



# World Forestry Congress Bulletin

## A Daily Report of the XIIIth World Forestry Congress (WFC 2009)

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in collaboration with FAO and GTZ

**iisd** Reporting Services

ONLINE AT [HTTP://WWW.IISD.CA/YMB/FOREST/WFC13/](http://www.iisd.ca/YMB/FOREST/WFC13/)  
ISSUE #1, VOLUME 10, NUMBER 13, MONDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2009



### PRE-CONGRESS WORKSHOP ON REGIONAL FOREST COOPERATION

The workshop on Regional Forest Cooperation took place on 17 October 2009 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on the occasion of the XIII World Forestry Congress, organized by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the German Organisation for Technical Cooperation GmbH (GTZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Thirty experts from regional organizations and initiatives, as well as twenty-five experts from research organizations, national and international institutions, and representatives of multilateral and bilateral donors attended the event.



Evy von Pfeil, GTZ, presented the main messages prepared by working groups as well as the final declaration of the meeting.

The Workshop built on previous events in support of the work of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the Convention on Biological Diversity, such as: the South-South Exchange Meeting on the conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity held in Montreal in July 2009; the Region-Led Initiative held in Geneva in January 2008; the Bali Country-Led Initiative (CLI) in February 2007; and the Berlin CLI in November 2005.

During the one-day event, participants heard presentations on challenges and impacts of regional forest cooperation and discussed in working groups the added value of the various

forms of regional cooperation initiatives and potential for attainment of their common goals. The result of the workshop was a series of recommendations to be forwarded to the World Forestry Congress (WFC).

### OPENING PLENARY

On behalf of Jan Heino, Assistant Director-General of the FAO Forestry Department, Eva Mueller, Chief of the FAO Forestry Policy Service, welcomed participants and explained the work of FAO's regional forestry cooperation commissions, which have provided a neutral forum for the discussion of forestry issues for the past four decades. She highlighted challenges in measuring the impact of regional cooperation forums, which facilitate information sharing and problem solving, but often do not produce tangible outputs.

Daniel Haas, BMZ, reviewed his ministry's support of regional forest cooperation initiatives,



Moderator Suhel Al-Janabi, GeoMedia, and Jan McAlpine, Director of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat



Daniel Haas, BMZ

The *World Forestry Congress Bulletin* is a publication of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) <info@iisd.ca>, publishers of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org>. This issue was written and edited by Soledad Aguilar and Aaron Leopold. The Digital Editor is Angeles Estrada. The Editor is Leonie Gordon <leonie@iisd.org>. The Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. Funding for coverage of this meeting has been provided by FAO and GTZ. IISD can be contacted at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada; tel: +1-204-958-7700; fax: +1-204-958-7710. The opinions expressed in the *Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD. Excerpts from the *Bulletin* may be used in other publications with appropriate academic citation. Electronic versions of the *Bulletin* are sent to e-mail distribution lists (in HTML and PDF format) and can be found on the Linkages WWW-server at <<http://www.iisd.ca/>>. For information on the *Bulletin*, including requests to provide reporting services, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>, +1-646-536-7556 or 300 East 56th St., 11A, New York, New York 10022, United States of America. The IISD team at WFC 2009 can be contacted by e-mail at <aaron@iisd.org>.





Participants engaged in a poster preparation session.

from formalized economic integration organizations to sustainable forest management initiatives such as the Congo Basin Forest Partnership. He said the WFC offers a unique opportunity to exchange experiences and visions, and highlighted the opportunity it presents to place sustainable forest management (SFM) in the climate regime, also suggesting to bring forest and climate experts together in preparation for the climate meetings to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December 2009. He further noted the newfound prominence of forests on the global political agenda.

