

REPORT

**Madison,
Wisconsin
USA**

**11-13 June
2014**

North American Forest Commission

Twenty-seventh Session



**Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations**

PREVIOUS SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION

First session	Mexico, D.F., Mexico	24-29 July 1961
Second session	Ottawa, Canada	17-22 July 1963
Third session	Washington, D.C., USA	18-22 October 1965
Fourth session	Mexico, D.F., Mexico	2-7 October 1967
Fifth session	Ottawa, Canada	15-20 September 1969
Sixth session	Washington, D.C., USA	27-31 March 1972
Seventh session	Mexico, D.F., Mexico	4-8 February 1974
Eighth session	Ottawa, Canada	23-27 February 1976
Ninth session	San Juan, Puerto Rico, USA	13-17 February 1978
Tenth session	Pátzcuaro, Mich., Mexico	18-22 February 1980
Eleventh session	Victoria, B.C., Canada	16-19 February 1982
Twelfth session	El Paso, Texas, USA	21-24 February 1984
Thirteenth session	Chetumal, Quintana Roo, Mexico	3-7 February 1986
Fourteenth session	Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada	14-17 October 1987
Fifteenth session	San Diego, California, USA	6-9 February 1990
Sixteenth session	Cancun, Mexico	10-14 February 1992
Seventeenth session	Jasper (Alberta), Canada	26-30 September 1994
Eighteenth session	Asheville (North Carolina), USA	18-22 November 1996
Nineteenth session	Villahermosa, Mexico	16-20 November 1998
Twentieth session	St. Andrews, New Brunswick, Canada	12-16 June 2000
Twenty-first session	Kailua-Kona, Hawai, USA	22-26 October 2002
Twenty-second session	Veracruz, Mexico	25-28 October 2004
Twenty-third session	Vancouver, Canada	23-24 October 2006
Twenty-fourth session	San Juan, Puerto Rico, USA	9-13 June 2008
Twenty-fifth session	Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico	3-7 May 2010
Twenty-sixth session	Quebec City, Quebec, Canada	8-9 May 2012

REPORT

of the

TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION

of the

NORTH AMERICAN FOREST COMMISSION

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United States
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OPENING OF THE SESSION (Item 1)

1. The Twenty-seventh Session of the North American Forest Commission (NAFC) was held in Madison, Wisconsin, from 11 to 13 June 2014, at the invitation of the Government of the United States of America. The session was attended by participants from the three member countries of the Commission and observers. The agenda of the session is attached as *Annex A*, the list of participants as *Annex B*, and the list of documents submitted for consideration by the Commission as *Annex C*.

2. Mr. Tom Tidwell, Chairperson of the Commission, welcomed participants on behalf of the Government of the United States.

3. Barbara Tavora-Jainchill, representative of the UNFF Secretariat, reported on the progress of the review of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF). The review will inform negotiations of UNFF11 that will take place in May 2015 on the evaluation of the IAF and on possible future options. Of particular importance will be the input and role of regional and sub-regional fora and processes, and strengthening the role they will play in implementing the goals of the IAF. She also reported on the ongoing negotiations of the Sustainable Development Goals, and noted concern over the current text lack of recognition of the full benefits of forests, specifically the socio-economic benefits of forests. The proposed SDGs and targets will be brought to the UN General Assembly in 2014 with final approval expected in 2015. She encouraged countries and the FAO regional forestry commissions to provide formal input into the process.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Item 2)

4. The Agenda (*Annex A*) was adopted.

5. Due to the rescheduling of the NAFC meeting from October 2013 to June 2014, a teleconference was held on 14 November 2013 amongst the Commissioners and Bureau of Alternates (BoA) members in order to provide NAFC input to the Steering Committee of COFO meeting that took place in Jordan on 31 January 2014. The conference call addressed agenda items 3.6, 7.6, 7.7 and 9.

6. The Minutes of the teleconference are incorporated in the current report under the respective agenda items and marked with italics.

COUNTRY REPORTS (Item 3)

Mexico

7. Commissioner Jorge Rescala Pérez presented an overview of Mexico's forest sector, highlighting that Mexico's current forest policy is aimed at promoting sustainable forest management to reactivate the economy of the sector, as well as improve the quality of life of inhabitants of forest areas while increasing provision of environmental goods and services, and reducing carbon emissions associated with deforestation and forest degradation.

8. As a basis for reactivating the economy of the forest sector, Mexico is currently implementing a strategy to increase forest production and productivity in order to reach a goal of annual timber production of 11 million cubic meters by 2018. The strategy provides financial support to forest land owners through the National Forest Program (PRONAFOR) to conduct technical studies to increase areas under sustainable forest management, promote more intensive silvicultural practices, and to strengthen community forest enterprises by investing in their renovation and improvement of their processes.

9. Commissioner Rescala emphasized that this strategy will promote linkages among forest markets and industry and encourage responsible consumption of forest products through certification of good forest management in order to ensure conservation of the biological richness of forest ecosystems in Mexico.

10. He further reported on the activities that the Government of Mexico is carrying out for conservation and protection of forest resources by strengthening institutional capacity through the creation of six regional centers and reinforcement of 32 state centers to more effectively address forest fires, and to promote inter-institutional coordination as well as increased participation of the forest communities.

11. He stressed the objective of increasing areas under payment for ecosystem services to 3.1 million hectares by 2018, through the development of new and additional sources of funding; for example, by promoting systems for matching funds.

12. Commissioner Rescala also noted that Mexico has a mandate by law to develop strategies, policies, measures and actions to reach a rate of zero percent carbon loss in original ecosystems. To achieve this goal, and to contribute to a greater efficiency and effectiveness for the mitigation and adaptation of climate change impacts, Mexico is developing a National REDD+ Strategy and a Monitoring, Reporting and Verification system (MRV). Key to this strategy is updating the National Forest and Soils Inventory and the development of 32 state forest inventories.

