

Report of the
Australian – Swiss Region Led Initiative
on Regional Input in Support of
the United Nations Forum on Forests

Geneva, Switzerland
28 – 30 January 2008

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

COMIFAC	Central African Forests Commission
CPF	Collaborative Partnership on Forests
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
GOFs	Global Objectives on Forests
IAF	International Arrangement on Forests
MYPOW	Multi-Year Programme of Work
NLBI	Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests
RLI	Region-Led Initiative
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
UN	United Nations
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests

The Region-Led Initiative

1. The Region Led Initiative (RLI), co-hosted by the Governments of Australia and Switzerland, was held in Geneva, Switzerland from 28 – 30 January 2008. Forty nine participants from thirty one organisations and countries attended the RLI. Participation was on invitation basis to forest-related regional and sub-regional organisations, Bureau members of the 8th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) members and selected country experts.
2. The RLI was Co-Chaired by Ms Sibylle Vermont and Mr Macarthy Oyebo. Two working groups, (Co-chairs: Mr Tony Bartlett and Mr Carlos Aragon and Rapporteurs: Ms Jerilyn Levi and Mr Abdellah Benmellouk), discussed the following issues drawn from a background paper prepared for the meeting:
 - Ways to enhance the integration of UNFF topics/matters into regional meetings;
 - Key priorities/challenges of regional bodies and how these link to the topics of the UNFF sessions (including any other topic that would need to be added);
 - Capacity to influence future UNFF deliberations (emerging issues, two-way process). What kind of outcome/decision/document from UNFF could contribute to improving Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) at the regional level; and
 - Modalities for providing regional input to UNFF (What type of support is required to hold regional meetings to deal with UNFF agenda items; and to use reporting mechanisms to collect and organize input to UNFF?).
3. Discussions at the RLI focused primarily on enhancing contributions of regional and sub-regional organisations to the UNFF, but participants recognized the important role of regional and sub-regional organisations in facilitating implementation of action at the country level. The issue of country-level actions was not addressed specifically at the RLI, since it was linked to other elements such as means of implementation which are to be addressed at UNFF8.

Objectives of the RLI:

- Raise awareness at the regional and sub-regional levels of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) and the role and work of the UNFF, especially its mandate to strengthen interaction between the UNFF and regional and sub-regional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organisations and processes;
- Inform on the topics identified in the UNFF Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) with a view to sharing regional and sub-regional perspectives on these topics with the UNFF;
- Examine opportunities for and constraints to integrating the planned UNFF agenda items into meetings of the regional or sub-regional processes;
- Identify practical mechanisms and timelines for ensuring that the outputs from regional and sub-regional organisation meetings are submitted to the Forum

- secretariat and integrated into the UNFF sessions, as appropriate and likewise enhancing outputs from the global level to the regional level; and
- Encourage inputs from forest-related regional and sub-regional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organisations and processes to UNFF, by 1) sending written focused contributions; and/or 2) participating in the sessions of the UNFF.

Introduction

4. The purpose of the RLI was to promote, stimulate and enhance the contributions and participation of regional and sub-regional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organisations and processes (hereafter referred to as regional and sub-regional organisations) in the UNFF's work, with a view to contribute to enhanced implementation of SFM. This was in response to UNFF member States agreeing that there should be a greater interaction between the UNFF and the work being carried out by forest-related organisations and processes that operate at the regional and sub-regional level.
5. Regional and sub-regional organisations have been invited by the UNFF resolution 7/1 to address issues and agenda items planned for each UNFF session, to provide a concise summary of their deliberations to the UNFF Secretariat, and to contribute to the discussions of UNFF sessions.

Background

6. The latter half of the 20th century saw a marked decline in global forest cover as well as widespread forest degradation. The two ad hoc bodies of the United Nations established to address the problems – the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests – produced a wide range of proposals for action. However, only limited progress on the ground resulted, and the problem continued. In 2000, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), by Resolution 2000/35, decided that the main objective of the IAF is to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and strengthen long-term political commitment to this end. In order to achieve the objective and carry out the functions of the IAF ECOSOC established the UNFF, as an intergovernmental body of the Council.
7. Although the establishment of the IAF showed new promise of implementing SFM, early years of UNFF saw global policy dialogue continuing to focus on the same issues without facilitating greater implementation of SFM. It became clear that a significant strengthening and improvement of the IAF was necessary to make it more effective at mobilizing political commitment to SFM and facilitating action on the ground.
8. In 2006 the IAF was strengthened through a new ECOSOC resolution - Resolution 2006/49 - with a new, focused approach to implementing internationally agreed actions towards SFM. It included four shared Global

Objectives on Forests (GOFs) as well as three new principal functions for UNFF including one on regional/global interaction (ECOSOC 2006). At UNFF7 member States reached agreement on the Non Legally Binding Instrument (NLBI) on All Types of Forests and the new MYPOW. In December 2007, fifteen years after the adoption of the Forest Principles at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) and subsequent discussions on a global approach to protect the world's forests, the UN General Assembly adopted this landmark Instrument (GA Resolution 62/98). This was the culmination of nearly three years of intense negotiation.

Key priorities and challenges of the regional and sub-regional organisations

9. The RLI provided an opportunity to share priorities and challenges faced by regional and sub-regional organisations, looking not only at ways to strengthen interactions with the UNFF, but also in implementing SFM generally. It was clear that while many of these priorities and challenges were commonly shared; the individual nature of forests, the specific economic circumstances and political will of countries within each regional and sub-regional organisation strongly influence the priorities and operating modalities of each organisation.
10. Most regional and sub-regional organisations already include issues from the UNFF MYPOW on their agendas. However, there may be other discussions on topics associated with UNFF thematic issues and the timing of these discussions varies.

Key Priorities

11. While there was common agreement on the key global forest priorities, the timing and the ways of addressing those priorities were strongly dependant on the needs and capabilities of each region or sub-region.
12. The following issues were identified as areas of priority for regional and sub-regional organisations that were also of priority at the global and national level. Not all identified were priorities for every region or sub-region, but many were common across organisations:
 - Implementation of SFM;
 - Capacity building and information exchange;
 - Mobilisation of all types of financing;
 - Forests and Climate Change;
 - Biofuels/ bioenergy;
 - Biodiversity conservation and protection;
 - Water and forests;
 - Combating illegal and unsustainable logging;
 - Establishing partnerships among all stakeholders – strengthening multi sectorial linkages and engagement;
 - Local communities use/access rights to the forests;

- Forest products trade and market reforms;
- Forest policy and institutional reform;
- Protected area management;
- Forests and health;
- Forest degradation;
- Deforestation; and
- Forests and poverty eradication.

The challenges faced in SFM implementation

The following views were expressed by regional and sub-regional organisations:

13. Implementation at the national, regional and global level of forest related commitments, particularly those related to the achievement of the four GOFs:
 - Translating high level policy into action is challenging. It is essential to promote understanding of the NLBI and MYPOW to facilitate action at the national level;
 - National needs should determine the priorities of regional and sub-regional organisations and global fora; and
 - Political will is important to move implementation forward.
14. While most regional and sub-regional organisations are aware of the MYPOW and the work of the UNFF, some regional organisations are under informed of the role and purpose of the UNFF.
15. Means of implementation were highlighted as a necessary condition for implementing SFM, particularly at the national level. Some expressed the need for providing financial resources, transfer of environmentally sound technology, capacity building, education, research, governance and law enforcement, and exploring the potential of a funding mechanism.
 - Mobilization of resources at all levels as well as international cooperation including Official Development Assistance was considered important; and
 - Mobilization of national resources was considered important for the establishment of national financing strategies for SFM. All types of financing options should be explored at the national and international levels for funding SFM.
16. Regions are diverse - economically, socially, and environmentally - which influence discussions of specific regional and sub-regional organisations.
17. There is a clear need to get forestry issues onto the broader global and national development agendas and to integrate forests in national development plans and strategies.
 - There is a need to further raise the profile of forestry issues within the UN system; and
 - Better coordination between national focal points on forest related issues, and between decision makers outside the forest sector needs greater attention.

