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The Collaborative Partnership *on* Forests

Promoting the *sustainable management* of all types of forests

In many parts of the world, forests are being degraded and lost at an alarming rate. Countries are asking international institutions to help them address this problem, and they are working hard to do so.

Until recently, these institutions operated mostly in isolation of each other. This is changing now, thanks largely to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.



What is the CPF?

The Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) is an informal, voluntary arrangement among 14 international organizations and secretariats with substantial programmes on forests (see page 6). These agencies share their experiences and build on them to produce new benefits for their respective constituencies. They collaborate to streamline and align their work and to find ways of improving forest management and conservation and the production and trade of forest products. They are also forming increasingly close and valuable strategic partnerships with one another, benefiting from shared expertise and pooled resources.

How was it formed?

The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) decided in 2000, in its Resolution 2000/35, to establish the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF). In the same resolution it invited the heads of relevant UN, international and regional bodies to form a collaborative partnership on forests. The CPF was duly formed in April 2001, chaired by FAO and supported by the UNFF Secretariat.

The UNFF and the CPF are part of an international arrangement on forests, the main objective of which is to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and

strengthen the long-term commitment to this end. ECOSOC originally assigned six principal functions to the arrangement and later added three more. Among them is increasing cooperation on forest-related issues between international organizations, institutions and instruments and contributing to synergies between them.

Objectives

The CPF's overarching objective is to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and strengthen long-term political commitment to this end. It does this by:

- supporting the work of the UNFF and its member states; and
- enhancing cooperation and coordination among CPF members.

How is it funded?

The CPF is a very cost-effective arrangement. Its joint initiatives and other collaborative activities are possible because of the voluntary contributions of its members, who make their expert staff available for the work, and external donor funds obtained for specific tasks.

The CPF: an informal, voluntary arrangement



The governing bodies of CPF members: *committed to making the CPF work*

What makes it effective?

One of the keys to the CPF's success is its informal and voluntary nature. The CPF members recognize the benefits of stronger partnerships with their institutional cousins. They share a common aspiration to improve forest management and conservation and the livelihoods of forest-dependent people. The relatively small size of the group keeps it focused.

Another key is the support of the memberships of the various partners. Almost all the governing bodies to which individual CPF members report have endorsed and encouraged the participation of their senior executives in the partnership, signalling their commitment to making the CPF work. The UNFF provides direction to the partnership and encourages even more coordination among CPF members.

Focal agency approach

Each CPF member has been designated as focal agency for one or more key forest issues (see side-bar for examples) for which they have specific expertise. The role of the focal agency is to strengthen collaboration among CPF members on the issue, mobilize resources and expertise to address it, and contribute to the related work of the UNFF.

Examples of issues on which CPF members collaborate

- Combating deforestation and forest degradation
- Criteria and indicators
- Economic, social and cultural aspects of forests
- Financing sustainable forest management (SFM)
- Forest biological diversity
- Forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems
- Forest health and productivity
- Forest landscape restoration
- Forest-related scientific knowledge
- International cooperation in capacity-building, transfer of and access to environmentally sound technologies
- International trade and SFM
- Livelihoods of forest-dependent people
- Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs
- Monitoring, assessment and reporting (including definitions)
- Policy approaches and incentives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation in developing countries
- Promoting public participation
- Rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover
- Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands, and the promotion of natural and planted forests
- Support to national forest programmes
- Traditional forest-related knowledge



How does the CPF operate?

A basic but important function of the CPF is to improve the sharing of information about the activities of its members and discuss opportunities for further collaboration. The CPF usually convenes in conjunction with major events, such as the sessions of the UNFF, to keep travel costs low and make efficient use of staff time.

The CPF engages in many joint activities, often through groups formed by experts from among its 14 members. Such work also goes well beyond the formal boundaries of the CPF, with subsets of members regularly engaging in informal collaborative work. Increasingly, members work together in projects, assisting countries to achieve their forest-related goals.

