

FAO Regional Forestry Commissions 2008

Outcomes of the 2008 sessions related to UNFF and CPF

Introduction

The six Regional Forestry Commissions were established by the FAO Conference between 1947 and 1959. Every two years, the Commissions bring together the Heads of Forestry in each major region of the world to address the most important forestry issues in the region. The Commissions consider both policy and technical issues. They play a key role in the international arrangement on forests, serving as a top-down link between global dialogue at the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), and national implementation; and serving as a bottom-up link by drawing global attention to national and regional issues.

The Regional Forestry Commissions are also active in-between formal sessions. Most of the Commissions have technical working groups or sub-regional chapters that implement projects that have trans-national implications and which benefit from collaboration among countries in the region. Examples include regional initiatives on forest fires and invasive species, as well as regional collaboration on forest resource assessments.

The agendas for the Regional Forestry Commissions are established by the member countries through their respective executive committees or bureaux. In their 2008 sessions, all six Regional Forestry Commissions addressed issues that are on the agenda of UNFF 8, specifically issues of relevance to the UNFF theme “Forests in a Changing Environment”. Some commissions also considered “Means of Implementation for Sustainable Forest Management”. The commissions also addressed other issues that are not on the UNFF8 agenda, such as forests and water; forests and energy; and adaptation of forest institutions in a changing world. All six commissions were informed of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All types of Forests (NLBI) and the forthcoming 8th session of UNFF. Representatives from the UNFF Secretariat have participated in most commission sessions as observers over the past six years, including 5 of the 6 sessions in 2008.

This note summarises the outcomes of the 2008 sessions, provides reference to the full reports, and includes updated information on contact points for each commission.

In FAO headquarters the focal point is Douglas Kneeland, Chief, Forest Communication Service and Secretary of the North American Forest Commission and COFO (Douglas.Kneeland@fao.org). Annex 1 contains contact information for the Chairs and Secretaries of each commission.

Regional cooperation – innovative approaches

The Regional Forestry Commissions have used innovative approaches to promote regional collaboration. The African Forestry and Wildlife Commission and the Near East Forestry Commission held a first ever *joint session*, addressing key common issues, such as linkages between forests and climate change; water; energy; and water resources. Two of the Commissions organized, in collaboration with partners, *regional forest weeks*, namely the *Asia-Pacific Forestry Week* (Hanoi, Viet Nam, April 2008) and the *European Forest Week* (Rome, Italy, October 2008). The Latin America and Caribbean Forestry Commission has been leading a way with dynamic *sub-regional activities*. The North American Forestry Commission has eight thematic *working groups* addressing topical issues such as climate change, invasive species, fire management, and watershed management; the European Forestry Commission has several active “*teams of specialists*” that work in collaboration with the Timber Committee of the UN Economic Commission for Europe.

Compilation of outcomes most relevant to UNFF, agenda items of UNFF8 – extracts by Regional Forestry Commission (paragraph numbers refer to the original Report of each commission)

Africa and Near East (joint meeting)	(pages 2-5)
Asia and the Pacific	(pages 6-8)
North America	(pages 8-9)
Latin America and the Caribbean	(pages 9-11)
Europe	(pages 11-13)

Africa and Near East

Joint meeting of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC) and the Near East Forestry Commission (NEFC), held in Khartoum, Sudan, 18-21 February 2008

Related to forests and climate change

29. The Commissions noted that climate change brought new challenges and opportunities to the forest sector, and that experience with sustainable forest management represented a sound foundation for climate change mitigation and adaptation measures in the sector.

30. The Commissions noted that several African and some Near East countries had high but unrealized potential to benefit financially from climate change mitigation activities. They highlighted that it had been difficult for countries to access Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) markets for afforestation/ reforestation projects. The Commissions further noted that the voluntary carbon market was quite favourable to forestry projects, but some constraints had to be overcome in order for countries to participate more actively.

31. The Commissions therefore urged member countries to:

- a) share and exchange experiences from CDM and voluntary market forestry projects, in particular ways in which difficulties had been overcome;
- b) promote the development of forest carbon projects through training, extension and policy and financial measures; and
- c) seek to fully engage the private sector in climate change mitigation projects in forestry.