Canada

13. Commissioner Glenn Mason began addressing the Commission by describing the Canadian government-wide *Blueprint 2020* Initiative: an innovative engagement process that encourages public servants to actively contribute their ideas as to how a shared vision for the future can be turned into concrete reality and noted four key areas where NRCan-CFS is concentrating its efforts. He noted that innovative ways of thinking, engaging and inspiring public servants will help efficiently mobilize science to respond to current and emerging priorities, including the relevance of the public service in the face of rapid change.

14. Commissioner Mason noted the importance of the forest sector to the Canadian economy and social fabric. Yet, recent and significant challenges have led to a fundamental shift in the business model the Canadian forest sector. In response, Canada developed the Expanding Market Opportunities Program to develop new offshore and North American markets for wood products.

15. He explained that the elements of the Offshore Component are: International Representation (infrastructure), including setting up a network of Canada Wood offices in key countries; Branding, including demonstration projects, and; Technical Support, including influencing foreign building codes to allow mid- (up to 6 storeys) and tall- (10 storeys or more) wood building construction and technical training.

16. The North American Market Component is focused on encouraging a greater use of wood in non-residential construction through the Wood *WORKS!* Program. Greater wood use is encouraged through: influencing domestic building codes via architects, engineers and builders; demonstration projects for mid-rise construction using innovative technologies such as cross-laminated timber, and; the provision of training on wood building. A new Tall Wood Building Initiative is intended to encourage the construction reaching 10 storeys or more through grants for innovative building design, testing/research and development (R&D) and incremental building costs.

17. Avenues for future collaboration included expanding markets and global partnerships through mobilizing knowledge around non-residential and mid-rise wood building, as well as

innovation for competitiveness and environmental performance, such as timber bridges and harmonized building standards.

United States of America

18. Commissioner Tom Tidwell noted that the United States is facing some of the greatest challenges in its history. Severe drought has resulted in extreme fire weather and very large fires and fire seasons partly due to warmer and drier conditions associated with a changing climate. In addition to climate change, dense forests – especially in the West – coupled with climate change have created conditions for severe outbreaks of pests and disease, like the mountain pine beetle, bark beetles and western spruce budworm. This has led to the destruction of over 13 million hectares on national forests.

19. By 2060, the US population is expected to grow to somewhere between 400 and 500 million, potentially resulting in a net forest loss of up to 15 million hectares. By 2030, he also explained that housing density is projected to grow to about 23 million hectares.

20. In addition to urban growth, water resources are increasingly at risk, and habitat degradation has affected 85 percent of all imperiled species. With more than 80 percent of US citizens living in urban areas, the need for urban forest education is increasing. The United States has 40 million hectares of urban and community forest lands.

21. Commissioner Tidwell emphasized that the key to addressing these challenges is ecological restoration. Working with partners, the US Forest Service is protecting forests from land use conversion and helping forests adapt to the climate-related stresses and disturbances they face.

22. He also remarked that jobs restoring green infrastructure abound. In fiscal year 2011, for example, the national forests and grasslands alone accounted for nearly 450,000 jobs and contributed over \$36 billion to the US gross domestic product. He also pointed out that the diversification and innovations in the US forest products industry is another area of opportunity.

23. He also noted the new uses for biomass and small-diameter materials. Through discoveries made at the Forest Products Lab, woody biomass can now be used to develop cross-laminated timber. The cross-lamination technology creates a stable and structurally sound panel that is used for building components such as floors, walls, ceilings, and more. Completed projects have included the use of these panels for 10-story high-rise buildings.

24. Commissioner Tidwell pointed out that US forests are a vital carbon sink, absorbing at least 12 percent of the US carbon dioxide emissions annually. Stresses and disturbances, however, have adversely affected the ability of US forests to take up and store carbon. In fact, there is growing evidence that forests in the US could become a net source of carbon dioxide emissions by 2060. Therefore, there exists a tremendous opportunity to rebuild the country's green infrastructure through active management.

Reaction to country presentations

25. ADG Rojas-Briales commented on the trend in many of the most of developed countries of forests moving from sink to sources of GHG (due to passing the peak of their sequestration capacity and impacts of climate change), which has caused some to be resistant to including forests in their carbon accounting.

26. Jonathon Peck, Future for Innovations, remarked that geoengineering will become more important, as well as wood's role in 3D printing.

27. Commissioners Rescala and Tidwell commented on the similarity between the three countries' desire to expand the wood sector and noted that this is an area of collaboration that should be explored.

28. Commissioner Mason noted the issues of drought and fire as described by the US as striking. He referenced existing cooperation on fire and suggested closer collaboration as an option, if needed.

29. Kurt Johnson, representative of the Forest Genetics Working Group, expressed the importance of being more proactive in dealing with climate change and that forest genetics is one of the keys to resiliency. He recommended that more effort and attention be given to assisted migration of key species.

FAO

30. ADG Rojas-Briales thanked the Chair and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) for hosting the meeting, and welcomed the new Mexican and Canadian Commissioners. He expressed that NAFC, compared to the other regional forestry commissions, is very special in the independent way it operates. He reflected that the small number of countries in the Commission allowed for a unique working environment. He noted that it was important for NAFC to connect with FAO's Informal Regional Conference for North America to ensure forestry issues are properly represented.

31. ADG Rojas-Briales invited the Commission to provide views on the following topics:

- increasing coordination among working groups functioning under the different Commissions;
- observation on the need for more socio-economic issues within the working groups, including through the establishment of a forest communicators North America network;
- strengthening FAO capacities through secondments, particularly in the fire program;
- strengthening the collaboration with the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC);
- guidance on the joint programme of work of UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and FAO regarding North America.

32. Commissioner Mason agreed that communication is an important issue. He requested additional information regarding the role and function of a newly proposed NAFC Forest Communicators Working Group in order to hold more informed discussion with fellow Commissioners. Canada offered to follow up with the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development in considering financial and technical support to FAO.

