


Forests in a changing environment (agenda item 5):
Key issues; key documents


- Forests and climate change (SGR-E/CN.18/2009/4, CPF Strategic Framework on Forests and Climate Change)
- Reversing the loss of forest cover, preventing forest degradation in all types of forests and combating desertification, including low forest cover countries (SGR:E/CN.18/2009/5)
- Forests and biodiversity conservation, including protected areas (SGR: E/CN.18/2009/6)
- Forests in a changing environment: low forest cover countries, small island developing states and high and medium forest cover countries (Secretariat Note: E/CN.18/2009/7)
- Recommendations for addressing the key challenges of forests in a changing environment (SGR: E/CN.18/2009/8)



Highlights of the SGR on Forests and climate change (E.CN/18/2009/4):

→ Climate change impacts on forests

- Increasing evidence that climate change is seriously affecting forests (changes in temperature and rainfall = changes in forest physiology, structure, species composition and health)
- Forests as a microcosm of sustainable development: livelihoods, societal well-being and key environmental services
- Climate change places additional stresses on people who depend on forests



Forests and climate change:


→ Forest-based climate change strategies

- Large amounts of carbon in forest ecosystems - 638 billion tons (2005) - more carbon in forests than in the atmosphere
- Deforestation and forest degradation are primary drivers of carbon emissions from forests, 17.4 % of total human-generated CO₂ emissions (2004)
- Climate Change negotiations & REDD
 - emissions from deforestation and forest degradation account for 35% of emissions in developing countries and 65 per cent in LDCs
 - Bali Action Plan
 - UNFCCC COP 15




Forests and climate change: → Opportunities & Challenges

- Consider the full scope – forests are much more than “carbon sticks”, they provide a wide range of goods and services
- to realize the maximum potential of forests contributions to climate change, REDD should be defined and elaborated within an appropriate framework.
- UNFF and its member States have an opportunity to contribute to the global climate change agenda through the promotion of SFM, including mitigation and adaptation measures related to climate change
- Outcome of UNFF negotiations on financing SFM could contribute substantively to the ongoing climate change negotiations
- Financing sustainable forest management is key to the full realization of forests potential for mitigating GHGs as well as addressing other forest-sector challenges.
- CPF Strategic Framework provides a unique approach to addressing climate change through SFM




Highlights of the SGR on reversing loss of forest cover, deforestation, forest degradation and desertification (E/CN.18/2009/5):

- Deforestation, forest degradation and desertification affects over one billion people, principally in developing countries
- Deforestation = approximately 13 million hectares/ year, net loss of forest cover = 7.3 million hectares (2000 –2005)
- 3 % of the global forest cover lost (1990 – 2005)
- Deforestation took place mostly in South America & Africa (2000 to 2005)
- 25% of land degradation associated with broad-leaved forests, 17 % with boreal forests, and 18 % with agricultural lands




Deforestation, forest degradation & desertification → Underlying Causes

- Some progress made in identifying and addressing causes, but definitely not enough
- These include the need for institutional capacity for SFM; strengthening forest law enforcement; broader participation; recognition of multiple values of forests
- Importance of coordinated cross-sectoral policy approach
- Impact of armed conflict on forests has emerged in recent years
- Drylands particularly vulnerable to land degradation leading to desertification
- By 2020, 135 million people at risk of being driven from their lands because of desertification, nearly half of them (60 million) are in sub-Saharan Africa




Combating deforestation, forest degradation & desertification: opportunities & challenges

- Afforestation, reforestation and the establishment of planted forests among most effective ways, as seen in several LFCCs
- Financial resources and transfer of environmentally sound technologies needed, especially for developing countries including LFCCs and SIDS
- On a global level, forests are being addressed in a fragmented and uncoordinated manner
- Strengthen implementation of the forest instrument - strengthen collaboration



Highlights of the SGR on Forests and Biodiversity Conservation, including Protected Areas (E/CN.18/2009/6):

- Provides an overview of forest biodiversity conservation
- Highlights relevant conservation approaches through SFM
- Explores potential opportunities to develop closer collaborative links with biodiversity-related organizations and processes, as well as integrated work approaches.




Forests and biodiversity

- 80 % of terrestrial biodiversity found in forests, mostly in tropical forests
- Deforestation, mainly conversion of forests to agricultural land, and other types of forest degradation are main drivers of forest biodiversity loss
- Climate change, natural disasters, forest fires, airborne pollution, forest fragmentation, invasive alien species also play a role in loss of forest biodiversity
- Over 11% of global forest area is designated mainly for biodiversity conservation




Forests and Biodiversity

- Conservation of forest biodiversity - widely recognized as an important SFM objective
- Effective management of protected areas is of critical importance
- Institutional options and improved policy measures required to promote the fair and equitable sharing of costs and benefits of protected areas
- Designation of a forest area to protected area is not enough to ensure effective conservation



Forests and biodiversity → Challenges and Opportunities

- Further protection analysis and capacity-building, particularly for important types of forests for biodiversity conservation, such as tropical montane cloud forests, mangrove forests and riparian forests
- Addressing the impacts of emerging challenges on forests such as climate change, food security, biofuels...
- Increased cooperation with relevant processes and NGOs
- The International Year of Biodiversity in 2010 and the International Year of Forests in 2011 -an excellent opportunity for cooperation



Highlights of the Secretariat Note on Forests in a changing environment:

→ Cross-cutting issues (E/CN.18/2009/7)

- International donors have focused on few large countries with large areas of forest cover, and less attention has been paid to LFCCs, SIDS and high and medium forest cover countries
 - LFCCs in arid and semi-arid areas are particularly susceptible to land degradation and desertification (deforestation and forest degradation combined with global warming)
 - Like LFCCs, SIDS are highly vulnerable to climate change impacts (land-use changes combined with global warming)
 - High and medium forest cover countries possess high biodiversity but also face severe deforestation (climate change interacting with deforestation and fires)



Highlights of the Secretary General Recommendations for Addressing Key Challenges of Forests in a Changing Environment (E/CN.18/2009/8)

- Focuses on the inextricable links among the three issues contained in forests in a changing environment
- Underscores the forest instrument as an effective tool for integrating the issues of climate change, deforestation, forest degradation, desertification, and biodiversity in a holistic and coordinated manner within the framework of SFM
- Provides a set of recommendations on the three issues contained in forests in a changing environment at all levels
- Action-oriented, targeted to key players and areas
- Encourage use of NFPs in national sustainable development strategies

...

→ Recommendations



- Establish national coordination mechanisms comprised of national focal points for UNFF, CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC and others to address the aggregate impact of these three issues
- Take advantage of UNFF central role in the United Nations to promote sustainable forest management in the global sustainable development and environmental agendas,
- Welcome the launching of the CPF Strategic Framework for Forests and Climate Change as a coordinated forest-sector response to climate change, and encourage its implementation...
- Invite donor countries, multilateral funding organizations and international organizations to increase funding for sustainable forest management.
- Invite the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions to include the Secretariat of the Forum in its work when forest-related issues are discussed.



Thank you!

United Nations Forum on Forests
<http://www.un.org/esa/forests>