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para la  
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# FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific

## Thirty-first Session

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### Information note

**Summary of the recommendations of the Regional Technical Commissions (RTCs): Relevance of the RTCs to the work of the APRC and their function as regional, subsectoral priority setting mechanisms**

## Table of Contents

	Paragraphs
I. Introduction.....	1 – 2
II. The relevance and function of the Regional Technical Commissions .....	3 – 8
III. Capacity building, training and raising awareness on regional issues .....	9 – 13
IV. Developing regional assessments, regional subsectoral reviews and status and trends reports .....	14 – 20
V. Establishing regional networks, regional technical cooperation and exchange .....	21 – 31
VI. Harmonizing data, standards and practices.....	32 – 33
VII. Developing regional standards, codes of practice and best practice guidelines ....	34 – 38
VIII. Advocating for and representing regional issues in global normative instruments .....	39 – 41
IX. Recommendations of the RTCs convened in the second half of 2011.....	42 – 45
X. Linking RTCs to the work of the FAO Global Technical Committees.....	46 – 52
XI. Strengthening the role of the RTCs.....	53

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## I. Introduction

1. The FAO regional office in Bangkok serves as the secretariat of five Asia-Pacific Regional Technical Commissions (RTCs). These statutory bodies of the Organization include the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (APCAS); the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC); the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC); the Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific (APHCA); and the Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC), and they deal with agricultural statistics, forestry, fisheries, animal production and health and plant protection respectively. Observers from other related regional organizations, NGOs and the private sector participate to varying degrees in these commissions. The RTCs have a unique ability to synthesize the opinions and recommendations of member countries within the region and to consolidate opinions on issues of importance to the various sectors through their regular sessions and intersessional activities (e.g. workshops, studies, status reports, projects). Over the past ten years, the RTCs' functions and achievements have included:

- capacity building, training and raising awareness on regional issues;
- conducting regional assessments, regional subsectoral reviews and status and trends reports;
- establishing regional networks, regional technical cooperation and exchange;
- harmonizing data, standards and practices;
- developing regional standards, codes of practice and best practice guidelines; and
- advocating for and representing regional issues in the development of global normative instruments.

2. In light of FAO reform, the changing functions of the FAO decentralized offices and the Regional Conference, the thirtieth Asia-Pacific Regional Conference (APRC) agreed that the recommendations of the RTCs can be considered the regional priorities for the subsectors in which they are competent. The APRC further recommended that the summary report of all RTC sessions and their recommendations should be made available to the Conference. This paper is the secretariat's response to that recommendation.

## II. The relevance and function of the Regional Technical Commissions

3. The regional and subsectoral focus of the RTCs provides a unique opportunity to address issues related to the Asia-Pacific region. Given the specific regional focus of the RTCs, their endorsement lends greater legitimacy and "ownership" to regional policy studies, sectoral outlook reviews and the development of codes of practice.

4. The RTCs are representative of a region and its subsectors; each of the five RTCs has a different membership and not all APRC members are members of each RTC. The implication of this is that each session of an RTC represents the consensus of its membership, but not necessarily the consensus of all the member countries of the APRC. Membership of a specific RTC generally reflects specific national priorities or interests and the level of importance of the subsector to those member countries. An FAO member country which is not a member of a particular Commission, but has a specific interest in its work, may join in the activity of that Commission.

5. The RTCs offer an efficient use of regular programme funding and generate significant leverage of additional resources. The RTCs are reliant on FAO regular programme funding for their core activities, and FAO covers a significant cost in operating the secretariat in the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. In addition to this, the RTCs have received financial or in-kind support for their activities from FAO, donors and member countries, which is recognition of the relevance of their work to the region.

6. Under the FAO reform, the APRC has been given an enhanced role in making decisions for the region and communicating these to the FAO Conference. In this way, the APRC's decisions and recommendations will become a more important decision-making tool in guiding the programme of work in the Asia-Pacific region and particularly in guiding the work of the FAO regional and subregional offices. Currently, subsectoral areas are typically under-represented in Conference

deliberations; however, at the thirtieth APRC, the Conference recognized that the RTCs offer effective mechanisms to address specific subsectoral technical matters, and in this regard, it agreed to recognize the competence of the RTCs to set priorities for their subsectors.