Integration of priorities at all levels

18. Forest-related issues are discussed at global, regional and national levels, often by a number of organisations or fora at each level and often with different focal points or country representatives at each discussion. To avoid duplication and

possible conflicting outcomes there is a clear need for better communication, coordination and integration across the global, regional and national levels.

19. Many regional and sub-regional organisations have already taken steps and made great advances in integrating and coordinating efforts aimed at achieving SFM. These organisations can provide models to build on and adapt for other regional and sub-regional organisations. There will never be a ‘one size fits all’ approach, but experience sharing and information exchange between organisations can result in less duplication of efforts and better outcomes at all levels.

The following views were expressed by regional and sub-regional organisations:

20. Regional and sub-regional organisations could consider UNFF topics as appropriate, with a view to providing input to UNFF and facilitating the global dialogue.
21. Regional and sub-regional organisations can raise awareness of UNFF outcomes. For example, workshops could be held at the regional level, to increase awareness in SFM policy development and implementation.
22. Information exchange between regional and subregional organisations is beneficial to share experiences and lessons learned.
23. Regional and sub-regional organisations can play a role in facilitating cross-sectoral information sharing and integrating forest policy into other related policies.
24. Regional topics could be explored jointly at events such as: the ‘Forest Weeks’ proposed in the Asia Pacific and Europe; the Puenbo, Central American Commission on Environment and Development, Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission initiative meetings; the Near East Forestry Commission - African Forestry and Wildlife Commission joint meeting; and the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC) meetings all to be held in 2008. (See Annex 4)
25. Contact points from regional and sub-regional organisations could facilitate communication and better links with the UNFF Secretariat.
26. The CPF member organisations could make their national and regional focal points known to assist in coordination and communication at the regional and sub-regional level. A CPF meeting in February 2008 will look at better cooperation and coordination on a number of key forest issues.

Emerging Issues

27. A number of issues that were identified as key priorities for regional and sub-regional organisations were also discussed as potential emerging issues for future sessions of the UNFF. These included bioenergy and land use change, water and forests and environmental services for mobilisation of additional financial resources. The Bureau of the UNFF will consider in consultation with member States, CPF and other stakeholders, any emerging issues for each session of the Forum as stated in Section D of the MYPOW of the UNFF.

Interaction between the regional and sub-regional organisations and the UNFF

28. There is a history of interaction between many regional and sub-regional organisations and the UNFF, but there is also a common agreement that this interaction can be strengthened from both sides and in both directions. There is a strong interest from both the UNFF and from regional and sub-regional organisations to explore steps and actions to achieve this. The RLI provided a useful opportunity for regional and sub-regional organisations to learn more about the UNFF and how it operates as well as about activities in other regions. Using past experiences and lessons learned, a number of ways were identified to improve interaction between regional and sub-regional organisations and the UNFF.
29. UNFF is an intergovernmental body, and the participants in UNFF are the official representatives of member States, representing the views and the policies of each one of their respective governments. Regional and sub-regional organisations are composed of diverse participants, with a wider range and larger number of forest practitioners and stakeholders present at the regional meetings than at global policy meetings. The composition of participants at the regional meetings compared to the global meetings creates a different dynamic for discussions. It is important to use this first cycle of regional and global meetings and interaction as a learning experience towards promoting greater exchange between regional and global levels.

How can the UNFF help the regional and sub-regional organisations?

The following views were expressed by regional and sub-regional organisations:

30. Exchange of information among regional and sub-regional organisations and knowledge sharing are important issues for capacity building.
- Most regional and sub-regional organisations have their own information sharing networks but there is no overall global library of information related to regional and sub-regional organisations;
 - The UNFF Secretariat could disseminate information and data from relevant regional and sub-regional organisations through the UNFF website, and provide links to their respective sites to facilitate communication and coordination between these entities. For sub-regional cooperation, the UNFF Secretariat could offer support by sharing information and contacts; and
 - The development of an events calendar of planned activities that could be made available on the UNFF website could be useful in providing deadlines for submissions and inputs into upcoming UNFF sessions (as outlined in the reporting section below).
31. New activities into the regional SFM agenda may require additional funding. The CPF could be asked to consider providing additional support to regional and sub-regional organisations for better synergies and coordination.

32. There is a need to support national focal points and strengthen capacity building to enhance communication and harmonization at all levels. This support could be enhanced through coordinated approaches with the CPF.
33. There is a need to devote one or two days in UNFF sessions to discussions on regional and sub-regional dimensions to allow regional and sub-regional organisations processes to present their perspectives, information and share experiences and best practices.
34. The member States of UNFF could organise and support events such as the RLI and side events at other fora to enhance the knowledge and awareness of organisations to the work of the UNFF.

How can the regional and sub-regional organisations help the UNFF?

The following views were expressed by regional and sub-regional organisations:

35. Regional and sub-regional organisations are aware of the MYPOW and the work of the UNFF. Most themes and sub-themes are on the agenda of these institutions, and some of them have integrated programs of work that include themes adopted by UNFF. However, the awareness of how the UNFF Secretariat and CPF members work, as well as knowledge of international forest policy decisions, varies at the regional level and could be enhanced through further interaction with the UNFF Secretariat.
36. Reports from regional and sub-regional organisations may help to complement national reporting as few UNFF member States submit voluntary country reports. Examples include the report on the State of Europe's Forests 2007 prepared jointly by the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, UN Economic Commission for Europe and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), and the COMIFAC report on progress in SFM implementation.
37. Regional and sub-regional organisations could organise activities related to the International Year of Forests to raise public awareness and engage political and public interest in SFM.
38. Regional and sub-regional organisations could promote implementation of action towards SFM at the ground level in member countries, in accordance with their mandates.
39. Regional and sub-regional organisations could use their technical expertise and experience to contribute to UNFF session deliberations.
40. Regional and sub-regional organisations could provide the UNFF Secretariat with a timetable and schedule of meetings each year for inclusion on the UNFF website.
41. Regional and sub-regional organisations could undertake collaborative programmes and organise workshops, seminars, and side events in conjunction with UNFF sessions to share information, seek advice and explore ideas:
 - Participation in the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue held as part of the Forum sessions could provide an opportunity for regional and sub-regional organisations to benefit from the experiences of a range of stakeholders and as a platform to create synergies among all stakeholders; and

- Organising regional and subregional events during UNFF sessions could provide an opportunity to transmit regional experiences to other regions.
- 42. Regional and sub-regional organisations could provide regular feedback to UNFF on policy development, lessons learnt and regional priorities. This input would inform UNFF discussions in a manner that could be practical and useful to regional and sub-regional organisations.

Modalities for regional and sub-regional organisations input

The following views were expressed by regional and sub-regional organisations:

- 43. Each region and sub-region has a number of regional and sub-regional processes which result in a variety of methodologies and approaches. One size does not fit all and modalities will vary to best suit each organisation:
 - Each organisation has its own mandate, intergovernmental process and priorities which will determine its ability to interact with UNFF.
- 44. There are valuable experiences from all the regional and sub-regional organisations that can be used as models or for lessons learnt for other regional and sub-regional organisations. The UNFF Secretariat could, through its website, share information on regional and sub-regional organisations, provide links to successful models or examples of interaction and input by regional and sub-regional organisations into the UNFF.
- 45. Different regional and sub-regional organisations may need different methods of interaction with the UNFF:
 - An option may be to ask regional and sub-regional organisations to discuss progress on the GOFs relevant to their work.
- 46. Having regional and sub-regional preparatory meetings of regional and sub-regional organisations before UNFF sessions could be considered as appropriate and helpful. As an example, the SFM Project I/II put together a technical support team to bring African delegates together prior to UNFF6 and UNFF7 to help African member states contribute to these UNFF sessions.
- 47. Timing is important. Intersessional work should support global meetings, with member States able to discuss issues and ideas at a regional and sub-regional level in time to provide input into the UNFF sessions and to promote closer interaction between regional/subregional organisations and the UNFF Secretariat.
- 48. UNFF can play a key role in supporting countries in gaining political support for implementing SFM at the national, regional and global levels
- 49. Time should be allocated in the UNFF session specifically for regional and sub-regional organisation focused discussions. This could include interactive panels which are proposed for UNFF8.