33. Commissioner Tidwell supported the suggestion to enhance coordination across regional working groups, as well as pursuing socio-economic issues. He thanked FAO's leadership on fire, but noted that the request for secondments needed further discussion. In regards to the joint work programme of FAO and UNECE, he acknowledged the good work over the years and emphasized that FAO should work to further strengthen the collaboration between the two entities, noting that leveraging the strengths of both organizations was more beneficial than each organization working separately.

The New Strategic Framework of FAO

34. This item was discussed at the teleconference. *ADG Rojas-Briales introduced document FO:NAFC/2013/2. He recalled the recent evolution of new global initiatives, such as the Blue Economy in fisheries or the Zero Illegal Deforestation initiative in forestry, and noted that these new instruments are meant to boost further cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination.*
35. *Commissioner Rescala noted Mexico's support to the new Strategic Framework and FAO's new orientation are well aligned with major relevant policies in Mexico, and suggested that FAO, as a leading global institution on forest matters, strengthen its actions in forestry to enhance its contribution to the achievements of the Strategic Objectives (SOs). It should continue contributing to strengthening collaboration of member countries, including through the RFCs.*
36. *Former Canadian Commissioner Rosser made reference to the relevance of agroforestry.*
37. *Chair Tidwell expressed appreciation for the Forestry Department's explanation of their efforts to incorporate forests into the action plans under the Strategic Framework. He encouraged them to continue their work to promote forests and the concept of ecosystem management across all Strategic Objectives. He also noted the close linkages between forests, food security, water, and landscapes. He also further noted the role agroforestry plays in providing an alternative flow of income.*
38. *FOM Director Eduardo Mansur informed the Commission on the growing importance of agroforestry and the strong recognition in SO2. He explained that SO2 includes in its scope agroforestry, trees outside forests and urban forests as well; noted the relevance of the Bonn Challenge where countries committed to reforest 150 million hectares by 2020. He stated that this input from NAFC will be used to reinforce the role of forests in the SOs.*
39. *FOE Director Eva Muller recalled the achievements of the International Conference on Forests for Food Security and Nutrition in promoting the role of forests in food security and job creation.*
40. During the NAFC meeting, Commissioner Mason echoed support for promoting agroforestry as well as landscape approaches, such as those practiced by Model Forests, as useful cross-sectoral examples for integrated natural resource management. Fire management was also cited an important cross-cutting area given Strategic Objective 5 on resilience to threats and crises.
41. Commissioner Rescala encouraged both members of COFO and FAO to renew their commitment to fully integrate the forest sector in the core work of the organization. He requested FAO to strengthen and expand collaboration between the Committees on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, to exploit the comparative advantages of the institution and increase mainstream actions.
42. Commissioner Rescala recommended FAO to maintain and strengthen its activities in the framework of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, the UN Forum on Forests and other relevant international initiatives and stimulate cooperation among international organizations related to forestry. He further requested FAO to work through the regional offices and the Regional Forestry Commissions to promote closer work with their member countries in order to promote cooperation among them.
43. Commissioner Mason suggested that water and urban forestry should be considered as emerging priority issues for FAO, and agreed with the need for FAO to revise its Forestry Strategy.

44. Commissioner Mason suggested that in addition to landscape approaches, agroforestry, water, and fire as noted above, areas for future work could include:

- Work on forest degradation, specifically improving the estimated area of forest degraded by type of degradation; and
- Reporting and transparency which contributes to addressing underlying problems in the forest sector in many developing countries.

45. Commissioner Mason also noted that, as the leading technical institution on forests, FAO has a central role to play in the global forestry architecture and in implementing global policy objectives. He supported the recommendation to develop a strategy for the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to further strengthen coordination.

46. Regarding the question on comparative advantage, Commissioner Mason observed that NAFC agencies work closely on fire management and should continue to seek opportunities to strengthen collaboration with other regions.

47. Commissioner Tidwell thanked FAO for its leadership on specific objectives, especially on forest resources assessments (FRA), forest inventories, and data collection. He cautioned that the reference to forest governance in the Strategic Objectives should not solely be interpreted as promoting or creating legally binding agreements, as that approach has its own set of inefficiencies. Commissioner Tidwell supported expanding collaboration between forest and agriculture sectors, and the work of Forest and Farm Facility.

REPORT OF THE BUREAU OF ALTERNATES (Item 4)

51. Chair and US Representative of the BoA, Val Mezainis provided an overview of the history of the BoA and the working groups. He stated that the BoA has met several times, via conference call and in-person, since the last meeting of the entire NAFC body in Quebec City, Canada (May 2012). The BoA has completed several tasks, as set forth by the Commissioners. These include recommending the disbanding of the Watershed Management Working Group; providing guidance to the *ad hoc* Resiliency Working Group, the Atmospheric Change and Forests Working Group and the Silviculture Working Group and creating a complete database of past and present NAFC membership.

52. The BoA also decided on funding two activities by the Forest Genetics Working Group: a) the collection of seeds in the Monarch Butterfly region to test for genetic climatic markers that could be used for assisted migration, and b) the scanning and storage of the working group's historical records.

53. BoA Chair Mezainis, reported that during the last BoA meeting, the BoA explored urban programs as a potential topic for the Commissioners to discuss at this Session—with the possibility for future trilateral collaboration.

54. Commissioner Rescala thanked Mr. Rick Scott, liaison to the working group, for all his work. He noted that Mexico, during their chairmanship, will appoint a liaison to work with Mr. Rick Scott to strengthen the coordination of working groups.

55. Commissioner Rescala recommended that the BoA develop a program to strengthen communication activities, both inside and outside of the NAFC, to increase awareness of their activities and achievements, particularly those related to the working groups.

REVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING GROUPS (Item 5)

Atmospheric Change and Forests

56. The Working Group's presentation can be found on the NAFC website.
57. The Working Group representative, Mr. Birdsey, emphasized the intention to collaborate with other Working Groups, specifically Inventory. He expressed the desire for the Working Group to have a representative from CONAFOR.
58. Commissioner Rescala confirmed that CONAFOR already appointed an officer from Mexico as a Working Group member.
59. The Commissioners agreed with the Working Group's idea of developing a strategic plan and coordinating with other trilateral entities.
60. ADG Rojas-Briales encouraged the Group to work closely with FAO staff, in particular Susan Braatz.

Fire Management

61. The Working Group's presentation can be found on the NAFC website.
62. Commissioner Mason noted the group is the NAFC's best demonstration of collaboration between countries and across different regions.
63. Commissioner Rescala announced that Mexico would support participation of two members of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission to participate for the next two Working Group meetings.
64. Commissioner Tidwell recommended that this Working Group focus on other topics beyond suppression such as fire for restoration of ecosystems.
65. ADG Rojas-Briales also encouraged the Group to coordinate with FAO staff, especially Pieter Van Lierop. He encouraged the Group to coordinate with the Asia Pacific region.

Forest Genetic Resources

66. The Working Group's presentation can be found on the NAFC website.
67. The Working Group suggested protecting a unique Maple forest in the state of Jalisco, Mexico. Mexico supported the recommendation from the Working Group to pursue protection for this unique forest.
68. Commissioner Rescala announced that Mexico will provide \$4,000 for support to develop climate based seed transfer protocols.
69. Commissioner Rescala requested technical support from FAO to update the National Report on the State of Forest Genetic Resources.

Forest Insects, Diseases and Invasive Plants

70. The Working Group's presentation can be found on the NAFC website.
71. Commissioner Tidwell asked the Working Group to assess whether they have adequate capacity to achieve their established goals. The US supports activities focused on managing the entry of insects and diseases at ports.

72. Commissioner Mason echoed Mr. Tidwell's concerns and commended the Chair, Jean-Luc St. Martin, for his effective leadership on this important topic. He voiced support for continuing their research and also building the group's capacity.

73. Commissioner Rescala will encourage the participation of a new member from Mexico from the National Commission of Biodiversity (CONABIO).

74. ADG Rojas-Briales encouraged the Working Group to collaborate with the Asia-Pacific Invasive Species Network (APFISN); the point person for this Network is Patrick Durst, Regional Forestry Officer, FAO. Commissioner Mason also supported this suggestion.

75. Jennifer Conje, USFS policy advisor, noted that due to the US territories in the Pacific, the US is part of APFC and actively engages in some of its activities, including the APFISN Network. The US has financially and technically contributed to the network for many years. She reflected that some of the bilateral work the US has done with China on the emerald ash borer is reflected within the APFISN documentation and may be of interest to the Working Group.

Forest, Inventory, Monitoring and Assessment

76. The Working Group's presentation can be found on the NAFC website.

77. Commissioner Tidwell expressed the need to seek a balance and establish best practices between investing in forest plots and remote sensing for forest inventories.

78. Commissioner Rescala supported the proposal to integrate a regional report on forest resources for North America as part of the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA).

79. Commissioner Rescala informed that a representative from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) will be invited to join this Working Group, as INEGI is officially responsible for generating and validating statistical and geographical information for Mexico.

80. Commissioner Mason informed the Commission that Canada is updating its national forest inventory and examining the appropriate balance between remote sensing and field work.

81. ADG Rojas-Briales noted the increasing importance of remote sensing and invited countries' guidance regarding its better integration in monitoring forest resources.

Silviculture

82. The Working Group's presentation can be found on the NAFC website.

83. The Commissioners acknowledged and thanked outgoing Chair, Maryanne Fajvan, for her leadership over the past 6 years.

84. Commissioner Rescala announced that CONAFOR will provide financial resources for the design and printing of the Silvicultural guides and requested FAO's guidance on the procedure for developing a NAFC publication.

85. Commissioner Rescala reported that Mexico is organizing the "International Seminar on Sustainable Forest Management" in cooperation with FAO, from September 22 to 25, 2014, in Mexico City and extended a cordial invitation to the members of the Commission. The Working Group meeting, chaired by Mexico, will take place after this meeting.

86. Regarding increasing membership in the Working Group, Commissioner Mason suggested CFS facilitate links with a Canadian provincial representative given that silviculture is principally a provincial responsibility.

Resilience

87. The ad-hoc Working Group's presentation can be found on the NAFC website.

88. Commissioner Rescala reported the appointment of Mexico's institutional representative to this Working Group.

89. Commissioner Rescala recommended that the Group review the reflections from the most recent results of the MegaFlorestais, whose deliberations and findings could contribute to the development of the activities of the Working Group on Resilience.

90. Commissioner Rescala announced that Mexico will be organizing the Third Scientific Conference of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, taking place in March 2015, and he extended an invitation to the Commissioners to participate in this event.

91. Commissioner Mason reacted positively to the resiliency work and signaled that the Canadian Forest Service could consult more broadly within the Government of Canada, provincial governments and other agencies to determine how best to contribute to this initiative. He added the group will need to develop clear deliverables, objectives and timelines.

92. ADG Rojas-Briales noted that FAO's Regional Forest Outlook studies as well as the Asia Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) publication on reinventing forestry agencies, which links to some of this work. He encouraged coordination with that Commission.

93. Jennifer Conje recommended that the working group look at some of the past publications from APFC, including reinventing forestry agencies, which contains a case study from the US, and the outlook studies produced by APFC and UNECE. In addition, she explained that the USFS has been actively involved with the APFC Forest Policy Short Course, where they run visioning exercises as part of the course to determine societal, economic, and environmental trends that will affect the future of the forests and forest sector of the region.

94. The Commissioners recommended that future Working Group reports include 1-2 key lessons learned over the reporting period.

95. ADG Rojas-Briales recommended that the Commission compile lessons learned and successes of the Working Groups and share it with the other Commissions at COFO during the Regional Forestry Commission Bureaux Meeting.