7. Sections III to VIII below summarize the main priorities and recommendations of the five RTCs on a range of issues for the following sessions:

- 24th session of the Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific (APHCA), Phuket, Thailand, 25–27 October 2010;
- 26th session of the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (APCAS), Siem Reap, Cambodia, 26 to 30 April 2010;
- 26th session of the Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC), New Delhi, India, 31 August to 4 September 2009;
- 31st session of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC), Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, 6 to 8 September 2010; and
- 23rd session of the Asia-pacific Forestry Commission (APRC), Thimphu, Bhutan, 9 to 11 June 2010.

8. The main recommendations of the most recent sessions of the Regional Technical Commissions which took place in the last half of 2011 are reported in section IX (paragraphs 42 to 45).

### **III. Capacity building, training and raising awareness on regional issues**

#### ***Capacity building and human resource development in agricultural statistics***

9. APCAS acknowledged that capacity building should be a continuing activity in the countries because of new developments and the high turnover of statistical personnel. The Commission recommended that countries conduct a thorough assessment of their capacity-building requirements and package these for assistance. The Commission recommended that regional training institutions, like the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), should conduct regular training programmes on agricultural statistics. FAO should also provide assistance to member countries in agri-environmental statistics, particularly in data collection and analysis, as these are becoming increasingly important.

#### ***Capacity building and training in small-scale meat and dairy production and processing***

10. APHCA supports activities and training programmes related to small-scale dairying in Bangladesh, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The activities include support for genetic improvement of dairy cattle on small farms; productivity enhancement through improved animal nutrition and good husbandry practices; and capacity development at all levels of the dairy value chain. APHCA also provided emergency support to the Government of Lao PDR in response to an outbreak of porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS) in 2010. APHCA recommended raising awareness among farmers, feed producers, food processors and government authorities on feed and food safety and their linkages.

#### ***Capacity building in forestry policy and management***

11. APFC recommended that FAO facilitate and support capacity building in priority technical, management and policy-related areas to make further progress towards sustainable forest management and to assist forestry agencies in reviewing structures, policies and functions to better align with the new demands and expectations on forests and forestry.

#### ***Capacity building in ecosystem approaches to management for fisheries and aquaculture***

12. APFIC noted the urgent need for basic ecosystem-based management training for a wide range of fisheries professionals within the region and is collaborating in the development of a regional training course in this regard.

***Capacity building and training in phytosanitary measures and control of alien invasive species***

13. APPPC supports activities and training programmes for ten countries to improve the capacity for pest risk analysis, pest surveillance, diagnostics and inspections and implementation of international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs). APPPC provided support to Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries in response to *Brontispa* (invasive coconut beetle) through integrated pest management, biological control and various ecological approaches. APPPC suggested close collaboration among countries to prevent the introduction of phytosanitary-concerned pests and to effectively control newly introduced invasive plant and plant pest species, such as Cassava pink mealybug and other migratory pests.

**IV. Developing regional assessments, regional subsectoral reviews and status and trends reports**

***Strengthening agricultural statistical systems***

14. APCAS recommended that as many countries as possible from Asia and the Pacific be closely associated with the formulation of the Regional Implementation Plan of the “Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural Statistics”, and that donors generously fund the Plan, given its importance for monitoring the MDGs and food security. It also recommended that the integration of agriculture into the National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS) should include dialogue and cooperation among data producers to avoid duplicated efforts and should cover national priorities and be flexible so that other statistics could be produced for subsectors’ specific needs. Furthermore, countries should ensure that their Statistical Master Plan (SMP) and NSDS are fully operational, given their importance for the development of the national agricultural statistics system. APCAS recommended that FAO should provide assistance in collecting and processing price data and coordinate closely with NSOs to determine ways to mainstream producer prices in national statistical systems. When member countries are confronted with reduced resources for their agricultural statistical programmes, APCAS recommended that they raise awareness among policy-makers about the value of agricultural statistics and develop close relations between statistical providers and key stakeholders and industry.