Reporting

- 50. Regional and sub-regional organisations were invited by the MYPOW of the Forum (Resolution 7/1 paragraph 7 and 8) to address issues and agenda items planned for each UNFF session, to provide a concise summary of their

deliberations to the UNFF secretariat, and to contribute to the discussions of UNFF sessions.

The following views were expressed by regional and sub-regional organisations:

51. Need to avoid creating new reporting systems, but utilise existing processes to avoid burden on member States, regional and sub-regional organisations and the UNFF Secretariat:
 - Many participants emphasised the need to avoid overlap and duplication for organisations which have their own program for reporting to specific governments and organisations (e.g. conventions and FAO). The CPF should continue enhancing coordination and cooperation with the forest related conventions and other relevant Intergovernmental Organisations to get the required information on actions, plans, programs and measures.
52. FAO expertise, experience and reporting tools such as the Global Forest Resource Assessment and the State of the Forests report could be used by UNFF for reporting.
53. Assistance from the UNFF may be useful and the development of guidance on reporting to UNFF was suggested by some participants.
 - A clear timeline showing reporting deadlines for input into UNFF sessions could also be developed by the UNFF Secretariat and made available.
54. Need to strengthen and streamline reporting mechanisms on the state of forests in all regional and sub-regional organisations of the world was highlighted. FAO and other CPF members could take the lead in assisting regional and sub-regional organisations with technical assistance and capacity building.

Conclusion

55. This RLI provided an excellent opportunity to exchange information and ensure closer interaction at all levels.
56. The RLI explored and highlighted several benefits from enhanced regional interaction.
57. Participants voiced their interest in working together to make progress on SFM globally.
58. Participants expressed their gratitude to the Governments of Australia and Switzerland for organising the RLI and encouraged other countries and regional and sub-regional organisations to organise future RLIs.

Annexes

Annex 1: Participants List



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**Australian-Swiss Region-Led Initiative
on regional input in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests
(28-30 January 2008, Geneva, Switzerland)**

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Annex 2: Agenda



Australian Government
**Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry**



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Office for the Environment FOEN

23 January 2008

Australian-Swiss Region-Led Initiative on regional input in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests

(28-30 January 2008, Geneva, Switzerland)

Time of meeting: 28-30 January 2008

Venue: Geneva, Switzerland

Duration: 3 days

Location: United Nations Office, Palais des Nations, Avenue de la Paix 8 – 14, 1211 Geneva 10, (Room VIII and Room A-206)

Languages/translation: French, English, Spanish

The two working groups will be held concurrently, one with simultaneous translations in three languages (English, French and Spanish) and the other only in English. Plenary sessions will be held with simultaneous translations in the three languages.

Working hours: Sessions will be held from 10am until 1pm, and 3pm until 6pm with a two hour lunch break between.

Outcome: Options on:

- How to organise regional/sub-regional inputs on issues and agenda items planned for each UNFF session, including for its dialogue on regional priorities;
- Applicable approaches to contribute to the discussions of UNFF sessions according to regional mandates;
- How UNFF can contribute to regional processes.



Australian Government
**Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry**



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Office for the Environment FOEN

Australian-Swiss Region-Led Initiative
on regional input in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests

(28-30 January 2008, Geneva, Switzerland)

Monday 28 January 2008

Plenary (Room VIII) (10 a.m. – 1 p.m.)

Co-chairs. Ms. S. Vermont (Switzerland) and Mr. M. Oyebo (Nigeria)

Part I: 10 a.m. - 11.00 a.m.

1. Opening statements

- Mr. Tony Bartlett (Australia) and Ms Sibylle Vermont (Switzerland)
- Mr. Jan Heino (FAO)
- Mr. Christopher Prins (UNECE)
- Mr. Jo Mulongoy (Convention on Biological Diversity)
- Mr. Abdellah Benmellouk (UNFF8 Bureau member)

2. Presentations on

- Strengthening of the regional interaction in UNFF by Ms. Catalina Santamaria (UNFF Secretariat)
- Perspectives from countries on the regional interaction in UNFF: Mr. Tasso Azevedo (Brazil), Dr Teguh Rahardja (Indonesia) and Mr. Sebastien Malele (Democratic Republic of Congo)

11 a.m. till 11.20 a.m.: *Coffee break*

Part II: 11.20 a.m. to 1 p.m.

3. Further presentations on

- Perspectives from selected regional organizations:
 - Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission: Mr Patrick Durst
 - African Forest Research Network: Mr Iba Kone
 - Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization: Mr. Francisco Ruiz
 - Ministerial Conference on the Protection of forests of Europe: Mr Arne Ivar Sletnes
 - Near East Forestry Commission: Mr Alexandros Christodoulou
- Background paper by Mr. Don Wijewardana
- The objectives and working modalities of the two working groups (co-chairs)

Monday 28 January 2008

Working Group sessions (Room VIII and Room A-206) (3 p.m. – 6 p.m.)

Room VIII: WG 1: Interpretation in English-French-Spanish.

Co-chair: Mr. C. Aragon (ACTO), Rapporteur: Mr. A. Benmellouk (Morocco)

Room A-206: WG 2: English.

Co-chair: Mr. T. Bartlett (Australia), Rapporteur: Ms. J. Levi (USA)

Part III: 3 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Key points for discussion

- Ways to enhance the integration of UNFF topics/matters into regional meetings
- Key priorities/challenges of regional bodies and how these link to the topics of the UNFF sessions (including any other topic that would need to be added)
- Capacity to influence future UNFF deliberations (emerging issues, two-way process). What kind of outcome/decision/document from UNFF could contribute to improving SFM at the regional level?
- Modalities for providing regional input to UNFF (What type of support is required to hold regional meetings to deal with UNFF agenda items; and to use reporting mechanisms to collect and organize input to UNFF?).

Recreation Part! : 6.30 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.

Buffet-Dinner hosted by the Government of Switzerland in the « Restaurant des délégués » in the UN building

Tuesday 29 January 2008

Plenary (Room VIII) (10 a.m. - 10.30 a.m.)

Co-chairs. Ms. S. Vermont (Switzerland) and Mr. M. Oyebo (Nigeria)

Part I: 10 a.m. - 10.30 a.m.

Preliminary reports of both working groups

10.30 a.m. till 10.40 a.m.: *small break*

Working Group sessions (Room VIII and Room A-206) (10.40 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.)

Room VIII: WG 1: Interpretation in English-French-Spanish.

Co-chair: Mr. C. Aragon (ACTO), Rapporteur: Mr. A. Benmellouk (Morocco)

Room A-206: WG 2: English. Co-chair: Mr. T. Bartlett (Australia), Rapporteur: Ms. J. Levi (USA)

Part II: 10.40 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Continuation of the two working groups' work

Wednesday 30 January 2008

Plenary (Room VIII) (10 a.m. – 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. – 6 p.m.)

Co-chairs. Ms. S. Vermont (Switzerland) and Mr. M. Oyebo (Nigeria)

Conclusions

- Presentation of working group reports, discussions on issues raised and presentation and finalization of the co-chair's report.
- Closing remarks

Annex 3: List of Regional and Sub-regional Organisations

**Australian-Swiss Region-Led Initiative
on regional input in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests
(28-30 January 2008, Geneva, Switzerland)**

Description of Regional and Sub-Regional Forest Related Organizations

Africa

African Forestry and Wildlife Commission

Membership: 45 countries

Created in 1959, the African Forestry Wildlife Commission (AFWC) is one of the six Regional Forestry Commissions facilitated by FAO to provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis. It meets every two years.

www.fao.org/forestry/site/afwc/en

Silva Mediterranea

Operates under FAO, since 1948. It is dedicated to Mediterranean forest issues in which the Mediterranean countries from the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission, the European Forestry Commission and the Near East Forestry Commission can meet, share experiences and establish cooperative programmes. Twenty-six countries and the European Community are members of the committee, and non-member countries are frequently invited to the sessions as observers.