URBAN FOREST MANAGEMENT (Item 6)

96. Michael Rains' and Michael and Amelia Howard's presentations can be found on the NAFC website.

97. The Commissioners and several observers commented on the unique quality of trees and the connection that all people – rural and urban – have to trees. Several comments were made that acknowledged the social impacts of forests, linking trees to improved health and reduction of violence, that go beyond the environmental benefits.

98. Commissioner Tidwell stressed the importance of increasing the relevancy of forests and the USFS to urban populations. He spoke about how in New York City, the USFS urban

forestry program has been able to work with populations who don't have access to forests and improve their quality of life through the environmental and societal benefits provided by trees.

99. Commissioner Mason expressed his appreciation for the US interest in urban forestry. Through partnerships and knowledge exchange, CFS is now working to engage on the urban front given that most of the population lives in an urban setting. Canada will continue to look for opportunities to collaborate on this issue.

100. Commissioner Rescala noted that a majority of Mexico's population lives in urban areas. He noted that although the Mexican population understands the connection between forests and watershed management and water, there is less clarity about the benefits of urban forests. He noted that the management of urban forests is an opportunity to link rural and urban communities in efforts to conserve important forest resources for the benefit of the society.

101. Commissioner Rescala expressed his interest to support work of NAFC on this issue, noting among other things, the need to properly define the term "urban forests"

102. Commissioner Tidwell noted that there are benefits to quantifying urban forests across larger scales, like North American. He also spoke about how urban forests, considered the 'hardest working trees,' require management. He also emphasized the importance of recycling wood waste from urban trees and noted some examples from Washington D.C.

103. ADG Rojas-Briales noted the importance of urban forestry especially with urban population rapidly growing. He invited countries to consider bringing the issue to the attention of the forthcoming session of COFO for a sufficiently strong mandate on this area. He also invited countries to consider providing support to the work on urban forestry by seconding staff to FAO.

104. Commissioner Tidwell proposed that Commissioners instruct the BoA to put together an ad hoc working group on urban forests. Canada and Mexico supported this proposal.

FAO ITEMS (Item 7)

Forests and Food Security Conference – May 2013

105. The FAO presentation can be found on the NAFC website.

106. Commissioner Tidwell reflected on his experience attending the Conference, noting that the level of interest showed the importance of the topic. Initially, he had been concerned that agriculture would dominate the conversation. However, there was constructive dialogue on how forests support agriculture and have a key role in food security. He acknowledged ADG Rojas-Briales' influential role as commissioner general for EXPO 2015 and the importance of highlighting the connection between forests and food security.

107. Commissioner Mason expressed appreciation for the good work in bringing attention to this important issue.

108. Commissioner Rescala highlighted that one of the underlying goals of sustainable development is the eradication of hunger, which is directly connected to forests. He remarked that the states with the most forest biomass, tend to be the states where there is the most hunger. Mexico's Crusade Against Hunger initiative, an integrated cross agency approach, is a national priority to address the root causes of this problem.

109. Commissioner Rescala supported efforts to develop a methodological approach for valuing ecosystem services in order to ensure that provision of environmental goods and services contribute to the wellbeing of local populations and society in general. He further

emphasized that the Conference reaffirm the importance of increasing awareness and understanding the links between forests for food and nutrition security and the importance of developing and promoting cross-cutting policies.

110. Commissioner Tidwell commented on the importance of gathering data and building the economic case of forests' importance to food security.

111. ADG Rojas-Briales noted the need to strengthen existing indicators describing forests' contribution to food security and livelihoods. He recalled that EXPO 2015 would provide an excellent opportunity for showcasing the full contribution of forests to food security and encouraged countries to work with their national pavilions in this regard.

Development of the SFM toolbox

112. The presentation can be found on the NAFC website.

113. Commissioner Mason expressed support for the Toolbox as a practical tool that is very much needed. He expressed Canada's commitment toward contributing to the development of the Toolbox and, as host to the Secretariat of the International Model Forest Network, indicated that Canada has been collaborating with FAO staff since November 2013 regarding some 22 suggested contributions from across the IMFN. Canadian contributions include the Canadian Model Forest Network's Pathways to Climate Change Resilience Guidebook for rural communities, as well as the Guide to Local Level Criteria and Indicators developed by CFS in collaboration with the CMFN.

114. He noted that CFS has been approached, and accepted, to act as a usability tester of the online platform of the Toolbox prior to launch. Regarding thematic priorities, Canada had recommended FAO to consider inclusion of forest or environmental education to the list.

115. With respect to implementation of the Toolbox, Commissioner Mason suggested that it would be helpful to know what FAO had planned so that members could reflect and possibly build on that.

116. Commissioner Rescala recommended the Toolbox contain a database of successful cases of community forestry in FAO member countries. Mexico can contribute with information regarding Mexico's National Strategy for Sustainable Forest Management, which is intended to increase forest production and productivity, as well as with a variety of guides and manuals in topics such as community forestry and practices for soil conservation and restoration, among others.

117. Commissioner Tidwell applauded FAO's efforts and suggested that FAO highlight areas where there is a need for more information. He stated that the USFS has numerous guidelines on a range of technical topics and to contact International Program to coordinate on information needs from the USFS.

118. Commissioner Tidwell also expressed the need to make those outside of the forest community aware of this tool and highlighted that the upcoming IUFRO Congress could serve as a platform to further disseminate knowledge of the tool.

119. ADG Rojas-Briales noted that the Toolbox is an evolving product and should be developed continuously. He agreed that the Toolbox should be publicized widely and outreach should start once the product is ready for being released. The Toolbox should be brought to the attention of constituencies outside the forest sector.

Development of the Voluntary Guidelines on National Forest Monitoring

120. The presentation can be found on the NAFC website.

121. Commissioner Mason stated Canada's support for the process and scope of the Guidelines and emphasized that the intent of the Guidelines should be descriptive rather than prescriptive to respect national circumstances. He indicated that the draft principles are relevant, appropriate and adequate for the proposed Guidelines and that they reaffirm Canada's own program commitments. He further remarked that the principles in the Guidelines are aligned with Canada's approach to forest monitoring.