32. The Commissions recognized that forestry cuts across both mitigation and adaptation, and that synergies between them can be created to bring benefits to the Near East and African regions. It was further recognized that mainstreaming local community needs within mitigation initiatives in the Near East and African countries could provide win-win solutions.

33. The Commissions requested FAO and other relevant organizations to pursue and increase their support to African and Near East countries in forests and climate change, including technical assistance and capacity strengthening in areas such as forest inventories, monitoring carbon stocks, development of forest carbon projects, and accessing carbon markets.

34. African countries were considered to be potentially well positioned to benefit from a future international instrument on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. However, many countries were not equipped to access potential benefits over the short-term. The Commission therefore requested FAO to help strengthen member countries' capacities and make the necessary

preparations, including through developing national strategies and a reference scenario and in forest monitoring and assessment.

35. The Commissions strongly recommended that African and Near East countries address adaptation and mitigation opportunities in their forestry sectors in a holistic way in order to capture synergies, incorporate them in national forest programmes (nfps), and link them with human development needs. The Commissions requested FAO to provide assistance to member countries in their efforts to mainstream climate change within their nfps.

36. The potential for dryland forests in adaptation and mitigation deserved higher attention at the international level. The Commissions therefore urged their member countries to highlight this potential in the international climate change dialogue and to include these forests in their climate change programmes.

37. Recognizing that it was essential that forestry institutions be prepared and fully engaged in national and international actions regarding forests and climate change mitigation and adaptation, the Commissions called upon FAO to organize regional workshops on forests and climate change to share information on recent developments; exchange experiences; facilitate regional and sub-regional cooperation; and, while recognizing variability among them, to develop unified approaches and positions.

38. The Commissions stressed the need for member countries to seek to identify and capitalize on social and environmental co-benefits (livelihood support and ecosystem services) when developing mitigation and adaptation strategies in forestry.

39. The Commissions therefore recommended that collaboration and information exchange on forests and climate change mitigation and adaptation be strengthened and that, while recognizing the variability among countries, unified responses to international initiatives be developed.

40. The Commissions urged countries to work to harmonize their efforts in climate change with their commitments under other forest-related international conventions and agreements. They also requested that FAO and other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) continue and increase their collaboration and cooperation in their forest and climate change programmes.

16th Session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC), held in Khartoum, Sudan, 18-21 February 2008

Related to forests and climate change

20. The Commission requested FAO to enhance its support to countries in wildlife management and to strengthen the FAO programme on wildlife and protected areas management. It further recommended that the terms of reference and mandate of the Working Party on Wildlife Management and Protected Areas (WPWMPA) be revised in order to increase its relevance for the Commission.

21. The Commissions requested FAO and other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) to continue and increase their collaboration and cooperation in their forest and climate change programmes. It called upon FAO to organize regional workshops on forests and climate change to share information on recent developments; exchange experiences; facilitate regional and sub-regional cooperation; and, while recognizing variability among them, to develop unified approaches and positions.

22. The Commissions recommended that FAO assist member countries in their efforts to implement the voluntary guidelines and to develop national and regional fire management plans.

23. The Commissions recommended that (i) linkages between forests and water resources be studied further; (ii) integrated management of water and trees be encouraged, including incorporating forestry in the watershed management plans; and (iii) innovative mechanisms, including payments for environmental services, be put in place to ensure efficient and sustainable water, trees and forests management.

The full report of the 16th Session of the AFWC is available at:
<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/meeting/013/ai573e.pdf>

18th Session of the Near East Forestry Commission (NEFC), held in Khartoum, Sudan, 18-21 February 2008

Related to reversing the loss of forest cover, preventing forest degradation in all types of forests and combating desertification, including low forest cover countries

13. The Commission stressed the importance of forest policies and legislation and the role they play in the conservation and management of forests, other wooded lands, rangelands and trees outside forests.

14. The Commission noted that, while all countries in the region have developed forest laws and legislation in the past, some were in the process of updating them and developing new policies. It was noted, however, that some countries lacked the necessary measures and institutional setting to implement such laws and legislation.

15. The Commission recommended that member countries strive to create synergies and strengthen cooperation among all the institutions and sectors dealing with forest-related activities and trees outside forests, including urban forests and trees, protected areas and other ecosystems.

16. The Commission noted the importance and benefits of including the various stakeholders concerned in the formulation of policies and legislation.

