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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION STRATEGY FOR FORESTRY

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

This document, prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), gives an overview of the objectives, approach and methods of the consultations for the development of a Strategy for Forestry.

The Special Session will be invited to contribute to the new FAO Strategy for Forestry, by discussing elements for this strategy. Based on feedback from countries and other stakeholders, a draft strategy will be prepared and circulated for review by FAO Members and other partners in May 2008. A new strategy will be presented for the consideration of the FAO Committee on Forestry in March 2009. The session is invited to take into consideration the elements set out in this paper and the outcome of the Strategic Review of the Integrated Programme of Work on Timber and Forestry of the UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission, which represents the regional contribution to the Strategy.

* This document was submitted late due to resource constraints.

I. BACKGROUND

1. At the occasion of the Strategic Review and Plan of the Integrated Programme of Work of the UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission, the Special Session has a deciding role for UNECE/FAO activities in the region. However, a parallel exercise is taking place at the global level: the preparation of the new FAO Strategy for Forestry. The Special Session is invited to discuss elements for the global FAO Strategy, to be proposed to the FAO Committee on Forestry in March 2009. The Special Session will be informed of progress on the FAO strategic review and the elaboration of the FAO Strategic Plan for Forestry.

II. NEW FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION STRATEGY FOR FORESTRY

2. The forestry sector is affected by the rapid pace of global changes, including economic globalization, acceleration of climate change, and the dynamism of global communications. In response to these changes and at the request of the Committee on Forestry (COFO), FAO is updating its strategy for forestry. The review is carried out in the context of ongoing UN and FAO reforms, and the outcome of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO.

3. Suggestions are solicited from FAO Members and other stakeholders through the Regional Forestry Commissions, among other means. An official communication has also been sent to the heads of forestry, requesting feedback by the end of April. Based on feedback, a draft strategy will be developed and stakeholders will have a further opportunity to comment. A proposed new strategy will be presented to FAO members for consideration during the 19th Session of COFO in March 2009.

4. The discussion paper "*FAO strategy for forestry: elements of a possible strategy*" is presented in the Annex. More information and a facility for on-line commenting are available at www.fao.org/forestry/strategy.

5. In providing guidance for the development of the strategy, delegates are invited to:

- (a) comment on the strategic elements outlined in the discussion paper; and
- (b) consider the following general questions:
 - (i) What is the biggest impact that FAO has had in forestry?
 - (ii) What are the three highest priorities for FAO in forestry in the future?
 - (iii) Are there any programmes or activities that FAO currently carries out in forestry that should be discontinued?
 - (iv) Do you have any additional comments about FAO programmes, activities, or priorities, or about the way that FAO works?

Annex

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION STRATEGY FOR FORESTRY

Discussion paper on elements of a possible strategy**What is *Forestry*?**

1. For the purposes of this strategy, *forestry* is broadly defined to include livelihoods, social aspects, environmental services, forestry policies and institutions, and economic considerations. In addition to traditional aspects of forest management, production, health and protection, *forestry* considers the broad landscape of trees outside forests, including urban forestry and agro-forestry. *Forestry* includes the management of wildlife and protected areas. *Forestry* considers the impacts of other sectors on the forest, as well as the impact of the forest on other sectors.

Potential strategic goals for Forestry

2. In developing the FAO strategic goals for forestry, the broader context of forestry within the world and the importance of linkages with other sectors are acknowledged. In particular, goals for forestry directly support the Millennium Development Goals and the FAO Global Goals of Members. Within the forestry sector, the global objectives on forests agreed by the United Nations Forum on Forests provide an important framework for strategic goals (refer to the Annex).