***Strengthening regional fishery assessments***

15. APFIC acknowledged the challenges in collating the available fisheries information from APFIC members and congratulated the secretariat for producing the comprehensive report of the “Status and Potential of Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Asia Pacific in 2010”. APFIC noted that catch rates have declined markedly in the last 20 years, and registered its concern that this has happened despite improvements in fishing technology. It emphasized the need to develop and promote lower-cost assessment methods that are not heavily reliant on expensive research-vessel cruises. APFIC recommended strengthening regional capacity to assess fisheries and aquaculture in the Asia-Pacific region for the purpose of policy development and management.

16. APFIC encouraged members to develop alternative aquaculture feeds that contain or use fewer wild fish. The Commission recommended that information on the cost benefits and the environmental impacts of stock enhancement practices should be collected and reported. The Commission welcomed the FAO technical guidelines for aquaculture certification. It noted with concern that significant threats to the aquaculture industry and the indigenous biodiversity continue to be escapes from aquaculture, deliberate introductions and unregulated movement of stock.

***Developing forest assessments and planning***

17. APFC took note of the current status of forests and future trends in the “Asia-Pacific Forestry Sector Outlook Study”, and requested FAO to assist countries in developing and implementing

efficient and practical forest monitoring and assessment mechanisms. FAO was also requested to develop methodologies to include evaluation of environmental services into national forest resources assessments for countries that might wish to include these in their national assessments. APFC asked FAO to support countries in making full use of the wealth of information and analysis that has been developed by integrating it into national strategic planning, national forest programme processes and forest policy formulation. FAO support for subregional workshops on strategic planning in forestry and further scenario development was also emphasized.

18. Recognizing the ongoing global activities and discussions about conservation and sustainable use of forests and biodiversity, APFC requested FAO, in collaboration with other international partners, to assist countries in identifying and studying problems of regional significance related to biodiversity conservation, determining strategic priorities and supporting implementation of recommendations. They were also requested to provide advice and tools to assess forest degradation, forest fragmentation and related biodiversity loss and to further address the harmonizing of forest-related definitions through the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

#### ***Strengthening regional assessment and collaboration on plant protection***

19. APPPC recommended considering the establishment of several working groups to address major constraints, challenges and management methods for topics including: implementation of international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs); pest incursion; and phytosanitary requirements for importing rubber plants. It also recommended that a contingency plan should be developed for the South American Leaf Blight (SALB) together with a technical assistance programme. It further recommended that there needs to be active collaboration among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries to harmonize pesticide registration and management.

#### ***Formulating smallholder dairy development strategy for Asia and the Pacific Region***

20. APHCA worked closely with member countries and selected donors to derive lessons in small-scale dairy development and to formulate a dairy development strategy and investment plan for the region. This provided inputs into project and programme formulation in selected countries.

### **V. Establishing regional networks, regional technical cooperation and exchange**

#### ***Strengthening regional fishery cooperation***

21. The members countries recommended that APFIC seek new partnerships and strengthen cooperation with other regional bodies as it implements the APFIC session recommendations. The Commission emphasized the importance of regional and subregional collaboration and asked APFIC to work on such mechanisms and initiatives. The Commission noted that several regional projects and bodies are currently operating in a range of APFIC areas and are undertaking work that is compatible with Commission objectives. It invited the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) project to report on the Bay of Bengal at its next session.

#### ***Strengthening regional forestry cooperation***

22. APFC acknowledged the excellent collaboration it has achieved with FAO, and urged FAO to further strengthen several ongoing activities, such as continued support for policy-related work under the APFC-initiated Asia-Pacific Forest Policy Think Tank.

23. APFC requested FAO to: maintain its strong level of activity and collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Forest Invasive Species Network; continue active engagement as a partner of the Mangroves for the Future Initiative; provide targeted project support for mangrove and coastal resources management; continue efforts to establish a regional support network for forestry education; and support forestry-related education of youth, university students and forestry practitioners.