122. Commissioner Rescala reported that Mexico has actively participated in the process of formulating voluntary guidelines, attending regional and global workshops where its preliminary principles and elements have been discussed.

123. Commissioner Rescala recommended creating and maintaining collaborative spaces, such as workshops and seminars, to promote the exchange of experiences on the challenges, results and information needs related to national inventories and the development of methodologies and tools.

124. Mexico considered that the scope and process developed to date meet the needs of FAO member countries and the preliminary principles of the voluntary guidelines are relevant, appropriate and adequate.

125. Commissioner Tidwell commented that the US supports the further development of the voluntary guidelines. He further expressed that the guidelines should strengthen the language on field validation in monitoring, given the growing interest and attention on remote sensing.

126. ADG Rojas-Briales noted that the Guidelines are intended to advise and support national activities to better monitor forest resources and to develop the needed capacities. They serve as a technical reference material but help also achieving data consistency. He further noted that the Guidelines can also help advise and inform future climate change negotiations.

Shaping the FAO Fire Management Umbrella Programme, managing wildfire-related risks at the landscape level and improving inter-agency coordination

127. The presentation can be found on the NAFC website.

128. Commissioner Rescala noted that this issue, along with climate change, is a priority for Mexico. He expressed his interest to have more detailed information about this program in order to determine what might be the best way for Mexico to collaborate. Commissioner Rescala expressed his willingness to support projects on fire management that would benefit all three countries.

129. Commissioner Rescala also supported a decision to allow FAO to identify additional financial and human resources to strengthen fire management within the FAO Forestry Programme.

130. Commissioners requested the BoA, along with the Working Group on Fire Management, to analyze FAO's proposals in order to provide guidance and recommendations to the Commissioners on this matter.

131. Commissioner Tidwell expressed that wildfires continue to be a high priority for the US and felt it was important to continue these discussions. Commissioner Tidwell expressed interest in exploring the topic of REDD+ investments within the context of fire management. Given budgetary constraints, he stated that it would be hard to contribute financially, but he will evaluate the possibility of participating through in-kind contribution/expertise.

132. Commissioner Mason expressed that, while agencies already work closely within North America, NAFC should seek opportunities to strengthen collaboration with other regions (South/Latin America; Asia Pacific and Europe), even if only in areas of shared science and technology and fire intelligence information. Further, a discussion is needed on ways to include fire management in a broader landscape approach.

133. With respect to the Smart Fire Umbrella Program, Canada would have to consult and learn more about the Program before investing resources, however the FAO request for secondments remains of interest and Commissioner Mason committed to explore on this item.

134. Commissioner Mason welcomed further discussion leading to support for a proposal that investments in REDD+ and other climate change initiatives include a fire management component.

135. Mr. de Groot, Canada's Fire Management Working Group expert, echoed this statement noting that integrating fire into land management is a priority topic for the Fire Management Working Group and the Group strongly supports the initiative to integrate fire into REDD+.

136. ADG Rojas-Briales noted that the umbrella program was developed to provide a foundation for various activities in fire management to be financed from a multi-donor trust fund as well as bilaterally but recalled also the difficulties around financing the fire programme. He underlined the need for collaboration between agencies and for creating a solid framework for coordinated future actions. He further recalled that the need for broadening the scope of REDD+ so that it could do more than supporting monitoring had been recognized long time ago. The integration of fire into REDD+ would be a much needed development in this direction.

Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests

137. The presentation can be found on the NAFC website.

138. Commissioner Rescala pointed out that Mexico has an extensive experience in developing instruments of improving local governance in the forest sector and to promote community management of forest ecosystems; and also have institutions promoting a forest policy that encourages productive activities and sustainable forest management with a focus on community participation and innovative measures, such as the program for the Development of Forest Communities in Southern Mexico, through which peasants without rights over land tenure are incorporated into the sustainable management of forest resources.

139. Following the decisions of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the country advances in the development of a national safeguards information system that would ensure effective implementation and monitor compliance with respect of the rights of communities and indigenous people.

140. Commissioner Rescala recognized that these guidelines are a major effort to promote the strengthening of global forest governance that will contribute to improve the management of forest resources to generate benefits to the land forest owners, and to promote the effective participation of indigenous peoples, women and other vulnerable groups.

141. Commissioner Rescala recommended FAO to further promote the dialogue and exchange among countries to share experiences and lessons learned in the field of forest governance. In this regard, Mexico can contribute by receiving technical officials and specialists from other countries or through the participation of national experts in workshops and similar events to share their experiences and lessons learned.

142. Commissioner Mason stated the importance of tenure and encouraged the work FAO is doing on this subject.

143. Commissioner Tidwell recognized the progress Mexico has made on implementing the guidelines and thanked FAO for the leadership on this difficult topic. He also urged that the FAO engage the World Bank on this issue.

Preparations for the XIV World Forestry Congress

144. The presentation can be found on the NAFC website

145. This item was discussed during the teleconference. *Associate Secretary-General Tiina Vahanen introduced document FO:NAFC/2013/11. She underlined the relevance of this being the first ever Congress on the African continent; recalled the themes of the last 4 congresses; explained the role of the different advisory bodies; and sought ideas for key themes, subject areas, key speakers, and ways to provide support to participation.*

146. *The Commission proposed that the theme of the XIV World Forestry Congress captures the importance of forests as a social, environmental and economic resource. It also proposed that the following elements be included in the potential Congress topics: quantifying the economic benefits of forests; climate change mitigation and adaptation; ecological restoration; and use of wood from sustainably managed forests. The Commissioners may provide further inputs in writing within one week, including possible speakers.*

147. *Commissioners encouraged wide participation and indicated that they would follow up with their relevant institutions on potential support to this end. Furthermore, Canada offered to share their experience from organizing the XII World Forestry Congress for the benefit of the preparations of the upcoming Congress.*

148. Commissioner Rescala informed that CONAFOR disseminate information about the event and will support, at the extent possible, participation of leading players of the forest sector and forestry officials at the highest possible level. Following agreements established on the teleconference, CONAFOR carried out a consultation among key actors in the Mexican forest sector and the National Forest Council to identify topics of interest for the technical sessions of the Congress.

