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COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

Twenty-sixth Session

3-7 October 2022

Decisions and Recommendations of FAO 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.

Suggested action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to:

- acknowledge the decisions and recommendations of the FAO Bodies of interest to the Committee on Forestry and provide guidance, as deemed appropriate.

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

Malgorzata Buszko-Briggs
COFO Secretary
Forestry Division
Tel: (+39) 06 570 55762
Malgorzata.BuszkoBriggs@fao.org

(Please copy: COFO@fao.org)

I. FAO CONFERENCE

1. At its 42nd Session, held at FAO headquarters in Rome from 14-18 June 2021, the FAO Conference¹ endorsed the Report of the 25th Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO), and in particular welcomed the accomplishments of FAO's work in forestry and its synergies with agriculture, and reiterated the important contribution of forests and sustainable forest management to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. The Conference took note of the update on the preparations for the XV World Forestry Congress, and commended the joint efforts of the Republic of Korea and FAO towards a successful event.
3. **The Committee is invited to consider the outcome of the 42nd Session of the Conference, in particular when addressing items 5, 6, 7, 9.1 of its agenda.**

II. FAO COUNCIL

4. At its 164th Session, held at FAO headquarters on 6-10 July 2020, the Council:
 - 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.
5. **The Committee is invited to consider the outcome of the 164th Session of the Council, in particular when addressing items 6 and 8.3 of its agenda.**
6. At its 165th Session, held at FAO headquarters 30 November - 4 December 2020, the Council endorsed the recommendations contained in the Report of the 25th Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO), and in particular:
 - reiterated the important contribution of forests and sustainable forest management to achieving the SDGs, including food security, sustainable food systems, and healthy diets, as well as to preserving biodiversity, and to mitigation of, and/or adaptation to, climate change;
 - requested FAO to showcase and promote existing and complementary practices between agriculture activities and the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of forests,

¹ C 2021/REP <https://www.fao.org/3/ng170en/ng170en.pdf>

avoiding deforestation and maintaining ecosystem services, as agriculture and forestry can synergistically support sustainable development;

- welcomed in particular COFO's request for improved cross-cutting and intersectoral work, and stressed in this context the need for FAO to maintain strong technical capacity in the forestry field;
- encouraged FAO to support local communities under specific forests in the sustainable management of forestry;
- requested FAO to continue producing a Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) report every five years, while developing, in consultation with Members and partners, a flexible FRA reporting process that allows voluntary updates of key SDG indicators;
- welcomed accomplishments on FAO's work in forestry under the reviewed Strategic Framework and requested FAO to continue to prioritize normative and technical work and put emphasis on data, under the Strategic Framework for 2022-31;
- requested FAO to identify new technologies and digital innovation for data collection on sustainable forestry management and use, as well as on forest products;
- noted progress made in implementing the FAO Strategy for Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors, acknowledged that Members may submit further comments in writing as inputs to the document and recommended that an open, transparent and Member-led consultation process be convened to finalize the draft Action Plan to implement the strategy, including inputs from all Technical Committees as well as the group of national focal points for Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA).
- requested FAO to:
 - conduct a review of biodiversity mainstreaming in forestry and promote the sustainable management of wildlife along the whole wild meat value chain and the adoption of measures to better prevent zoonotic disease risk, including through the One Health approach; and
 - consider an initiative to mainstream biodiversity in food systems in consultation with Members.
- noted the importance for FAO to support Members, upon request, to increase capacity to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation as part of their climate actions, strengthen its collaboration with the private sector aiming at mobilizing climate finance for forests and strengthen further the international standard-setting activities and enhance visibility of the work of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and CODEX Alimentarius;
- requested FAO to integrate forestry in its work on food systems, including, but not limited to, through COVID-19 pandemic recovery measures and in its Hand-in-Hand Initiative,

and underlined in general the importance of FAO's participation in inter-governmental multilateral mechanisms recognized within the United Nations system;

- requested strengthening coordination between COFO and COAG on cross-sectoral matters and recommended that in the future any papers dealing with inter-related issues between agriculture and forests be presented to both COFO and COAG;
- requested inclusion of issues related to the use of digital technology in land use planning, land use change and forestry in the Terms of Reference of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture by the COFO; and
- requested FAO to align the World Forestry Congress (WFC) discussions with the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2030 Agenda.