Website: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/39115/en/>

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

Membership: 53 member States

Languages: English; French and Arabic.

Structures: Commission has an Executive Secretariat. Organized around 6 substantive programme divisions. Forest issues are addressed under the Sustainable Development division.

Convenes Committee meetings on: Women and Development; Development Information; Sustainable Development; Human Development and Civil Society; and Trade and Regional Cooperation and Integration. Committee meetings are also organized by 5 sub-regional offices to link policy-oriented work generated at headquarters and policy making at the sub-regional level. Serves as a policy advocate on critical development issues for economic and social advancement in Africa.

Functions: policy analysis and advocacy; enhancing partnerships; technical assistance; communication/knowledge sharing; and supporting sub-regional activities.

An important part of its advocacy work is fostering regional cooperation and integration; assisting member States strengthen intra-regional linkages and establishing sub-regional organizations and institutions. Special attention is focused on cross-boundary issues, such as HIV/AIDS, gender mainstreaming, ICTs for development, and the MDGs.

Regional advisory services have focused on a few key areas: gender & development; information and communications technologies (ICT) for development; the MDGs and poverty reduction; public finance management; trade promotion and negotiation; and water.

To improve coherence and synergies in the UN, particularly around the system's response to NEPAD, ECA also convenes an Annual Regional Consultation of UN Agencies Working in Africa, bringing together UN agencies, funds and programmes working on African issues to a forum for information-sharing as well as enhanced collaboration in Africa.

Civil society groups contribute to the ECA by providing input to the Commission's strategic programmatic focus, reviewing its ongoing work, disseminating policy findings, engaging in policy advocacy, and building capacity.

www.eca.org

African Forum on Forests (AFF)

Membership: At its first meeting on October 15-16, 2006, the Governing Council (GC) of the African Forest Forum approved applications of 253 members as Ordinary Members (252) and Associate Members (1) of the African Forest Forum: Central Africa (29 Ordinary members and 1 Associate Member), Eastern Africa (80 Ordinary Members), Northern and North-Eastern Africa (22 Ordinary Members), Southern Africa (46 Ordinary Members), Western Africa (52 Ordinary Members), and Outside Africa (23 Ordinary Members).

Structure: The Forum is registered in Kenya, as an independent, not-for-profit, international non-governmental organisation. It emerged from the SFM II project (funded by SIDA).

Project Title: A mechanism to strengthen capacity for forest management in Africa and some initial activities to be carried out by the Forum.

Overall objective: To strengthen the African Forest Forum as a mechanism for improved forest management in Africa.

Specific objectives are:

- (a) To improve generation, sharing and uptake of relevant information by African forestry stakeholders.
- (b) To facilitate good governance of forest resources and fair trade in their products.
- (c) To facilitate the evolution of an African forest-based response to climate change.
- (d) To facilitate dialogue and activities leading to improved forest-water relations.
- (e) To facilitate dialogue on forestry issues at national, regional and global levels.
- (f) To facilitate restoration and efficient management of forest plantations
- (g) To facilitate collaboration between African and Swedish forestry institutions.”

www.afforum.org

African Forest Research Network (AFORNET)

The AFORNET is a network that operates two competitive, merit-based, and peer review research grants. These are the Young Scientist Programme (US\$8,000 per research grant) and the Thematic Research Programme (US\$80,000 per research grant). It also provides a platform to forest scientists to improve their skills, have access to additional financial resources to undertake collaborative research of sub regional significance. Its main programmatic activities cover: granting, strategic research studies, short term training and wider information sharing as well as providing updates data for forest policy formulation and evaluation in Africa.

Mission: Forest Science is making a significant contribution to livelihoods, socio economic development as well as sustainable environmental management in Africa

Overall Objective: To contribute to the socio economic development of African via sustainable management of tree and forest resources that is informed by outputs from high quality research.

Achievements: AFORNET has awarded 216 research grants to Young Scientist from 1991 to 2005 and over 222 scientists have benefited from the Thematic Research programme. AFORNET current and former grantees are now in leadership position both in academia, research and policy making organs in Africa. It has spearheaded pioneering programmes on National Forest programmes in Africa, East Africa Forest Forum, East Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (EA-FLEG) and has hosted the secretariat on Lessons Learnt on Sustainable Forest Management in Africa (SFM Phase one) as well as other several initiatives on forest issues Africa-wide.

Structure: AFORNET has a Board, a Secretariat hosted by the African Academy of Sciences and four eco regional nodes that are: Eastern and Northeastern Africa Node, Sahel Node, Western and Central Africa Nodes and Southern Africa Node

www.afor.net.org

Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC)

Members

Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, DR Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tomé/ Príncipe

Founded in /operational since/responsible for:

1999 foundation in Yaoundé (Yaoundé Declaration);

2002 entry of DR Congo;

2005 signature of COMIFAC Treaty by Heads of State; entry of Burundi, Rwanda and Sao Tomé/ Príncipe.

Responsible for directing, harmonizing and monitoring forest and environmental policies in Central Africa

Structure

- Summit of Heads of State and Government: The Summit shall adopt the Organization's guidelines for the implementation of the commitments relating to the conservation and the sustainable management of forest ecosystems of Central Africa.
- Council of Ministers: The Council of Ministers shall be the organ responsible for decision-making, coordination and control of the implementation of policies on the sustainable management of Forest Ecosystems of Central Africa.
- Executive Secretariat: The Executive Secretariat is the implementing organ of COMIFAC. In this respect, it shall perform among other the following duties: (i) coordinate the implementation of COMIFAC activities and (ii) prepare and implement decisions of the Council of Ministers.

Decision making

- Acts strictly on the basis of consensus within the Conferences of Forest Ministers.

Conventions/Agreements, Treaties

COMIFAC Treaty

Strategic Partners/Memberships and Integrative approaches

Sub-regional Partners Institutions:

- the Organization for the Conservation of Wildlife in Africa (OCFSA), for biodiversity conservation and transboundary poaching control;
- -the International Agency for the Development of Environmental Information (ADIE), for sub-regional environmental information management and dissemination to all partners;
- -the Conference on Humid Forests Ecosystems of Central Africa (CEFDHAC), for the management of consultation processes within the Sub-Regional Forum, National Fora and their specialized committees;
- -the African Timber Organization (ATO), in specific issues on the forest economics, certification and trade in forest products;
- -the Network of Central African Protected Areas (RAPAC).

Commitments

Can be cited among other the following ones:

- conservation and sustainable management of forests and the environment as national priorities;
- harmonisation of national forestry policies and development of requisite human resources for their implementation;
- formulation and implementation of protected area management plans;
- development of an appropriate forestry taxation system and attendant implementation measures to support conservation and sustainable forest management;
- creation of transborder protected areas;
- increase of stakeholder participation;
- promoting and speeding up of industrialisation and trade in the sector;
- strengthening of networking, coordination and cooperation.