24. APFC urged member countries to share experiences and advise on efforts to enhance biodiversity conservation, including opportunities to capitalize on bio-prospecting.

### ***Forming an Asia Dairy Network***

25. Based on the recommendations of previous APHCA sessions, APHCA is working towards forming an Asia Dairy Network that will facilitate information exchange and capacity development in the Asian dairy sector.

### ***Controlling transboundary animal diseases***

26. APHCA reviewed the control of transboundary animal diseases (TADs) focused on the support to the Field Epidemiology Training Programme for Veterinarians (FETPV); Animal Human Environment Interface Workshop; the Bat Surveillance Workshop in the Philippines; the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) Regional Steering Committee Meeting for Asia; the regional Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) on PRRS diagnosis and other swine diseases; the TCP on foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) risk-based strategies in Bhutan and the ongoing activities under the Environmental Animal Health Management Initiative Project.

### ***Improving regional information exchange on food safety and livestock development***

27. APHCA recommended improving access to food safety-related hazard information through information-sharing mechanisms and implementing a risk-based preventative approach to mitigating risks associated with feed safety. This would include promoting the Codex Code of Practice on Good Animal Feeding and relevant chapters of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Terrestrial and Aquatic Animal Health Codes.

28. APHCA has supported the development of a smallholder dairy development strategy for the Asia region and is in the process of promoting a network of professionals to share experiences and disseminate knowledge. APHCA recommended that FAO continue to provide leadership in this area given its technical strengths and close stakeholder linkages in the region.

29. The fourth OIE/FAO-APHCA Regional Workshop and Working Group Meeting on Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and Other Prion Diseases (organized in Seoul, Republic of Korea) recommended: strengthened networking regarding BSE and other prion diseases; facilitation of expert technical support and services; and provision of diagnostic materials and reagents.

### ***Strengthening regional cooperation in phytosanitary measures, pesticide risk reduction and integrated pest management***

30. APPPC called for continued cooperation with potential supporters and counterparts for assistance and financial support in providing technical assistance to improve country capacity in implementing Regional Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (RSPMs), ISPMs, pesticide risk reduction through integrated pest management (IPM), and the Rotterdam Convention and Code of Conduct. APPPC considers that IPM will not succeed without reform of pesticide policies consistent with IPM principles, and it recommended that it link up with ASEAN to advance its IPM and farmer education agenda. APPPC also recommended that national IPM programmes should lobby for its inclusion in relevant ASEAN working groups.

### ***Strengthening regional information exchange and communication about plant protection***

31. APPPC will consider the development of a system to collect and disseminate plant protection information within the region, including the creation of an APPPC website and continued development and maintenance of updated plant protection profiles.

## **VI. Harmonizing data, standards and practices**

### ***Disseminating and sharing data***

32. APCAS encouraged member countries to assess and take steps to improve their response rates to FAO questionnaires where necessary and to use CountrySTAT.

### ***Strengthening support for small-scale fisheries***

33. The Commission requested a clearly defined concept of small-scale fisheries to be based not only on the size of the vessel or gear used, but also on other indicators. The Commission expressed its desire for FAO to work more closely with the World Trade Organization on fisheries subsidies, particularly in relation to developing countries and small-scale fisheries.

## **VII. Developing regional standards, codes of practice and best practice guidelines**

### ***Improving regional regulatory frameworks for animal feed safety***

34. APHCA recommended the establishment of a functional regulatory framework on feed safety with a view to improving animal health as well as food safety. This would include improving the type and standard of analytical methods to include accurate, inexpensive screening methods for contaminants.

### ***Strengthening fisheries governance and combatting IUU fishing***

35. APFIC noted the importance of vessel registers and licensing in controlling fishing capacity and combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The Commission called for continued assistance from developed countries and international organizations to support their efforts in the region to combat IUU fishing. APFIC noted that the issue of poor labour conditions on fishing vessels and in aquaculture farms and processing factories in producing countries is currently being examined by some importing countries.

