



Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development

Federal Ministry
of Food, Agriculture and
Consumer Protection



Conference Announcement
“Contributions of Forests to a Green Economy”
4-7 October 2011 in Bonn, Germany

Germany, with support from Finland and Austria, is pleased to announce the conference “*Contributions of Forests to a Green Economy*”, to take place from 4 to 7 October 2011 in Bonn, Germany. The conference is a country-led initiative (CLI) in support of the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and is one of Germany’s activities to celebrate the “International Year of Forests”. The conference will be organized in close collaboration with the UNFF Secretariat and FAO and will be guided by an International Steering Group. The results of the conference shall also feed into the preparatory process of the upcoming UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

Background

Forests and sustainable forest management are critical underpinnings for the establishment of a Green Economy. Forests harbour two thirds of all terrestrial species and contribute to the livelihoods of 1,6 billion people. Properly managed, forests can provide numerous renewable raw materials for development as well as ecosystem services, including clean water, soil conservation, and biodiversity. Forests store large amounts of carbon and thus play a crucial role in climate change mitigation. Deforestation and forest degradation, on the other hand, undermine efforts to establish a Green Economy, and adversely diminish our capacity to meet human needs, eradicate poverty and improve human wellbeing.

Understanding the roles that forests can play in building a Green Economy is central to the themes of both Rio+20 and UNFF-10 (2013): Rio+20 will focus on the themes of “Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication” and “Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development”, while the central theme of UNFF-10 is “Forests and Economic Development”.

Meanwhile, the Ministerial Declaration of the 9th session of UNFF calls for substantive contributions to the Rio+20 conference by highlighting the economic, social and environmental benefits of forests to people and the contributions of sustainable forest management to the themes and objectives of this conference including to a Green Economy.

While the principles and concepts for a Green Economy are still being developed, the conference will use UNEP’s working definition of a Green Economy as “a system of

economic activities related to the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services that result in improved human wellbeing over the long term, while not exposing future generations to significant environmental risks and ecological scarcities”.

During 2011, the International Year of Forests, a number of international events will explore the role of forests in sustainable development and in developing a Green Economy. The **Bonn Conference on Contributions of Forests to a Green Economy** will build to the greatest extent possible on the results and outcomes of these events¹.

Objectives of the Conference

- Exchange ideas and experiences concerning the roles of forests and sustainable forest management for developing a Green Economy.
- Promote alliances, partnerships and networking within and among the UNFF and CSD parties.

Expected Outcomes

- Provide conclusions and recommendations on how to realize the potential of forests to help building Green Economy, aimed for Rio+20 in Brazil and UNFF-10.

The report of the conference will be submitted by Germany to the Secretary General of the United Nations, in order to be translated to all official UN languages and to be made available for the preparatory process for Rio+20 and for UNFF-10.

Conference Themes

Theme for plenary discussions: Setting the scene - Contribution of forests to a Green Economy

Key note presentations and panel debate focusing on current contributions of forests to local and national economic development and the role of the forest sector in the transition towards a Green Economy.

Additional presentations and panel debate on how forests can meet demands and what is the potential of forests: provision of livelihoods, income and employment, poverty eradication, energy and raw material supply, development of new bio-based products and services, at the same time ensuring vital forest functions such as provision of clean water, biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration, resilience to climate change, protection against land degradation. This session will not only focus on natural forests but also discuss the role of plantations and planted forests.

The discussion at plenary will explore the issues from the national, regional, and international perspective, identify variations in understanding of the different concepts

¹ notably the conference ‘Counting on the Environment: The Contribution of Forests to Rural Livelihoods’ (www.cifor.cgiar.org/pen/london-conference), taking place in London in June 2011, and the UNFF CLI in Vietnam in Sep. 2011, which will put a focus on the role of markets and the promotion of SFM.

and determine knowledge and information gaps to be bridged so that better informed policies and strategies can be formulated for a Green Economy. Furthermore the trade-off between these manifold demands and expectations vis-à-vis the forests will be discussed and opportunities to manage potentially conflicting goals and to prioritize objectives.

Working groups themes:

The parallel working groups will discuss the following themes:

1. Challenges and Opportunities - Forest valuation and financing

Discussions in this WG will focus on increasing understanding of the full economic value of goods and ecosystem services provided by forests, and on strategies, policies and actions to promote incentives that can turn these values into concrete financing in support of both better forest management and sustainable development (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, Payments for Environmental Services, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and other initiatives, at local, regional and national levels).

2. Challenges and Opportunities - Institutions, Governance and Stakeholders

This WG will focus on strategies, policies and actions to improve institutions and governance at all levels as key enabling circumstances for halting deforestation and forest degradation, sustainably managing forests, enhancing their contributions to development and catalyzing the participation of the full range of stakeholders.

3. Challenges and opportunities – Benefiting people

The third WG will focus on strategies, policies and actions to ensure that forest-dependent local and indigenous communities effectively participate in forest policymaking and management, and benefit from conservation and sustainable use of forest resources, as a key component of approaches towards a Green Economy.

4. Challenges and opportunities – Technology transfer, capacity building, bio-based products and role of the private sector

The fourth WG will exchange ideas and experiences on strategies, policies and actions to build capacity and transfer green technologies related to forests, to develop new bio-based products and to create green employment while ensuring vital forest functions. This group will also address the role of the private sector.

Participants

The conference seeks to attract balanced representation across UNFF and CSD member countries, as well as representatives of major groups and CPF organizations. Interested countries and organizations are asked to nominate 1 or 2 participants to attend the meeting. Some 150-170 participants are expected.

Conference Organization

The conference will unfold over a 4 - day period, starting out with a series of key note speeches and presentations in plenary sessions, followed by parallel working group sessions centered on the main conference themes.

The outcomes of the conference will be summarized and presented in a Chair's report. The conference language is English. Conference discussions will be supported by background papers and presentations.

The meeting and its preparations will be guided by an international Steering Group, composed of representatives from developed and developing countries, UNFF secretariat and FAO. Technical support is provided by BLE (Bundesanstalt für Landwirtschaft) and GIZ (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit). Information on the conference will be posted on a website.

Contacts:

Matthias Schwoerer, Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection

Phone: +49 - 228 99 529 - 3348

Email: matthias.schwoerer@bmelv.bund.de

Daniel Haas, Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development

Phone: +49 – 228 99 535 - 3756

Email: daniel.haas@bmz.bund.de

Logistics and venue :

Herr Girth, Bundesanstalt für Landwirtschaft

Phone: +49 – 228 - 68 45 3952

Email: ktm-team2@ble.de