



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
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Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
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ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY COMMISSION

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CODES OF PRACTICE

FOREST CODES

1. Various forest-related voluntary codes, guidelines and best practices have been developed in recent years to enhance knowledge sharing and means to conceptualize, implement and evaluate sustainable forest management. FAO is working on such instruments in collaboration with a range of experts from countries, Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) members and other international organizations and from civil society and private sector groups. They vary in scope and level – from detailed operational practices to broader policy guidelines, and from regional to global. FAO is also working to help its member countries implement the codes by making them widely accessible and by organizing training and exchange of experience through national and regional workshops.

2. The sections below describe the progress made in three voluntary instruments related to forest harvesting, planted forests and wildland fire management. In addition to discussing these specific codes and guidelines, delegates may also wish to discuss whether there is a need for broader regional or global code(s) for sustainable forest management. During the *Special Session: Toward Sustainable Forest Management*, delegates will also be informed of the developments in the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). According to the outcome of its sixth session in February 2006, UNFF is expected, *inter alia*, to conclude and adopt a non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests at its seventh session in April 2007.

CODES OF PRACTICE FOR FOREST HARVESTING

3. Implementing sustainable forest management continues to be one of the most critical challenges facing wood-producing countries in the Asia-Pacific region. In recognition of, and in response to, this challenge, during the past 15 years many countries have developed and are implementing codes of practice for forest harvesting or similar guidelines for improved harvesting practices in natural forests. To reflect the region's commitment to sustainable forest management, the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) prepared the *Code of Practice for Forest Harvesting in Asia-Pacific*, which was published by FAO in 1999. Many member countries have responded positively to the code and the Association of SouthEast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

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Ministers for Agriculture and Forestry and the ASEAN Senior Officials on Forestry endorsed the regional code in 2001.

4. Since the publication of the code, several national and international organizations have initiated activities to support and strengthen its implementation, such as awareness raising and training, the preparation of national codes and reduced impact logging guidelines, targeted research and the dissemination of additional information related to better forest harvesting and management. Although countries follow different strategies for implementing national codes and a comprehensive picture of the impact of most activities is currently not available, it appears that improved practices are increasingly visible on the ground. Thus, there is reason for cautious optimism over progress towards sustainable forest management in several countries.

5. Especially since publication of the regional code, many national codes and guidelines have been developed, and previous codes have been reviewed and revised, usually through consultative processes. However, the dissemination of the valuable information contained in the codes requires strengthening. Many key stakeholders, including operators involved in forest harvesting and local people affected by logging, are not fully aware of the guidelines and standards. In part, the reason for the lack of awareness and knowledge in many countries is that national codes have not been well publicized and, with only a few exceptions, their provisions are not legally binding.

6. Training has received considerable attention throughout the region, although a shortage of qualified trainers means that the number of trainees remains low. In most countries, there is also an absence of regular monitoring and evaluation of training activities. Training in most countries tends to be sporadic rather than systematically organized as part of a broader and strategic approach to increasing knowledge, upgrading skills and changing attitudes in the industry. A more coherent approach to training is emerging in some countries, however, often in collaboration with international organizations.

7. Research on improved forest harvesting practices has been conducted in a few countries, but even in those instances where the body of knowledge on better forest management and reduced impact logging has expanded, dissemination and application of such knowledge in the field remains slow. Knowledge on the economics of different logging systems is particularly limited. Thus, the debate on the financial implications of reduced impact logging continues, often based more on perceptions than scientific information. Increased extension and cross-border exchanges of information and experiences, facilitated by regional and sub-regional entities, could help address these knowledge gaps and accelerate adoption.

8. Illegal logging has emerged as a serious threat to the effective implementation of codes of practice for forest harvesting, the adoption of reduced impact logging practices, and sustainable forest management more generally. Illegal operations depress market prices for forest products, reduce the comparative profitability of products produced under more sustainable regimes, and provide a competitive advantage to illegal operators. As they witness profit margins shrink, legitimate operators can hardly be expected to invest in the training, equipment, improved supervision, and incentives that are needed to support the adoption and implementation of codes for improved forest harvesting. Consequently, forest law enforcement has become one of the most debated topics among responsible forest operators.

9. Delegates are invited to share their experiences in developing and implementing codes of practice for forest harvesting. Delegates are also encouraged to advise on how FAO and other international organizations can best assist in overcoming constraints to the adoption of better forest harvesting practices.

PLANTED FORESTS CODE

10. In response to member country requests¹, FAO, working in collaboration with member countries and a wide variety of partners², is facilitating a process to develop a Planted Forests Code. The code aims to describe the priority principles for policy, legal, regulatory and other enabling conditions for the responsible planning and management of planted forests.

11. The draft code will be presented at a pre-APFC regional workshop in April 2006. The workshop will provide an opportunity for government, industry and NGO representatives to offer perspectives and influence the formulation of the nascent code.

12. The recommendations from the workshop will be presented to the Twenty-first Session of the Commission for endorsement under the present agenda item 8 "Codes of Practice". Based on the recommendations of the Regional Forestry Commissions (RFCs) and other consultations, the code will be presented to the Eighteenth Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) in March 2007 for adoption.