7. The Committee is invited to consider the outcome of the 165th Session of the Council, in particular when addressing items 6, 7, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 9.1, 9.2 and 9.4 of its agenda.

8. At its 166th Session, held at FAO headquarters on 26 April – 1 May 2021, the Council reviewed document C 2021/7, *Strategic Framework 2022-31*, and in particular:

- welcomed that the strategic narrative of transformation should be encouraged in a coherent manner, as appropriate, in accordance with, and dependent on national contexts and capacities, to achieve MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems² for *better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life*, leaving no one behind, to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and FAO's three Global Goals of Members;
- highlighted the importance of ensuring an equitable focus on fisheries and forestry across the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) and the Strategic Framework.

9. The Committee is invited to consider the outcome of the 166th Session of the Council, in particular when addressing item 9.1 of its agenda.

10. At its 168th Session, held at FAO headquarters on 29 November – 4 December 2021, the Council reviewed document CL 168/21 *Update on the development of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change*, and in particular:

- welcomed the attention in *the Strategy* to sustainable forest management, nutritional needs, oceans, rivers and inland waters, biodiversity, food loss and waste, soil erosion and ecosystem-based approaches.

11. In the Resolution 1/168 on *The Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity*, the Council invited Members to:

- (paragraph 6.i.) integrate the Commission's sectoral Global Plans of Action, the Framework for Action on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture and policy tools into policies, programmes and national and regional plans of action on agriculture, forestry,

² The agrifood system covers the journey of food from farm to table – including when it is grown, fished, harvested, processed, packaged, transported, distributed, traded, bought, prepared, eaten and disposed of. It also encompasses non-food products that also constitute livelihoods and all of the people as well as the activities, investments and choices that play a part in getting us these food and agricultural products. In the FAO Constitution, the term "agriculture" and its derivatives include fisheries, marine products, forestry and primary forestry products.

fisheries and aquaculture, biodiversity, climate change, food security, nutrition and health, and other relevant sectors, as appropriate; and

- (paragraph 6.ii.) actively support, as appropriate and according to national contexts, priorities and capacities, the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems that promote the sustainable use, conservation and restoration of biodiversity for food and agriculture, including genetic resources, leaving no farmer, livestock keeper and pastoralist, forest-based producer, fisher or aquaculturalist behind; and taking into account the contributions and needs of women, indigenous peoples and local communities.

12. The Committee is invited to consider the outcome of the 168th Session of the Council, in particular when addressing items 7, 8.2 and 8.6, 9.1 of its agenda.

13. At its 170th Session, held at FAO headquarters on 13-17 June 2022, the Council endorsed *the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031*, as outlined in Appendix C to CL 170/Report and highlighted the importance of mobilizing additional resources and developing an action plan for its effective implementation.

14. The Council also endorsed the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy, as outlined in Appendix D to the CL 170 Report and highlighted the importance of developing an action plan for its effective implementation.

15. The Committee is invited to consider the outcome of the 170th Session of the Council, in particular when addressing items 7, 7.1, 7.2 and 8.3 of its agenda.

III. PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

16. At its 130th Session, held at FAO headquarters in 22-26 March and 6 April 2021, the FAO Programme Committee requested to receive information on FAO activities in collaboration with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) within the framework of the Committee on Forestry (COFO), to be included under Item 20 Any Other Matters, in particular in relation to the International Conference on Forest Education (ICFE) to be held virtually on 8-10 June 2021.

17. The Committee noted the information on FAO activities in collaboration with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), in particular in relation to the International Conference on Forest Education to be held virtually from 8-10 June 2021; requested FAO to duly inform Members through their Permanent Representations in Rome on meetings and initiatives in the framework of CPF and the Committee on Forestry; and appreciated the assurances from Management that Permanent Representations will be better informed on the Organization's work in forestry, including by regular updates from headquarters and Regional Offices, improved links with the other Technical Committees and enhanced effectiveness and efficiency of the Regional Forestry Commissions.