Jan McAlpine, Director of the UNFF Secretariat, highlighted that regional level cooperation translates policy into action, and moves SFM forward. She noted the value of regional reports to the work of UNFF, and provided an overview of upcoming events within the UNFF process leading to UNFF 9, where the focus will be on forest-dwelling peoples, livelihoods and poverty. She also highlighted that UNFF discusses financing issues and reached an agreement earlier this month on a draft decision on the means of implementation on all types of forests, which will be adopted at a Special Session of UNFF 9 on 30 October 2009.

Evy von Pfeil, GTZ International Forest Policy, closed the introductory session by highlighting the rationales for holding a workshop on regional actors, which include: the transboundary nature of SFM; the high national and international expectations

held for regional organizations, processes and initiatives; and the diversity of mandates, functions, strengths, and degrees of freedom of various regional organizations. She then outlined the objectives for the day, which were to: promote an exchange on strengths and differences between regional actors; expand possibilities for innovation and political commitment; underline what they can realistically deliver; and develop new ways of increasing the effectiveness and impact of regional actors.

## PRESENTATION OF REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, NETWORKS AND INITIATIVES

Moderator Suhel al-Janabi, GeoMedia, Germany, began this plenary session with an overview of the posters participants prepared during the poster session, noting that regional organizations seemed to be united by their diversity and that an important outcome of the exercise was that, when discussing regional and sub-regional actors, one must consider carefully which ones are being discussed.

Raman Letchumanan, Director of the Environmental Division, Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), discussed new cooperation on SFM, conservation of biodiversity, and climate change between his organization, the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (OTCA) and the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC), which together represent the largest tropical forest regions in the world, the Amazon, Borneo, and the Congo. He said their cooperation led to an exchange of experts, coordination and development of programs, and the sharing of success stories. He noted that the group is currently preparing a roadmap and



Raman Letchumanan, Director Environment Division, ASEAN



Jorge Rodríguez Quiroz, Minister of Environment, Energy and Telecommunications, Costa Rica (right), and Peter Saile, gtz (left)

strategic plan, opening dialogues with member states, and organizing funding. Jan McAlpine commented that there is currently a proposal going through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) on SFM that would create significant opportunities for regional groups and cooperation.

Godwin Kowero, Executive Secretary, African Forest Forum (AFF) presented the work and structure of his institution, an association of individuals interested in trees and forests in

Africa created in 2007. Their mission is to improve livelihoods by creating a platform and enabling environment for analysis, advocacy, and advice on achieving SFM in Africa. In response to a question, Kowero highlighted opportunities for investments in forest-related issues.

Ambassador Manuel Picasso, Secretary General of OTCA highlighted his organization's development of a work plan for 2010-2020 and views of the Amazon basin as a whole. He mentioned a new GEF project on transboundary water resources and one financed by Brazil's Amazon Fund to expand the coverage of satellite monitoring technology on forest cover, deforestation and forest fires in the Amazon to all the OTCA member countries. Jan McAlpine commented on UNFF's interest in liaising with OTCA to enhance regional cooperation, for example on issues of financing.

Jorge Rodríguez Quiroz, Minister of Environment, Energy and Telecommunications, Costa Rica, discussed his experiences with the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD). He lauded CCAD's efforts to include a wide range of stakeholders in its work and the promotion of the development of national forestry plans. He noted the borderless nature of ecological issues plays a role in assuaging political tensions between nations.

Frances Seymour, Director General, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), explained her organization's work to inform policy and practices on forest-related issues. She used CIFOR's cooperation with the Amazon Initiative, COMIFAC, COMESA and the Asia Forest Partnership as a segway into a discussion of lessons learned from these experiences. These included: that regional initiatives are becoming an increasingly important pathway for translating research into action; the importance of informal dialogue across national and stakeholder groups; and the need to strike a balance between investments in governance-related initiatives and those dealing with substantive issues.

In the ensuing discussion, Martin Tadoum, Vice Executive Secretary of COMIFAC noted that COMIFAC aims to achieve SFM in its member states, although it is yet unclear where funding for this goal will come from. Rodríguez noted that Costa Rica's reforestation efforts faced similar questions and

that streamlining forest issues into the tourism agenda emerged as a successful mechanism to finance forest projects.