The CPF produces joint statements and papers on issues relevant to the international forest policy dialogue. For example, the CPF prepared a joint response to a questionnaire on the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests. Usually, a focal agency prepares a draft paper on a given issue and circulates it to other CPF members for input before finalization.

Global Objectives on Forests

At the sixth session of the UNFF in 2006, member states set four Global Objectives on Forests in support of the Millennium Development Goals and SFM.

Global Objective 1

Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through SFM, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation

Global Objective 2

Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people

Global Objective 3

Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests

Global Objective 4

Reverse the decline in official development assistance for SFM and mobilize significantly increased new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of SFM

Summarized from ECOSOC Resolution 2006/49



The work of the CPF

Assisting countries

Streamlining reporting

One of the consequences of the high global profile of forests is an increase in the amount of information that treaties and other international agreements require countries to provide. In some cases, countries must supply similar – but not identical – information to two or more institutions at different times using different terminology and definitions. These reporting obligations can cause confusion and stretch the scarce human resources of national agencies.

To help minimize this reporting burden, CPF members formed a task force with a brief to reduce and streamline reporting requests and help strengthen the capacity of countries to respond to them. Members are now working towards creating a joint information framework and organizing the reporting of SFM according to the seven common thematic elements used by the various criteria and indicator processes. A more coordinated approach to national reporting

is particularly relevant to the CBD, FAO, ITTO, UNCCD, UNFCCC and the UNFF, to which member countries report on aspects of forest management. A coordinated approach will also help monitor progress towards achieving the Global Objectives on Forests agreed by the UNFF and ECOSOC (see side-bar).

The CPF portal on the worldwide web provides a reporting calendar and other relevant information.

www.fao.org/forestry/cpf-mar

Definitions

The aim of this initiative is to harmonize forest-related definitions, which will help minimize the reporting burden on countries and reduce the confusion that inconsistent definitions can cause. Sometimes, harmonizing is not easy; definitions are often agreed in international negotiations to meet political and practical ends and, in some cases, changing these to conform to other processes is not feasible.

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All CPF members share the *aspiration of improving forest management and conservation and the livelihoods of forest-dependent people*

CPF members

Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)



CIFOR is an international forestry research organization established by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). It works through research partnerships as a 'centre without walls', taking a holistic, inter-disciplinary approach to solving general or widespread forest-related problems with the aim of contributing to the sustained well-being of people in developing countries, particularly in the tropics.

www.cifor.cgiar.org

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)



FAO helps developing countries and countries in transition to modernize and improve their agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The Forestry Department champions a broad vision of SFM through policy advice, forest assessments and technical support to governments while fostering partnerships with civil society and industry in the implementation of national forest programmes.

www.fao.org

Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Secretariat



The GEF provides grants to developing countries for projects and programmes that benefit the global environment and promote sustainable livelihoods in local communities. Of the GEF's six focal areas, biodiversity, climate change and land degradation are particularly relevant to forests.

www.thegef.org

International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)



ITTO promotes the conservation and sustainable management, use and trade of tropical forest resources. It develops internationally agreed policies and assists tropical member countries to adapt such policies to local circumstances and to implement them in the field through projects. As of the end of 2006, it has funded 750 projects and other activities worth nearly US\$300 million.

www.itto.or.jp

International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO)



IUFRO is a non-profit, non-governmental international network of forest scientists. It promotes global cooperation in forest-related research and enhances the understanding of the ecological, economic and social aspects of forests and trees. It disseminates scientific knowledge to stakeholders and decision-makers and contributes to forest policy and on-the-ground forest management.

www.iufro.org

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat



The CBD Secretariat supports the implementation of the CBD, which has three goals: conservation of biodiversity; sustainable use of its components; and sharing the benefits from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way. The CBD addresses forest issues directly through its expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity, with the ecosystem approach as the primary framework for action, and also through its other thematic programmes of work and work on cross-cutting issues, including on traditional knowledge and protected areas.

www.biodiv.org

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Secretariat



The Secretariat works with member countries to implement the UNCCD. The Convention is the only international, legally binding framework set up to address desertification and is based on the principles of participation, partnership and decentralization. The Convention focuses on improving land productivity, rehabilitating land, and the conservation and sustainable management of land and water resources.

www.unccd.int

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)



UNDP is the UN's global development network, an organization advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. It operates on the ground in 166 countries. UNDP is a GEF implementing agency.

www.undp.org

The CPF is an innovative partnership of 14 major forest-related international organizations, institutions and convention secretariats

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)



UNEP is the voice for the environment in the United Nations system. UNEP's mission is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. UNEP is a GEF implementing agency.

www.unep.org

United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat



The UNFF Secretariat is part of the UN Secretariat, representing the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in all forest-related issues. It services the UNFF to advance long-term political commitment to the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests at the global, regional and national levels, and to promote achievement of the Global Objectives on Forests. It also provides the CPF with secretariat services.

www.un.org/esa/forests

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat



The UNFCCC provides the basis for concerted international action to mitigate climate change and to adapt to its impacts. The UNFCCC Secretariat supports all institutions involved in the climate change process, particularly the Conference of the Parties (COP). Among other things, the Secretariat is responsible for the publication, compilation and technical review of annual greenhouse gas inventories by Kyoto Protocol Annex I parties, including in the land-use, land-use change and forestry sector, and the consideration of policy approaches and positive incentives to reduce emissions from deforestation in developing countries.

www.unfccc.int

World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)



ICRAF is an autonomous, not-for-profit research and development institution supported by over 50 governments, private foundations, regional development banks and the World Bank. ICRAF uses science to generate knowledge on the complex role of trees in livelihoods and the environment, and facilitates use of this knowledge to improve policies and decision-making processes that affect the poor. ICRAF is part of The Alliance of 15 Centres of the CGIAR and works in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

www.worldagroforestrycentre.org

World Bank



The World Bank's mission is to reduce global poverty and improve living standards. Its forests strategy is built on three equally important and interlinked pillars: harnessing the potential of forests to reduce poverty, integrating forests into sustainable economic development, and protecting global forest values. The World Bank is a GEF implementing agency.

www.worldbank.org/forests

World Conservation Union (IUCN)



IUCN is a conservation network of states, government agencies, non-government organizations, scientists and experts. The goal of IUCN's Forest Conservation Programme is to enhance and optimize the contribution of forests and trees to rural poverty reduction, the long-term and equitable conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable supply of forest-related goods and services.

www.iucn.org



Nevertheless, a process to harmonize or, when this is not possible, illuminate the differences between definitions is useful. CIFOR, FAO, ITTO, IUFRO, UNEP and the UNFCCC Secretariat have convened three expert meetings on definitions since 2002. Terms that have become more commonly understood through this process include forest improvement, forest fragmentation, natural forest, planted forest, forest plantation, trees outside forests, managed forest and unmanaged forest.

The CPF provides a web portal to forest definitions containing summaries of the expert meetings, the definitions agreed at the meetings, and links to definitions in use or compiled by CPF members.

www.fao.org/forestry/cpf-definitions

Funding sourcebook

The *Sourcebook on Funding for SFM* is an electronic database of more than 650 funding sources developed by the CPF in collaboration with the National Forest Programme Facility to assist users to find funds for SFM projects. The CPF also publishes an electronic newsletter providing information on funding opportunities as they arise and hosts an electronic discussion forum on related topics.

www.fao.org/forestry/cpf-sourcebook

GFIS

The Global Forest Information Service (GFIS), led by IUFRO together with FAO, CIFOR and the UNFF Secretariat, is an internet gateway providing easy access to information supplied by partner institutions on forest conservation, management and use. Searching the GFIS is free and provides direct access to the original information.