13. The objective of the Planted Forests Code is to provide a framework of principles to balance the trade offs between the economic, cultural, social and environmental dimensions of planted forests in the supply of wood, fibre, non-wood products and services, whilst contributing to sustainable forest management and integrated land-use as well as improving livelihoods.

14. The code will be a voluntary instrument tailored primarily to Governments and investors (public and private sector), policy makers and planners. The scope of the code will include the planting component of semi-natural forests and plantation forests, as well as the full spectrum of planning, management and monitoring activities for both productive and protective functions. Resources to prepare the code include international, regional and national processes and a range of existing codes and guidelines.³

15. Process for the development and adoption of the code:

- First task group of collaborating partners met in Rome on 20 January 2005 to define the nature, scope and process for the code. This served as a basis for an annotated outline, building on the existing ethical, international and national framework documents;
- Second task group met from 15 to 16 September 2005 to review the outline;
- A multi-stakeholder expert consultation was held from 15 to 16 December 2005 at FAO, Headquarters, to review the first draft code. Representatives of countries in Asia and the Pacific and other regions participated in the meeting;
- The second draft was prepared with the assistance of two consultants, and shared with the expert consultation participants for their feedback at the end of February 2006;

¹ 17th Committee on Forestry, Rome, Italy, 2005 (Para 54); International Council of Forest and Paper Associations Meeting, Australia, 2003; and the country-led UNFF Intersessional Meeting on the Role of Planted Forests in Sustainable Forest Management, New Zealand, 2003

² Collaborating partners include Government representatives, American Forest and Paper Association (AF&PA), Associação Brasileira de Celulose e Papel (BRACELPA), Portuguese Paper Industry Association (CELPA)/Conseil européen des Professions immobilières (CEPI), Encuentro Internacional, Forestal, Maderero, Celulosa y Papel (CORMA-CHILE), International Council of Forest and Paper Associations (ICFPA), Japan Overseas Plantation Centre for Pulpwood (JOPP)/Japan Paper Association (JPA) Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), International Federation of Building and Wood Workers (IFBWW), International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), The World Conservation Union (IUCN), the World Bank, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Government representatives and smallholder forest owners.

³ Prepared by FAO, ITTO, CIFOR, WWF, IUCN, certification schemes (Forest Stewardship Council (FSC); Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC); Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI); etc., and selected countries.

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- A draft code will be submitted for consideration by and feedback from the six Regional Forestry Commissions (RFCs), member countries and collaborating partner networks between March and November 2006;
 - The final draft code will be presented to the Eighteenth Session of the Committee on Forestry, March 2007, for adoption and recommendations on its application and the provision of necessary capacity building by RFCs and member countries;
 - The final code will be published and disseminated in hard copy and CD formats and posted on the FAO Forestry website.
 - FAO, in collaboration with partners, will conduct regional and national training workshops to introduce the code and strengthen capacity for implementation – translating principles into policy, legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks.
16. Delegates are invited to:
- (a) comment on the usefulness of the Planted Forests Code;
 - (b) endorse the consultative process for its development;
 - (c) provide feedback on the content of the code and possible need for capacity building for its implementation; and
 - (d) comment on the need for its endorsement by the Committee on Forestry (COFO).

VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

17. In response to member country requests⁴ FAO, with collaborating partners⁵ is committed to a multi-stakeholder process to prepare Voluntary Guidelines for Wildland Fire Management to describe the priority principles underpinning the policy, legal, regulatory and other enabling conditions for responsible planning and implementation of wildland fire management. The guidelines will build upon existing sources, notably from the on-going international, regional and national processes as well as a range of existing codes and guidelines prepared by FAO, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, the Global Fire Monitoring Centre (GFMC), the International Liaison Committee (ILC) of the International Wildland Fire Summit and selected countries.

18. The following process is proposed for the development of the guidelines:

- A core group of specialists will consider the first draft of the guidelines in March 2006 at FAO, Rome;
- A second draft of the guidelines will be prepared by the end of April 2006;
- Feedback is sought from member countries and other partners during 2006;
- A multi-stakeholder expert consultation is proposed to coincide with the ILC planning meeting for the 4th International Wildland Fire Conference, Madrid, Spain, 2006, to review the second draft of the guidelines;
- A final draft of the guidelines will be brought to the attention of the Eighteenth Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) in March 2007, for adoption and for recommendations on application and capacity building;
- The guidelines will be disseminated through various means, including the Wildland Fire Networks; and
- FAO and partners will conduct regional training workshops introducing the guidelines and strengthening countries' capacity for their implementation.

19. Delegates are invited to:

- (a) comment on the usefulness of the Voluntary Guidelines for Wildland Fire Management;
- (b) endorse the consultative process for their development;
- (c) provide feedback on the content of the guidelines and possible need for capacity building for their implementation; and
- (d) comment on the need for their endorsement by the Committee on Forestry.

⁴ 3rd International Wildland Fire Summit, Sydney, Australia, October 2003; and report of 17th Session of FAO Committee on Forestry, March 2005 (Para 53)

⁵ Collaborating partners providing inputs on an "in kind" basis, with FAO undertaking the overall coordination, technical inputs, include members of the International Liaison Committee, 4th International Wildland Fire Conference, Madrid, 2007, particularly USDA Forest Service and Global Fire Monitoring Centre.