

Report of the Indian Delegation

**25TH Session of
ASIA PACIFIC FORESTRY COMMISSION,
ROTORUA, NEW ZEALAND**

Dated: 05-08 November, 2013

Theme: Forests for Prosperity

Asia Pacific Forestry Commission:

India is part of Asia Pacific Forestry Commissions, one of the six Regional Forestry Commissions of FAO of United Nations, established by the FAO between 1947 and 1959 and deals with scientific and technical forestry issues in the respective regions to guide and strengthen collaboration in the forestry sector among member countries. For more than 60 years, the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission has served the countries of the region as the largest and most inclusive inter-governmental organization addressing forests and forestry issues and challenges. The Commission has membership of 33 countries. The recent APFC activities include the Asia-Pacific Forestry Sector Outlook Study, "In Search of Excellence: Exemplary forest management in Asia and the Pacific", formulation of regional and national forestry codes of practice, and regional cooperation in addressing the threats from forest invasive species.

The twenty-fifth session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) was held in Rotorua, New Zealand, from 5 to 8 November 2013. Delegates from 28 member countries and 2 United Nations organizations participated in the session, along with observers and representatives from 16 regional and inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. From India the participants were:

1. DGF & SS- Shri K. Jude Sekar
2. ADG (FC)- Shri A. K. Srivastava

The day to day programme with Agenda items discussed are given below:

Tuesday, the 5th November, 2013:

1. Adoption of Agenda: The session started on Tuesday, the 5th November, 2013. The outgoing APFC Chair (Mr. Su Chunyu) from China welcomed the participants. The Agenda was adopted.

2. Election of Officers (Item 2)

The Commission unanimously elected the following individuals to hold officials until the commencement of the twenty-fifth session:

- i. Chairperson: Mr Jarred Mair (New Zealand)
- ii. Vice-Chairpersons: Mr Taisuke Shimada (Japan)
Mr. Harry Santoso (Indonesia)

Shri K. Jude Sekar (India)

Mr. Amaro from Bangladesh was nominated as Rapporteur.

3. Agenda item no.3: Forests for prosperity: Dr. Warren Parker, Chief Executive Officer of the Scion Crown Research Institute made the keynote address on the theme of the Session “Forests for prosperity.” After the country’s intervention Dr. Parker made his final comments. It was noted that the Millennium Development Goals provide a framework for enhanced global prosperity and poverty alleviation. For achieving sustained growth with equity it is essential to avoid excessive depletion of natural resources. Education, capacity building and access to technology were identified as key components of development. In line with the “Forests for prosperity” theme of the Commission session, several countries reported on recent initiatives to expand value-added wood processing, enhance wood recovery from forest resources, tap new market opportunities for forest products, develop payments for ecosystem services, and create more jobs in the forestry sector. Key impediments to enhanced prosperity through forestry include shortfalls in financing and investment for sustainable forest management, degraded forests and depleted biodiversity and inadequate recognition and valuation of the full range of ecosystem services provided by forests.

India’s efforts related to forestry, biodiversity, climate change, wood processing and marketing of forest products, and revitalization of the forest sector were highlighted including achievements in afforestation, reforestation and forest restoration, establishment and rehabilitation of coastal forests, fire management, and slowing the rate of deforestation. The interventions were made by Indian Delegation based on the **statement-I**.

4. Agenda item no. 4 Forest financing: investing for prosperity was discussed

Mr. Kenichi Shone, forest resources officer, FAO Regional office for Asia and the Pacific to introduce the topic. Thereafter delegates gave their views on forest financing on their respective countries. Financing is a major challenge with significant shortfalls in funding for sustainable forest management. Broad options for forest financing include state budgets, private sector investment, financing from the international community and payments for ecosystem services. FAO was requested to work on methodology issues related to payments for ecosystem services, including development of valuation methods

that recognize the full benefits and values of forests and guide member countries. The interventions were made by Indian Delegation based on the **statement-II**.

5. Agenda item no. 5 Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT): emerging legality restrictions and responses.

Mr. Bruno Cammaert, Forestry Officer, EU-FAO FLEGT Support Programme, FAO Regional Office of Asia and the Pacific made the presentation. Strong commitments to improving forest law enforcement and governance have been made by the countries, building upon the Bali Declaration issued at the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance East Asia Ministerial Conference in 2001. FAO was requested to continue efforts to raise awareness and increase understanding of evolving international demand-side legality requirements through regional information and training workshops and further coordinate with other FLEGT support programmes and also more actively engage the private sector in these activities. FAO was requested to explore the potential for establishing a regional mechanism for sharing information related to trade in illegally logged timber in collaboration with other partners and member countries. FAO was requested to build upon initial efforts in disseminating and building awareness of the Guidelines through regional and national workshops. FAO support training-of-trainers to extend awareness and build capacity among stakeholders at all levels for implementing the Guidelines to facilitate the sharing of experiences and approaches. The interventions were made by Indian Delegation based on **statement-III**.

