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COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION

5 - 9 October 2020

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF FAO GOVERNING BODIES OF INTEREST TO THE COMMITTEE

Executive Summary

This document provides a report of the decisions and recommendations of the FAO Bodies of interest to the Committee on Forestry.

Queries on the substantive content of the document may be addressed to:

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I. FAO CONFERENCE

1. At its 41st session, held at FAO headquarters in Rome on 22-29 June 2019, the FAO Conference¹ endorsed the Report of the 24th Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO), and in particular recognized the urgency of action to promote sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests, and increase afforestation and reforestation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2. The Conference also endorsed the Biennial Theme 2020-21 - Promoting healthy diets and preventing all forms of malnutrition, stressing that FAO has a leading role in supporting countries in transitioning towards sustainable agriculture and food systems.

¹ C 2019/REP <http://www.fao.org/3/na421en/na421en.pdf>

The Committee may wish to consider the outcome of the Conference's deliberations in particular when addressing item 6, 7.1, 7.2, 8.2, 8.3, 9.1, 9.2 of its agenda.

II. FAO COUNCIL

3. At its 160th session, held at FAO headquarters in December 2018, the Council² endorsed the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Report of the 24th Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO). In particular:

- a) welcomed the State of the World's Forests 2018 (SOFO 2018), recognized the importance of forests for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and requested FAO to assist countries in strengthening the role of forests and trees in achieving multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in accelerating progress in this regard, in accordance with national priorities, and to strengthen its role as coordinator of forest data reporting;
- b) requested FAO to promote action to halt deforestation and increase forest cover and support countries in sustainable management of all types of forests worldwide, developing policies and measures that lead to sustainable value chains for forest products, strengthening capacities in implementation innovation and in monitoring progress, including through data for the Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators;
- c) recognized that sustainable management of urban and peri-urban forests and trees and their integration in urban planning could help achieve the SDGs, ensuring people's health and well-being and tackling climate change, and requested FAO to support international dialogue and countries' efforts in this regard;
- d) recognized that the implementation of sustainable forest management was important for mainstreaming biodiversity in forestry and requested FAO to contribute to an improved understanding of the implications of forest biodiversity loss for forestry, fisheries and agriculture and to develop a biodiversity strategy, which will include a plan to mainstream biodiversity in the forest sector and bring to COFO's consideration;
- e) welcomed the policy recommendations, as endorsed by the CFS, on sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition and requested FAO to support countries in developing cross-sectoral policies and integrate food security and nutrition objectives into their sustainable forest management practices;
- f) encouraged FAO and Members to explore options for linking the work of the regional forestry commissions to other policy areas and to further mainstream the outcome of their meetings into the Regional Conferences;
- g) recommended that FAO continue its work on boreal forests within its existing programmes and available resources and through existing mechanisms, and include it in the next Programme of Work and Budget;
- h) requested FAO to:
 - continue to facilitate inter-sectoral dialogues to address the vulnerabilities and mitigation potential of forests, promote more holistic landscape-based approaches, and integrate forestry into national plans and action to address climate change, including with the involvement of relevant stakeholders, including rural and indigenous communities who depend on the forest for their livelihood;

² CL 160/REP

http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/bodies/CL_160/CL160_Report/MY722_CL_160_REP_en.pdf

- assist countries to promote actions to prevent deforestation and forest degradation and implement Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) and alternative strategies, forest financing strategies and investment plans;
- i) supported the eight thematic priority areas for FAO's work in forestry in 2018-2021; and encouraged FAO to continue strengthening its contribution to global forest goals and targets, and to integrate them explicitly into the forest-related plans and programmes;
- j) requested FAO to continue to strengthen its leadership role in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and to initiate new activities, including inter alia on forest education and support to smallholders;
- k) encouraged FAO to recognize the contribution to the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 as an important sector of work of the Organization, and to include it in the Medium Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget;
- l) encouraged FAO to give high priority to its scientific and technical expertise, as well as standard setting activities throughout its work; and
- m) underlined the need to promote an integrated approach with regard to the linkages between forestry and agriculture.

The Committee may wish to consider the outcome of the Council's deliberations, in particular when addressing item 4.2, 5, 6, 7.1, 7.2, 8.2, 9.1, 9.3 and 9.5 of its agenda.

4. At its 161st session, held at FAO headquarters in April 2019, the Council³ approved the Report of the 108th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), in particular:

- a) noting the contribution of the International Poplar Commission to FAO's strategic objectives and food security goals, endorsed the draft Conference Resolution entitled "Amendments to the Convention Placing the International Poplar Commission within the framework of FAO", set out in Appendix G to this Report, and requested that it be forwarded to the Conference for its concurrence.

