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Antalya, 10-14 October 2011

Review of activities in the International Year of Forests**Note by the secretariat***Summary*

The year 2011 was declared the International Year of Forests by the General Assembly of the United Nations in order to benefit current and future generations by raising awareness and strengthening sustainable management and conservation of all types of forests.

This paper presents a list of activities that the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section undertook during 2011 to celebrate forests. It recalls some recommendations from the meeting of the TC/EFC Bureaux held in Geneva on 24 and 25 February 2010 and the last session of the European Forestry Commission held in Lisbon on 27-30 April 2010 on a possible way forward in organizing a second European Forest Week in the future.

I. International Year of Forests 2011

1. The UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section held its opening event for the International Year of Forests 2011 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, on 14 February. Together with the Permanent Mission of the United States and the UNOG Cultural Programme, the Forestry and Timber Section organized the exhibition “The Art of Trees – a Forest Gallery”. This exhibition in the Hall des Pas Perdus of the Palais des Nations included almost 100 living trees, together with illustrations by United States artist Monte Dolack, and other forest and wood products from North America and Europe.
2. This forest gallery was an occasion to reflect the growing appreciation of the contribution of forests to economic, environmental and social wellbeing. After the exhibition the trees were planted in the park of the Palais des Nations, further enriching the biodiversity of the park. Two videos were prepared by the United Nations Television and the United States Mission respectively on the exhibit. These are available at, <http://www.youtube.com/user/UNECE#p/u/0/u6wxKBFz1Xg> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qogj0qUt82o>.
3. To celebrate World Forestry Day on 21 March, a tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera* L.) from the exhibit, was planted by distinguished guests, which included: the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Mr. Ján Kubiš; the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, Ambassador Betty E. King; the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations, Ambassador Hannu Himanen; the Director of the FAO Liaison Office in Geneva, Mr. Abdessalam Ould Ahmed; and the Director of Administration from the United Nations Office in Geneva, Mr. Clemens Adams.
4. The tree planting ceremony officially opened the UNECE/FAO Regional Forest Information Week, 21-24 March, organized to enhance knowledge on forests and communicate the latest developments of the sector in the UNECE region. The week featured a series of events including a seminar on the State of Forests in the North American and Pan-European region; the annual session of the joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics, a roundtable on forest information challenges in the region; and a “zero meeting” on a possible working party to facilitate exchange of expert advice based on the work of UNECE/FAO Teams of Specialists. The week also marked the launch of a 2011 PhD Thesis Award on sustainable forest management and forest product markets in the UNECE region. This award, sponsored by the Geneva independent asset management house Pictet, will be presented at the opening of the joint TC/EFC session in Antalya, Turkey (item 2 of ECE/TIM/2011/1 – FO: EFC/2011/1).
5. To celebrate World Environment Day and the International Year of Forests, the section took part in two events. The first one was a press briefing organized by the United Nations Environment Programme on 3 June, where Roman Michalak, Senior Forestry Officer at the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber section presented the UNECE/FAO/Forest Europe State of Europe's Forests 2011 preliminary findings. The press briefing was recorded and is available at, <http://4am.ch/data/20110531-unepl/>. The second event, a roundtable targeting People and the Social and Economic Value of Forests was organized by the Geneva Environment Network on 6 June. Paola Deda, Section Chief, presented the Section's work on wood energy with a presentation on “Economy and Renewable Energy”. More information on this event is available at, <http://genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/?q=en/events/forests-nature-your-service-roundtable>.
6. Other contributions to the International Year of Forests 2011 included a stakeholder consultation meeting to develop a draft action plan on forests and the green economy

(ECE/TIM/2011/4 – FO:EFC/11/4). The Action Plan will be presented as a regional sectoral contribution from the forest sector at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). A workshop on ‘Payment for Ecosystem Services – what role for a green economy’ was also organized on 4-6 July as part of the UNECE Forest and Water Week (4-8 July). Other events are planned in Geneva for the end of the IYF. At the time of writing, the Secretariat is consulting with some Geneva based missions to agree upon those activities.