### ***Improving fishery and aquaculture management through the ecosystem approach***

36. APFIC strongly recommended that all countries develop a national ecosystem approach framework through which ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) and ecosystem approach to aquaculture (EAA) activities can be implemented and reported.

### ***Improving forest law enforcement and governance in the region***

37. APFC noted the progress that is being achieved in the region in curbing illegal logging and implementing better forest governance. APFC urged FAO and other international organizations and partners to facilitate additional regional dialogue on forest law enforcement and governance (FLEG) to discuss shared concerns, identify best practices in FLEG implementation and establish mechanisms for cooperation. FAO and other international organizations and partners were requested to provide assistance to build capacities to fight illegal logging and other forest crimes, and to help countries secure financial resources for effective FLEG implementation.

### ***Developing regional plant protection standards***

38. APPPC adopted two RSPMs: the Guidelines for Protection against South American Leaf Blight (SALB) of Rubber and Guidance on the Operation of Land Border Entry Points for Local Trade. It suggested that the Commission set up a working group on SALB to develop detailed guidelines to support the APPPC SALB standard. The working group would develop and consider harmonized plant import requirements for rubber planting material and other pathways and would organize a workshop concerning inspection, diagnostics and disinfection in SALB-endemic countries.

## **VIII. Advocating for and representing regional issues in global normative instruments**

### ***Addressing forestry and climate change***

39. APFC expressed concern over the potential negative impacts of climate change on forests, took note of the responses by national forestry agencies to develop “climate compatible” strategies and requested FAO to take a leading role in supporting technical aspects of REDD-plus in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

***Improving conservation and sustainable use of forests***

40. APFC urged member countries to strengthen international arrangements and facilitate action at national levels, including giving due attention to financing and international assistance and increasing participation of foresters in multilateral biodiversity dialogues.

***Reviewing the implications of climate change to the sector in the Asian region***

41. APFIC emphasized that climate change adaptation and mitigation related to fisheries and aquaculture is a very important issue in the region. The Commission recommended that APFIC review the effects of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture in the region and provide advice to member countries on strategic planning for adaptation and mitigation measures for the sector.

**IX. Recommendations of the RTCs convened in the second half of 2011**

42. At the 30th APRC, the Conference recommended that the schedules of the RTC sessions be adjusted to precede the FAO Regional Conference and that summary reports of the outcomes and recommendations of the sessions be made available to member countries prior to the FAO Regional Conference. The section below provides a summary of the key recommendations of the three RTCs which preceded the 31st APRC (the plant protection, animal production and health and forestry Commissions). The fisheries and statistics Commissions were unable to reschedule their sessions to precede the 31st APRC, and therefore their session recommendations are reported in area sections III to VIII; both Commissions are exploring the possibility of rescheduling their next sessions to precede the APRC.

**Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC)**

43. The 27th session of APPPC was convened in Manila, Philippines from 15 to 19 August 2011 and adopted the following main recommendations:

- Development of new Regional Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (RSPMs) on irradiation, fumigation and movement of used machinery.
- Implementation of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) and RSPMs in member countries.
- Technical assistance for improvement of capacity in the implementation by the Working Group on Implementation of ISPMs through arranging training courses, explanatory papers etc. for selected ISPMs.
- Active participation in development of ISPMs, especially regional consultations on review of draft ISPMs.
- Cooperation with Brazil and relevant international organizations on the issue of South American Leaf Blight (SALB) of rubber, especially training programmes and diagnostic workshops.
- Enhancement of information exchange among member countries through the newly launched APPPC website and inputs from the APPPC Working Group on Information Exchange.
- Co-organize the international workshop on grain movement by sending two representatives of the APPPC to participate, who will be funded by the APPPC, and provide inputs to the development of the agenda by the working group. Member countries are encouraged to actively participate at their own cost.
- In support of the FAO strategy on sustainable crop production intensification (SCPI), implementing IPM, especially ecological approaches and community based farmer training,



- strengthening IPM policy and advocacy, and reduction of highly hazardous pesticides in member countries.
- Promotion of the implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct on the use and distribution of pesticides.
  - The Commission called on member countries to accept the revised Plant Protection Agreement(s) as soon as possible and make financial contributions for supporting activities of the APPPC.
  - The Commission called on non-member countries to join APPPC.

