



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
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联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

Organisation  
des  
Nations  
Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
Объединенных  
Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

### NINETEENTH SESSION

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## FAO STRATEGY FOR FORESTS AND FORESTRY

1. At the request of the 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO), March 2007, a draft *FAO Strategy for Forests and Forestry* has been prepared. Delegates attending the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of COFO are asked to consider and endorse the new strategy.
2. The new strategy replaces the *FAO Strategic Plan for Forestry* that was endorsed by the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of COFO in 1999. The new strategy will provide guidance for FAO's work in forestry over the next ten years
3. The draft *FAO Strategy for Forests and Forestry* was developed through a consultative process that included review by member countries and stakeholders from the private sector and civil society. The review process included several steps:
  - Intensive internal consultations with FAO staff, including representatives of the Forestry Department, other departments, and decentralized offices.
  - In late 2007, elements of a strategy were shared with all national Heads of Forestry and with a wide range of stakeholders, including a call for comments on the FAO Forestry home page.
  - In early 2008, the elements of a strategy were discussed with the Conference Committee of the Independent External Evaluation (IEE) of FAO, and with three Regional Forestry Commissions: Africa, Near East, and Asia-Pacific.
  - In mid-2008, a draft *FAO Strategy for Forests and Forestry* was prepared based on inputs received through the process to date. This draft document was shared for a second round of comments with all national Heads of Forestry; comments were solicited on the FAO Forestry internet site; and the draft Strategy was discussed by three additional Regional Forestry Commissions: North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe.
  - In September 2008, the COFO Steering Committee comprising the Chairs of the six Regional Forestry Commissions met in Rome and modified the draft Strategy.

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- Key sections of the draft *FAO Strategy for Forests and Forestry* were included in a document that was considered by the FAO Conference in November 2008, including the “core functions,” “strategic objectives” and “organizational results” for FAO that would be included in the new FAO Strategic Framework and Medium-Term Plan. The Special Session of the FAO Conference (November 2008) “endorsed in principle” the document, with final approval deferred until the 36th Session of the Conference in November 2009.
4. The COFO Steering Committee which met in September 2008 (representing the six Regional Forestry Commissions) recommended the endorsement of the *FAO Strategy for Forests and Forestry*.
  5. **IN SUMMARY**, the draft *FAO Strategy for Forests and Forestry* that is being presented to COFO in March 2009 for consideration is the result of an extensive consultative process with countries. The Strategy will supplement and complement the draft new FAO Strategic Framework and Medium-Term Plan; the two documents are entirely consistent.

## FAO STRATEGY FOR FORESTS AND FORESTRY

### Challenges ahead

1. The forest sector continues to be affected by the rapid pace of global changes. Globalization, through rapid expansion of trade, increased transnational investments, and through world-wide introduction of improved information and communication technology, is presenting new opportunities and challenges. Forestry has become more people centered, and society's perceptions on forests have undergone significant changes with increasing emphasis on the environmental, social and cultural values of forests.
2. Interactions between the forest sector and other sectors are increasingly understood to be the source of both problems and opportunities for forestry. In addition, the critical roles that forests and trees outside forests play in mitigation of and adaptation to climate change as well as a source of bio-energy are increasingly recognized, requiring careful consideration in national and international decision-making.
3. Commitment to enhancing the contribution of sustainable forest management to sustainable development is increasing. More than ever, the significant contributions of forests and trees to sustainable livelihoods and eradication of hunger and poverty is appreciated. There is greater recognition of the linkages of forestry with agriculture, energy and water. However, progress towards sustainable forest management remains uneven and the potential of the cross-sectoral dimensions, integrated management and landscape approaches is often underutilized.
4. The continuing loss of forests and forest degradation in many developing countries, especially in tropical regions, pose a critical challenge. Rural livelihoods often depend on productive forests that support employment and income, thus reducing poverty. Increasing demand for food, fibre and fuel can trigger substantial unplanned land use changes, including large scale forest clearance.
5. In many economically developed countries, conservation of environmental and recreational benefits and services of forests is the dominant concern of society. In all countries in all regions, the demand for ecosystem services from forests is increasing.
6. A strategic approach is needed to ensure the health and productivity of forests, so as to optimize their capacity to help to mitigate climate change, conserve biodiversity, safeguard wildlife habitat and protect land and watersheds.
7. A significant minority of countries are managing their forests in a sustainable manner; the challenge for FAO is to help more countries to improve the management of their forests so that this minority becomes a majority within the next decade. As the quantity of and access to information about forests and forestry continue to rapidly expand, the need to share and manage knowledge more effectively is becoming more urgent.
8. FAO recognizes that the expectations of its members are changing. Countries demand that FAO works more effectively to respond to its rapidly changing environment, to reach outside the traditional forest sector, to engage in partnerships with new stakeholders, and to serve as a global leader.
9. In this Strategy, the role that FAO will play in addressing these challenges is described in the following sections, in particular in the discussion of the "core functions of FAO in forestry" and in the "Organizational Results" to be achieved by FAO in the medium-term. FAO stands ready to make a significant contribution to strengthen country capacities to overcome the obstacles to sustainable forest management through reliable information, policy advice, and technical assistance.