7. Major publications are being released this year, including the UNECE/FAO/Forest Europe report on the State of Europe’s Forests 2011 and the new European Forest Sector Outlook Study. These publications are key outputs toward strengthening the forest sector and its contribution to sustainable development throughout the UNECE region. In addition, the Section released the Joint Wood Energy Enquiry, a reference source of information on wood energy, which gives a comprehensive overview on the role of wood energy within the region. The enquiry also promotes cross-sectoral communication and cooperation between the energy and forestry sectors in the region.

8. Finally, to raise awareness on the role of forests and communicate the latest developments of the forest sector in the region, the secretariat developed an explanatory video presenting the work of the Section and its contributions to sustainable forest management in the region. The video will be presented at the joint session in October.

II. European Forest Week

9. The first ever European Forest Week (EFW) took place on 20-24 October 2008 in Rome, Brussels and all over Europe. Rome-based events brought together approximately 450 participants who met in plenary sessions, a number of policy dialogues and partner events. In Brussels, a conference was organized by the European Economic and Social Committee. In parallel and all over Europe, almost 150 in-country events took place in more than 30 countries. These events brought together policy makers, advisers, researchers, the private sector and civil society from the forest sector, but also from other sectors, in particular from the water, energy and the architectural/building community.

10. The TC/EFC Bureaux meeting, held in Geneva on 24-25 February 2010, recommended that the next EFW focus on in-country activities. Bureaux members emphasized that very few resources were needed to gather information from the participating countries. Furthermore, these activities showed countries’ enthusiasm in sharing their knowledge of the forest sector with various audiences. The Bureaux proposed organizing a second EFW.

11. Results from a survey developed by the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section together with the UNECE/FAO Forest Communicators Network showed that 100% of the respondents would be in favour of organizing future similar forest-related events under the umbrella of another EFW. Following such success in celebrating forests at local, regional and national levels, and raising awareness on forest related issues, the idea of organizing a second European Forest Week was discussed at the last session of the EFC in Lisbon in 2010. The Commission decided to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the events related to the IYF and to decide on whether to organize a second EFW.

12. The TC and EFC may wish to take note of activities undertaken by the Forestry and Timber section during the IYF and comment on their countries’ experience, impact and effectiveness of the IYF on their forest-related activities. On this basis, the TC and EFC may also wish to consider organizing a EFW in 2013 in the margins of the next TC/EFC meeting.

Annex

Conference

Thirty-seventh Session

Rome, 25 June - 2 July 2011

International Year of Forests 2011

1. This report documents FAO's contribution to the International Year of Forests 2011¹, including FAO's role, as chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, in facilitating international cooperation. The attention of the Conference is also drawn to the importance of continued recognition of sustainable forest management beyond the Year.
2. The Conference is invited to:
 - (a) encourage countries to engage actively in the celebration of the International Year of Forests 2011 and enhance cooperation to this end;
 - (b) welcome the cooperation within the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and request FAO to continue its efforts in coordinating these activities;
 - (c) recognize the importance of adequate resources in successful public awareness activities and encourage countries and FAO to seek synergies and innovative approaches in this regard;
 - (d) note the important role of an International Day of Forests in promoting sustainable forest management and support its establishment, and recommend that FAO serve as an information hub for events related to the celebration of that day

A. Introduction

3. The UN General Assembly, in Resolution 61/193, declared 2011 the International Year of Forests (IYF) and requested the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) to serve as the international focal point for the implementation of the Year, in collaboration with Governments, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and international, regional and subregional organizations and processes as well as relevant major groups. The General Assembly has invited, in particular, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, as the Chair of the CPF, within its mandate, to support the implementation of the Year.
4. The purpose of the Year is to *recognize* that forests and sustainable forest management can contribute significantly to sustainable development, poverty eradication and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals. The Resolution *emphasizes* the need for sustainable management of all types of forests and that concerted efforts are required to raise awareness at all levels in order to strengthen the sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests for the benefit of current and future generations.

¹ Resolution 61/193 of the UN General Assembly, adopted on 20 December 2006.

5. The Year was officially launched at the high level segment of the 9th Session of UNFF on 2 February 2011. In support, FAO provided a briefing to Members and the public on 9 February by introducing its flagship forestry publication, the State of the World's Forests 2011 and the IYF Toolkit for Communicators.