Mandate

Direct, harmonize and monitor forest and environment policies in Central Africa. In this regard, supervising and coordinating forest and environmental actions and initiatives in the sub-region fall under COMIFAC

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Yaoundé - Cameroon

Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP)

Membership

South Africa: Department of Water Affairs and Forestry; Germany: Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ); Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ); Belgium: Affaires étrangères, Commerce extérieur et Coopération au Développement; Cameroon: Ministry of Forests and Fauna; Canada: Canadian International Development Agency; European Commission: European Union; ECOFAC; Joint Research Centre; United States: US Department of State: Partnerships and Initiatives; CARPE: US Agency for International Development (USAID), Central African Regional Program for the Environment; France: Ministère des Affaires Étrangères; Agence Française de Développement (AFD); Ministère de l'écologie et du développement durable; Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD); Equatorial Guinea: Ministère des Infrastructures et des Forêts; Gabon; Japan: Ambassade du Japon en France; Pays-Bas: SNV Netherlands Development Organisation; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Centrafrican Republic; République Démocratique du Congo: Ministère de l'Environnement, Conservation de la Nature, Eaux et Forêts; République du Congo/Republic of Congo: Government; Ministère de l'Économie Forestière et de l'Environnement; Royaume-Uni/United Kingdom: Department for International Development (DFID)

Intergovernmental organizations

- World Bank, COMIFAC, FAO, GEF, ITTO, UNESCO, GRASP

NGO, Research groups and associations

American Forest & Paper Association, African Wildlife Foundation (AWF); Association Technique Internationale des Bois Tropicaux (ATIBT); Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Conservation International; Forest Trends; Jane Goodall Institute; Society of American Foresters, Union Mondiale pour la Nature (UICN) / World Conservation Union (IUCN); Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS); World Resources Institute (WRI); WWF US ; WWF International

Mandate

The Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) is an association which today brings together around 40 governmental, non-governmental and international organisations. It was launched in September 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa) in response to a call by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 54/214 of 1 February 2000 encouraging the international community to support the countries of the Congo Basin, through the provision of financial and technical assistance, in their efforts towards sustainable management of the forests. The goal of CBFP is to improve communication between members and coordination between their projects, programmes and policies in order to enhance the conservation, the sustainable management of the Congo Basin Forests and improve on the standard of living of the inhabitants of the region.

Activities

The form of governance chosen for the CBFP is steering through ‘facilitation’ provided by one of the members for a two years period. The role of the facilitator is to organise a dialogue and to promote collaboration between the different partners, to set up a work programme based on the guidelines provided in the COMIFAC Convergence Plan, and to represent the partnership externally. The facilitator is chosen on a voluntary basis. After the United States of America, which was facilitator from 2003 to 2004, this role was played by France for the period 2005-2007, and now by Germany (2008-2009). The members meet on a periodic basis and share information through all possible channels, in particular via the following web site: <http://www.cbfp.org>. For the next two years (2008-2009), German facilitation proposes to enhance CBFP member activities in the following four strategic priority areas:

- Strengthening of COMIFAC institutions and the CBFP
- Improvement of forest governance and framework conditions
- Implementation of the Convergence Plan and major international environmental conventions and agreements
- Innovative financial mechanisms to support funding of the Convergence Plan measures

For the activities to be undertaken, the facilitation will rely as much as possible on the existing working groups which will be evaluated and strengthened as required. The German facilitation will on a regular basis inform and consult with the partnership members, and respect and follow the dispositions of the COMIFAC treaty regarding the role and responsibilities of the regional institutions.

<http://www.cbfp.org>

Permanent Committee on Drought Control (CILSS in West Africa)

CILSS is an intergovernmental organization composed of 9 Sahelian countries, namely Burkina Faso, Cape-Verde, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritanian, Niger, Senegal, and Chad. It was formed in 1973 with the mandate to invest in research for food security and in the struggle against the effects of drought and desertification to achieve a new ecological equilibrium in the Sahel.

www.cilss.bf

African Timber Organization (ATO)

Created in 1976, ATO brings together 13 countries. Its objectives include, in particular the harmonization of national policies regarding forest conservation, reforestation, forest management and related subjects. In recent years ATO has focused particularly in the definition of C&I for SFM and on the establishment of certification in Africa. The main priorities since 1994 has been “to promote the implementation of SFM in ATO member countries, in accordance with recommendations made at international levels , specially by the IPF”, and it has chosen to use for its work 5 principles, 2 sub principles, 26 criteria and 60 indicators at the regional and national levels.

[No website listed.](#)

Southern African Development Community (SADC)

Members

14 countries in Southern Africa (Angola, Botswana, DR Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe)

Founded in /operational since:

1992 / Predecessor started end of the 1970ies (South African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC))

Secretariat and staff:

HQ in Gaborona (Uganda);

Structure:

The Summit of Heads of State and Government is the ultimate policy-making institution of SADC. It is responsible for the overall policy direction and control of functions of the Community. The Council of Ministers is responsible for overseeing the functioning and development of SADC and ensuring that policies are properly implemented. The Summit and Council are supported by the Integrated Committee of Ministers, Standing Committee of Officials, SADC National Committees and finally the SADC-Secretariat

Decision making:

By consensus and decisions shall be binding

Conventions/Agreements, Treaties:

Treaty of the Southern African Development Community;

Strategic Partners/Memberships and Integrative approaches:

East African Community; Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, AU

Vision:

A common future in a regional community that will ensure economic well-being, improvement of the standards of living and quality of life, freedom and social justice and peace and security through regional integration

Mandate and general Mission:

- Poverty alleviation
- Evolve common political values, systems and institutions;
- Promote self-sustaining development
- Achieve complementarity between national and regional strategies and programmes;
- Promote and maximise productive employment and utilisation of resources of the Region;
- Achieve sustainable utilization of natural resources and effective protection of the environment;

Strengthen and consolidate the long-standing historical, social and cultural affinities and links among the people of the Region.

www.sadc.int

Near East

FAO-Near East Forestry Commission (NEFC)

Established in 1953, the Near East Forestry Commission (NEFC) is one of the six Regional Forestry Commissions established by FAO to provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis. It meets every two years. The NEFC gather 20 countries from North Africa, Middle East and central Asia. Between its sessions, the NEFC Task Force, comprising its Executive Committee expanded to regional resource persons including sub-regional Organizations and NGOs, is mandated to follow-up on the technical discussions of the sessions and maintain active collaboration between its members.

The NEFC Task Force recently initiated the preparation of guidelines for good forestry practices in arid and semi arid zones. Its activities during the current inter-session also included preparation of case studies carried out case studies on “Integrated Management of Forest and Water Resources”, “Forest fires situation in the Near east” and Forest Pests and Diseases”. It established a Near East Forest Health and Invasive Species Network, NENFHIS, which is currently coordinated and hosted by Tunisia.

In order to improve preparedness and meaningful impact of the Region in international debate and for a, the NEFC Task Force has also been preparing Position Papers on the main issues at stake to help Near East delegations better organize their participation.

www.fao.org/forestry/site/31112/en

Asia-Pacific

The Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC)

The Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) is one of the six FAO Regional Forestry Commissions. The APFC is a forum for advising and taking action on key forestry issues. It focuses on issues pertinent to Asia and the Pacific, a region characterized by its diversity and rapid changes. The members of the APFC (currently comprised of 33 countries in Asia and the Pacific) meet every two years in a general session to review forestry developments in the region, discuss problems of mutual concern, and set new agendas for inter-sessional work. The APFC Executive Committee guides the Commission’s inter-sessional work.

Recent core APFC activities include support for development and implementation of codes of practice for forest harvesting, establishment and implementation of activities of the Asia-Pacific Forest Invasive Species Network, conduct of the second Asia-Pacific Forestry Sector Outlook Study and launching of that Asia-Pacific Forest Policy Initiative (“think tank”).

APFC has also supported regional forest policy studies on issues of regional concern, including:

- Impact and effectiveness of logging bans
- Role of incentives in promoting forest plantation development
- Forest tenure and resource access
- Reinventing forestry agencies
- Removing constraints to private sector investment in forestry

To diversify participation in the APFC, the first-ever Asia-Pacific Forestry Week is being organized in Hanoi, Viet Nam, 21-26 April 2008, anchored around the 22nd APFC Session. The event will bring together as many as 500 forestry and natural resources officials and specialists from governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), research institutions, regional and international networks and the private sector. It is expected to be the largest and most important forestry event in the region in 2008, and will provide a unique opportunity for diverse stakeholders and forest managers to share perspectives and seek solutions to the most challenging issues facing forests and forestry today.