The GFIS team is working continually to expand its network of information providers and to help stakeholders use the service. Since its launch in 2005, training on how to use the GFIS has been provided in Chile, China and Russia with the support of CPF members CIFOR, FAO, ITTO and IUFRO and a number of countries.

www.gfis.net

Science and technology

An initiative on science and technology has been established by the CPF to support the UNFF and other intergovernmental processes by assessing available scientific information and producing reports on issues of concern. IUFRO, the CBD Secretariat, CIFOR, FAO, ICRAF and the UNFF Secretariat currently collaborate in this endeavour.

The CPF has already produced results – less duplication, important initiatives and stronger partnerships



Supporting the UNFF

CPF members provide strong input to sessions of the UNFF and related expert meetings. They prepare background papers, make presentations, and, in many cases, assist in the production of summaries and proceedings. Several members – CIFOR, FAO, ITTO, UNDP and UNEP – have helped increase the capacity of the UNFF Secretariat by seconding staff to it for varying lengths of time.

Initiative on financing

The UNFF is seeking ways of speeding up the rate of implementation of SFM. As a contribution to this, the World Bank, in cooperation with the UNFF Secretariat and other CPF members, prepared a paper on financing SFM for submission to the seventh session of the UNFF in April 2007. The paper discusses possible innovative solutions and the potential to strengthen existing funds.

Member work programmes

CPF members contribute to the international arrangement on forests by implementing their own forest work programmes and engaging in joint approaches and initiatives. They mobilize resources to assist countries to implement the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IPF/IFF) proposals for action and increase

the flow of information between the global and national levels. They also respond to invitations of ECOSOC and the UNFF, including those contained in a recent ECOSOC resolution (2006/49), to establish or strengthen joint activities.

Increasing collaboration between members

The creation of the CPF has helped the development of strong partnerships between individual member institutions. Increasingly, two or more members are joining together to explore common ground and to strengthen their impacts at the field level.

Forest landscape restoration

The Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (GPFLR) is a network of governments, organizations and companies who recognize the importance of forest landscape restoration and want to be part of a coordinated global effort; partners include CPF members the CBD Secretariat, CIFOR, FAO, ICRAF, ITTO, IUFRO, IUCN, UNEP, the UNFF Secretariat and the World Bank.

In its first phase, the GPFLR helped raise the profile of forest landscape restoration in national, regional and international decision-making and generated increased funding for its ground-level application. In its second phase, the GPFLR is building a learning network to improve critical understanding and practice on forest landscape restoration, increasing support for it with new audiences, and providing



information and tools to help people make and implement decisions on it. ITTO, CIFOR, FAO and IUCN contributed to the publication of a manual on forest landscape restoration, and ITTO and IUCN convened a series of national-level workshops to introduce the manual and encourage its application. Collaborative scientific activities are reinforced through international meetings such as the IUFRO Conference on Forest Landscape Restoration in May 2007.

Improving governance and law enforcement

CPF members are working separately and collaboratively to help improve forest governance and law enforcement. One of the important elements of collaborative work is engaging stakeholders in discussions, increasing awareness and supporting political processes to address the issue. CPF members have been strong contributors to the World Bank-backed Forest Law Enforcement and Governance processes, which have been under way in various regions since 2001.

In 2005, FAO and ITTO published *Best Practices for Improving Law Compliance in the Forest Sector*, which analyses and distils available knowledge on forest law compliance for decision-makers. In addition, the two organizations are working with other partners including IUCN and the World Bank to convene a series of regional workshops to help strengthen the dialogue among countries, share experiences and develop appropriate strategies and measures to improve compliance with forest laws.