6. For celebrating the Year, FAO has developed its activities in three main directions: cooperating with, and providing support to, its Member Nations; collaborating with members of the CPF and other international and regional partners; and the Organization's own actions. This document provides an account of these clusters of activities.

B. Cooperation with Member Nations

Toolkit for Communicators

7. The International Year of Forests offers a significant opportunity to promote sustainable forest management nationally and internationally. To support national efforts, FAO has developed a toolkit as an open source that can be used by both national authorities and civil society. It contains several components, some of them taken from the international focal point, such as the logo and the possible key messages, while others have been developed by FAO, including outreach suggestions and media interview know-how, design elements such as posters and web-banners. Special video spots of 30 and 60 seconds have been produced in all FAO official languages² for advertising the Year through television programmes. The videos have been used in several national televisions as well as international networks, e.g. CNN International, and arrangements are underway with others, for example EURONEWS. The toolkit also contains a 11-minute film (with a 2-minute version for special broadcasts) on one recent success story in forestry, a project in the Philippines on assisted natural regeneration³.

8. Other elements of the Toolkit include a collection of forest-related photographs and key publications of the FAO Forestry Department as well as information on ongoing IYF-related activities of the CPF.

9. The toolkit is an online instrument⁴ and will evolve throughout the Year, but a DVD version has also been produced and disseminated in early April to all national forestry administrations, FAO regional offices and country representations to ensure large distribution and wide effects.

10. FAO Forestry's IYF website provides additional supporting information related to the Year, including reports on relevant international events and an online calendar of international days recognized by the UN and which are directly or indirectly related to forests.

B. Collaborative activities

11. Many events to celebrate the International Year of Forests are currently under preparation. Some examples are given below.

² The 30-second version is also available in German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese and Turkish, the 60-second version in German, Italian, and Portuguese

³ The project itself has been nominated for the Saouma Award

⁴ <http://www.fao.org/forestry/iyf2011/68425/en/>

Contributions of Forests to a Green Economy

12. Germany, with support from Finland and Austria⁵, is working to host a conference on “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 in support of the work of the 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. The objective of the conference is to exchange ideas and experiences concerning the role of forests and sustainable forest management in progressing towards a Green Economy and provide recommendations for realizing the potentials offered by forests. The conference also aims to contribute to the outcomes of the Rio+20 summit and UNFF10.

13. Parallel to this conference, FAO is also cooperating with Germany in organizing the International Bonn Forest Days (6 to 9 October 2011) at a central market place in Bonn to offer an international theme show for interested countries from all continents to present raw materials, food, crafts as well as information on cultural and spiritual values from forests in an interactive way. The event seeks to promote the key theme of the Year, “Forests for People”.

The role of forests, forestry and forest products in sustainable development

14. FAO is working with the Government of India on a global conference titled “Rediscovering wood: the key to a sustainable future”. The conference (19-22 October, 2011, Bangalore, India) intends to examine how the use of wood can make a greater contribution to sustainable development and how wood producers and users can benefit from increased prosperity and the growing demands for more sustainable consumption and lifestyles.

15. While the three pillars of sustainability (economic, social and environmental) have already been frequently discussed at international forestry events, the sustainability of wood use attracted much less attention. The conference intends to explore how far the social dimensions of wood use (culture, traditions and aesthetics) can be integrated into the development of the sector. It is hoped that this would bring new perspectives and shed more light on how wood use can continue to contribute to sustainable development and remain firmly connected to human life.

Support to international networks in forest communication

16. As requested by COFO⁶, FAO is elaborating a proposal for strengthening forest communication capacities in countries and regions, including the capacity of FAO decentralized offices. The concept is focused on developing a forest communication practitioner training module applicable at country or regional level, and on developing a longer-term strategy for establishing and/or strengthening regional forest communication practitioner networks.

Support to national efforts

17. FAO is supporting national IYF activities based on requests from Member Nations. The Regional and Sub-regional Offices are playing a key role in providing such support. Requests cover a broad range of services, from information resources and technical and logistical support to events and initiatives, and financial contributions. It may be noted in

⁵ Other countries, including Brazil, China, Japan, Ghana, Mexico and the United States have also provided input to the conference.

