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Multi-stakeholder dialogue

Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Discussion Paper

Note by the Secretariat

Discussion Paper contributed by the Scientific and Technological Community Major Group**

Summary

This Discussion Paper is a contribution by two networks of forestry research institutions in Africa (FORNESSA) and Asia (APAFRI), in consultation with the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO).

The paper:

- (i). Briefly describes FORNESSA and APAFRI, which provided the materials for the development of the paper;
- (ii). Assesses priority areas for actions, with a focus on the most pressing issues which need urgent action, and how future international arrangements could better address these;
- (iii). Assesses the contribution and influences of the UNFF process on addressing issues of priority for the Scientific and Technological (S&T) Communities Major Group, focusing on the global, regional and sub-regional activities and programmes directly or indirectly contributing to the guiding principles of UNFF;
- (iv). Recommends a number of science and technology-related elements for the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on Forests;
- (v). Recommends modalities for the Multi-Year Programme of Work; and finally
- (vi). Provides concluding remarks and a summary of major recommendations for effective contribution of science-policy linkages to sustainable forest management.

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** This discussion paper is a contribution by the Scientific and Technological Community major group to the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF7). It is prepared by Atse M. Yapi and Sim Heok-Choh, on the basis of information gathered by the Forestry Research Network for Sub-Saharan Africa (FORNESSA) and the Asian Pacific Association of Forestry Institutions (APAFRI), and in collaboration with the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO).

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Advance Unedited Version

I. Introduction

1. This discussion paper is a contribution prepared by FORNESSA and APAFRI on behalf of the Scientific and Technological Community major group to the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF7). It benefited from review comments by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO).

2. FORNESSA is a federation of three sub-regional forestry research networks: AFREA (Association of forestry research institutions in Eastern Africa); CORAF/WECARD (the Forestry and Agro-forestry Research Network of the West and central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development); and SADC/FANR-Research and Training (The Forestry Research and Training unit of the Food, Agriculture and natural Resources Directorate within the SADC Secretariat). Its goal is to strengthen forestry research in sub-Saharan Africa for greater impact on management and conservation of forest and tree resources for sustainable development.

3. APAFRI is a non-governmental organization with over 60 members. Most of the national forest research institutions, and many of the forestry schools, in the Asia-Pacific region which are actively engaged in forestry and forest-related research, are members of APAFRI. Its vision is to be recognized as a dynamic, strong and self-reliant forestry research association in the Asia-Pacific region, which promotes innovative research and development efforts in support of national, regional and community developments. APAFRI

is also a chapter of IUFRO, and has collaborated in various activities with FAO, ITTO, ACIAR, USDA, and other regional and international agencies.

4. The paper assesses (i) the most pressing science and technology-related issues that need to be urgently addressed in order to enhance sustainable forest management and meet the four global objectives on forests agreed upon during the sixth Session of the UNFF; (ii) how UNFF process has contributed to a wider understanding of these issues and helped addressing them. The paper also makes recommendations for a comprehensive and more effective Non-Legally Binding Instrument on all Types of Forests, and also for enhancing the organization of the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) from now to the year 2015.

II. Priority areas for Action

5. This section assesses the most pressing science and technology-related problems that need urgent attention in order to enhance sustainable forest management and meet the four agreed Global Objectives on Forests. It also suggests ways the UNFF could address these problems.

A. Enhancing the Interface of Forest Science and Forest Policy

6. The Scientific and Technological (S&T) Community Major Group would like to emphasize that enhancing the science-policy interface is key to sustainable forest management and to the

successful implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF)/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) proposals for action; and for the achievement of the various resolutions and decisions of the United Nations Forum on Forests; as well as the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and the four Global Objectives agreed and negotiated during the Sixth Session of the UNFF held in February 2006.