The Committee may wish to consider the outcome of the Council's deliberations, in particular when addressing item 8.3 of its agenda.

5. At its 163rd session, held at FAO headquarters in December 2019, the FAO Council⁴ endorsed the reports of the 127th Session of the Programme Committee, 178th session of the Finance Committee, and their Joint Meeting with respect to the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21, and:

- welcomed [matters not related to forestry]; as well as the resources towards mainstreaming biodiversity; and asked that all these additional resources be incorporated in the ongoing programme of work;
- welcomed the update on the Strategy and Vision for FAO's work in nutrition, and with regard to the introduction of a new concept of "sustainable healthy diet";
- commended the inclusive consultation process conducted following the request of the 41st Session of the FAO Conference, and adopted the FAO Strategy on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors;

The Committee may wish to consider the outcome of the Council's deliberations in particular when addressing item 5, 9.1, 9.2, 9.3 and 9.5 of its agenda.

³ CL 161/REP <http://www.fao.org/3/mz619en/mz619en.pdf>

⁴ CL 163/REP <http://www.fao.org/3/nb990en/nb990en.pdf>

6. At its 164th session, held virtually in light of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the FAO Council⁵ endorsed the Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee and expressed satisfaction with the Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2020-21, in particular:

With regard to Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2020-21 the Council:

- a) supported the Director-General's vision for the Organization to be fit-for-purpose, modern, inclusive and agile, while preserving its technical capacity, in particular through a more modular and flexible structure aiming to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and cross-sectoral collaboration.
- b) welcomed the focus oriented on increasing efficiency, breaking silos by reducing bureaucracy and improving flexibility to respond to emerging needs and priorities, through innovative approaches.
- c) approved the structural changes as reflected in Annex 1 of CL 164/3, which abolishes the layer of the Departments and where the forestry work will fall under the Forestry Division (NFO), within the Natural Resources and Sustainable Production Stream. The Assistant Directors-General, shown in the Organigramme directly below the DG and the core leadership team, would focus on specific assignments given by the Director-General in key areas of the Organization's mandate, in support of, and overseen by the DDGs and Chiefs. Under this model, the ADGs would no longer be encumbered by internal management issues associated with their previous role of heads of Departments – a layer of the hierarchy which would be removed.

With regard to the Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee, the Council:

- appreciated the progress made in the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors, highlighted the need for the draft Action Plan to be reviewed by the relevant Technical Committees (Committee on Fisheries (COFI), Committee on Forestry (COFO) and COAG), as decided by the Council at its 163rd Session, before its review by the Programme Committee and subsequent submission for consideration by the Council, and recommended that the implementation period of the Action Plan be extended to three years;
- acknowledged that Members will be consulted in the development of the Transforming Food Systems to Feed the Planet without Deforestation initiative; stressed the interlinkage between food security and forestry, and agreed that COFO review the drivers of the expansion of agricultural land in light of sustainable forest management, and looked forward to further consultations with Members on the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 and the State of the World's Forests 2020 at the 25th Session of COFO; and requested FAO to prepare technical notes on the financial, and technical implications of elaborating an assessment of global forest resources comparing the positive and negative aspects of a two year and five year cycle, for the forthcoming session of the COFO; and encouraged FAO to continue to support Members in their efforts to protect, restore and sustainably manage forests including through reducing and reversing deforestation and access funding from platforms such as the Green Climate Fund.

With regard to Reports of the 110th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters, the 128th Session of the Programme Committee, and the Joint Meeting of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee and the 180th Session of the Finance Committee, the Council:

⁵ CL 164/REP <http://www.fao.org/3/nd238en/nd238en.pdf>

- endorsed these reports with respect to the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture, and in particular
- requested review of the terms of reference for the Platform by the COAG, COFI, COFO (see document FO:COFO/2020/8.1.a), the Programme Committee and the FAO Council.

The Committee may wish to consider the outcome of the Council's deliberations in particular when addressing item 4, 5, 6, 9.1, 9.2 of its agenda.

III. PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

7. At its 127th Session, held at FAO headquarters in November 2019, the FAO Programme Committee⁶:

b) In considering the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21:

- welcomed the additional resources allocated to FAO's work on the IPPC and on the Joint FAO/WHO food safety scientific advice programme, and to mainstreaming biodiversity;

c) In considering the FAO Strategy on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors:

- emphasised the need that the Action Plan (for Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors) should be reviewed by the Technical Committees;
- agreed to hold informal meetings prior to the formal sessions to consider, and agreed on the following agenda items for its informal meeting in January 2020: a) [matter not related to forestry] b) sustainable management of forestry c) first draft of the Biodiversity Action Plan d) [matter not related to forestry].