### A broad view of forestry

10. In this strategy, forestry is considered to be a broad, multi-disciplinary concept that encompasses social, economic and environmental aspects. Forestry is about people. Forestry includes social aspects; policies and institutions; the production of goods and services and the jobs associated with them; livelihoods and market considerations related both to forests and to trees outside forests. Forestry focuses on the forest, but it does not stop at the forest boundary; city dwellers are involved in urban forestry, and farmers are involved in agro-forestry. Forestry is inter-disciplinary; it takes into consideration that complexity of the many different forest ecosystems in the world, as well as the social and ecological complexities of the broader landscapes within which forests and trees exist.

### Global goals for forests and forestry

11. In translating the broader FAO vision into the context of forests and forestry, three goals are identified for society as a whole:
- a. **Decision-making across sectors is informed, better coordinated, transparent and participatory**, enabling effective action both within and outside the forest sector. Forest-related decisions are based on timely and accurate information, inter-disciplinary approaches and stakeholder participation at all levels.
  - b. **The benefits from trees, forests and forestry are increasing, widely recognized and appreciated**. Their contributions to society are increased, including the role of forests in livelihoods, poverty alleviation, food security and sustainable supply of raw materials and energy. Investments in forestry are increased, and forestry is accorded a growing priority in wider development strategies.
  - c. **Forest resources are increasing in a majority of countries and ecosystem services are increasingly recognized and valued**. The vitality and area of forests show a stable or increasing trend in most countries and ecosystems, thereby increasing the contribution of forests and trees to mitigating climate change, combating desertification, conserving biodiversity, and ensuring water quality. Good management practices are implemented, including integrated land-use approaches.

### Core Functions of FAO in Forestry

12. Future challenges for forests and forestry are multi-faceted. Many national and international organizations deal with forest issues, in addition to actors in the private sector and non-governmental organizations. With more than 60 years of experience, FAO's role in forestry continues to evolve.
13. Through the FAO Conference, the member countries of FAO have "agreed in principle" on a set of core functions that provide the means of action to underpin the work of FAO at global, regional and national levels. The core functions for forestry include:
- a. Providing long-term perspectives and leadership in monitoring and assessing trends in forest resources and services, and the production, consumption and trade of forest products.
  - b. Generating, disseminating and applying information and knowledge, including statistics.
  - c. Leading the development of voluntary guidelines, supporting the development of national legal instruments, and promoting their implementation.
  - d. Articulating policy and strategy options and advice to improve the social, economic, and environmental aspects of forest development and conservation.
  - e. Providing technical support to promote technology transfer, catalyze change and build effective and sustainable institutional capacity for sustainable forest management.
  - f. Undertaking advocacy and communication to mobilize political will and to promote global recognition of required actions to achieve sustainable forest management.

- g. Bringing integrated interdisciplinary and innovative approaches to bear on work in the forest sector and in other key sectors that have an impact on forests.
- h. Working through strong partnerships and alliances where joint action is needed.
- i. Facilitating linkages between national, regional and global levels.

#### **Assumptions and Risks**

14. Success in achieving the goals will depend on relatively consistent economic progress; improvements in forestry require investments. FAO can make a significant contribution to the capacities of countries to help them overcome obstacles to sustainable forest management through policy advice, capacity development and technical assistance. However, continued population growth, political instability, and/or and economic pressures may continue to result in the conversion of forests to agriculture, urban or other land uses. There is a high level of risk that sustainable forest management may continue to fail in some key countries without a combination of political will, effective governance, and economic progress.

#### **Strategic Objective for Forestry**

15. In preparing a revised strategic framework for FAO, 11 strategic objectives have been identified and “approved in principle” by the FAO Conference, including one objective that is specific for forestry:

#### *Sustainable management of forests and trees*

#### **Organizational Results**

16. To move toward a broad vision, goals, and strategic objective for society as a whole, a set of six outcomes or “organizational results” are identified. These results cannot be achieved by FAO alone, but FAO can make a significant contribution. For each result, several FAO priorities are identified which will guide FAO during the first four years of this Strategy, 2010-2013. The FAO Medium-Term Plan that is developed for this time period will include indicators for each of these outcomes. These indicators will be monitored, and success or failure will be reported to FAO governing bodies including COFO.

#### **A. *Policy and practice affecting forests and forestry are:***

##### *i. based on timely and reliable information*

FAO Priorities:

- serve as an authoritative global source of information on forests;
- prepare and disseminate the results of periodic Global Forest Resources Assessments and reports on the State of the World’s Forests;
- support to national and regional forest monitoring and assessment, including interactions with other sectors through integrated land use assessments;
- effectively share knowledge and information through timely, high-quality use of the internet, networks, publications, and other media.

##### *ii. and reinforced by international cooperation and debate.*

FAO Priorities:

- provide a dynamic forum for governments and other stakeholders to address policy and emerging issues, including Ministerial Meetings, the Committee on Forestry, the World Forestry Congress, Regional Forestry Commissions, technical panels and commissions, expert consultations, and global and regional networks;
- strengthen linkages between national, regional and global processes, including through an expansion of the role of Regional Forestry Commissions.