7. Consequently, the S&T Community Major Group wishes to see more concerted efforts and commitment by governments, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), regional and sub-regional networks, as well as relevant multilateral environmental agreements, instruments, processes and United Nations bodies to recognize and strengthen the research-policy linkage by:

- (a) Increasing support to sound scientific knowledge generation, and the development and adaptation of forest technologies;
- (b) Improving information access, and enhancing the sharing and exchange of experiences and knowledge, including traditional knowledge and good practices in forest resources utilization, conservation and management;
- (c) Strengthening forestry education and training, as well as research and development;
- (d) Strengthening the capacity of scientists and research organizations from developing countries to participate effectively in joint initiatives and

activities of the CPF on science and technology in support of UNFF and other international forest forums and processes;

- (e) Promoting appropriate mechanisms for greater participation of forest stakeholder groups, including the scientific community, private sector and civil society organizations in the formulation and implementation of forest policies and best practices, and of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management;

B. Enhancing the transformation of research results into usable information and technologies and facilitate their greater extension and adoption

8. The second key priority area for action for the Scientific and Technological Community Major Group is how to transform research results into usable information and technologies which could increase the impact of sound scientific information on forest policy and the sustainable management of forests for greater value and wealth creation to society. It is one thing to generate scientific information; but it is another thing altogether to transform the research findings into usable knowledge and technologies and place these technologies into the hands of policy makers and other forest stakeholders. If forests and other related natural resources are to be saved, they must be highly valued by forest stakeholders, including forest-dependent communities, landowners, forest practitioners and policy decision makers. This is even more important in developing countries, where the fight for sustainable forest management is most often undertaken against the background of a pressing need for economic development and the improvement of external debts and human development indexes. The S&T Community Major Group recognizes

that research needs to demonstrate even more clearly the usefulness of forests and forest resources and communicate the research findings appropriately and effectively to end users in more convincing ways. To this end, UNFF actions in the following directions could be extremely helpful:

- (a) Organize training workshops on how to plan, conduct and organize research activities so that research results can more readily be transformed into usable problem-solving and policy-making instruments.
- (b) Organize communication and interaction programmes (extension services) for a better flow of scientific information between researchers, policy-makers and forest practitioners and managers.
- (c) Develop mechanisms to better associate, as many as possible, relevant stakeholders into the research-policy formulation and implementation processes in order to avoid conflicts and cases of antagonism between the state forestry apparatus and the citizenry, and improve good governance, transparency and accountability in the forest sector.

C. Coordinating and streamlining national, sub-regional and regional development priorities with internationally agreed global objectives on forests

9. Another key priority area for action for the Scientific and Technological Community Major Group is how to harmonize national, sub-regional and regional priorities and strategies with

internationally agreed Global Objectives and resolutions. This is a challenging area, as national priorities and strategies are not always in line with global objectives, which tend to be more in favour of conservation rather than utilization. The key to achieving this harmonization is to avoid opposing conservation to utilization, in favour of the concept of sustainable conservation and utilization of forests and forest resources, which aims at achieving a good balance between resources conservation and use.

10. To this end, the UNFF could endeavor to:

- a) Develop a programme of actions aimed at demonstrating clearly the opportunities embedded in the different forest-related conventions and agreements for developing countries to implement them more easily. Outstanding examples of these are the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which are not always well understood as to the opportunities they hold for developing countries to fully implement them.
- b) Encourage national, sub-regional and regional collaboration in pursuing projects of common interest and pulling resources and capacities to this end, and in partnership with international institutions and CPF member organizations.

D. Mobilization of adequate funding for forestry research, education and extension

11. A fourth important priority area for action is the mobilization of adequate funding for forest research, education and extension, especially and most urgently in developing countries. Indeed most reports from sub-Saharan African countries on the poor progress on the implementation of international conventions and arrangements on forests (e.g., IPF/IFF proposals for action) have indicated that the persistent lack of funding is at the heart of the lack of progress. Africa is a continent where poverty is the defining characteristic. Its richness based on the relative abundance of its natural resources remains only potential as long as economic, social and environmental benefits are not derived from them to improve the livelihood of its large forest-dependent populations. The continent indeed is home for over 50% of the highly indebted poor countries of the world. How can they enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people if they lack the capital base necessary to initiate and sustain livelihood improvement programme and policies? How can they reverse substantively the loss of forest cover through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation, if the needed funding over a fairly long enough period is not available on a sustainable basis? Far-reaching actions and initiatives to promote sustainable forest management require substantial and long-term investments. To achieve this, efforts from the UNFF and the international community could be helpful in:

- a) Seriously looking for ways to reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management; and mobilize significant, and

increased, new and additional, financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management, as clearly stated in the fourth Global Objective agreed during the sixth Session of UNFF.