⁶ C 2011/18

this regard that the Organization is making every effort to meet expectations, within the given resource constraints.

Activities within the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)

18. FAO, as chair of the CPF, initiated a new cooperation on forest communication and convened a working meeting for communication officers of CPF member organizations to develop a proposal for collaborative actions. CPF members have agreed on a special timetable for the Year, assigning forest-relevant topics to each month and identifying lead and contributing agencies from among CPF members for developing specific programmes related to these topics. Activities represent a broad spectrum from the minimum requirement of a joint CPF press release to organizing major events such as Forest Day 5 in relation to climate change.

19. Relevant information, news items and the press releases are made available on the FAO Forestry IYF website⁷. Altogether 26 themes were identified for the year, linked with the relevant international day whenever possible. FAO is the lead agency on six of the themes: Forest and water; Managing risks of forests under climate change; Forests and tourism; Urban forestry; Forests and food security; Forests and mountains, and is a contributing agency for additional eight topics⁸.

20. Other areas of cooperation are also being discussed by CPF members including possible joint production of information and media products as well as the use of existing communication networks to promote the Year.

FAO Activities

21. Plans at the regional offices and in headquarters include a broad range of activities, from publications to organizing events and conducting outreach activities. The following section provides a non-exhaustive list of planned and already implemented actions.

Publications and audio-visual materials

22. The State of the World's Forests 2011 was the first major contribution to the Year with a special chapter devoted to the forest and people nexus, and was introduced at the launching event of the Year in February. Fourteen other major publications are planned for the year covering the widest possible range of topics related to forests and sustainable forest management, mostly in the form of Forestry Working Papers.

23. One special issue of FAO publication *Unasylva* was devoted to showcasing, through the different international days, how forests and trees are inextricably linked with almost every aspect of human life. The other two issues of this publication planned for this year will focus on forests and natural disasters, and on forest degradation. Other periodicals, for example the 2011 issues of the *Nature and Fauna Magazine* of the Regional Office for Africa will also be dedicated to the Year.

24. A series of fact sheets, related to the "CPF monthly themes" and based on most recent information including the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010, will be produced and published on the web in support of the communication activities presented in the previous section.

25. Considerations are given to producing additional short video features on key forestry issues around the world that could potentially include topics such as the economic

⁷ <http://www.fao.org/forestry/iyf2011/68850/en/>

⁸ For details please visit <http://www.fao.org/forestry/iyf2011/69194/en/>

significance of dryland forest commodities, forests and watershed management, forests and food security, sustainable mountain development. Implementation of these plans is subject to availability of funds.

Events

26. Many important related events are taking place during the year. For instance, the Second Mediterranean Forest Week took place on 5-7 April in Avignon, France, featuring main achievements of, and key challenges to, forestry in the region and also celebrating the 100 years anniversary of *Silva Mediterranea*. The event was very well attended and attracted considerable media attention, thanks to the strong commitment of member countries and partner organizations.

27. The FAO European Forestry Commission will hold its 36th session, organized jointly with the 68th session of the UNECE Timber Committee, on 10-14 October, in Antalya (Turkey) at the kind invitation of the Government of Turkey. The joint session will focus on forests and green economy and be built around the central topic of the Year.

28. The Asia Pacific Forestry Commission will hold its 24th session on 7-11 November in Beijing at the generous invitation of the Government of China. The session will coincide with the Second Asia Pacific Forestry Week: "New challenges – new opportunities", the most important forestry event in the region in 2011 which is expected to attract 1500-2000 participants, providing ample opportunities for raising awareness of forest issues and the Year in general. The Week will host several professional and outreach activities intended for the broadest possible audiences. The programme of the event was still being formulated at the time of preparation of this document.

29. FAO is organizing/co-organizing other events that also provide ample opportunities for promoting the International Year of Forests. Most notable among these are the International Model Forest Network Global Forum in March in Spain, the 5th International Wildland Fire Conference in May in South Africa and the 2nd World Landslide Forum in October in Rome. Special attention would be paid to World Food Day celebration which could provide an important opportunity to demonstrate the strong linkages between forests and food security and highlight the role of forests as an important source of food and livelihood for huge populations, often the poorest and most vulnerable people among them.