- provide leadership for the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), including developing joint programmes or actions, and through other partnerships including hosting the Mountain Partnership and through active partnerships with the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

**B. *Institutions governing forests are strengthened and decision-making improved, including involvement of forest stakeholders in the development of forest policies and legislation, thereby enhancing an enabling environment for investment in forestry and forest industries.***

FAO Priorities:

- support participatory development of forest policy and law, institutional reform and efforts to improve governance;
- sector studies and comparative analyses of forest institutions;

**C. *Forestry is better integrated into national development plans and processes, considering interfaces between forests and other land uses.***

FAO Priorities:

- support to effective national forest programmes, including capacity building and knowledge exchange;
- host and support the National Forest Programme Facility.

**D. *Sustainable management of forests and trees is more broadly adopted, leading to reductions in deforestation and forest degradation and increased contributions of forests and trees to improve livelihoods and mitigate climate change.***

FAO Priorities:

- development and use of guidelines for good forest practices through effective stakeholder consultative processes;
- support improved forest fire management including through community-based approaches;
- support the development and implementation of national and international financial mechanisms to support sustainable forest management;
- increased use of financial mechanisms to facilitate information sharing and database development, and to build capacity to strengthen forest management and to reduce deforestation and forest degradation (e.g., REDD).

**E. *Social and economic values and livelihood benefits of forests and trees are enhanced, and markets for forest products and services contribute to making forestry a more economically viable land-use option.***

FAO Priorities:

- analysis and knowledge of social and economic factors resulting in increased investment;
- analysis of production, consumption and trade of forest products;
- technical assistance and guidelines for community-based forest management, forest-based enterprises that improve livelihoods and reduce poverty.

**F. *Environmental values of forests and forestry are better realized; strategies for conserving forest biodiversity, adapting to climate change, rehabilitating degraded lands, and managing water and wildlife resources are effectively implemented.***

FAO Priorities:

- provide technical and policy assistance in support of landscape and ecosystem approaches, with an emphasis on mountain ecosystems, arid zones and rangelands, coastal forests and other fragile ecosystems;
- support countries to address forest health, with special reference to adaptation to climate change;
- support national and regional initiatives to conserve forests and their biological diversity, to improve the management of watersheds, wildlife resources and protected areas, and to rehabilitate degraded forest lands and combat desertification.

**Context for the *FAO Strategy for Forests and Forestry***

17. In 1999 the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) approved the first *FAO Strategic Plan for Forestry*. In 2007, COFO requested that the plan be reviewed and updated in consultation with member countries and other stakeholders. The present version of the draft is a result of rounds of consultations with FAO members, other stakeholders and FAO staff. The Regional Forestry Commissions provided guidance for its preparation. A proposed strategy will be presented to COFO for consideration in March 2009.

18. The *FAO Strategy for Forests and Forestry* has been prepared within the context of the broader reform of the United Nations and FAO. In particular, the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (IEE) recommended that FAO should undertake a strategic review of its work in Forestry using logical framework principles with a focus on desired outcomes to be achieved as the result of FAO's work in Forestry. This document is consistent with the broader review of FAO Strategic Objectives and Organizational Results, and the preparation of a new FAO Strategic Framework and programming model.

19. The *FAO Strategy for Forests and Forestry* supports the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the FAO Goals for Members, and the Global Objectives on Forests agreed by the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). It also contributes to the implementation of the international agreements, in particular the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests adopted by UNFF and subsequently by the United Nations General Assembly.

20. The core values of FAO will guide its work in forestry, including: commitment to cooperation among nations; independence, in which Members seek to broaden consensus; partnerships within the UN family; competence; equality, especially the full participation of women in development; diversity; and unity of action when carrying out the decisions of Members.

21. The time frame of the strategy is 10 years. However, it will be dynamic so that it can be regularly updated to reflect new priorities and changing expectations of society. The *FAO Strategy for Forests and Forestry* is directly linked to the FAO programme budget process. The Organizational Results have been formulated for a four-year time frame, and Indicators will be identified in the FAO Medium-Term Plan with a four-year time horizon.

## **Annex**

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

### **UNFF Global Objectives on Forests**

Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation.

1. Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest dependent people.
2. 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.
3. 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.

### **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's Vision and Global Goals**

FAO's vision is of a world free of hunger and malnutrition where food and agriculture<sup>1</sup> contributes to improving the living standards of all, especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner. To foster the achievement of this vision and of the Millennium Development Goals, FAO will promote the continuous contribution of food and sustainable agriculture to the attainment of three global goals:

1. reduction of the absolute number of people suffering from hunger, progressively ensuring a world in which all people at all times, have sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life;
2. elimination of poverty and the driving forward of economic and social progress for all with increased food production, enhanced rural development and sustainable livelihoods;
3. sustainable management and utilization of natural resources, including land, water, air, climate and genetic resources, for the benefit of present and future generations.

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<sup>1</sup> Agriculture encompasses all aspects of crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries.