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## Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda

### THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON POPLARS AND OTHER FAST-GROWING TREES SUSTAINING PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT (IPC)

#### Twenty-sixth Session

5- 8 October 2021

### STRATEGY FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON POPLARS AND OTHER FAST-GROWING TREES SUSTAINING PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT (IPC) 2022-2032

#### Guidance sought from the IPC

The Commission may wish to:

- adopt the draft IPC Strategy for 2022-2032;
- encourage Members to support the implementation of the Strategy;
- request that the IPC Executive Committee lead the implementation of the Strategy;
- call for the IPC Secretariat to advance the targeted activities in this Strategy.

*Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:  
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*Appendix I: Potential Contributions of the IPC to Global Forest Goals in the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030*

## I. BACKGROUND

1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) supports its Members in implementing the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests<sup>1</sup>, FAO Forestry is committed, *inter alia*, to support halting deforestation and forest degradation, promoting forest restoration; reforestation and afforestation; as well as the conservation and sustainable use of forests and forest biodiversity to enhance forest-based livelihoods; and improving forest-related data, information and capacities<sup>2</sup>.

2. Fast-growing trees are a fundamentally important component of forestry and agricultural systems worldwide, often owned by small-scale farmers to support their livelihoods. They are a major part of large forest-based companies' production systems and business models, and a key component of global wood-based value chains. Fast-growing trees also have important environmental applications. With their rapid growth, they are useful for restoration of degraded or contaminated land, stabilization of soils, and watershed protection. Finally, in the context of good planning and governance, fast-growing trees can efficiently produce ecosystem services and spare land for conservation<sup>3</sup>. Because of long-term investments to improve their genetic material and management methods, fast-growing trees have significant potential to contribute to the Global Forest and Sustainable Development Goals.

3. The International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment (IPC) was founded in 1947, and established as a statutory body under the provisions of Article XIV of the FAO Constitution in 1967. The IPC's purpose is to study and engage on scientific, technical, social, economic, and environmental aspects of poplars, willows (the Salicaceae) and other fast-growing trees; to promote the exchange of sustainable management practices, knowledge, technology, and material between researchers, developers, producers, and users; to arrange joint research programmes; to stimulate the organization of congresses combined with study tours; to report and make recommendations to the FAO Conference through the Director-General, and to make recommendations to the National Commissions or other national bodies provided for in Article IV of this Convention, through the Director-General and the Governments concerned<sup>4</sup>. The IPC is now comprised of 38 Members, signatories to the Convention on the International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment<sup>5</sup>.

4. The IPC Convention provides for work on all fast-growing tree species that sustain people and the environment. Until 2019, the IPC worked with poplar, aspen, cottonwood and willow (family Salicaceae). Based on the experience and knowledge generated over seven decades of work by the IPC, consideration was given to expanding the IPC thematic scope to include other genera and species. A revised Convention of the IPC was endorsed by a Special Session of the Commission on 6 February 2019 and approved by the 41<sup>st</sup> Session of the FAO Conference on 29 June 2019, including changing the name of the IPC<sup>6</sup>.

## II. INTRODUCTION

5. Considering the new scope of the IPC in its revised 2019 Convention, and the need to structure and prioritize work within that new scope, the IPC has developed this Strategy to guide its work.

6. Specifically, the IPC seeks to make a global contribution to the 2030 Agenda and the Global Forest Goals (see p. 9, Annex I Potential Contributions of the IPC to Global Forest Goals), the UN

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/un-strategic-plan-for-forests-2030/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/ne205en/ne205en.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Agenda 21, 1992 'Forest Principles' Annex III 6(d) <https://www.un.org/esa/documents/ga/conf151/aconf15126-3.htm>; UN Strategic Plan on Forests 2017-30 & Global Forest Goal 1.3 <https://www.un.org/esa/documents/ga/conf151/aconf15126-3.htm>[https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/UNSPF\\_AdvUnedited.pdf](https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/UNSPF_AdvUnedited.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/gsb/Conventions/IPC\\_Convention\\_e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/gsb/Conventions/IPC_Convention_e.pdf) (Art III)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.fao.org/unfao/govbodies/gsb-subject-matter/statutory-bodies-details/en/c/110/>

<sup>6</sup> The abbreviation remains as "IPC" but with the meaning of the longer, comprehensive name

Decade for Family Farming, and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. Sustainably managed fast-growing trees are part of the solution to turn the tide on deforestation and enhance benefits from forests. Sustainably managed fast-growing trees are often bankable investments that can mobilize resources, as real assets that offer a competitive return on investment with a ready market. As a statutory body within the FAO, the IPC is well positioned to improve governance and enhance cooperation on forest-related issues related to fast-growing trees.