APFC Secretariat is based at FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/33592/en>

Asia-Pacific Forestry Week: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/44755/en/>

ASEAN

Members

Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam

Operational since: 1967

Structure

The highest decision-making organ is the Meeting of the ASEAN Heads of State and Government. They are supported by 29 committees of senior officials and 122 technical working groups.

Decision making

Consensus based; not interference

Conventions/Agreements, Treaties

Some of the major political accords of ASEAN are as follows:

- ASEAN Declaration (1967)
- Declaration of ASEAN Concord I & II (1976 / 2003)

Strategic Partners/Memberships and Integrative approaches

Activities with organizations with related aims and purposes

Advisory bodies

Cooperation with several specialized bodies and arrangements

UNFF accreditation

Since 2004 with a status as an observer

General Mission

- to accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development and
- to promote regional peace and stability.

Mandate of ASEAN Secretariat

"To provide for greater efficiency in the coordination of ASEAN organs and for more effective implementation of ASEAN projects and activities".

www.asean.org

Asia Forest Partnership

Background

AFP is a multi-stakeholder mechanism to facilitate and promote dialogue, information exchange, and collaborative action to realize sustainable forest management in the Asia-Pacific region.

AFP was launched in August 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) as a Type II partnership for sustainable development. AFP was established at a time when existing regional processes and the policies and work programmes of governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations were struggling to deal with high rates of deforestation and forest degradation in Asia. AFP was expected to enhance the efforts of individual forest stakeholders to promote Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) by bringing them together in a regional forum for information sharing, dialogue and joint action.

The first phase of AFP was from 2002 to 2007. The mandate of the partnership was renewed for a second eight-year phase (2008-2015).

Goal of AFP

To promote cooperation and catalyze action among governments, civil society and business to achieve sustainable forest management in Asia and the Pacific and thereby maintain and enhance the provision of forest products and ecosystem services, and their contribution to human well-being.

Key themes

- Reducing forest loss and degradation and enhancing forest cover to maintain the provision of forest products and ecosystem services, including mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, watershed and land resource protection, and conserving biological diversity; and
- Combating illegal logging and associated trade.

Key Considerations in addressing the key themes:

- Protecting and enhancing the livelihoods, rights, security and well-being of forest-dependent people;
- Improving forest-related governance;
- Strengthening institutions and capacities for sustainable forest management; and
- Securing and diversifying finance for conservation and sustainable use of forest resources.

Membership

When established, AFP's membership was drawn from Asia plus supporting countries and institutions from outside the region, but this has since been expanded to Asia Pacific. Currently there are 42 partners.

However AFP Annual Meetings and events are attended not only by partners but also numerous non-partners. In addition, there are over 600 subscribers to AFP's update service which provides recipients with the latest information about AFP-related issues.

Links to Global Processes

AFP is accredited to the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)

Key Donors

Japan has been the main bi-lateral donor particularly for the Secretariat. Other contributors have included the governments of Indonesia, Switzerland, Australia, USA, and international organisations like CIFOR, WWF and Tropenbos.

Steering Committee

AFP Steering Committee comprises a Focal Point nominated by each interested Partner and the Coordinator of the Secretariat. Its role includes promoting communication between Partners to strengthen implementation of concrete activities. SC Chairmanship last one year, to be succeeded by the Vice-Chair, whose successor is decided by SC Members.

Secretariat

CIFOR has hosted the Secretariat since AFP's establishment providing in-kind contribution in the form of office space and equipment as well as staff time to support organization of meetings, tracking progress, preparation of documentation and administration of financial resources.

www.asiaforests.org

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Membership: 53 member States and 9 associate member States.

Commission has an Executive and Deputy Secretariat and Divisions for its Programme of Work and Programme Management Support.

It has 3 Committees, 8 Sub-committees and 2 Special Bodies that guide the Commission's work and make recommendations on the 7 subprogrammes on: emerging social issues; environment and sustainable development; information, communication and space technology; poverty and development; statistics; trade and investment; and transport and tourism.

Functions: promote economic and social development through regional and sub regional cooperation and integration.

Activities: trade and investment, poverty & development, health, gender, social policy, transport, IT, space technology, environment and sustainable development, and statistics.

Serves as the main economic and social development forum within the UN system for the region.

Formulates & promotes development assistance activities and projects, corresponding with the needs and priorities of the region, while acting as an executing agency for operational projects.

Provides substantive and secretariat services and documentation for the Commission and its subsidiary bodies; carries out studies, research and other activities within the terms of reference of the Commission; provides advisory services to governments at their request; and develops and executes programmes of technical cooperation.

Coordinates activities with those of major departments/offices of the UN at Headquarters and specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations.

www.escap.org

Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC)

RECOFTC is an international not-for-profit organization based in Bangkok, Thailand. It works closely with partners to design and facilitate learning processes and systems to support community forestry and community-based natural resource management.

Background

RECOFTC was established in 1987 in response to a need for a regional institution focused on community forestry training, research, and information exchange.

Strategy

Through strategic partnerships and collaboration, RECOFTC aims to enhance capacity at all levels and to promote constructive multi-stakeholder dialogues and interactions to ensure equitable and sustainable management of forest and natural resources. RECOFTC's main

geographical focus is in the Asia-Pacific region, but it welcomes collaboration with organizations from other regions.

Programs

Three interlinked programs working at the international, regional, national, and local levels contribute to RECOFTC's mission, with the backing of an organizational support program:

Regional Analysis and Representation (RAR)
Capacity Building Services (CABS)
Country Program Support (COPS)
Program Planning and Delivery (PROP)

<http://www.recoftc.org>

Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)

Members

- 22 Pacific Island countries and territories
- Members of the Pacific Community: 22 Members of SPC and 4 remaining founding members – AUS, FRA, NZ and USA.
- Only regional organisation covering all 22 countries and territories of the Pacific

Founded in /operational since:

Founded in 1947 under the Canberra Agreement

HQ: Noumea, New Caledonia; Regional Office: Suva Fiji

Structure

The governing body is the Conference of the Pacific Community. The heart of SPC is its integrated work programme. This combination of diverse disciplines offers a unique approach to the development of the region's land, marine and human resources.

The organisation's current work programme focuses on the following sectors: Land Resources (Agriculture and Forestry), Marine Resources, and Social Resources

Decision making

- Equally distributed voting power
- Decisions arrive in most cases on the Pacific Consensus.

Conventions/Agreements, Treaties

- Canberra Agreement (1947)
- Convention on the Protection of Natural Resources in the South Pacific (1986)
- "Déclaration de Tahiti Nui": (1999)

General Mission

SPC is an organisation for technical assistance, training and research that serves 22 Pacific Island Countries and territories. Its vision is that of a secure and prosperous Pacific Community, whose people are healthy and manage their resources in an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable way.

SPC strives to develop the technical, professional, scientific, research, planning and management capability of Pacific Islands people to enable them to make informed decisions about their future development and well-being.

Mandate

SPC must avoid activities of political nature; politics are the province of the Pacific Islands Forum. SPC's mandate allows it to work on a variety of issues that concern its member countries (see structure: Land Resources, Marine Resources, and Social Resources). The focus of SPC's work can and does change over time in response to evolving regional needs and collaborative arrangements with other regional organisations.

www.spc.int

Mekong River Commission (MRC)

Members: Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam,

Founded in /operational since:
1995 by the "Agreement on The Cooperation for The Sustainable Development of The Mekong River Basin"

Secretariat and staff:
Based in Vientiane / Laos
Staff numbers in 2004: more than 100

Structure

- The MRC consists of three permanent bodies: The Council, the Joint Committee (JC) and the Secretariat.
- The Council consists of one member from each country at ministerial or cabinet level. The Council makes policy decisions and provides other necessary guidance. The Joint Committee is responsible for the implementation of the policies and decisions of the Council and supervises the activities of the MRC Secretariat.
- The MRC Secretariat is the operational arm of the MRC. It provides technical and administrative services to the Council and the Joint Committee.