30. Steps are made to make the Staff Day in 2011 a global organization-wide effort to celebrate forests by planting trees. In Italy the Corpo Forestale dello Stato has expressed readiness to provide venue for such an event if FAO so wishes. In addition, cooperation partners could be sought for in every country hosting an FAO office to make it a truly global event.

Web-based activities

31. The FAO Forestry Department has launched a dedicated website⁹ to provide up-to-date information related to the Year. In addition to traditional use of the web, more innovative approaches are also tested including the creation of social media-based communication platforms, a special website presenting information for children, and applications designed for hand-held devices targeting the most technology-savvy adolescent and young adult generations.

⁹ <http://www.fao.org/forestry/iyf2011/en/>

Media and outreach

32. Efforts are made in cooperation with the Office of Corporate Communications and External Relations (OCE) to achieve a steady media attention throughout the year. In addition to press releases and media material on key events and publications, several interviews have been organized with national and international media, and although no complete inventory can be presented at this early stage, quick surveys show considerably more intense presence in the media than in similar periods of any other year.

33. Outreach activities are targeting various audiences, some are for more professional ones, such as the standing exhibition “Forest Corner” at FAO Headquarters following the monthly topics of the CPF cooperation or the Art of Trees exhibition in the Palais des Nations in Geneva, while others are targeting the general public, like rock concerts (e.g. the Lollapalozza in early April in Santiago, Chile, or the Earth Day Concert in Rome), cultural events, advertisements placed in public transport facilities, or joint celebration with the Italian Forestry Authority in October. Opportunities for such cooperation are and will be continuously sought throughout the year.

34. FAO has made important steps in establishing a strong visual identity for the Year. Since the launching event, all electronic correspondence, the FAO website, and offices worldwide, including headquarters, carry visual elements, marking the celebration of the Year.

Sustaining attention to Forests

35. The IYF underscores the importance of sustainable forest management and highlights the potential advantages to establish one or more mechanisms to sustain attention to forests. At its 20th session (Rome, 4-8 October 2010), the Committee on Forestry (COFO) recommended to countries and FAO to consider the strengthening of the idea and profile of the observation of an international day of forests¹⁰.

36. A number of such mechanisms exist, mostly outside forestry and mainly in the form of international or world days.

37. The idea of having such a day has a long history, more recently the General Assembly of the European Confederation of Agriculture made a recommendation¹¹ in this regard in 1971. In November 1971, The Sixteenth Session of FAO Conference “*recommended that FAO should support the establishment of a World Forestry Day (WFD), and cooperate in an appropriate manner to this end with Member Nations*”¹². Although this was a forward looking recommendation by the Conference and a bold step towards recognizing the multiple and significant roles forests play, it has not fully materialized. As a result, at present there is no one globally recognized day to celebrate forests. According to various sources researched recently, about 40 countries are celebrating forests under different names such as Forestry Day, Arbor Day or Tree Day, and on different dates, depending partly on climate and suitable planting season, but mostly

¹⁰ Paragraph 46 of document C 2011/18.

¹¹ 23rd General Assembly of the European Confederation of Agriculture (CEA) in Santa Cruz de Tenerife on 21st October 1971: “La CEA, au nom des propriétaires forestiers européens, prendra, dans les plus brefs délais, l’initiative en vue de l’introduction d’une journée mondiale de la forêt”.

¹² FAO Conference Report http://www.fao.org/docrep/C3592E/C3592e08.htm#chapter_4 special programmes.

on 21 March. The date is believed to be set at the autumnal equinox in the Southern, and the vernal equinox in the Northern Hemisphere.

38. Most recently the 9th session of UNFF considered the need for a mechanism for lasting recognition of the role of forests and recommended to ECOSOC and through it to the General Assembly "*to consider the establishment of an International Day of the Forest with the aim to recognize the significant contribution of forests to sustainable development, the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, and the corresponding need to strengthen the sustainable management of all types of forests for the benefit of current and future generations*"¹³.

¹³ Item 6, paragraph 5 in:
[http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/session_documents/unff9/Adopted resolution at 530PM
4 Feb 2011.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/session_documents/unff9/Adopted%20resolution%20at%20530PM%204%20Feb%202011.pdf)