#### **Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific (APHCA)**

44. The 35th session of APHCA was convened in Cebu, Philippines from 2 to 4 November 2011 and adopted the following main recommendations:

- Asian smallholders have largely been by-passed by the development opportunities created through the rapid expansion in demand for livestock products in the region. The Commission therefore recommends to examine the approaches of national governments and private, civil and international organizations to livestock sector development and to formulate policies and devise strategies that better integrate the smallholder rural majority into national agri-food supply chains.
- The co-existence of traditional and modern livestock production and marketing systems, increasing travel and trade, changing ecologies, and climate change have increased health risks for both animals and humans. The Commission welcomed the One Health approach and recommended that regional veterinary laboratory networks establish closer links to global diagnostic networks and that the link between animal and human health laboratory systems be strengthened.
- The dynamics of the Asian food economy is heavily influenced by the emergence of a middle class in China (and to a lesser extent India) exerting immense demands on regional agricultural resources. This development will create new challenges, particularly for smaller countries, but can potentially also make a significant contribution to regional growth and poverty alleviation. In order to capitalize on the foreseeable dynamics of Asian agri-food demand, the Commission recommends the promotion of more inclusive regional trade policies.
- As demand growth for livestock products in Asia is likely to be sustained and may even accelerate, the Commission recommends renewed attention to sustainable increases in livestock productivity as otherwise rising food prices may threaten livelihoods across the region. Increasing productivity will require enhanced investment in technical domains of livestock production such as improved feeding, breeding and disease control, in improved systems for technology development and transfer, in improved input supply and service provision, as well as investment in resilience against natural disasters (e.g. floods and drought) and rehabilitation of degraded lands.

#### **Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC)**

45. The 24th session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) was convened in Beijing, China from 7 to 11 November 2011 and adopted the following recommendations:

- Requested FAO to collaborate in promulgating forestry information to mitigate against natural disasters, including providing collaborative support for an international conference on forests and natural disasters being planned for early 2012 in Japan.

- Requested that FAO give additional attention to monitoring, reporting and verification aspects of forestry including: (i) potential needs to review and clarify forest definitions; (ii) preparation of voluntary guidelines and other support for conducting forest inventories and assessments, with particular focus on requirements for REDD+ reporting; and (iii) development of Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) reporting methodologies that provide greater interpretative capacity for key forestry statistics; and support to strengthen capacities for reporting to the FRA 2015 assessment.
- Urged FAO to support and build capacities for forest law enforcement and improved governance.
- Recommended that FAO continue awareness raising efforts, sharing of experiences, and development of capacity to address forest law enforcement and governance challenges.
- Endorsed the key priorities identified by the second Asia-Pacific Forestry Sector Outlook Study and urged FAO to support efforts to promote, promulgate and interpret the findings.
- Requested FAO to support studies on the roles that forests can play in emerging “green growth” frameworks, and assist member countries in formulating and implementing related policies and programs.
- Requested FAO to collaborate with donors and partners to support the development of REDD+ readiness and demonstration activities.
- Urged FAO to assist countries to share experiences in climate change adaptation and to help further refine national climate change adaptation strategies.
- Requested FAO to help countries develop national action plans on climate change adaptation.
- The Commission agreed to establish a Forestry Communications Working Group, under the auspices of the Commission, to pursue the following objectives: (i) share experiences and knowledge related to forestry communications among member countries and international partner organizations; (ii) exchange communication materials, photographs, mailing lists, expertise, etc. and facilitate the access to other resources for effective information management; and (iii) strengthen member countries’ capacity to effectively address communication issues and challenges.

