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FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA

Twenty-Ninth Session

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 4-8 April 2016

Summary Report of the Recommendations of the Regional Bodies

Executive Summary

FAO has a number of sectoral or thematic statutory Committees that each provide a platform for countries in the Africa region to agree on a common course of action and to suggest priorities for, and make recommendations on, the support that FAO could provide. They advise on the formulation of policies and review and coordinate their implementation on the regional plan. The sessions make appropriate recommendations to members and FAO regional and global bodies in relation to the foregoing.

The document provides an overview of the issues that were raised and the recommendations that were made, during the 2014-2015 biennium, by these Committees/Commissions. Participants to the Africa Regional Conference may wish to keep these issues in mind in considering their common course of action and in making recommendations to FAO's Conference and Council.

Matters to be brought to the attention of the Regional Conference

The Conference may wish to consider:

1. Including, in its session in the future, at least one discussion item dealing with natural resources issues
2. Include two cross-cutting issues of regional importance, namely, wood fuel for rural energy and water, in the agenda for the its 30th Session;
3. Strengthen collaboration at country level between agriculture, forestry and water for enhanced achievement of the SDGs and for climate change adaptation and mitigation.
4. Note the outcomes of the regional fisheries bodies.

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A. THE 24TH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS (AFCAS)

1. The 24th Session of African Commission on Agricultural Statistics (AFCAS) took place in Kigali, Rwanda, from 1st to 4th December 2015. Twenty (20) Delegates from member countries as well as Five (5) regional and international institutions participated as observers. 77 participants attended to the session. The new bureau, composed of: Rwanda as Chair, Congo (Republic of) as Vice Chair, Burkina Faso and Tanzania as Rapporteurs was elected.
2. The 24th Commission:
 - a) Encouraged all governments to support participation at regional, and in the future, global Commission meetings.
 - b) Noted the often low response rates to FAO questionnaires, recommended: (i) every country to designate a single office that is responsible for statistical activities in agriculture and related areas; (ii) FAO to coordinate questionnaire dispatches through the Chief Statistician to avoid duplication of requests; (iii) organizing specific training and workshops to address data related issues; (iv) developing multi-modal data harvesting options such as web based questionnaires or Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), ideally based on Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange formats (SDMX); and (v) returning questionnaires even when no new data are available, reviewing and possibly correcting past submissions and, importantly, providing clear reasons for the lack of new information.
 - c) Encouraged FAO to set standards and provide technical support at national and regional level, especially on the technical capacity required for monitoring new indicators identified by the IAEG. Suggests that FAO prepares a manual for monitoring progress towards all SDGs concerning food and agriculture.
 - d) Recommends CountrySTAT as a dissemination platform for SDG indicators. Also recommends full coordination through regional institutions for data collection and dissemination as well as for capacity development efforts.
 - e) Welcomes the timely availability of the new guidelines for the World Census for Agriculture Programme 2020 and the planned roll-out of the new guidelines through regional roundtables as of 2016.
 - f) Recommends the Global Strategy (GS) implementing partners in Africa to take into account capacity building activities undertaken by regional organizations to avoid duplication of efforts. Data collection need to be covered by the countries implementing the Agricultural Statistics Strategic Plan (ASSP).
 - g) Recommends countries to champion the ASSPs and bring it to the attention of the highest government authority to secure support. Highlights the importance of resource mobilization for the implementation of the GS action plan at country level (data collection) and encourages FAO to help identify resource partners for the implementation.
 - h) Takes note of the two-tiered approach on current statistical governance arrangements, with consideration of a possible Global Statistics Commission to include permanent Regional Working Groups and designated regional representation on an Intersession Bureau.
3. The documents of session are available at: <http://www.fao.org/economic/ess/ess-events/afcas/afcas24/>.

B. THE COMMITTEE FOR INLAND FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE OF AFRICA (CIFAA)

4. Two extraordinary sessions of the Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa (CIFAA) were held in December 2014 and July 2015 respectively. The first was held from 1 to 2 December 2014 in Lusaka, Zambia. A total of 47 delegates from 22 member countries and four observer bodies attended the Session. The second was held from 14 to 15 July 2015 in Dakar, Senegal. A total of 45 delegates from 21 member countries and AU-IBAR as an observer body attended the Session.