149. ADG Rojas-Briales invited countries to appoint a national focal point to liaise with the organizing committee. He emphasized that the WFC is the largest forestry gathering and the first one on the African continent is expected to attract special attention. The organizers are expecting 10000 participants and this would require support from multiple sources. He invited members' active participation in the Congress.

The UN development agenda beyond 2015: sustainable development goals

150. The presentation can be found on the NAFC website

151. This item was discussed during the teleconference. *ADG Eduardo Rojas-Briales introduced document FO:NAFC/2013/12. He briefly recalled the Open Working Group (OWG) process for developing proposals for the SDGs. He noted that while an overarching natural resource SDG is preferred by many, various areas seem to be aspiring for stand-alone SDGs, therefore considerations should be given to positioning forests properly in these initiatives. He recalled the most recent session of AFWC making a strong recommendation for a stand-alone forest SDG, which was supported by APFC last week.*

152. *Former Canadian Commissioner Tom Rosser noted that internal discussions are ongoing on the SDGs but that there appears to be preference at this stage for consideration of a natural resource over a forest-specific SDG.*

153. Chair Tidwell informed that the US does not have set a preference at this stage, and that they were still undergoing internal Government deliberations on the US position(s) in regards to the SDGs, but he looks forward to working with FAO and other CPF partners to find the most appropriate way for forests' representation in the SDG's.

154. Commissioner Jorge Rescala Perez emphasized the relevance of forests in sustainable development, and in particular in addressing new challenges such as climate change. He suggested that FAO should contribute to developing a forest SDG that is meaningful, and progress towards its achievement is easy to measure at low cost.

155. Chair Tidwell summed up the discussion noting that members unanimously stressed the relevance of forests for any future sustainable development scheme, and that members presented different views on how to represent them in the SDGs.

156. ADG Rojas-Briales suggested that a stand-alone forest SDG could benefit from connection with mountains and that the COFO SC, which will be held just before the OWG, could revisit this issue. He encouraged active liaison with OWG representatives.

157. Chair Tidwell suggested that the BoA could follow up on the SDG discussion.

158. During the Madison meeting, ADG Rojas-Briales provided an update on recent events related to the development of SDGs and noted the concern around the current representation of forests in the Goals. He noted with regret that the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, which is a unique instrument of UN and non-UN entities to enhance collaboration, on forest issues, was not given an adequate role in supporting preparations for the Open Working Group (OWG). He recalled also the developments leading to the separation of marine and terrestrial ecosystems in the SDGs.

159. Commissioner Rescala highlighted that the current proposal of Sustainable Development Goals related to forests has a limited view and is focused on conservation and restoration, and does not recognize the potential of sustainable forest management to achieve social, economic and environmental objectives. Therefore, he stressed the importance of promoting the adoption of targets and indicators that recognize the multi-functionality of forests. He highlighted that this process should take into account the work done by international initiatives (such as the United Nations Forum on Forests and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests where FAO is involved).

160. Commissioner Rescala recommended that the proposal for targets and indicators should be based on the current and future capabilities and needs of countries and the collection and analysis of information for reporting progress in achieving these goals, build on the progress of initiatives for monitoring and assessment of forest resources, such as the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) and the Montreal Process, among others.

161. Commissioner Mason spoke to Canada's active engagement in the process to date. Canada is supportive of including forest related targets and/or indicators.

162. Commissioner Tidwell thanked FAO for their timely update and encouraged FAO to continue to highlight the importance of forests under different goals. Although it appears that there will most likely be overarching natural resources goal, a forest target seems to be in the works.

163. ADG Rojas-Briales invited countries to consider recommending a title for the SDG containing forests which represents them properly; as well as to consider targets that include the concept of sustainable use in addition to protection, which dominates the current version. He noted that mountains are largely absent from the SDGs and invited countries to address this issue in the remaining part of the negotiations. He noted further that the respective agenda

item and the side event during COFO would provide an opportunity for countries to consider appropriate steps for enhancing forests and mountains in the SDGs.

FORESTRY ACTIVITIES/EVENTS OF INTEREST TO THE REGION (Item 8)

164. Commissioner Tidwell reiterated that the IUFRO Congress will take place in September in Salt Lake City and invited each countries actively participate in the event.

REGIONAL ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMISSION FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY (COFO) AND PRIORITIES FOR FAO'S WORK IN FORESTRY (Item 9)

165. The presentation can be found on the NAFC website.

166. This item was discussed during the teleconference. *NAFC Secretary Peter Csoka introduced document FO:NAFC/2013/13. He noted the challenge in making recommendations for the FAO Forestry programme without the technical discussions of NAFC and suggested that priority be given to recommendations for the COFO agenda.*

167. *Commissioner Rescala noted the FAO reform process and the increasing role of the regional bodies including RFCs. He suggested that FAO focus on: green economy, creation of green jobs, and increasing the sector's productivity so that it can make a growing contribution to sustainable development. He further suggested that FAO work on valuation of forest ecosystem services, promotion of adaptation to climate change through SFM, and on elaborating a forest SDG.*

168. *Former Canadian Commissioner Rosser suggested including discussion of the green economy as a continuation of the discourse started at the previous COFO. He stressed the need to consider that promoting the sound use of wood, including through developing new and innovative products as well as green infrastructure, could also contribute to climate change mitigation. He further suggested that COFO could consider the issue of the SDGs.*

169. *Chair Tidwell stressed the need for sound economic data showing clearly the importance of forests. He supported Commissioner Rosser's comment on the use of wood and the linkage to climate change mitigation He suggested that FAO report on the efforts in properly positioning forests in the new FAO Strategic Framework action plans.*