Other collaborative activities

- Several CPF members, including FAO, ITTO, UNCCD and the World Bank, are working with countries to improve access to financing for SFM.
- CIFOR and ICRAF have launched a joint research platform focusing on integrating livelihoods and biodiversity conservation in tropical forest landscapes.
- FAO, ITTO, IUCN and UNEP coordinated their responses to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, sharing information on impact and needs assessments; these institutions are also part of a taskforce to produce a new world mangrove conservation atlas.
- CIFOR and the UNFF Secretariat have commenced a joint study on forests, conflict and peace-building.
- The CBD Secretariat is working with FAO to carry out an in-depth review of the implementation of the CBD expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity.
- FAO is working with the CBD Secretariat, UNEP and ITTO to assist countries in Asia and the Pacific to develop harmonized forest-related national monitoring, assessment and reporting systems that link directly to national policy and planning; parts of the project are being replicated in Latin America and Africa.
- Increasingly, CPF members are taking advantage of each other's meetings by organizing side-events and back-to-back meetings. For example, the Rio conventions (CBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC) organize many of their expert meetings at FAO.



Interacting with stakeholders

The CPF and its members are committed to transparency and continue to seek ways of keeping stakeholders informed about and involved in CPF work. The CPF works with UNFF major group focal points (see box) to open up the flow of information between the CPF and forest stakeholders and take advantage of a wider pool of views, expertise and experiences. It also maintains a website containing the minutes of CPF meetings, summaries of task force activities, and portals to key internet resources. The electronic *UNFF Newsletter* reports regularly on CPF activities.

All CPF members have networks in place to obtain input from stakeholders and involve them in their forums and discussions, and several also have mechanisms for encouraging and supporting the participation of civil society in national-level work.

What are 'major groups'?

Agenda 21, one of the key documents produced by the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, identified nine major social groups, the involvement of whom in decision-making was "one of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development". These groups are: women; children and youth; indigenous people; non-governmental organizations; local authorities; workers and trade unions; business and industry; scientific and technological communities; and farmers and small forest landowners.

The future

The diversity of institutions in the international arrangement on forests is a good thing, because each has a unique way of operating and specific issues to address. The CPF is a mechanism for bringing these institutions together – to share information, coordinate responses and work collaboratively. Already it has produced results – less duplication, important initiatives and stronger partnerships. And the potential to do more is huge.

For example, the CPF and its members can step up analytical work on options for financing SFM, probably the single most important component of efforts to reach the Global Objectives on Forests set by the UNFF. It could also play a greater role in global awareness-raising about the issues surrounding forests – which, among other things, could help generate more interest in and funds for SFM. CPF members could work more closely on critical and emerging issues, such as avoided deforestation in the context of climate change and the linkages between forests and poverty. The CPF could also form a virtual clearing house, improving access by developing countries and countries with economies in transition to SFM technologies – as proposed in ECOSOC Resolution 2006/49.



The countries that invited the formation of the CPF hoped for a *synergistic effect*. Their hopes are being met

A stronger CPF

The CPF is a low-cost addition to the international arrangement on forests, but more funding would increase the scope of its work. In the past, donors have provided it with funds for specific tasks and this approach could be continued and boosted. There is also potential to improve efficiency by increasing joint or back-to-back meetings and strengthening planning among CPF members.

For the CPF to perform at its best, all CPF members must have clear guidance from their respective constituencies. CPF members can work together with countries to help provide consistent messages to the individual governing bodies of CPF members.

The growth in policy initiatives at the international scale must be complemented by an intensification of work at the field level. The CPF and its members can strengthen joint approaches to regional and country-level activities that help improve forest conservation and management. The informal nature of many of the CPF initiatives means that an expansion in this sort of work will not be accompanied by an escalation in the size of the international bureaucracy.

This is perhaps the CPF's greatest strength. The countries that invited the formation of the CPF through ECOSOC and encouraged the participation of individual institutions in it hoped for a synergistic effect. The results presented in this brochure suggest that their hopes were justified. With little additional funding, several initiatives have been launched and are making substantial progress. The CPF has made important contributions to the intergovernmental dialogue on forests. And CPF members have dramatically increased their day-to-day collaboration on an ever-greater range of activities at the international, regional and country levels, increasing the effectiveness of their work.

**This is synergy.
This is partnership.**

**For more information on the CPF,
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