5. At the Lusaka Session, the Committee reviewed the CIFAA performance, effectiveness and future. It noted many issues that limit CIFAA's effectiveness and impede its delivery and threaten its very existence. The Committee recommended a review of CIFAA's statutes and rules of procedure to enable it address specific technical and scientific matters. The meeting recommended that a working group (Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Malawi, Sudan and Uganda; with Malawi as the Chair) be constituted to review the statutes and rules of procedure of CIFAA. . A meeting of the Working Group was convened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 10th and 11th March 2015.

6. The Dakar Session reviewed the proposed amendments to the Statutes and Rules of Procedure of CIFAA formulated by the Working Group. The amendments were to make CIFAA functional taking into account emerging over-arching socio-cultural and economic concerns such as biodiversity conservation, climate change, pressure on resources and sustainability. The amended Statutes and Rules of Procedure were adopted, subject to suggested changes.

7. In addition, the meeting agreed to establish a CIFAA Multi-donor Trust Fund (hereafter "the Trust Fund"), starting with the formulation of a detailed programme of work and budget in line with FAO's Strategic Framework and delivery mechanisms at regional (i.e. Regional Initiatives) and national level (i.e. Country Programming Frameworks). It was decided that a working group composed of Senegal, Gambia, Lesotho Sudan, Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger, under the leadership of FAO, should further elaborate the proposal.

8. The Committee further agreed on the following priority actions:

- a) providing such other views as develop sustainable aquaculture;
- b) collate information on needs including on infrastructure, material and human resources, and training;
- c) develop a strategic plan and related action plan;
- d) work with countries, sub-regional and regional organizations to combat illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing in inland waters and harmonize legislations in countries sharing inland water resources.

9. CIFAA was advised on the guidance of the FAO Conference and Council on establishing new Statutory Bodies, and informed that the process for the establishment of CIFAA as an independent body, within or outside FAO, is cumbersome, lengthy and costly, and may offer very little help in addressing CIFAA problems. In response, it considered four options in deciding on future arrangements for cooperation in inland fisheries and aquaculture in Africa, and the advantages and disadvantages of each option. It considered:

- 1) maintaining CIFAA as an Article VI body of the FAO Constitution and reviewing its Statutes and Rules of Procedures to update its functions, mandate and working modalities;
- 2) abolishing CIFAA and recommending that any future work programme be undertaken with more flexible task-oriented and time-bound working arrangements;
- 3) providing such other views as deemed appropriate.

10. The Committee decided to maintain CIFAA as an Article VI body of the FAO Constitution and reviewed its Statutes and Rules of Procedure to enable it address specific technical and scientific matters. The amended Statutes and Rules of Procedure were adopted.

THE 7th SESSION OF THE SOUTH WEST INDIAN OCEAN FISHERIES COMMISSION

11. The Seventh Session of the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission was held at the Cardoso Hotel, Maputo, Mozambique, from 12 to 16 October 2015. Delegates from nine member countries and observers from ten intergovernmental, international non-government organizations and projects attended.

12. The Commission noted the decline of shrimp stocks in the region and agreed with its recommendations. It acknowledged the trend in the status of fish stocks over the decade, appreciated the initiatives to develop the capacity of in stock assessment and management, but considered these were still insufficient for the needs of the region, and requested the Secretariat to provide further training.

13. The Commission noted the positive outcomes of the Working Party on Collaboration and Cooperation in Tuna Fisheries, and endorsed its guidance of the SWIO Fisheries Accord, the Maputo Declaration, and the draft Protocol on Minimum Terms and Conditions of Fishing Access. It revised the SWIOFC Rules of Procedure to encourage greater involvement and increased responsibilities of members, and allow the establishment of a trust fund for voluntary contributions. Noting Resolution 11/2015 of the FAO Conference, members wished to continue strengthening the Article VI body as well as start negotiations towards setting up an Article XIV body. The Commission raised matters relating to the SWIOFC Secretariat and the establishment of a SADC Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance centre in Maputo.