Decision making:
Unanimous vote

Conventions/Agreements, Treaties:
The Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin

Strategic Partners/Memberships and Integrative approaches:
More than 40 partners, amongst others FAO, International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO), International Water Management Institute (IWMI), IUCN, WWF, European Union.

General Mission

To promote and co-ordinate sustainable management and development of water and related resources for the countries' mutual benefit and the people's well-being by implementing strategic programmes and activities and providing scientific information and policy advice.

Mandate

The MRC member countries agree to co-operate in all fields of sustainable development, utilization, management and conservation of the water and related resources of the Mekong River Basin, such as amongst others navigation, flood control, fisheries, agriculture, hydropower and environmental protection, timber floating, recreation and tourism.

www.mrcmekong.org

North America

FAO-North American Forest Commission

Established in 1959, the North American Forest Commission (NAFC) is one of six Regional Forestry Commissions established by FAO to provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis. The heads of the three national forestry agencies and the FAO Assistant Director-General for Forestry serve as the NAFC Commissioners. The Commission meets every two years, with the meetings rotated among the three member countries. The Commissioners are supported by a Bureau of Alternates who oversee the work of thematic working groups.

Membership: 3 countries: Canada, Mexico, and USA

Working groups: Over the years, NAFC has added new working groups in response to the needs of the member countries, while other working groups have been abolished after their work is completed. The role has evolved from “study groups” focused on research, to “working groups” that address a mixture of policy, technical, research and management issues.

NAFC working groups as of 2008 include: Atmospheric Change & Forests; Fire Management; Forest Products; Inventory, Monitoring & Assessment; Forest Genetic Resources; Silviculture; Insects & Diseases; Watershed Management; and Invasive Species (proposed).

NAFC has produced many tangible outcomes, including agreements among the three countries to share resources to fight forest fires and outbreaks of forest insect pests and diseases; joint studies on the effects of air pollution on forests; joint studies on forest genetic resources; and development of common standards and methodologies for forest resources assessments.

<http://www.fs.fed.us/global/nafc/welcome.html>

South and Central America

Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization Secretariat (ACTO)

Members

Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Perú, Suriname and Venezuela

Founded in /operational since:

1978 as Amazon Cooperation Treaty (ACT)

1998 amendment to create the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) was approved to strengthen and implement the objectives of the treaty.

2003 establishment of the Permanent Secretariat (PS) in Brasilia, Brazil

Structure

- Conference of the Foreign Ministers: decision-making. Meets whenever deemed necessary or convenient and may be convened by any Party, whenever supported by at least four Country Members.
- Amazon Cooperation Council: meeting of high-level diplomatic representatives of the Treaty Signatory Parties. Ensures compliance with the treaty objectives and with decisions made in the meetings of Foreign Ministers. Assesses the progress of relevant bilateral or multilateral projects.
- Permanent Secretariat: supportive and executive functions. Responsible for implementing the objectives established in the Treaty in conformity with the decisions taken at the meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Amazon Cooperation Council.
- Permanent National Commissions (PNCs): national executing instances in charge of applying the Amazon Cooperation Treaty's provisions in each Member State, and executing the decisions made by the Meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and by the Amazon Cooperation Council.

Mission/ Mandate

Strengthen and/or build the technical and financial mechanisms and tools, as well as shared or matched policies for putting in place effective processes of regional integration and sustainable development.

Achieving a balanced distribution of benefits generated, thus providing to create synergies that will increase the capacity of negotiation by the Country Members at a global level, in light of topics that relate to the Amazon.

Conference of Foreign Ministers decides and expresses political positions unanimously.

Functions of the Permanent Secretariat

- Promoting a regionally coordinated trans-boundary policy of sustainable utilisation and conservation of the natural resources of the Amazon region,
- moderating the formulation of regional positions,
- representing these positions in international negotiations and,
- establishing (externally financed) strategic regional programmes agreed with the foreign ministers for activities to implement the Strategic Plan 2004-2012.

The Secretariat does not have a mandate to express an own political position, but it exerts influence by assuming agenda management and thematic leadership. The decisions are not legally binding.

Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD)

Members: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panamá

Founded in /operational since: 14 June 1990

Secretariat and staff:

Executive Secretary: Marco Antonio González Pastora

Secretariat: 14 staff

Structure:

Commission is composed of the representatives of each country nominated by their governments:

Ministers for the Environment (responsibility for forests only in 5 of the ministries)

Commission is supported by:

- The presidency of the Commission: represents the C. before third parties, convenes and presides the C. Meetings
- The Secretariat: responsible for the compliance of the resolutions assigned by C. And Presidency.
- The Ad-hoc Technical Commissions

Decision making: The Commission decides unanimously

Conventions/Agreements, Treaties:

- Convention on Biodiversity Conservation and Protection of Wild Areas of Priority in Central America 1992.
- Regional Convention on Climate Change 1993.
- Regional Agreement on the transboundary movements of dangerous waste 1992.
- Convention on the Management and conservation of Natural Forest Ecosystems and Planted Forests 1993.
- Convention on the Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Development of Marine and Coastal Zones of the Northeast Pacific and its Action Plan 2002.
- Regional Protocol on the Access to Genetic and Biochemical Resources and to the Associated Traditional Knowledge 2002.

General Mission:

To develop the regional regime for cooperation and environmental integration which contributes to the improvement of the livelihood of the people of Central America.

Mandate:

Following attributes correspond to the Commission:

- The formulation of strategies to promote the sustainable development of the environment of the countries in the region.
- The elaboration of a Action Plan to put into practice the strategies
- The approval of its internal regulations, financing and administrative regulations
- Directing the Secretariat and supervising the management of the funds established by the Agreement

The designation of the president of the C. who is the legal representative

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Membership

33 countries of Latin America and Caribbean

8 North American and European nations that have historical, economic and cultural regional ties

Total of 41 member States

Associate members: 7 non-independent territories in the Caribbean.

Languages: Spanish, English, French

Structure

Organizational units are divided into: Executive Secretary; Deputy Executive Secretary; Secretary of the Commission.

10 Functional Divisions. Those relevant to forests are: Environment & Human Settlements Division; Natural Resources and Infrastructure Division;

ECLAC also consists of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES).

Sub-regional headquarters in Mexico City, serving the Central American subregion, and in Port of Spain, Trinidad Tobago, for the Caribbean. In addition, ECLAC maintains country offices in Bogotá, Brasilia, Buenos Aires, and Montevideo, as well as a liaison office in D.C.

Activities

Social policy & development; economic governance; macroeconomics; international positioning, environment and sustainable development; productive and managerial development; and statistics.

www.eclac.org

Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (COFLAC)

Created in 1948, the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC) is one of six Regional Forestry Commissions established by FAO to provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis. It meets every two years.

Membership: 32

Steering committee, comprised of vice-presidents from each of four subregional groups: the Southern Cone; Amazonian; Meso-America; and Caribbean countries.

Ministerial level meetings. One outcome of such collaboration, for example, is the forestry strategy formulated by the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD) under the umbrella of LACFC.

Cooperation and coordination networks, forest fires and national forest programmes, regional technical cooperation networks, such as: on national parks, other protected areas and wildlife, and on watershed management.

PUEMBO Initiative

The aim of the Puembo Initiative is to strengthen – within the framework of the subregional organisations – the dialogue on forests in Latin America with the aim to promote Sustainable Forest Management. This means in particular to:

- Facilitate a bridge between the international processes and their national and regional implementation.
- Use more effectively the potential of **forests and their management**, applying the principles of **social, economic and ecologic sustainability** in order to combat **poverty** and promote **economic and social development**.
- Create a **platform for dialogue and coordination** to share local, national and (sub)regional experiences.
- Facilitate a mechanism for the (sub)regional formulation of recommendations for the international, regional and national forest related processes (“a shared forest agenda”).