18. The Committee is invited to consider the outcome of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee, in particular when addressing items 9.3 and 9.4 of its agenda.

19. At its 133rd Session, held at FAO headquarters on 16-20 May 2022, the FAO Programme Committee evaluated FAO's contribution to availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (SDG 6) and Management's Response. The Committee:

- recognized FAO's technical expertise in supporting its Members on crop production, livestock, fisheries, forestry, aquaculture, agriculture, irrigated agriculture, agrochemicals

and other pollutants in relation to their impacts on water quality, and encouraged FAO to strengthen its work in this area.

20. **The Committee is invited to consider the outcome of the 133rd Session of the Programme Committee, in particular when addressing item 5.2, 6.2, 6.5 and 7.1 of its agenda.**

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

21. At its Eighteenth Regular Session, held virtually from 27 September - 1 October 2021, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture considered several cross-sectoral topics (e.g. access and benefit-sharing, “digital sequence information” and biotechnologies) in addition to the implementation of the sectoral Global Plans of Action on genetic resources and its work on biodiversity for food and agriculture.³

22. The Commission welcomed the dissemination of the report on *The State of the World’s Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*⁴ and noted the worldwide attention it had received. The Commission invited countries to continue disseminating the key messages of the report at national level, and to consider using its findings in the elaboration of future policies, programmes and activities, as appropriate and in accordance with their needs and capabilities. Moreover, as a cross-sectoral follow-up to the report, it endorsed the *Framework for Action on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*⁵.

23. In considering the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources*, the Commission invited countries to strengthen their efforts in this regard and to contribute, through their National Focal Points, to the development and testing of a new global information system on forest genetic resources (FGR), and to continue providing data on FGR. In addition, it encouraged countries to continue mainstreaming FGR into larger and holistic actions on sustainable forest management and forest-based adaptation and mitigation measures, as well as to identify needs for specific and strategic actions on FGR. The Commission requested FAO to continue coordinating and supporting the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, in collaboration with regional networks on FGR and relevant international organizations. It further requested FAO to continue its efforts in developing the new global information system.

24. In considering the preparation of *The Second Report on the State of the World’s Forest Genetic Resources*, the Commission took note of the progress made and invited countries that have not yet done so to nominate a National Focal Point on FGR and alternates, as needed. It also urged countries, regional networks and relevant international organizations that have not yet done so to submit their reports to FAO as soon as possible. The Commission requested FAO to present a draft of the report for review by the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on FGR at its Seventh Session (scheduled for March 2023) and then for consideration by the Commission at its Nineteenth Regular Session (scheduled for July 2023).

³ CGRFA-18/21/Report

⁴ <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca3129en>

⁵ <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb8338en>

25. **The Committee is invited to consider the outcome of the Eighteenth Regular Session of the CGRFA, in particular when addressing item 8.2 of its agenda.**

V. REGIONAL CONFERENCES

26. At its 36th Session, held in a hybrid format in Baghdad, Iraq, on 10-11 January and 7-8 February 2022, the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC) considered and adopted the report of the 25th Session of the Near East Forestry and Range Commission (NEFRC). The Meeting took note of the key messages which emerged from the Report of the Commission, including:

- a) The recommendations for NERC 36 to:
 - (i) acknowledge the importance of interactions between agriculture and forestry for sustainable development and to consider food security, agriculture, rangeland, forestry and other aspects of rural development in an integrated manner;
 - (ii) address cross-sectoral forestry/rangelands and agrifood systems matters at the next NERC as an agenda item; and
 - (iii) improve interactions between NEFRC and NERC Members, including Rome-based delegations, with a view to strengthening cross-sectoral policy dialogue and to ensure that important regional forestry/rangelands matters are integrated in the themes of the Regional Conferences.
- b) The recommendations for the COFO to:
 - (i) strengthen its cross-sectoral work through activities aimed at halting land degradation and deforestation, and promoting sustainable agriculture, rangeland, and forest management in ways that lead to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems; and
 - (ii) extend and strengthen its work on rangelands.
- c) The call upon countries to:
 - (i) promote efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems that contribute to sustainable forest and land management;
 - (ii) strengthen the institutional mechanisms for silvopastoral and agroforestry approaches in integrating livestock management in forest- and tree-based production systems;
 - (iii) bring their forest and rangeland related climate concerns to the attention of the NERC and request that it recognize the role of forests and rangelands in policies and programmes that combat climate change; and
 - (iv) increase knowledge of forests by updating national land cover maps and conducting National Forest Inventories.