17. The Commission urged FAO to undertake a study on the forest policies, laws and institutions in the countries of the region. The study would serve as a baseline for providing the necessary support to countries when updating their legislation and policies, where these exist, and when drafting new policies and legislation, if necessary, and to create synergies among all the institutions concerned.

18. The Commission noted that global trends such as decentralization and the devolution of management rights to local stakeholders were having an influence on the forestry sector and needed to be addressed adequately.

19. The Commission also stressed the importance of participatory forestry as a means of contributing to poverty alleviation and as an efficient and cost-effective alternative to state forest management.

20. The Commission further acknowledged that, while most forests are state owned, there was an urgent need to better involve the private sector, community groups and civil society organizations in the sustainable management of forest resources.

21. Despite recent improvements, forestry legislation in some countries still hindered the efficient participation of the private sector and local communities in forestry-related activities.

22. The Commission further noted the importance and benefit of including the various stakeholders concerned in the formulation of policies and legislation that better respond to societies' needs and

concerns. When supported and agreed upon by stakeholders, policies were more likely to be implemented in an efficient manner.

23. The Commission acknowledged that participatory policy formulation would ensure necessary cross-sectoral linkages as well as better reflect the recent changes that have occurred in the forestry sector at the international level.

24. The Commission recommended that member countries undertake forest tenure reforms that could provide favorable conditions for rural communities, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders to sustainably manage forests.

25. The Commission further urged member countries to take action and recommended that they seek support from FAO to conduct a regional workshop on participatory forestry, to take stock of on-going participatory forestry initiatives, clarify the concept of participatory forestry, share best practices, raise awareness and to decide how to further promote participatory forestry in the region.

37. The Commission commended the efforts deployed in the preparation of the draft outline and in key elements of the *Guidelines for Good Forestry Practices in the Near East Arid and Semi-Arid Zones*.

38. The Commission noted the importance of such guidelines as a tool for policy-making.

40. The Commission urged the FAO Regional Office for the Near East to move ahead with the preparation of the guidelines and their submission in final form to the next session of the Committee on Forestry in 2009.

Related to means of implementation for sustainable forest management

27. The Commission commended the secretariat on the paper on the mobilization of domestic resources for forestry development in the region and underlined the importance of highlighting such an issue at the national and regional levels. The Commission noted the limited resources provided to the forestry sector in most of the countries of the region.

28. The Commission noted the difficulties being faced in the attempts to secure the participation of the private sector both in the financing and in the management of forests.

29. The Commission noted the lack of coordination between the different institutions in charge of forests and trees outside forests at the country level. The lack of coordination and cooperation between the organizations working in the region was also noted.

30. The Commission urged FAO to undertake a study to document and highlight the economic, social and environmental importance of forests, trees outside forests, urban forests, oases and other particular formations.

31. The Commission stressed the need to undertake major changes at the decision-making and institutional levels in order to take better account of forest goods and services in national economies.

32. The Commission further noted the need to strengthen forestry institutions in order to increase their ability to attract necessary funds and to mainstream forestry-related issues within national development programmes.

33. The Commission recommended that the FAO Regional Office for the Near East organize a workshop to share experiences in successful mechanisms to increase funding and stakeholder participation in forest-related activities.

34. Commission recommended that participation of and partnership with all stakeholders concerned in forest-related activities be increased. This would lead to the greater visibility and importance of the sector, in order to obtain enhanced political, institutional and financial support from national authorities.

The full report of the 18th Session of the NEFC is available at:

<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/meeting/013/ai681e.pdf>

Asia and the Pacific

22nd Session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC), Hanoi, Viet Nam, 21-25 April 2008, held in conjunction with the Asia-Pacific Forestry Week

Related to forests and climate change

45. The Commission recognized the need for a holistic and multi-sectoral approach to effectively address forestry issues related to climate change. The Commission further noted that forest policies and national development plans must be realigned in response to climate change developments. The Commission urged FAO to strengthen efforts to help countries integrate policies and strategies on climate change mitigation and adaptation into national forest programmes (NFPs).

46. The Commission noted the need to resolve many outstanding methodological issues concerning a potential REDD instrument under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Commission requested FAO to support work on methodological issues related to REDD, including the definition of “forest degradation.”

47. The Commission recognized that, while the focus of the role of forests in climate change is carbon, other ecosystem services and livelihood benefits should be considered in national and sub-national strategies to reduce deforestation and forest degradation. It urged FAO to develop tools that could assist countries to address these benefits in their REDD strategies.