The Committee may wish to consider the outcome of the Programme Committee's deliberations in particular when addressing item 5 of its agenda.

8. At its 128th Session⁷, held virtually in June 2020, the FAO Programme Committee, considering:

Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21

- noted that Forestry and Fisheries were in the “Natural Resources and Sustainable Production” stream and noted the need to ensure their due visibility, especially given their role on important issues such as climate change and biodiversity;

Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors

- stressed the need for the Technical Committees on Fisheries (COFI), Forestry (COFO) and Agriculture (COAG) to review the draft Action Plan, as mandated by the Council at its 163rd Session, before reviewing the draft Action Plan in the Programme Committee;

9. The Programme Committee examined a number of matters relating to programme planning and evaluation, in particular it welcomed the Update on Sustainable Forest Management, and:

⁶ CL 163/4 <http://www.fao.org/3/na582en/na582en.pdf>

⁷ CL/164/6 Rev.1 <http://www.fao.org/3/nc439en/nc439en.pdf>

- a) noted the key findings of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 and the State of the World's Forests (SOFO) 2020, including progress made in light of the SDG indicators;
- b) requested FAO to use multilaterally agreed concepts and science and evidence-based linkages in flagship publications, such as SOFO;
- c) noted that although the rate of deforestation had decreased substantially in past years it remained a source of concern as it may not meet the Agenda 2030 targets;
- d) highlighted the importance of the Organization's role in achieving sustainable development and its contribution to the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030;
- e) noted the initiative "Transforming food systems to feed the planet without deforestation" and requested that Members be consulted on its development;
- f) highlighted the need to halt deforestation in order to achieve sustainable forest management, sustainable food systems and prevent the loss of biodiversity;
- g) noted that deforestation, forest and environmental degradation posed a threat to sustainable development resulting in high vulnerability of the livelihoods of many communities;
- h) encouraged FAO to continue to support Members to prevent, halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation, and to enhance FAO's work and capacity in the area of prevention, prediction and control of forest fires, dust and haze and emergency issues;
- i) stressed the need to mainstream biodiversity conservation into forest management practices and for sustainable land use;
- j) encouraged FAO to support Members in integrating global and regional forestry policies and strategies into relevant national policies and legal frameworks, taking into account countries' priorities and diversities;
- k) noted that appropriate implementation of forest restoration can contribute to the restoration of habitats and ecosystems, and the creation of jobs and income, and was an effective solution to achieve sustainable development through an ecosystem-based approach;
- l) encouraged FAO to explore innovative ways of improving the interconnection of sustainable agriculture and sustainable forest management and development of agroforestry;
- m) noted that 85 percent of annual delivery came from extra-budgetary resources and highlighted the need for sustainable funding, including from the regular budget;
- n) encouraged FAO to strengthen activities to enhance big data, remote sensing and up-to-date technology to assist Members to better monitor progress of forest coverage;
- o) suggested that COFO review the drivers of the expansion of agricultural land in the light of sustainable forest management;
- p) encouraged FAO to support multidisciplinary and forest quality assessment approaches for the dissemination of best practices in forestry for land management;
- q) highlighted the need for further consultations on the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 and the State of the World's Forests 2020 with Members in the next session of COFO;
- r) suggested an assessment of Global Forest Resources every 2-year instead of a 5-year cycle; and
- s) looked forward to further review by the forthcoming COFO and based on the review an update report in a next session of the Programme Committee.

The Committee may wish to consider the outcome of the Programme Committee's deliberations in particular when addressing item 4, 6, 7.1, 7.2, 8.2,

IV. COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL MATTERS (CCLM)

10. At its 108th Session, held at FAO headquarters in March 2019, the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters⁸ considered document CCLM 108/3 "Reform of the International Poplar Commission

⁸ CL 161/2 Rev.1 <http://www.fao.org/3/mz007en/mz007en.pdf>

(IPC) – Proposal to amend the Convention Placing the International Poplar Commission within the framework of FAO.”