170. *ADG Rojas-Briales recalled the importance of contributing also to the Informal Regional Conference for North America on the issues relevant for FAO.*

171. *P. Csoka suggested that NAFC could consider providing further ideas for the work programme in writing, prior to the COFO SC meeting.*

172. *In summing up Chair Tidwell thanked the Commissioners for their input and noted that the secretariat is in the best position to develop a recommendation for programme priorities and encouraged to do so and present it to COFO.*

173. The Commission's recommendation for the COFO agenda is presented in Annex D.

BUSINESS OF THE COMMISSION

ELECTION OF OFFICERS (Item 10)

174. The following officers were elected by the Commission to hold office during the forthcoming biennium:

Chairperson:	Jorge Rescala Perez (Mexico)
First Vice-Chairperson:	Glenn Mason (Canada)
Second Vice-Chairperson:	Tom Tidwell (United States of America)

175. Bureau of Alternates positions were reaffirmed as follows:

Miguel Abaid (Chairperson)	- Mexico
Peter Besseau	- Canada
Val Mezainis	- United States of America

176. In closing, Mr. Tidwell recognized everything the BoA had done over the last two years and praised Val Mezainis' leadership as chair over this period.

177. The Commissioners extended their thanks and sincere appreciation to Commissioner Tidwell and the Government of the United States of America and, in particular, the US Forest Service and its staff for their very able chairing of the NAFC these past two years and for hosting a successful 27th Session of the NAFC .

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING (Item 11)

178. Mexico offered to host the 28th Session of the Commission. The Commission noted with appreciation the offer to host the next meeting.

179. The exact dates and venue of the meeting would be further determined in consultation with the country concerned after appropriate logistical consultations.

180. The Commission charged the BoA with advising the NAFC on a precise date and location of the 28th session.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT AND CLOSURE OF THE SESSION (Item 12)

181. The Commission adopted the report as amended.

*ANNEX A***AGENDA**

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Country Reports
 - 3.1 Mexico
 - 3.2 Canada
 - 3.3 USA
 - 3.4 FAO
4. Report of the Bureau of Alternates
5. Review of the Activities of the Working Groups
 - 5.1 Atmospheric Change
 - 5.2 Fire Management
 - 5.3 Forest Genetic Resources
 - 5.4 Forest Insects and Diseases and Invasive Plants
 - 5.5 Forest Inventory, Monitoring, and Assessment
 - 5.6 Silviculture
 - 5.7 Resiliency
6. Urban Forest Management
7. FAO Items
 - 7.1 Forests and Food Security Conference – May 2013
 - 7.2 Development of the SFM toolbox
 - 7.3 Development of the Voluntary Guidelines on National Forest Monitoring
 - 7.4 Shaping the FAO Fire Management Umbrella Programme, managing wildfire-related risks at the landscape level and improving inter-agency coordination
 - 7.5 Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests
 - 7.6 Preparations for the XIV World Forestry Congress
 - 7.7 The UN development agenda beyond 2015: sustainable development goals
8. Forestry Activities /Events of Interest to the Region
9. Regional Issues Identified by the Commission for the attention of COFO and FAO
 - 9.1 COFO 2014
10. Election of officers
11. Date and place of the next Session
12. Adoption of the Report
13. Closing Ceremony

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No Non-Member Countries participated in this session.

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LIST OF DOCUMENTS

FO:NAFC/2014/1	Agenda
FO:NAFC/2014/2	The new strategic framework for FAO
FO:NAFC/2014/3	Strategic evaluation of FAO's role and work in forestry: Management Response
FO:NAFC/2014/4	Report of the Bureau of Alternates
FO:NAFC/2014/5.1	Report of the Atmospheric Change and Forest Working Group
FO:NAFC/2014/5.2	Report of the Fire Management Working Group
FO:NAFC/2014/5.3	Report of the Forest Genetic Resources Working Group
FO:NAFC/2014/5.4	Report of the Forest Insects Diseases and Invasive Plants Working Group
FO:NAFC/2014/5.5	Report of the Forest Inventory and Monitoring Working Group
FO:NAFC/2014/5.6	Report of the Silviculture Working Group
FO:NAFC/2014/5.7	Report of the Resilience Working Group
FO:NAFC/2014/6	Forests and Food Security. Follow-up to the conclusions of the International Conference
FO:NAFC/2014/7	Sustainable forest management (SFM) toolbox
FO:NAFC/2014/8	Voluntary guidelines on national forest monitoring
FO:NAFC/2014/9	Shaping the FAO Fire Management Umbrella Programme, managing wildfire-related risks at the landscape level and improving inter-agency coordination
FO:NAFC/2014/10	Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forestry
FO:NAFC/2014/11	Preparations for the XIV World Forestry Congress
FO:NAFC/2014/12	The UN development agenda beyond 2015: sustainable development goals
FO:NAFC/2014/13	Contribution to FAO governance: input to the Committee on Forestry and the Regional Conferences
FO:NAFC/2014/Inf.1	Provisional timetable
FO:NAFC/2014/Inf.2	List of Documents

ANNEX D

NAFC Recommendations for the attention of COFO

<i>Priority issues for COFO to consider</i>	<i>Expected outcome of the considerations (information/decision)</i>	<i>Possible follow up activities for COFO and FAO (link to Annex 2)</i>
Forests in the new Strategic Framework of FAO	Information	Present views to the FAO Council including recommendations to incorporate forests, ecosystem management, and agroforestry in the development of all Strategic Objective action plans
Forests and the Sustainable Development Goals	Information/Decision	Advise members and FAO on further steps/ for promoting the recognition of forests in the SDGs
Forests and green economy: valuation of forest ecosystem services, sound use of wood, innovative products, green jobs and green infrastructure, climate change mitigation	Information/Decision. Potential themes also for WFC.	Advise FAO on related program priorities

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

Canada

Mexico

United States of America

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