### III. VISION

7. The potential of sustainable management of fast-growing trees to improve livelihoods and facilitate production of ecosystem goods and services<sup>7</sup> is fully realized worldwide, thus the IPC will contribute to the 2030 Agenda.

### IV. SCOPE

8. This Strategy applies to the work of the IPC from 2022 to 2032.

### V. AIM

9. The IPC will function as a knowledge and capacity building network and as a science-policy-implementation platform, converting science-based approaches into practice.

### VI. OBJECTIVES

10. Based on this general working approach, and mindful of the Global Forest Goals and Sustainable Development Goals, the IPC has identified four objectives for its work until the year 2030:

- (i) to foster innovation in land production systems and provide ecosystem services involving fast-growing trees;
- (ii) to comprehensively assess innovations to establish best practices for management and utilization of fast-growing trees in rural and urban contexts;
- (iii) to make recommendations to interested countries, FAO, international initiatives, and working partners so that best practices in managing fast-growing trees achieve scale and effectively contribute to sustainable development;
- (iv) to deepen partnerships and cooperation in order to more effectively achieve Objectives 1-3.

1 Foster innovation	2 Establish best practices	3 Take best practices to scale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• study and engage on scientific, technical, social, economic, and environmental aspects of fast-growing trees</li> <li>• arrange joint research programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organize IPC Sessions, congresses, and study tours</li> <li>• promote the exchange of sustainable management practices, knowledge, technology, and planting material</li> <li>• support pilots and demonstration projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• report and make recommendations to the Conference of FAO, through FAO's Director-General</li> <li>• make recommendations to the IPC National Commissions through FAO's Director-General and the governments concerned</li> </ul>
4 Deepen partnerships and cooperation to more effectively deliver knowledge and best practices		

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. <http://www.fao.org/3/i2670e/i2670e.pdf> Chapter 12; <https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/cfa/ifr/2009/00000011/00000001/art00011>

## VII. ACTIVITIES

### *Operating Principles*

11. The IPC implements its Strategy based on the principles of governance, partnerships, and a knowledge-based approach.

#### *Governance*

- (a) The IPC is an Article XIV body of FAO, currently composed of 38 Member Nations and governed by the IPC 2019 Convention<sup>8</sup>, its Member Nations, and the General Rules of the FAO;
- (b) The Convention of the IPC should continue to evolve based on the guidance and active involvement of IPC members, so that the IPC can be more effective and efficient.
- (c) The Executive Committee of the IPC acts on behalf of the Commission between Sessions; in particular it makes proposals to the Commission, and implements the programme approved by the Commission;
- (d) The Secretary of the Commission is appointed by FAO's Director-General, and works to advance the programme approved by the Commission;
- (e) National Commissions are established or designated by each Member Nation to work on fast-growing trees and communicate their publications to FAO's Director-General;
- (f) Subsidiary bodies or working parties may be established and revised by the Commission to best achieve Members priorities;
- (g) Meetings of the IPC and its subsidiary bodies are open to countries interested in participation as observers; and, non-governmental organizations recognized as having consultative or liaison status with FAO may participate in meetings of the IPC as noted in the General Rules of the FAO;

#### *Partnerships*

- (h) The IPC will continue to develop close cooperation with other FAO programmes, technical partners, and funding partners;
- (i) The IPC will deepen work with partner organizations to actively contribute to and gradually expand the knowledge base on other fast-growing tree species beyond poplars and willows.

#### *Knowledge-based approach*

- (j) The IPC will continue to focus on fostering the development and application of technical knowledge on fast-growing trees in the context of all relevant aspects of sustainable development;
- (k) The IPC will continue expanding its collaboration to new countries in biomes that can immediately take advantage of its knowledge on poplars and willows in temperate and boreal climates and as capacity and capability allows, expand the scope to research and use of other fast growing tree species;
- (l) Within its new mandate, the IPC will focus on promoting, with funding and technical partners, collaborative approaches to research and use of fast-growing trees in the tropics and sub-tropics.