- b) Serious thought should be given to the conventional project-based approach used to achieve conservation impacts and livelihood improvement. Project-based interventions are limited in time, space and number of beneficiaries, while most forest cover loss is the result of the land and resource use practices of large number of people distributed over areas and acting over a long period of time. A paradigm shift from using short-term instruments to using non-project models in addressing long-term problems is urgently needed.

III. Brief Assessment of how UNFF process has addressed issues of priority for Science and Technological Major Group

12. The Secretary General's Report for UNFF-4 on Scientific Forest-related Knowledge observed that "progress in this area has been made at the international level, but the degree of interaction and the extent to which forest-related scientific knowledge is used for policy-making varies considerably among countries and tends to be low in particular in developing countries." This observation remains largely valid today.

13. Indeed at the global level, in line with the UNFF process and its recommendations, several innovative initiatives have been established in recent years to facilitate

communication between scientists, policy makers and other stakeholders in view of improving science-policy interaction. These initiatives include; (i) intergovernmental forums and subsidiary advisory bodies; (ii) task-oriented expert groups set up by forest-related global conventions, instruments and organizations; (iii) the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF); (iv) the Multi-Stake Holder Dialogues (MSD); (v) increased cooperation between the scientific community and international organizations, leading to key informative publications, such as the FAO State of the World's Forests report, and the ITTO criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

14. Likewise at regional and sub-regional levels, many regional and international organizations and agencies have launched and implemented various initiatives, which directly or indirectly address the issues of generating, disseminating and utilizing forest related knowledge as illustrated by the following examples:

a) Enhancing the interaction between science and policy

- ◆ IUFRO Task Force on the Forest Science/Policy Interface has produced guidelines for research organizations and research scientists providing best practices for the interaction between the science community and policy makers.
- ◆ IUFRO-SPDC has also initiated a training module for forest scientists on "International forest related initiatives and agreements and their implementation in

the context of national forest programmes – linking research and science with practice".

- ◆ IUFRO Task Force on Public Relations in Forest Science has produced a PR manual that will be used in another new IUFRO-SPDC training module on “Communicating forest research – Making science work for policy and management”.
- ◆ Work of the IUFRO Special Project “World Forests, Society and Environment” (IUFRO-WFSE) in compiling a book on “Forests in the Global Balance” and a policy brief to be tabled at UNFF 5.
- ◆ CIFOR research on forests and governance and the recently launched initiative entitled the “Rights and Resources Initiative” in partnership with IUCN, ICRAF, and a number of NGOs

b) Promoting efficient sharing of information and strengthen networks:

- ◆ IUFRO has established the Global Forest Information Service (GFIS) as a CPF Initiative. The service is operated by IUFRO, FAO, CIFOR and other national and international forestry expert institutions. The GFIS Africa project has established five GFIS Service Centres strategically located throughout the ecological zones of

the continent; while in Asia, the GFIS project is being developed with active participation of regional network such as APAFRI.

- ◆ CIFOR has established a carbon forestry website (CarboFor) to serve the communities working on land-use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) activities and the associated climate change.
- ◆ IUFRO and other partners such as the International Foundation of Sciences (IFS) and FORNESSA have organized periodic training courses in research management, proposal preparation, and information management, to strengthen research capacity and capacity for mobilize funding for research:

c) Further implementing International Arrangements on Forests:

- ◆ The positive role of the FAO Regional Forestry Commissions – The African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC) and the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) recommended that member countries take further actions to implement internationally agreed actions related to forests, especially the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, and institute programmes towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. They further recommended that FAO help convey regional meetings for member countries to exchange experiences in working towards sustainable forest management, including successes and

impediments, and make useful recommendations to the Committee on Forests (COFO) and UNFF.

- ◆ These Commissions also recommended that member countries actively participate and provide forestry expertise in the intergovernmental negotiations related to forest, especially the UNFF and the conventions on biodiversity, desertification and climate change.

d) Strengthening regional and sub-regional collaboration between countries:

- ◆ The emergence of regional and sub-regional coordination initiatives: A number of regional and sub-regional partnership initiatives emerged in recent years to create platforms for coordination and consultation between countries and donor agencies and development partner countries. The New partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) is an example of these at regional level; while CEFDHAC (Conférence sur les écosystèmes de forêts denses humides d’Afrique Centrale) born out of the Brazzaville Process, and COMIFAC (Conférence des ministres en charges des forêts d’Afrique Centrale) formed following the 1999 Summit of Heads of State, held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, and which contributes to the harmonization of national forest policies and actions, are but two outstanding examples at sub-regional level in the Congo Basin, the second largest contiguous track of tropical forest in the world. In the Asia-Pacific, the Asia Pacific Forest Genetic Resources Programme (APFORGEN) participated by 14 Asia-Pacific

nations has achieved much progress in sharing information and exchanging experiences in forest genetic resources conservation and management. The programme, initiated by APAFRI and International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI, recently renamed as Bioversity International) has furthered boosted by funding from ITTO for a sub-programme covering 7 out of its 14 participating countries. Other notable examples from the Asia Pacific region would include the various programmes on poverty reduction and communities forestry initiated by regional organizations such as the Asia Forest Partnership (AFP) and the Asia Forest Network (AFN). Increasingly too, the Secretariat of Pacific Community (SPC), has assisted many of the Pacific Island Nations to participate effectively in regional and international fora by mobilizing resources and building capacity.

- ◆ Regional and sub-regional forest information promotion initiatives and research networks have been established to strengthen research capacities, promote collaboration and efficient provision and sharing of relevant information, with the overall goal of strengthening science-policy interaction for sustainable forest management. FORNESSA, AFORNET (African Forestry Research Network), IPGRI forest genetic resources network (SAFORGEN) in Africa; and the Asia Pacific Forest Genetic Resources Programme (APFORGEN) established by IPGRI and APAFRI, currently hosted by APAFRI, in Asia-Pacific; are but few example of regional forest research-related network; while AFREA (in Eastern

Africa), CORAF/WECARD (in West and Central Africa), and SADC-FARN/Research and training Unit (in Southern Africa) are outstanding examples of sub-regional forest research networks. The GFIS Africa Project initiated by IUFRO and which is contributing to enhancing access to and provision of quality forest-related information, especially that available through electronic media, is another outstanding initiative with five well-established eco-regional information centers strategically located throughout Africa. APAFRI, assisted by CIFOR, is in the initial stages of developing GFIS Asia.

♦ At the national level, a number of initiatives are emerging in recent years, mainly through partnership with the NFP Facility Programme hosted by FAO. Indeed, in line with UNFF recommendations to encourage increased multi-stakeholder participation in sustainable forest management, the NFP facility programme has successfully mobilized the participation of civil society organizations and local communities and individuals in forest policy formulation and implementation in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In Ghana for example, through the partnership with the NFP Facility Programme, Forest Forums are being established enthusiastically in each of the ten (10) administrative regions of the country. The main objective of these forums is to allow the National Forestry Commission to cast the net wider in seeking relevant information for forest policy formulation and implementation. Likewise in Nigeria, through partnership with the NFP Facility Programme, five studies of the ecological

zones of the country are currently underway. The main purpose of the partnership established between Nigeria and the National Forest Programme Facility is to strengthen the participation of local people and communities in sustainable forest management, and promote community based forest management (CBFM) as a policy strategy to achieve sustainable forest management. Similar actions are being undertaken in Asia and Latin America.

IV. Recommendations for Non-Legally Binding Instruments on Forests

15. Science and technology constitute a major asset, which when properly developed and utilized, can play a vital role in the formulation and implementation of forest policy for sustainable forest management. This has been already recognized both by Agenda 21 (chapters 31 and 35) and the UNFF, including through the inclusion of forest-related scientific knowledge in the agenda of a number of its previous sessions.

16. However, future international agreements/arrangements need to go further and beyond recognizing the importance of Science and Technology, by seriously considering ways to enhance the interface between science and policy, to support the greater extension and adoption of research results, to facilitate research capacity building, and to mobilize funding for research in order to unlock the potential for scientific information and appropriate technologies to contribute to sustainable development. The following suggestions are ways for future international arrangements on forests to better address these urgent proposals:

