to the Member States of the United Nations for comments. The Commission expressed its concern about this situation and requests the FAO Regional Conference to seek a better positioning of forestry in Rio +20.

30. The Regional Conference endorsed the “recommendation of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC) in terms of giving more visibility to the forest sector with regard to climate change and food security and the economic progress of family farming”. The Conference also made a call for attention to that “in particular, the role of the forest sector in the sustainability of rural production systems, its relationship with soil conservation and biodiversity and the sustainable development and use of water should be stressed”. In particular, the Conference recommended a better positioning of forests at Rio +20.

31. In this regard, the FAO Assistant Director-General for Forestry conducted the following activities and participated in the events mentioned below, promoting the visibility of forestry in Rio +20:

- Forests: the heart of the green economy (event ICFPA/FAO, 18 June).
- The Landscape: Transformative Action through Cross-Sectoral Coordination (CPF event, 19 June).
- World Mountain Association Meeting (19 June).
- Towards neutral soil degradation: the role of soil and forests sustainable management in the green economy (UNCCD-Korea event, 19 June).
- First CPF plenary meeting 2012 (20 June).
- UN-REDD Strategic Group Meeting (17 June).

Sustainable forest management

32. *The Commission stressed the importance of the Model Forest concept to create opportunities for communication and exchange that minimize cross cutting conflicts and requested FAO to continue supporting the Model Forest initiative. (11 - para. 67)*

33. The FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean gave the first course on sustainable forest management with the participation of 60 students from across the Region. Also, a technical cooperation project was approved to continue with a second phase of the systematization of exemplary cases of sustainable forest management, where a community of practice designed, implemented and operational for the regular exchange and transfer of knowledge among actors of exemplary cases of good forest management will be established. The systematization of new exemplary cases will continue and a tool that complements the generation of information, monitoring and tracking of implementation of national or subnational forest programs/plans will be standardized. The model forest concept will also be considered in the development of the aforementioned actions.

Forest and Farm Facility

34. *The Commission recommended revising the eligibility criteria of the countries associated with the new Mechanism, because with the current criteria of low and average human development index, several countries in the Region would not be eligible. (13 - para. 73)*

35. In the first selection of the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) beneficiary countries, the following criteria were considered:

- Experience in National Forest Programme Facility (NFPF)/Growing Forest Partnerships (GFP)/FC and other relevant programmes.
- Proven interest and possibilities to strengthen or create producer organizations.
- Interest of the Government to strengthen sectoral cooperation.
- Identification of products and services in the country, which provide an add value to FFF cooperation.
- Political stability and possibilities to continue the implementation of FFF in the country.
- Regional and neighbouring countries balance, to generate synergies, facilitates the exchange of experiences and strengthens regional and subregional cooperation.

36. Six countries were selected on the basis of the aforementioned criteria: Guatemala and Nicaragua (Latin America), Gambia and Liberia (Africa), Myanmar and Nepal (Asia).

37. The FFF Steering Committee emphasized that these criteria should only be used to start the activities of the FFF. New selection criteria shall be considered by the Steering Committee for countries expressing interest.

Miscellaneous

38. *The Commission requested FAO to carry out intersessional meetings of the Subregional Groups to monitor work plans formulated for the biennium and assess their progress. (14 - para. 93)*

39. As part of the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), the Technical Group on Forests made up of Forestry Managers of Central America and Dominican Republic, have met on several occasions to work on the Regional Strategic Program for Forest Ecosystems Management (PERFOR) update. These meetings have made tracking the biennium work plan possible and, above all, to establish the strategic foundation that will support the development of the work plan for the next biennium.

40. However, given the limited availability of resources from FAO, the specific LACFC Subregional Groups intersessional meetings could not be held. It would be necessary to identify together with the countries, financing strategies to hold these meetings, and explore the possibility of video conferencing, using the facilities of the FAO Representations in the countries.

41. Taking advantage of the participation of Forestry Managers in COFO, the LACFC Secretariat convened a meeting of the Steering Committee in Rome on 27 September 2012. As a result, important aspects for the realization of the 28th LACFC Session were identified in this meeting.

For the dialogue at LACFC

42. *Regional network of inventories and monitoring.* Delegates from 15 countries at the "Seminar-Workshop of experts on national forest inventory: a platform to support future challenges" held in Chile, reinforced the idea of establishing a regional network of inventories and monitoring.

43. *The importance of forests in the promotion of food security, poverty reduction and economic and social development.* Regional and subregional collective actions, in addition to national actions, can be undertaken to attract political and public attention about the importance of sustainable forest management and community forestry for a more equitable social and economic development.

44. *Forest fires.* An efficient South-South cooperation should be developed to strengthen national and regional capacities for timely detection and fighting forest fires and reducing its impact and damage.

45. *Intersessional meetings of the Subregional Groups.* Identify funding strategies and country commitment to carry out these meetings. For example, the meetings could be held via video conferences and/or consider the funding of the meetings (logistics in the country) by the host countries that belong to the subregional groups.