6. Agenda item no. 6: State of Forestry in the Asia-Pacific region

Mr. Patrick Durst, Senior Forestry Officer, FAO Regional Office for Asia and Pacific, made the presentation. The growing importance given to adaptation and mitigation measures to respond to climate change and natural disasters. Significant progress was reported in strengthening capacities for measurement, reporting and verification, forest monitoring and assessment, and national forest inventories, often supported by REDD+ readiness programmes to governance structure and participatory processes, and disaster risk assessment and preparedness. There are many remaining challenges, including lack of technical capacity and high costs constraining REDD+ readiness activities, climate change adaptation, and resilience to natural disasters. Emphasis on decentralization and devolution of forest management, community forestry, participatory approaches, and strengthening of forest tenure and access rights for forest-dependent people. FAO was requested to work with regional partners and member countries for forest landscape reforestation, develop natural regeneration strategies to complement intensive planted forest programmes. FAO was requested as GEF agency to support the formulation and implementation of new forestry related GEF Projects and programmes under upcoming

sixth replenishment period of GEF. The intervention were made by the Indian Delegation based on **statement-IV**.

Wednesday, 6th November, 2013

7. Agenda item no. 7: In-session seminar: building resilience in forests, landscapes and communities

Mr. Patrick Durst, Senior Forestry Officer, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific presented a brief outline of the topic. Importance of restoring forests and maintaining natural forest dynamics and the need to ensure resilience building activities in forest was noted. Urgent need to increase self reliance and resilience in many forest dependent communities was highlighted with the need to incorporate sustainability concepts and using traditional knowledge and methods. FAO was requested to facilitate sharing of experience building resilience in forests, landscapes and forest dependent communities. In view of specific threads and uncertainties posed by climate change, FAO was required to produce a knowledge product relating to forests and drought in Asia and Pacific. The interventions were made by Indian Delegation based on **statement-V**.

8. Agenda item no.8: Progress in implementing APFC- and FAO-supported activities in the region.

Mr. Aru Mathias, Forest Resources Management Officer, FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific Islands, introduced the agenda topic. Establishment of Asia Pacific Forest Policy Think Tank (APFTT) and the Asia-Pacific Forestry Communications Network (APFCN) as mechanisms for capacity building, awareness raising and sharing information, expertise and knowledge were welcomed. Need for promotion of education and research in the region was recognized including forest landscape restoration and forest rehabilitation including watershed management, soil and water conservation. India recognized greater involvement of national offices of FAO in forestry activities. FAO was requested to assist countries in responding to complex international agreements, process and financing mechanisms including GEF and formulating the proposals for donor support including FAO to continue to collaborate and harmonize work on cross-cutting issues with other international agencies including CPF members. The interventions were made by the Indian Delegation based on **statement-VI**.

9. Agenda item no.9: Heads of Forestry Dialogue: policies to support wood processing development.

The Heads of forestry dialogue provided an opportunity for direct exchange of views among delegates on policies to support wood processing development. A wide range of constraints to investment in wood processing were discussed including poor or excessive

regulation, poorly targeted incentives, trade restriction, low Profitability, lack of economies of scale, weak supporting infrastructure, limited access to appropriate science and technology were developed. FAO was requested to explore mechanisms to support special diagnostic missions to interested countries, with a view toward fostering an enabling environment for rational and competitive wood processing. The interventions were made by Indian Delegation based on the **statement-VII**.

10. Agenda item no. 10: Forests and climate change: pathway to prosperity

Mr. Vickers, Regional Programme Officer, UN-REDD Programme, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific made the presentation. The Commission requested FAO to continue working closely with partner organizations within the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to support REDD+ initiatives. Delegates noted that attention has largely shifted to adaptation considerations in many countries, but that capacities to support adaptation to climate change is limited in many areas. The Commission requested FAO to provide technical support to build capacities in member countries to address climate change adaptation at policy levels and to strengthen resilience and implementation of climate change adaption measures at community levels. The Commission requested FAO to support regional sharing of information, forest data, and experiences related to the roles of forests in climate change adaptation, in collaboration with other international and regional partners and established mechanisms. The interventions were made by Indian Delegation based on the **statement-VIII**.

11. Agenda item no.11: Strategies developments in FAO and the UN

Ms. Eva Muller, Director, Forest Economic Policy and Products Division, FAO Headquarters, introduced the agenda topic. In view of FAO's role as the leading global forestry organization, the Commission emphasized the importance of continuing FAO's core technical work in forestry under the new strategic framework. Delegates highlighted emerging areas such as the contribution of forests to food security. The Commission noted that the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG) established through the Rio+20 processes is currently debating the formulation of sustainable development goals. Key features of SDG's are that they should be action-oriented, aspirational, easy to communicate and should address all three dimensions of sustainable development. The Commission urged countries in the Asia-Pacific region to actively engage in the discussions on a forest-related SDG through the OWG. The interventions were made by Indian Delegation based on **statement-IX**.