48. The Commission emphasized that climate change adaptation and mitigation measures must consider governance issues and social impacts, ensure the engagement of local communities, and address equity and benefit-sharing concerns.

49. The Commission emphasized that implementation of sustainable forest management makes an essential contribution to effective climate mitigation and adaptation. The Commission stressed that focus must be on action, based on solid science, and urged member countries to employ the principles, approaches and tools of sustainable forest management in climate change projects and REDD demonstration activities.

50. The Commission noted that readiness for REDD requires capacity and resources beyond those currently available in developing countries. The Commission requested that FAO assist with REDD-readiness and demonstration activities in developing countries by enhancing transfer of knowledge and technology, particularly with regard to monitoring and accounting of forest carbon, in addition to strengthening monitoring, assessment and reporting on sustainable forest management in Asia and the Pacific. The Commission urged FAO to assist developing countries in securing financial resources for carrying out REDD-readiness and demonstration activities.

51. The Commission recognized that lack of information and data, and insufficient analytical capacity, currently constrain countries’ ability to respond to climate change challenges. The

Commission requested FAO to enhance sharing of information and experiences across the region and to improve access to relevant data. The Commission further requested FAO to help strengthen countries' analytical capacities, and to assist by summarizing and clarifying the complexities of climate change mechanisms.

52. The Commission requested FAO to prepare guidelines for developing national forest climate change adaptation plans.

53. The Commission urged FAO to use opportunities presented by United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) to convey the forestry communities' perspectives on forests and climate change to UNFCCC.

Related to international arrangements and links to UNFF

55. The Commission was informed of recent developments within the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

56. The Commission welcomed the reported progress, including the development of the non-legally-binding instrument on forests, increased linkages with regional forest-related organizations and the multi-year programme of work in UNFF; the pending entry into force of the International Tropical Timber Agreement 2006; the review of CBD's Programme of Work on Forest Biodiversity; and UNCCD's adoption of a 10-year strategic plan. The Commission provided an opportunity for members to discuss how inputs from the region to the eighth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF8) could be achieved.

57. The Commission emphasized the contribution of sustainable forest management in combating land degradation, desertification and mitigating and adapting to climate change. Delegates acknowledged that sustainable forest management has been under-financed, and noted potential avenues for increasing funding, including from national and donor resources, payments for environmental services, private-sector resources, and through international processes, as appropriate for the respective member countries.

58. Delegates noted an increasing number of international agencies with involvement in the forests agenda. The Commission urged international agencies to coordinate closely to minimize overlaps in work programmes and ensure maximum efficiency in resource utilization.

59. The Commission noted the importance of forestry agreements reached at the thirteenth Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and requested FAO and other international agencies to facilitate reporting of the outcomes of international forestry processes to UNFCCC.

84. The Commission wished to bring to COFO's attention the opportunity provided by holding *Asia-Pacific Forestry Week* in conjunction with the twenty-second session of APFC to facilitate regional dialogue on issues related to the forthcoming UNFF session. The Commission requested COFO to consider the implementation of processes used in each FAO region in order to determine how the regional forestry commissions can best contribute input to UNFF.

92. Recognizing the revised modalities of the United Nations Forum on Forests to facilitate enhanced linkages with regional forest-related organizations, and the desire to enhance input from regional forest-related organizations into the Multi-Year Program of Work agenda items to be discussed at the eighth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF8), the Commission endorsed a proposal that:

- (a) commended FAO and the host country for their outstanding efforts in organizing the first Asia-Pacific Forestry Week as part of the twenty-second session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission, which enabled enhanced dialogue among a broad range of stakeholders on regional and global forest-related issues;
- (b) requested FAO to submit the report from the twenty-second session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission, including a summary of the outcomes relevant to the UNFF8 agenda items, to the UNFF Secretariat by October 2008; and
- (c) invited organizations participating in Asia-Pacific Forestry Week to submit relevant information to the UNFF Secretariat to complement the regional report provided by FAO.

The full report of the 22nd session of the APFC is available at:
www.fao.org/docrep/010/ai415e/ai415e00.htm.