27. The Ministerial Session of the 36th Session the NERC also requested FAO to promote sustainable agriculture, rangeland, and forest management in ways that lead to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems.

28. The 36th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific held in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 8-11 March 2022 (hybrid) recommended FAO to:

- develop a regional plan to promote cohesive action on mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors, including fishery, crops, livestock and forestry in the Pacific region; and
- expand work and support regional cooperation on sustainable forestry, in particular sustainable production and consumption of wood.

29. The Regional Conference emphasized the need to reduce emissions in line with commitments under the Paris Agreement, and recognized that sustainable forestry, including restoration and agroforestry, contributes to climate change adaptation and mitigation, and to enhancing resilience for sustainable agrifood systems transformation. The Regional Conference recognized that agriculture is a contributor to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and noted the need for the reduction of emissions in the land sector, the potential for restorative agriculture and forestry, and opportunity for the development and use of renewable or sustainable energy for agricultural purposes.

30. The Regional Conference highlighted initiatives including improved forestry and fishery management, promotion of sustainable cropping systems, sustainable wood value-chains, coping with water scarcity and their national efforts to reduce agriculture impacts on vulnerable terrestrial, aquatic and coastal ecosystems. The Regional Conference also noted the potential for regenerative and restorative agriculture and forestry to reduce GHG-emissions.

31. The 37th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and Caribbean was held in Quito, Ecuador (hybrid) on 28 March – 1 April 2022. The Regional Conference:

- endorsed the recommendations of the 32nd Session of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC);
- recognized the threats and challenges posed by the climate crisis, water scarcity and drought, soil degradation, biodiversity loss, deforestation, plant and animal pests and diseases, and natural disasters;
- recommended that FAO: (i) consider international environmental agreements such as those of the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) through the Glasgow Climate Pact, the Paris Agreement and, as appropriate, the Glasgow Declaration on Forests and Land Use in its work and; (ii) use holistic and innovative approaches in its work, including biotechnology, genome editing, no-tillage and other technical tools, promoting linkages between climate change, restoration of productive ecosystems, integrated water resource management, land-use planning and management, and combating desertification, soil degradation and illegal deforestation.

32. The 32nd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa was held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea on 11-14 April 2022 (hybrid). The Conference encouraged members to:

- seize the opportunity of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 to strengthen country- and regional-level action and coordination across sectors and countries, for example through the Great Green Wall and the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100); and
- invest in innovations, technologies to generate data and knowledge to support ecosystem restoration, the management of natural resources and all productive sectors in agriculture (crops, livestock and fisheries, forestry, etc.) toward a resilient and sustainable agrifood systems transformation.

33. Regarding the host country event: Experience sharing on challenges related to forest governance, the Regional Conference:

- acknowledged the nexus of forest governance with deforestation, climate change and poverty reduction;
- underlined that improving forest governance is essential to ensure the durability of forests in Central Africa, to mitigate climate changes impacts, contribute to national economies and improve the livelihoods of forest dependent local communities;
- welcomed FAO support in Central Africa to ensure sustainable forest management;
- recommended FAO to support Members in their efforts to promote afforestation programmes and to implement best practices of forest governance;

and invited Members of the Regional Conference to:

- consider the use of agroforestry, resilient agricultural practices and eco-agriculture as options to prevent deforestation and desertification;
- consider Carbon Credit and other innovative financing schemes for resource mobilization for forest and climate change nexus; and
- share more experiences on policy, legal and institutional environment to boost forest governance.

34. The 33rd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe was held in Lodz, Poland from 10-13 May 2022 (hybrid event).

35. The Regional Conference endorsed the report and recommendations from the Joint Session of the 41st European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the 79th United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Committee on Forest and the Forest Industry.

36. The Committee is invited to consider the outcomes of the FAO Regional Conferences, in particular when addressing items 8.6 and 9.1 of its agenda.