14. The Commission also discussed the incorporation of the regional component of the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Governance and Growth project (SWIOFISH1) within the SWIOFC Secretariat and established a Steering Committee for the project. Finally the Commission's programme of work until the next session was reviewed and approved.

15. Documents on the various fisheries Commissions can be accessed at: www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/swiofc/en ; and www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/cifaa

C. THE 20TH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

16. The African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC) held its Twentieth Session in Nairobi, Kenya, from 1 – 5 February 2016. under the theme “Sustainable Management of Forests and Wildlife in Africa: Enhancing Values, Benefits and Services”, to highlight and promote the implementation of the many facets of sustainable management of forests and wildlife and their importance in sustaining the livelihoods of millions of people and in contributing to sustainable development in the Region.

17. The Session was attended by 54 representatives from 12 member countries, and 6 representatives of the United Nations system. Observers from 15 intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations also attended.

18. The Commission deliberated on Global policy processes; Forestry and climate change adaptation and mitigation; Non-wood forest products; Implementation of forest and wildlife policies in Africa; enhancing sustainability and efficiency of woodfuel production and consumption; reports on FAO and member actions in response to the recommendations of 19th commission of AFWC; Illegal hunting and trade; Forests and water resources management in Africa; Forest and landscape restoration.

19. The Commission emphasized that collaboration and coordination between forests, agriculture, energy and water will be crucial for the achievement of the SDGs. and climate change adaptation and mitigation and acknowledged that forest policies and sub-regional convergence plans will contribute to forest and wildlife conservation in the region.

20. The Commission reiterated the importance of the Paris Agreement of COP21 of UNFCCC relating to the forestry and climate change adaptation and mitigation and urged countries to implement

them in a coordinated and inclusive manner. The Commission stressed the need for broad-based capacity building on and mainstreaming of REDD+ strategies into existing laws and policies.

21. The Commission noted the importance of regulating Non –Wood Forest Products tenure and improving domestication of NWFPs while supporting local value addition, market and enterprise development.

22. The Commission highlighted opportunities for countries to harmonize land use policies and laws, such as the African Union Land Policy Initiative and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of food security (VGGT).

23. The Commission recognized the importance of Criteria and Indicators in assessing progress toward sustainable forest management and SGDs and noted the need to promote their use.

24. The Commission stressed that urgent action was needed to improve the sustainability of production and the efficiency of consumption of woodfuel.

25. On the issue of implementation of its recommendations the Commission requested members to make every effort to submit their reports.

26. The Commission took note of key outcomes from the World Forestry Congress the integration of all stakeholders, particularly the youth into the planning process. It requested all member countries to keep the momentum and to translate the “2050 Vision” into concrete actions (programmes) at regional and country level.

27. The Commission raised the issue of land use planning as a crucial element to balance conservation with development needs, improve livelihoods and mitigate human-wildlife conflicts, as well as minimize the illegal taking of wild flora and fauna.

28. The Commission underlined the need for greater stakeholder participation and inclusive consultation, including a diversity of supportive government interventions, to ensure growth of Small Scale Forest and Wildlife Enterprises (SSFWE).

29. The Commission took note of the importance of establishing synergies and collaboration in forest, water and climate change programmes and sharing information on watershed management.

30. The Commission called for urgent actions to improve participation of women and youth and engagement in leadership in the two sectors, and to rethink forestry and wildlife education systems and policies.

31. The Commission shared experiences in planning and implementing Forest and Landscape Restoration, underlining that restoration represents an investment in long-term ecosystem productivity and sustainability and provides employment and other livelihood benefits.

32. The Commission proposed that the agenda for the 23rd session of COFO consider the roles of women and youth in forestry.

33. The Commission recommended:

- that the Africa Regional Conference include an agenda item focusing on natural resources issues systematically and more fully in its sessions’ agenda.
- that two cross-cutting issues of regional importance, namely woodfuel for rural energy, and water, could be taken up by the Regional Conference at its 30th Session.

34. Mali offered to host the 21st Session of the Commission in 2018.

35. The documents of the Session are available at: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/afwc/en/>