Asia-Pacific Forestry Week: Forestry in a changing world

The first ever Asia-Pacific Forestry Week was organized in Hanoi, Viet Nam from 21 to 26 April 2008. It was the region's largest forest-related event of the year, hosted jointly by the Vietnamese Government and FAO. The week was anchored around the 22nd session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission, and it was organized with local, regional and international partner institutions for wider participation. It was open to governments, multilateral institutions and the public and attracted more than 700 participants.

The meeting identified and addressed the imminent challenges of protecting and managing the region's forest resources in a rapidly changing global environment. The plenary sessions focused on the three pillars of sustainable development: social, environmental and economic.

Special activities during the forest week included an essay contest for young professionals, a photo contest and an "information market" presenting forestry-related organizations, projects and activities in the region and allowing organizations to showcase their work through posters and displays.

The overarching theme of Asia-Pacific Forestry Week was "Forestry in a changing world" and several parallel events organized during the week focused on issues of particular relevance to UNFF. CIFOR, INBAR, SNV, GTZ, USDA Forest Service, British Council, FAO and others organized various events related to forests and climate change.

www.fao.org/forestry/44155/en/

North America

24th Session of the North American Forest Commission (NAFC), held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, United States of America, 9–13 June 2008

Note: The North American Forest Commission addressed climate change as its primary technical agenda item at its 23rd Session in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, in October 2006. The report is available at: www.fs.fed.us/global/nafc/nafc_reports/nafcreports.htm#

Related to the theme "forests in a changing environment", including forests and climate change

- The Commission recommended that COFO give attention to forests and climate change, stressing integrated approaches to monitoring, assessing and reporting on complex forces related to climate change that affect forest ecosystems. The Commission requested FAO to

play a lead role in the development of common terminology, standards, and methodologies under the umbrella of global forest resource assessments.

- The Commission recommended that COFO consider forests and water, noting the critical role played by forests and trees in the quantity and quality of fresh water.
- COFO would be an ideal venue to review changes in the role of forests in the broader energy picture, noting that bioenergy is increasing in importance in all regions.

The full report of the 24th session of the NAFC is available at:
www.fs.fed.us/global/nafc/nafc_reports/nafcreports.htm

Latin America and the Caribbean

25th Session of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (COFLAC), held in Quito, Ecuador, 29 September – 3 October 2008

Related to forests and climate change

30. The Commission noted with interest the information given on recent global discussions on the role of forests in mitigating and adapting to climate change, which provided both challenges and opportunities to the forest sector. The Commission was also informed of major initiatives that had been introduced to support efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in the developing countries (REDD).

31. The Commission acknowledged that the issue of climate change presented an opportunity to demonstrate to society that forests were part of the solution to the problem. However, given the uncertain knowledge of aspects of climate change, an effective contribution of the forest sector to discussions of the issue would depend on the reliability of information available.

32. The Commission stated that information on climate change was generally sourced outside the forest sector and generated confusion and myths concerning the response of forests to climate change. The forest sector therefore needed to support scientific research if it was to make a successful contribution to the problem of climate change.

33. Some delegates expressed their concern about the mechanisms that could be established to support countries in reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, in the sense that they might be complicated to access and thus cause frustration, as in the case of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) for forest projects. In view of this, the Commission requested that FAO help open simple access routes to such mechanisms.

34. In some countries the forest sector was under a public administration body other than that dealing with the environment and climate change, which could hamper collective action and create a sense alienation from other agendas.

59. Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation offers an alternative way of achieving the conservation of forests and their biodiversity, and reducing deforestation. However, REDD also poses a series of challenges to governments and States.

60. Opportunities:

- Different funds and mechanisms currently exist to support country preparation for REDD.
- Latin America is the region with the most tropical forests and the highest levels of deforestation, which makes it an attractive region for the development of REDD mechanisms.
- It will help clarify land tenure, property rights and forest use.
- It will create new sources of financing from the carbon market (not grants) for forest management and conservation.

61. Challenges:

- There is a need to create technical capability (to develop methodologies, baseline, etc.) and human and institutional capacity in each country.
- The benefits will need to be distributed equitably, with the inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities.
- The causes of deforestation need to be understood so that they can be addressed.
- Agreed positions among countries need to be reached, which could favour the participation of countries with small forest areas.