The Initiative facilitates an informal dialogue and interchange between national and regional stakeholders. It collaborates in sub-regional forest policy discussions, in direct support to ACTO, CCAD and other regional fora. Governance, intersectoral cooperation, forest financing strategies and the national implementation of international agreements in the context of NFP’s are the main issues.

The regional organisations have used the Puembo Initiative as a main mechanism to enhance regional and national coordination and mutual understanding. The partnership of the regional organisations with the NFP-Facility, FAO and IUCN have helped in the development and strengthening of NFPs. Experiences and lessons learnt from NFP processes of all countries have been collected, systematised and made accessible in the form of studies and presentations. Knowledge management as provided by the Initiative was complementary to the formal forest negotiating processes and created an informal discussion platform. The regional platform finalized a common priority agenda setting.

Amongst others, Puembo II has laid the foundation for an integrated development process of the PERFOR (the Regional Strategic Programme on Forests) in Meso America, the expansion of ACTO’s forestry and environmental agenda and the proposal to establish an institutionalised space for discussion of forest-related themes in the Southern Cone within MERCOSUR, which are forging their own agendas. The World Bank drew on Puembo analyses in starting to support the FLEG process in Central America.

www.puembo.org

Europe

FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC)

Created in 1947, the European Forestry Commission (EFC) is one of six Regional Forestry Commissions established by FAO to provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis. It meets every two years.

The EFC has a number of associated subsidiary bodies, including an Executive Committee; the Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds and the FAO/ECE Working Party on

Forest Economics and Statistics. The EFC shares a joint secretariat with the UNECE Timber Committee. The programme of the two bodies is integrated.

<http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/>
www.fao.org/forestry/site/31096/en

Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE)

The MCPFE is a high-level political initiative that has developed as a dynamic process towards sustainable forest management in Europe. It involves the European countries and the European Community, as well as a broad range of international organisations and countries outside Europe which participate as observers. The mission of the MCPFE is to achieve ministerial commitments on forest-policy relevant issues of common concern and interest to all its participants and to provide an open platform for dialogue. It was launched in 1990, and is a continuing process, which is based on a chain of Ministerial Conferences and follow-up activities. It is linked to global and other regional processes and initiatives dealing with issues on forests and forestry.

www.mcpfe.org

Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity (PEBLDS)

The Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy was endorsed at the *3rd Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe'* in 1995

Objective

To provide an innovative and proactive approach to stop and reverse the degradation of biological and landscape diversity values in Europe.

Coordinated Action

The Strategy reinforces the implementation of existing measures to ensure conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity and identifies additional actions that need to be taken over the next two decades. The Strategy also provides a 20-year vision for Europe and a framework to promote a consistent approach and common objectives for national and regional action to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Coverage

The Strategy is endorsed by the governments participating in the 'Environment for Europe' ministerial process that includes all 56 UN/ECE countries. In addition a number of international organizations are participating in the Strategy.

www.pebls.org

UN Economic Commission for Europe - Timber Committee

Membership: 55 countries of North America, Western, Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The Timber Committee is one of the technical committees of the UNECE, which is the only UN Regional Economic Commission that has a specific focus on the forest sector.

The programme of the Timber Committee integrated with that of the EFC has five work areas: markets and statistics, forest resource assessment, sector outlook studies, social and cultural aspects, and policy and cross-sectoral issues. The Committee and the Commission collect and analyse information, and provide a forum for policy discussion. They also carry out some

capacity building work. They work closely with other parts of ECE and FAO (notably the Subregional office in Budapest as well as other organisations including the EU and MCPFE.

<http://www.unece.org/trade/timber>

Annex 4: Meeting/Event Schedules for Regional bodies

Regional Body	Meetings/Event Title	Location	Dates	Comment
Asia Forest Partnership	Meeting hosted by Indonesia	Indonesia	2008	Offered by Indonesia in last annual meeting
FAO Africa Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC)	Joint Meeting with NEFC	Khartoum, Sudan	18-21 February, 2008	Commission meets annually. Will discuss UNFF issues at the joint meeting with NEFC including "Climate Change"
North American Forestry Commission (NAFC)	Joint Working Group Meeting (8 Working Groups)	Virginia - US	3 -7 March 2008	Thematic sessions including agenda items of the UNFF
FAO	Commission Meeting to launch the "Forest Resource Assessment"		3 – 7 March, 2008	All Regional Forestry Commissions will consider "Forests in a Changing Environment"
START/AAS/IRA	Climate change	Dar es Salaam	11 -14 March 2008	Preparatory meeting for launching a comprehensive programme that will encompass capacity building, fellowship programme and advocacy
Congo Basin Forest Partnership	Climate Change discussion	Paris	12-13 March, 2008	
Congo Basin Forest Partnership	Regional Coordination Committee Meeting		17-18 March, 2008	
Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC)	Asia Pacific Forestry Week: Forestry in a changing world	Hanoi, Vietnam	21-26 April 2008	A broad range of participating regional organisations. Will include UNFF agenda items.

Regional Body	Meetings/Event Title	Location	Dates	Comment
Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC)	22 nd Session of Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission	Hanoi, Vietnam	21-26 April 2008	The Commission session will be conducted as part of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Week
Asia Forest Partnership	Session at Asia Pacific Forestry Week with TNC on Trade, Forest law Compliance and Governance	Hanoi, Vietnam	24 April 2008	Co-organized by AFP, TNC, and Asia FLEG
UN ECE Timber Committee and FAO Forestry Commission	4 Year Strategic Review – Special Session	Geneva	28 – 30 April, 2008	Coordinated with MCPFE. Aims to determine objectives/methods/programs etc through until 2013
MCPFE	Expert Level Meeting		May 2008	
Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)	Strategic Meeting	Bonn	2 days in May, 2008	Will include discussion on UNFF agenda items.
FAO	“World Food Security and Bioenergy”		June, 2008	High level – Heads of States
North American Forestry Commission (NAFC)	24 th session of Commission Meeting	San Juan, Puerto Rico	8-14 June, 2008	COFLAC and another commission will be invited to attend. Heads of Forestry will speak on compelling topics including Water and Markets for environmental services
FAO	“Climate Change and Human Health”		August, 2008	
SPC	Bi-Annual Technical Meeting of Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services	Apia, Samoa	September 2008	To be held in conjunction with the 4 yearly political meeting of Ministers and Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Will include UNFF side event

Regional Body	Meetings/Event Title	Location	Dates	Comment
MCFE/Finland	Pan European Workshop “Forests in the changing environment”	Koli, Finland	3-5 September 2008	The workshop supports the MCPFE Work Programme. Finland will organize the workshop. The outcome of the workshop will be presented at the MCPFE Expert Level Meeting, disseminated at the Pan-European Forest Week in November 2008 and forwarded to the UNFF secretariat.
FAO - COFLAC	25 th meeting of COFLAC	Quito, Ecuador	29 September- 3 October 2008	
SPC	UNFF Preparatory workshop	Nadi, Fiji	October, 2008	In preparation for UNFF8
	Pan-European Forest Week	Major venues in Brussels and Rome	20 - 24 October, 2008	
Asia Forest Partnership	Annual Meeting	To be decided	November, 2008	Timing is tentative, according to recent practice
RECOFTC	Regional Community Forest Forum/s		Early 2009	
FAO – COFO (Committees on Forestry)	Meeting of Committee on Forestry		March 2009	
African Forum on Forests (AFF)	To finalise details of new studies commissions and prepare African delegates input for UNFF8.	Nairobi, Kenya		
Convention on	Joint Meeting with	Rome		Will identify linkages between

Regional Body	Meetings/Event Title	Location	Dates	Comment
Biological Diversity (CBD)	UNFF/FAO/Scientific body of CBD			international policy agenda and regional processes