- a) The CCLM endorsed the Draft Conference Resolution entitled “Amendments to the Convention Placing the International Poplar Commission within the framework of FAO” as set out in Annex to the document CCLM 108/03 subject to the following additional amendments :
- i) In the Preamble :
- “[...] **Having considered** the report of the 161st Session of the Council, [~~and that the Council found~~ *noting the understanding* that amendments would not involve new obligations for Members of the International Poplar Commission;
- ~~Approves~~ **Concurs** with the amendments to the Convention, in accordance with Article XII, paragraph 3, as follows:”
- ii) Article II- Membership – paragraph 3, second sentence:
 “3. [...] *Non member States of the Organization, that are Members of the United Nations, any of its Specialized Agencies of or the International Atomic Energy Agency may, upon request,*
 [...].
- b) The CCLM endorsed the amendments adopted by the International Poplar Commission at its Special Session on 6 February 2019 and agreed to submit the draft Conference Resolution, set forth in the Annex to this Report, to the Council for consideration and subsequent on-forwarding to the FAO Conference in accordance with Article XII, paragraph 3 of the Convention Placing the International Poplar Commission within the framework of FAO

The Committee may wish to consider the outcome of the Committee's deliberations in particular when addressing item 8.3 of its agenda.

V. COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CGRFA)

11. At its 17th Regular Session, held at FAO headquarters in February 2019, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture⁹:

- a) **In considering the Access and benefit-sharing (ABS) for genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA):**
- requested FAO to continue assisting countries, at their request, in developing legislative, administrative and/or policy measures for ABS for GRFA, considering the importance of GRFA and their special role for food security.
 - In addition, recommended that countries implement ABS measures in harmony with existing frameworks and infrastructures of the different subsectors of GRFA and that agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries ministries be engaged in the development and implementation of ABS measures for GRFA.

⁹ CGRFA-17/19 Report <http://www.fao.org/3/mz618en/mz618en.pdf>

b) In considering the preparation of The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture:

- welcomed FAO's report on The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture as an important milestone for the Commission and the UN Decade on Biodiversity and as a valuable contribution to the discussions on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
- noted that the report would contribute to raising awareness on the important role of crop and livestock farming, forestry and fisheries in the conservation and use of biodiversity for food and agriculture and that it would help to strengthen collaboration and enhance communication between relevant international fora and instruments.
- further noted that the country reporting process had been a good opportunity for countries to, inter alia, assess gaps and needs with respect to sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity for food and agriculture.

c) In considering the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources:

- adopted the Funding Strategy for the Implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources [as given in Appendix D to this report], and encouraged countries to actively mainstream forest genetic resources into larger and holistic actions on sustainable forest management, including agroforestry and forest strategies, and forest-based climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, as well as to identify needs for specific and strategic actions on forest genetic resources. It also endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines for Preparing a National Strategy for Forest Genetic Resources; and
- noted the importance of countries having a national or subnational strategy for forest genetic resources in place in view of climate change.

The Committee may wish to consider these outcomes in particular when addressing Agenda items 5 and 8.3.

VI. REGIONAL CONFERENCES

12. At its 30th Session, held in Khartoum, the Sudan in February 2018, the FAO Regional Conference for Africa¹⁰ invited countries to enhance collaboration and coordination towards stronger and more effective biodiversity mainstreaming across agriculture, forestry and fisheries, including in the context of climate change.

13. At its 31st Session, held in May 2018 in Voronezh, Russian Federation, the FAO Regional Conference for Europe¹¹ (ERC):

- d) commended the work undertaken by FAO on forestry issues in the region and encouraged FAO to pursue and further enhance its forestry work, including on forest fires, invasive species, forestry education, and boreal and temperate forests;
- e) supported the joint activities of FAO and UNECE in the field of forestry and welcomed the adoption of the EFC/COFFI Warsaw Integrated Programme of Work for 2018–2021.

¹⁰ ARC/18/REP <http://www.fao.org/3/mw666en/mw666en.pdf>

¹¹ ERC/18/REP <http://www.fao.org/3/mw908en/mw908en.pdf>

14. At its 35th Session, held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, in March 2018, the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean¹² recommended that FAO support the development of strategies and policies for the conservation and recovery of degraded forests and soils, by encouraging countries to invest in national initiatives on agro-forestry, agroecological and organic production systems, as well as biotechnologies that protect and preserve biodiversity, especially for family farmers, and support experience exchange initiatives at global and regional levels.

15. The next sessions of the Regional Conferences were scheduled to be held from February to May 2020. In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the declaration of the Novel Coronavirus as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) by the World Health Organization, the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has decided, in consultation with the Host Governments and discussion with the Regional Groups, to postpone the dates of the FAO Regional Conferences to the second half of 2020.

The Committee may wish to consider these outcomes in particular when addressing Agenda items 5, 6, and 7.2.

¹² LARC/18/REP

http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/bodies/LARC_35/MW677_REP/MW677_LARC_18_REP_en.pdf