- ♦ Support joint initiatives on science and technology to strengthen the contribution of research to more informed decision making at the global level.
- ♦ Support the application of scientific and technological innovations as well as traditional forest-related knowledge that help indigenous and local communities undertake sustainable forest management;
- ♦ Find innovative ways to reduce the debt burden of developing countries so as to channel funds into sustainable management of natural resources including scientific knowledge development as a viable support to the process.
- ♦ Increase donor interest in collaborative initiatives, which could help advance implementation of the urgent proposals, through effective flows of information at all level of decision-making, especially to increase awareness of policy-makers, land-owners, communities and representatives outside the forest sector;

17. The S&T Major Group wishes to stress that for the proposed Non-Legally Binding Instrument on Forests to be comprehensive and effective, it should address also the following additional issues, which are equally important for the science-policy interface, especially in developing countries:

- ♦ Support and improve training programmes in developing countries so that emerging issues and challenges such as conflict resolution, dialogue between forest stakeholders, including dialogue between forest scientists, administrators and donors, intersectoral linkages and participatory approaches to address sustainability issues, are properly addressed.
- ♦ Support and promote dynamic networking and collaboration between sub-regional, regional and international forestry training and research institutions as a powerful way to mitigate not only capacity constraints, but also unproductive competition for financial resources, which does not always allow the best use of resources and obtain far reaching results in addressing global problems of sub-regional, regional and international in nature.
- ♦ Empowering and building capacity of local people, communities and authorities to effectively participate in sustainable forest management, and perform the new and challenging roles they have to play in the decentralization process, which is gaining momentum in the developing world.

18. Indeed, if research capacities are strengthened and funds for forest research mobilized adequately, then, there is a greater chance to:

- ♦ Address effectively and in a timely fashion the knowledge gaps and set research priorities, which in turn will contribute to:
- ♦ Improving linkages between science and policy processes;
- ♦ Promoting efficient sharing of information and strengthening networks;
- ♦ Applying participatory mechanisms to integrate research into planning processes.

V. Recommendations for the Multi-Year Programme of Work

19. The S&T Community Major Group supports the decision of the Sixth Session of UNFF that, following its seventh session in 2007, the UNFF shall meet biennially for a period of up to two weeks.

Furthermore, the S&T Community Major Group wishes to propose that:

- a)** During each session, time slots be allocated for specific thematic panel discussions or dialogues of multi-national interest on issues of high concern to the Forum in order to share and exchange existing information, including

traditional forest-related knowledge (TFRK), and identify knowledge gaps and additional information needs;

- b) During each session, time slots should also be allocated for addressing cross-cutting issues, such as funding for implementing elements of NLBI;
- c) During the years when the UNFF does not meet, regional events should be organized to address region-specific issues with global impacts, or lessons learned from regional implementation of international initiatives; contributions of the scientific community to these regional events should be invited.

20. Bearing in mind that other international agencies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), have regional offices or commissions, which organize regular regional events, events during the inter-sessional years, could best be organized in conjunction with these regional offices/commissions. This would avoid undesirable duplication and diluting the scarce resources, and often result in unfocused, inconclusive, and at times disastrous outcomes.

21. Finally, the S&T Community Major Group would like to suggest that:

- ♦ **The Multi-Year Programme of Work focuses on a limited number of practical and concrete activities in line with the constraints limiting progress towards sustainable forest management, in general and the achievement of the four Global objectives defined for the NLBI.**

- ♦ **For each of the identified activities, practical modalities for effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation must be carefully defined in order to facilitate assessment of progress and impacts.**

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

22. Achieving sustainable management of the world's forests and forest resources is certainly one of the greatest challenges facing the world today. If the international community holds this truth to be self-evident, then courageous actions should be taken consequently, including bringing scientific and technological knowledge to bear in facing up this challenge. The international community should consider drastic recommendations including putting real power and commitment behind the proposed elements of the NLBI in order to facilitate their implementation. With regard to the proposals for action related to Science and Technologies, it is recommended that:

- ♦ Commitment should be affirmed to invest in strengthening forest research capacities and support research networks and activities, in

particular in economically disadvantaged countries, so that science and research can make a difference to real life problems through the timely delivery of utilizable science-based solutions.

- ♦ Appropriate support from governments, CPF members and other international organizations, be mobilized to assist regional and sub-regional forest research networks involved in building forest research capacities, improving communications, information sharing and networking between forest scientists, research institutions, universities, policy-makers, local communities, and other stakeholders in the forest and other land-based sectors.

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