Related to national forest programmes

46. In many countries sustainable forest development is faced with dual authority reflecting forest conservation and forest production. The problems that have arisen from a lack of harmonization between those authorities need to be analysed and resolved by the highest national authorities so that the forest sector, alone or in concert with other sectors, can better contribute to national development.

47. The sustainable development of forest resources requires interaction between the forest sector and other sectors. Such interaction would be better supported by FAO if the Organization were to enhance the integration of the programmes of its different departments.

48. Many countries are vigorously updating their forest policy, legislation and institutions, with the inclusion of mechanisms for dialogue and coordination. Special attention should be paid to creating and developing related bodies and to enhancing the dissemination of policies and regulations among national populations.

National Forest Programme Facility

49. Facility impact was considered to be significant and there was a call for its scope to be broadened in the Region. At the same time, it was pointed out that reference to the Human Development Index (HDI) as a parameter for determining country eligibility for support was preventing the forest areas of countries with a high HDI, which were generally the most depressed areas, from benefiting from the Facility. Its Steering Committee should review this criterion and consider the real level of development of the forest areas and use the Unsatisfied Basic Needs indicator.

50. Many countries of the Region have recently issued or are planning to issue amendments to their forest legislation and regulations and to their forest development plans. Several countries are also in the process of institutional restructuring of their national forest authorities. Facility support was in high demand for cooperation along these lines. In the case of partner countries, it was the Facility national committees that determined priority for the allocation of funds, but non-partner countries had first had to apply for partnership to receive support.

51. The Facility had supported three subregional processes in the Region (CCAD, ACICAFOC and CANARI). The demonstrated results and the potential for further action in support of NFPs argue in

favour of the Facility broadening such cooperation, with priority to the establishment of information exchange networks.

Suggestions on the Puembo Initiative

52. The Puembo Initiative, as an informal platform for the management and exchange of information, has permitted significant achievements in forest dialogue in the Region. The 10 suggested priorities for a shared agenda that come from the Initiative (formulated from the findings of cross-cutting analyses and identification of topics relating to governance, valorization and financing, intersectorality and national-international linkage) are starting to enter the Programme of Work of the Commission and its Subregions, a development that would undoubtedly be accentuated in the future.

It is also expected to contribute substantively towards the systematic strengthening of intersectoral dialogue on forest policy, with the inclusion of representatives of other sectors. Their participation in discussion forums will help foster convergence between different NFP support agencies and mechanisms, and thereby enhance complementarity between them and with government programmes. It could also play a useful collaborative role in fostering the exchange of information and knowledge between subregions, countries and levels (national, subregional, regional, international).

Related to the means of implementation

53. The many benefits that society and other sectors gain from forests need to be evidenced, valued and included in the National Accounts. Greater efforts should be made to profile the forest sector as an opportunity and not as a problem (enhance its image).

National strategies for forest financing

54. The national strategies for forest financing (NSFF) need to be formulated in an integrated manner, taking into account the differences that exist within and between countries, considering all types of forest and identifying the stakeholders (government, cooperation, private sector, NGOs and local groups) and their roles. An enabling environment needs to be created to apply mechanisms of investment and payment for goods and services. The relationship between the forest and the financial sectors should be strengthened within the NSFF, and guarantee and insurance mechanisms established.

Training for successful valorization and the NSFF

55. Training and exchange of know-how are key instruments for formulation and implementation of the NSFF, in other words for building capacity to develop financial mechanisms and to exchange information within and between sectors, countries and regions. The NFSS need to be strengthened through training and in-depth evaluation studies of existing traditional and innovative mechanisms.

The full report of the 25th session of the COFLAC will be available at:

<http://www.rlc.fao.org/es/comisiones/coflac/2008/default.htm>

Europe

34th Session of the European Forestry Commission - joint session with the 66th Session of the UNECE Timber Committee - held in the FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy, 21-24 October 2008, in conjunction with the European Forest Week

Related to forests and climate change

13. The plenary session discussed how climate change mitigation and adaptation measures could be integrated into forest sector policies, how forest management strategies could contribute to reducing forests' vulnerabilities to climate change, and how coordination and communication could be improved between climate change negotiations and forest sector policies.

30. The joint session recommended that UNECE and FAO, ...:

(a):

- (i) work further, in collaboration with MCPFE and other partners, to provide consistent data, information and policy messages;
- (ii) establish a mechanism to provide information and facilitate exchange of experiences related to forests and climate change in the region;
- (iii) develop a strategy to raise awareness of the contribution of forests and forest products to climate change mitigation.