## GROUP WORK SESSION

In the afternoon, three Groups met and considered a set of questions on: success stories and lessons learnt; understanding the "comparative disadvantages" of regional organizations and initiatives; and how regional cooperation initiatives can improve their common work. Each group reported back to plenary.

Evy von Pfeil presented on the work of group 1, the main message being that regional forest cooperation organizations have been very successful, and highlighted indicators as well as prerequisites for success, and impact of the activities of regional organizations. Regarding successful activities, she highlighted information exchange, awareness raising, and consultation platforms. On indicators for success, she highlighted joint agendas, joint action plans and common rules and procedures; and as prerequisites for success she emphasized stable funding, ratification of protocols and treaties at the national level, and internalization of regional policies, as well as the involvement of the private sector. Regarding measuring impacts of regional efforts, she identified: the ratification of new policies in parliament; regional agendas taken up by subregional agencies; customs cooperation; shared vision; and joint positioning in the international agenda. Five messages were agreed by the group and incorporated into the final declaration.

Godwin Kowero presented the work of group 2 on identifying "comparative disadvantages," noting national entities are more effective than regional ones in: dealing with sovereignty issues and implementing SFM activities on the ground; collecting information on forest resources and activities; coordinating the implementation of activities within and across sectors; and mobilizing support. He also noted their advantage in promoting legislation and law enforcement, and awarding legitimacy to political processes. He also highlighted that international entities are more effective than regional ones in mobilizing international financial resources, as well



Group 3, moderated by Peter Saile, discussed how regional cooperation initiatives can improve their common work.





Main messages prepared by working groups as well as the final declaration of the meeting.

as generating knowledge and working on good governance, democracy and public participation in forest activities. The group presented three messages that were incorporated into the final declaration.

Peter Saile presented the work of group 3, which discussed the advantages and challenges of different types of regional fora for dealing with SFM. He noted that those focusing solely on forest issues may seem more trustworthy for the task of addressing SFM and can aid in the creation of a culture of understanding of forests and their values; but run the risk of getting lost in technical details and face difficulties in accessing decision makers. He illustrated that organizations dealing with SFM as part of a more general mandate have more political outreach, can take a more holistic and synergistic approach, and have the ability to bring together decision makers and actors from different sectors; but cautioned that sovereignty issues may pose stumbling blocks when working at the regional level. The group presented seven messages that were incorporated into the final declaration.

Al-Janabi moderated a brief discussion on the draft recommendations prepared during the workshop to be presented at the WFC on behalf of the participants. The recommendations were then adopted. He then thanked participants and organizers, and closed the workshop at 5:55pm.

## FINAL DECLARATION

The final Declaration will be forwarded to the XIII World Forestry Congress in thematic session 6.1 on “International dialogue and processes and their impact.” It states, *inter alia*, that regional organizations and initiatives are important emerging instruments that complement international and national approaches to SFM and they:

- have the most impact (are the most effective) when they mobilize the participation of and support from a wide range of stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society organizations; and
- can substantially benefit strategic alliances and partnerships, and South-South-cooperation.

The Declaration states that international and national level entities are well positioned to mobilize resources (financial and technical) to implement SFM on the national level, but more support is required at the regional level for transboundary aspects.

It also states that the international community should make better use of regional organizations and initiatives to: build regional capacity; address technical and sensitive political issues; take into account the rights and interests of indigenous and forest-dwelling people; attract and channel funds; develop and promote common positions; and promote SFM and related



Evy von Pfeil, GTZ, thanked participants and organizers.

subjects, such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and land Degradation (REDD), access and benefit sharing and payment for ecosystem services.



Group 2, moderated by Godwin Kowero, Executive Secretary, AFF, discussed the “comparative disadvantages” of regional organizations and initiatives