Decision-making is informed, harmonized across sectors, and participatory

3. Decisions about forestry, forests and trees are based on timely and accurate information. Stakeholder involvement in decisions is increased at all levels. Countries have progressive policies and laws that are developed through broad stakeholder participation and effectively implemented through efficient and responsive institutions and sound governance, which are:

(a) The benefits from trees, forests and forestry are increasing, equitably shared, and widely recognized and appreciated. The contributions of forests and forestry to food security and society are increased, including the role of forests in livelihoods and poverty alleviation. Clear and secure forest tenure contributes to equitable sharing of benefits at local and national levels. The wider public and key actors in other sectors are aware of the many values and benefits of forests as demonstrated by changed behaviour. Investments in forestry are increased, and forestry is accorded an increasing priority in development.

(b) Forest resources are increasing and ecosystem services are increasingly valued. The health, vitality, and area of forests show a stable or increasing trend in most countries and ecosystems, thereby increasing the contribution of forests to mitigating climate change, conserving biodiversity, and improving water quality. The net rates of forest loss and degradation are reversed. Good management practices are implemented along a continuum ranging up to the landscape level, including interactions with other sectors.

Potential elements of Strategies for FAO to achieve the Strategic goals for Forestry Strengthen country capacities

4. Work with member countries to strengthen policies and institutions, and to support participatory processes and the allocation of decision-making to appropriate levels.
 - (a) Strengthen information to support policy-making: Support national capabilities to collect and analyze information about forests and forestry, and to strengthen linkages with policy making;
 - (b) Exchange knowledge: Serve as an authoritative source of information about forests, forestry policies and institutions, and natural resources. Provide leadership in the exchange of knowledge;
 - (c) Improve forestry practices: Develop guidelines for best practices through multi-stakeholder processes and assist countries with their implementation;
 - (d) Promote networks: Develop and facilitate networks among countries, institutions, and individuals to more effectively share knowledge and implement improved practices;
 - (e) Work across sectors: Link forestry with broader FAO goals and strategies and with the Millennium Development goals. Assist countries to mainstream forestry into other sectors and national development processes and to implement integrated land use approaches;
 - (f) Work in partnerships: Collaborate with others in the public and private sectors and in civil society to achieve synergies, to leverage resources, and to avoid duplication;
 - (g) Vertical linkages: Facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices between local, national, regional and global levels;
 - (h) Advocacy for forestry: Raise awareness about forestry, especially in other sectors, in order to increase political commitment and support for increased investments in forestry;
 - (i) Neutral venue: Serve as a forum for the exchange of knowledge and the development of shared approaches to forestry policies and technical issues.

Comparative advantages

5. Forestry has been part of FAO's global mandate from its establishment in 1945. As a UN specialized agency, FAO has many assets including:
 - (a) Producing and disseminating global forest information based on country information;
 - (b) Providing information and venues for consultation in multiple languages;
 - (c) Sharing knowledge in the form of guidelines and best practices that reflect experience from a broad range of stakeholders;
 - (d) Policy support and capacity building;
 - (e) Providing direct linkages between national, regional and global levels, e.g., through national forest programmes, regional forestry commissions and networks, and COFO;
 - (f) Experienced staff covering a broad range of specialty areas;
 - (g) Neutral facilitator, providing a venue for dialogue and the development of globally agreed concepts;

- (h) Global, regional, country and field presence;
- (i) Multi-disciplinary organization with a broad mandate for agriculture, food security, nutrition, fisheries, rural development, natural resources, economics and investment.

Appendix

The FAO Strategy for Forestry is developed within the broader framework of:

Millennium Development Goals

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

FAO Members' Global Goals (Strategic Framework for FAO 2000 – 2015)

1. Access of all people at all times to sufficient nutritionally adequate and safe food, ensuring that the number of undernourished people is reduced by half by no later than 2015.
2. The continued contribution of sustainable agriculture and rural development, including fisheries and forestry, to economic and social progress and the well-being of all.
3. The conservation, improvement and sustainable utilization of natural resources, including land, water, forest, fisheries and genetic resources for food and agriculture.

United Nations on Forests (UNFF) Global Objectives on Forests

1. Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation.
 2. Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest dependent people.
 3. Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests.
 4. Reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management and mobilize significantly increased new and additional financial resources for the implementation of sustainable forest management.
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