## **X. Linking RTCs to the work of the FAO Global Technical Committees**

46. FAO’s Global Technical Committees generally do not address regional differences or specifics; their work is typically focussed on globally relevant issues and requires consensus. Focusing on matters of common global importance may, at times, be counterproductive to addressing those issues within a region. The RTCs are capable of identifying such regional specificities and offer an effective mechanism to address specific subsectoral technical matters, raise awareness and build capacity and understanding. The RTCs also offer a means to mobilize their membership to endorse or implement recommendations (e.g. recommendations of the FAO Global Technical Committees).

47. The RTCs may have a specific link to an FAO Global Technical Committee, with clear reporting functions, or may be represented in steering committees (e.g. APFC regularly draws regional issues to the attention of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) thereby shaping its agenda. APFC is also represented in the COFO steering committee through its chairperson, which is an important element of a successful two-way communication.). Some of the RTCs do not currently report to the FAO Global Technical Committees and care is needed to avoid overlaps in decision-making.

48. Currently, some RTCs provide only limited feedback to the FAO Global Technical Committees, but they directly contribute to the work of FAO’s headquarters technical departments by providing “local knowledge and considerations” to inform programmes and planning. This has resulted in recognition of regional priorities and enhanced allocations, and underlines the importance of APRC’s endorsement of the RTCs’ work and recommendations.

49. The RTCs also consider the work of FAO's Global Technical Committees, and therefore they can be considered as a bridge between the region and the work and recommendations of the Committees. If the RTCs included more of the work of the Global Technical Committees in their agendas, it would be necessary to more clearly distinguish the functions between the entities. For example, the RTCs would focus more on awareness raising and capacity building with their memberships. Under Article XIV and, to a lesser extent, Article VI mandates, the RTCs also are responsible for reviewing and tracking regional issues, status and trends in their subsectors and galvanizing action with their memberships to address these. Several of the RTCs also work directly with members in developing regional normative agreements (e.g. Code of Practice for Forest Harvesting in Asia-Pacific; regional standards for phytosanitary measures) where no global equivalent or consensus on such agreements exists.

50. The RTCs also have an excellent opportunity to convey their subsectoral regional work and members' concerns in other intergovernmental fora (e.g. APFC reporting to the United Nations Forum on Forests; APFIC reporting to the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea). This is particularly the case where agriculture sectoral issues may be under-represented or require a stronger regional voice. There is an opportunity to add value to this process through the APRC by requesting the RTCs to contribute to regional and international standards-setting, climate change fora, environmental and conservation fora, energy development, mitigation or prevention of pollution and water management.

51. It will be challenging to find a means of adequately incorporating the work of the RTCs into the agendas of the FAO Global Technical Committees. Current examples are: (1) the APPPC, which facilitates an annual expert consultation on the review of draft ISPMs to provide regional input to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) secretariat for the development of ISPMs; and (2) the APFC, which prepares a regional status review for the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and is a member of the COFO secretariat.

52. Another means of achieving greater integration between the work of the RTCs and the FAO Global Technical Committees would be to consider forming standing or *ad hoc* "regional working groups" under the RTCs to cover issues identified by the Global Technical Committees or subcommittees. These would be particularly relevant if they were convened to address issues that were specific to a particular region or regions.

## **XI. Strengthening the role of the RTCs**

53. The increasingly important role of the APRC provides an opportunity to enhance the integration of the RTCs' work into its future agenda. This will be accompanied by an ongoing review of the relationship between the RTCs and the FAO Technical Committees and an examination of how the functions of reporting on regional trends and priorities can be brought into a global discussion. The potential of the RTCs to provide regional normative advice and promote regional standards could be enhanced over the coming years. In addition, the RTCs' work could be strengthened or promoted in support of better regional advocacy and cooperation in the agriculture sector in climate change and environmental and conservation fora and in the areas of energy development, mitigation or prevention of pollution and water management. The RTCs offer a dynamic and member country-led mechanism to ensure that the regional dimensions of the agriculture subsectors are represented within the FAO framework and in regional and global decision-making fora.