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LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Item 4.2 of the Provisional Agenda

TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 26 - 30 June 2006

**SPECIAL SESSION: IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE
FOREST MANAGEMENT: “Strategies and codes of best forest
practices: their role in promoting sustainable forest management”**

Secretariat Note

INTRODUCTION

1. The development of voluntary codes and guidelines that promote best practices in the forest sector is a key part of FAO's work. Various forest-related voluntary codes, guidelines and best practices are being developed to enhance knowledge sharing and to provide the means to conceptualize, implement and evaluate sustainable forest management. FAO is working on such instruments in collaboration with a range of experts from countries, civil society and the private sector, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and other international bodies. The codes and guidelines vary in scope and level – from detailed operational practices to broader policy guidelines, and from regional to global. FAO will also work to help its member countries implement the codes by making them widely accessible and by organizing training and facilitating the exchange of experience through national and regional workshops in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.
2. The sections below describe the progress made in three voluntary instruments, namely on harvesting, planted forests and fire management. The Latin American and the Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC) is invited to comment on the process to develop these instruments and their proposed content.
3. During discussion of agenda item 3.3 on Global activities, delegates will also be informed of the expected development of a non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests within the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF).

HARVESTING CODE

4. Implementing sustainable forest management continues to be one of the most critical challenges facing wood-producing countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region. In response to this challenge, during the past 15 years some countries have developed and are implementing codes of practice for forest harvesting practices including in natural forests. To reflect the region's commitment to sustainable forest management, the 23rd Session of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC 2004) held a side meeting on *Regional Code of Practice for Reduced Impact Forest Harvesting in Tropical Moist Forests of Latin America and the Caribbean*.

5. The preparation of a regional Forest Harvesting Code for Tropical Moist Forests should be the fruit of collaboration involving many organizations associated with tropical forestry and forest management in Latin America. The code is intended to be used as a reference by FAO member countries which are contemplating the preparation of their own codes of forest harvesting practice, if not already in place. It intends to provide information on a range of practices that are advisable under various conditions, and also on practices which may damage timber, remaining stands, or non-timber forest resources. The basic assumption of the regional code is that it is possible to conduct forest harvesting operations in ways that are consistent with sustainable forest management.

6. Due to financial constraints, FAO has to date not taken follow-up action. However, considering the importance of improved harvesting practices in natural forests as an integral part of sustainable forest management, FAO decided to conduct a preparatory study to have a better understanding of the current situation related to the legal and operational aspects of natural forest harvesting and the need for harvesting codes in the region.

7. Delegates are invited to:

- (a) take stock and to share their experiences in developing and implementing codes of practice for forest harvesting; and
- (b) 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

8. In response to member country requests*, FAO, working in collaboration with member countries and a wide variety of partners†, 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.

9. The draft Code is being presented to the 2006 sessions of all FAO Regional Forestry Commissions for endorsement of the process and to encourage stakeholder feedback. Based on the recommendations of the Commissions and other multi-stakeholder consultations, the Code will be presented to the Eighteenth Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) in March 2007.

* 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.

† 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.

10. 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.
11. 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.
12. Resources to prepare the Code include international, regional and national processes and a range of existing Codes and Guidelines.[‡]
13. The process for the development, adoption and implementation of the Code:
 - Collaborating partners met to elaborate on the objectives, scope, content, target beneficiaries, partners and process for the preparation of the Code at FAO Headquarters, Rome, in January and September 2005.
 - A multi-stakeholder expert consultation, including representatives from governments, private sector (corporate and smallholder) and non-governmental organizations, was held in December 2005 at FAO, Headquarters, to review the first draft of the Code and to provide guidelines for the preparation of a second draft.
 - The second draft coordinated by FAO was made available on the FAO Forestry website (<http://www.fao.org/forestry/plantedforestscode>), inviting comments and feedback from stakeholder groups and the six Regional Forestry Commissions, member countries and collaborating partner networks. Paper versions of the draft will be made available to LACFC delegations at this session in English, French and Spanish.
 - The final draft Code will be presented to the Eighteenth Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) March 2007 where recommendations for its continued development, adoption and implementation, including capacity building, will be sought.
 - The Code and information on the code process 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 its implementation – translating principles into policy, legal, regulatory, institutional and management frameworks.
14. Delegates are invited to:
 - (a) comment on the usefulness of the Planted Forests Code;
 - (b) endorse the consultative process for its development and endorse its scope and objectives;
 - (c) provide feedback on the content of the code and a possible need for capacity building for its implementation;

[‡] 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.

FIRE MANAGEMENT CODE

15. In response to member country requests[§] and the Seventeenth Session of COFO^{**}, March 2005, FAO, with collaborating partners^{††} is committed to a multi-stakeholder process to prepare a Fire Management Code to describe the priority principles underpinning the policy, legal, regulatory and other enabling conditions for responsible vegetation fire planning, implementation and monitoring. In addition, COFO requested FAO to develop a strategy to enhance international cooperation in fire management. The strategy would be complementary to the code and establish a framework for its implementation at the international, national, sub-national and local levels. The code and strategy 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.

16. The following process is proposed for the development of the code and strategy:

- A core group of forest fire specialists prepared the first draft of the Fire Management Code and Strategy to Enhance International Cooperation in Implementing the Fire Management Code in March 2006 at FAO, Rome;
- A second draft of the code and strategy was prepared by the end of April 2006;
- A multi-stakeholder expert consultation is being organized in, Madrid, Spain, May 2006, to review the second draft of the code and strategy;
- A third draft will be coordinated by FAO and made available on the FAO Forestry website in June 2006, inviting comments and feedback from stakeholder groups and the six Regional Forestry Commissions, member countries and collaborating partner networks by September 2006.
- A final draft of the code and strategy will be presented to the Eighteenth Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) in March 2007, for recommendations on its continued development, adoption, implementation, provision of capacity building and determination of monitoring and reporting;
- The code and strategy will be disseminated through various means, including the regional fire networks; and
- FAO and partners will conduct regional training workshops introducing the code and strategy and strengthening countries' capacity to translate into policies and practices.

17. Delegates are invited to:

- (a) comment on the usefulness of the Fire Management Code and Strategy to Enhance International Cooperation in Implementing the Fire Management Code;
- (b) endorse the consultative process for their development, and endorse their scope and objectives;

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

^{**} Para 53, Report of the Seventeenth Session of the Committee on Forestry, Rome, 15-19 March, 2005 "Requested that FAO work with partners to develop Voluntary Guidelines on the prevention suppression and recovery from forest fire".

^{††} 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 the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service and the Global Fire Monitoring Centre.

- (c) provide feedback on the content of the code and strategy and a possible need for capacity building, monitoring and reporting progress in their implementation;
- (d) comment on the role of FAO in coordinating and harmonizing development and implementation of codes of practice for key areas of sustainable forest management.