### *Targeted Activities*

12. In the globally critical years between 2022 and 2032, the IPC will support the 2030 Agenda<sup>8</sup>, the Global Forest Goals<sup>9</sup>, the UN Decade for Family Farming<sup>10</sup>, and the UN Decade on Ecosystem

<sup>8</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/un-strategic-plan-for-forests-2030/index.html>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.fao.org/family-farming-decade/home/en/>

Restoration<sup>11</sup>. The IPC, i.e. its Members and the IPC Secretariat will, subject to the availability of extra-budgetary resources:

- (a) foster sustainable forest management systems that support family farmers' livelihoods, improve rural employment, and that enhance the provision of environmental and ecosystem services;
- (b) organize conferences in 2021, 2024, 2028, and 2032 (i.e. IPC Sessions) that invite all Members of the IPC, and Executive Committee meetings in 2022, 2026, and 2030;
- (c) participate in major events on forestry organized by members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests<sup>12</sup>;
- (d) collect information and develop technical guidance (e.g. best practices) suitable for application at scale, particularly on applications of fast-growing trees for ecosystem restoration and for livelihoods of family farmers;
- (e) arrange and promote joint research programmes and pilots suitable for trial in projects;
- (f) develop, as appropriate, recommendations on best management practices in the use of fast-growing tree species;
- (g) develop guidance on the design of projects and programmes of research in fast-growing species, and invite relevant institutions to support and engage in these work programmes.
- (h) Develop partnerships and collaboration to more effectively deliver the work of the IPC

13. These targeted activities will be delivered through the IPC's Working Parties, the National Commissions of the IPC, and with partners.

### **VIII. IMPLEMENTATION MODALITY**

14. The IPC Executive Committee is mandated to lead this Strategy. There is a need for a stepwise approach to go from the prior IPC scope (i.e. prior to 2019) to the current scope as outlined in the revised Convention, which encompasses many more tree genera, countries, and ecological contexts than before. The IPC Secretary will work to advance the targeted activities in this Strategy, as the Commission may require.

15. At the request of the Executive Committee, the IPC Secretariat will periodically develop Action Plans for the delivery of the objectives targeted in the Strategy. Action Plans will cover the intersessional period of the IPC and include thematic priorities and milestones for the work of the IPC, pending the availability of extra-budgetary funds.

### **IX. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

16. The implementation of the Strategy and its Action Plans will be monitored by the IPC Secretariat and reported to the IPC at the meetings of the IPC Executive Committee and sessions of the IPC. A mid-term assessment of progress will be prepared for the 27th IPC Session. Based on progress, new global developments, and the resources available, Action Plans and their activities and approaches will be adjusted.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.cpfweb.org/en/>

## APPENDIX I

**POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE IPC TO GLOBAL FOREST GOALS IN  
THE UN STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FORESTS 2017-2030**

<b>Global Forest Goals</b>	<b>Potential contribution through the IPC network</b>	<b>Weight</b>
<b>1. Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change.</b>	Fast-growing trees have the potential to produce, within a few years, valuable products, goods and services useful for society. It is an effective way in forest-poor areas to combine trees and woodlots in agricultural landscapes to reduce pressure on forests and to protect landscapes from the effects of climate change.	++
<b>2. Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people.</b>	Poplar, willow and other fast-growing trees can be widely used in predominately forest-poor developing and transitional countries to improve livelihoods, food security, protect soil and water, and serve as a basis for long-term economic security.	+++
<b>3. Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests.</b>	Fast-growing trees can be used as a buffer for protected areas, an alternative source for fuelwood and wood products for local livelihoods and a sustainable source of raw material wood. They can also be used as a nurse crop for slower-growing indigenous tree species.	++
<b>4. Mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management and strengthen scientific and technical cooperation and partnerships.</b>	The IPC network is a unique scientific and technical network advising development cooperation and policy based on the best science, and working to strengthen partnership.	+
<b>5. Promote governance frameworks to implement sustainable forest management, including through the UN Forest Instrument, and enhance the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda.</b>	IPC works as a technical advisory body to support implementation of tree growing on the ground. Fast-growing trees when properly managed support the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda.	++
<b>6. Enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels, including within the UN System and across Collaborative Partnership on Forests member organizations, as well as across sectors and relevant stakeholders.</b>	IPC is uniquely positioned to support a broader agenda of overlapping land uses in forest and agricultural landscapes. Fast-growing trees on agricultural landscapes and farm forestry help support cross-sectoral approaches.	+++