Friday, 8th November, 2013

12. Agenda item no. 12: Tools for sustainable forest management

Ms. Mette Loyche Wilkie, Deputy Director, Forest Assessment, Conservation and Management Division, FAO Headquarters, made presentation on three short items relating to tools developed within FAO to support sustainable forest management. The Smart Fire Umbrella Programme of FAO was welcomed & FAO was requested to continue to strengthen international cooperation on fire related activities and support regional networks and initiatives. The interventions were made by Indian Delegation based on **statement-X**.

13. Agenda item no.13: Forests and food security: follow-up to the conclusions of the International Conference.

Ms. Eva Muller, Forest Economic Policy and Products Division, FAO Headquarters, introduced the topic. The Commission considered follow-up to the International Conference on Forests on Food Security and Nutrition on the basis of Secretariat Note FO:APFC/2013/17. Delegates noted that there was a lack of comprehensive data and information on the contributions of trees and forests to food security and nutrition. The Commission requested FAO to develop methodologies, standard definitions and terminology to support the collection, analysis, and reporting of such data, and to provide guidance and assistance to member countries in implementing such activities. The interventions were made by Indian Delegation based on the **statement-XI**.

14. Agenda item no.14: Preparations for the XIV World Forestry Congress.

Ms. Eva Muller, Forest Economic Policy and Products Division, FAO Headquarters, introduced the topic. The Commission proposed several potential overarching themes for the World Forestry Congress including, (i) Forests in everyday life; (ii) Forest for food security; and (iii) Forests for all. A variety of potential topics that could help to form the basis for technical sessions at the Congress were also proposed including, a framework for global forest governance, transformation of forest polices, management of ecosystem services, forest culture and eco-civilization, forest monitoring and assessment, understanding and implementation of the forest instrument, forests and economies, forest science and decision-making, and forests and climate change. The Commission requested FAO to explore the potential for incorporating a high-level ministerial component as part of the Congress. The interventions were made by Indian Delegation based on **statement-XII**.

15. Agenda item no.15: Regional issues identified by the Commission for the attention of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC).

Ms. Eva Muller presented key policy and technical issues for Asia-Pacific forestry to be referred to the 22nd session of COFO in September 2014 and to the 32nd FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific in March 2014.

New governance structure of FAO including the increased importance of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and Pacific in the development of the Organization's programme of work and budget was discussed. The commission encouraged member countries to ensure that forestry is strongly represented in national delegations and /or in national processes to develop priorities for presentation to the FAO Regional Conference. The Commission recognized an agenda item on "Restoration of rangelands forests for climate change mitigation and adaptation and the promotion of ecosystem services" provides a vehicle for many important forestry issues to be taken up for consideration at the 32nd FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific. The Commission proposed several topics for the agenda of the 22nd session of COFO including (i) development of a stand alone SDG for forestry; (ii) the importance of forestry in combating climate change; (iii) payments for ecosystem services; and (iv) forest financing. The Commission noted that the Chair and the Secretary would work to identify other recommendations from the proceedings of the 25th session of APFC for the attention of COFO including (i) issues relating to forest governance, particularly in relation to forest tenure and access rights; (ii) forest landscape restoration; and (iii) building resilience against climate change and natural disasters. The Indian Delegation made interventions based on the country position in this regard. India has not agreed to payment of ecosystem Services, however, FAO and COFO can assist countries in developing scientific knowledge and methodologies for capacity building in developing countries for valuation of Ecosystem Services.

16. Agenda item no.17: Date and place of the next session

Proposals from member nations to host the next (twenty-sixth) Session of the Commission were obtained. The Commission welcomed the offer of Philippines to host the twenty-sixth session of the Commission. The exact dates and venue will be decided by the Director-General of FAO in consultation of the host country.

Mr. Barney Chan facilitated this agenda and closed the session.

Key recommendations:

1. It was agreed that forests have important role in sustainable development.
2. Role of forests in prosperity was recognized and countries agreed for scientific and technical cooperation on processing of forest products for creating more values.

3. Enhancing finance in forests was also discussed. FAO was requested to strengthen capacity of countries for implementation of REDD+ and to explore option under GEF and other sources.
4. FAO to work on strengthening support for control of forest fire.
5. FAO to work on methodologies for valuation of ecosystem services and guide countries.
6. Strengthening scientific and technical cooperation in forestry among countries of the region was discussed with the request to FAO to guide the process.