36. The Commission identified the following issues for the attention of the Committee on Forestry (COFO):

- i. in addition to the critical role that forests play in climate change mitigation, the Commission noted the importance of improving the understanding of the impact of climate change on forests. This is an important issue not only in Europe but also in all other regions of the world;
- ii. the increasing emphasis on renewable energy, including bioenergy, will have many consequences for the world's forests, including increased demand for wood. This issue is directly linked to the climate issues discussed above;
- iii. linkages between forests and water were discussed in depth by COFO in 2003; it is considered timely to raise this as a priority issue again, in view of the impacts that climate change will have on future water supplies as well as to the increasing severity and frequency of droughts and floods that the world is experiencing as a result of climate change;

Related to cooperation in Europe and links to UNFF¹

44. The joint session agreed that progress had been made in Europe in addressing many of the critical global issues that are on the agenda of UNFF 8. The work of the Timber Committee and the European Forestry Commission constitutes a contribution from Europe to achieving the global objectives of UNFF. The joint session acknowledged and welcomed the broad, fruitful and mutually beneficial cooperation in advancing sustainable forest management in Europe, including with the MCPFE, the Environment for Europe/Pan European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (EfE/PEBLDS) and other key players.

45. The joint session requested that the UNECE/FAO Secretariat prepare an input to UNFF8, from the European region, in continued cooperation with MCPFE, which was mandated by the fifth Ministerial Conference to prepare an input, as well as with EfE/PEBLDS and EFI. It recommended that the input include the key achievements in the region and references to the on-going and future work of the entities involved as related to addressing forests in a changing environment, as well as describe the ways these entities work together, highlighting the excellent existing cooperation among them.

46. The joint session noted the Koli Pan European workshop on "Forest in the changing environment" organized under the MCPFE and recognized the value of its output, highlighting European priorities for UNFF 8.

¹ Note: at the time of the submission of this report, the joint input was under preparation by the involved secretariats and it is planned to be submitted by the end of November 2008.

47. The joint session welcomed the organization of the first European Forest Week and congratulated UNECE, FAO, the MCPFE and the European Community on the success of the event. The joint session thanked the European Forest Week Organizing Committee for its work and also warmly thanked the speakers who had greatly contributed to the discussions throughout the week. It noted that the European Forest Week represented a major communication opportunity which served the purpose of reaching out to other sectors as well as advancing the dialogue and increased understanding of important sector issues. The joint session welcomed the format of the week and recommended that a decision on a future European Forest Week would be taken after evaluation of the first European Forest Week. The Committee and the Commission also recommended that regional events be considered within the context of the International Year of Forests in 2011.

The full edited report of the 34th session of the EFC will be available at:
<http://www.fao.org/forestry/31913/>

European Forest Week (20-24 October 2008)

The first ever European Forest Week took place on 20-24 October 2008 in Rome, Brussels and all over Europe, to discuss the role of forests and the forest sector in combating climate change, providing renewable energy and supplying water. The Week highlighted sustainable forest management as forest sector response to combating climate change and measures necessary to fully utilize the sector's potential.

The Rome-based events brought together some 450 participants from the forest, water, energy, and housing sectors. The week marked the first ever policy-level meeting between the forest and water sectors. In Brussels, a Conference by the European Economic and Social Committee addressed the "role of forests in meeting the European Union's climate change commitments." All over Europe, about 150 affiliated national and local events took place in 30 countries, to highlight the potential of Europe's forests and what it takes to fully utilize it.

The European Forest Week (EFW) was co-organized by the [European Commission](#), the [FAO European Forestry Commission](#), the [Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe](#) and the [UNECE Timber Committee](#), in close collaboration with the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, France.

The objectives of the European Forest Week were to:

- Increase the visibility of the forest based-sector and its contribution to development of economy and society in Europe.
- Raise awareness about its important contributions to mitigating climate change, providing freshwater and protecting the environment.
- Engage other sectors in a participatory dialogue on forest related issues.

The European Forest Week was perceived as an excellent demonstration of the good and continued cooperation among different entities in Europe. It represented a major communication opportunity which served the purpose of reaching out to other sectors as well as advancing the dialogue and increased understanding of important sector issues.

www.europeanforestweek.org