



The Commonwealth and the International Forestry Dialogue

By Jim Ball, Chair, Commonwealth Forestry Association

This chapter describes the international forestry dialogue which has been ongoing since the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. It includes both meetings and participation in the Conventions and Agreements.

■ International forestry-related events

This section covers the Commonwealth Forestry Conference and the two main global forestry meetings, the World Forestry Congress and the World Congress of the International Union of Forestry Research Organisations (IUFRO), as well as recent UN forest-related years and national Forestry Days.

The Commonwealth Forestry Conference

The Commonwealth Forestry Conference is an informal forum for foresters, and all those with an interest in the forestry sector, to meet to exchange knowledge and

experience. Meetings are hosted by different Commonwealth countries at approximately four-yearly intervals. It has been the custom to issue a Declaration or Recommendations at the end of each Conference, addressed to Commonwealth governments, especially to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) which is held every two years. In recent years CHOGM has focused on climate change issues; in 2007 (Uganda) it issued the "Lake Victoria Commonwealth Climate Change Action Plan" while at the meeting in November 2009 (Trinidad & Tobago) – see www.chogm2009.org/home – it delivered the Port of Spain Consensus to the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UNFCCC which was held in Copenhagen in December 2009 (see below) noting that there were only "a few short years" remaining to address the threat of climate change and that an international, legally-binding agreement was essential.

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Delegates to the 3rd British Empire Forestry Conference in September 1928 pose for a group photo at Albert Hall in Canberra, Australia.





A Standing Committee on Commonwealth Forestry (SCCF) was established on the occasion of the Conference in 1923. Its role is to:

- Provide continuity between one Conference and the next, including close liaison with host countries in their preparations, and follow-up actions;
- Determine the Conference theme and format, invite speakers, commission papers and issue appropriate guidance notes;
- Issue periodic newsletters to keep interested parties throughout the Commonwealth informed of arrangements and relevant activities;
- Take appropriate follow-up action on Commonwealth Conference recommendations.

The SCCF consists of one representative from each independent Commonwealth government (usually the head of the Forest Service or its equivalent), together with a number of co-opted advisory members in the UK.



Venues and Themes of Commonwealth Forestry Conferences

TABLE 7.1

Year	Location	Theme*
1920	United Kingdom (London)	
1923	Canada	
1928	Australia and New Zealand	
1935	South Africa	
1947	United Kingdom	
1952	Canada	
1957	Australia and New Zealand	
1962	East Africa	
1968	India (New Delhi)	Changing objectives of forest management
1974	United Kingdom	The forest and global environment
1980	Trinidad & Tobago	Forestry's contribution to social and economic development
1985	Canada (Victoria)	Investment in forestry – the needs and opportunities
1989	New Zealand (Rotorua)	Forestry – a multiple-use enterprise
1993	Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur)	People, the environment and forestry – conflict or harmony
1997	Zimbabwe (Victoria Falls)	Forestry in a changing political environment: challenges for the 21st century
2001	Australia (Fremantle)	Forests in a changing landscape
2005	Sri Lanka (Colombo)	Forestry's contribution to poverty reduction
2010	UK (Edinburgh)	Restoring the Commonwealth's forests: tackling climate change

* There were no themes before 1968.

The co-opted members include the Commonwealth Forestry Association, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the UK Department for International Development. The UK Forestry Commission provides the Secretariat.

Commonwealth Forestry Conferences have been held since 1920 when the first (Empire) Forestry Conference was held in the UK. *Table 7.1* shows all of the venues and the themes for recent Conferences.

Discussions in the early Conferences were related to general aspects of forest management but themes have been introduced since 1968 to broaden discussions and



focus them on the changing priorities of the forestry sector. At the same time the programme has evolved with the emphasis in recent years less on plenary sessions and more on discussions in small groups. Participation at the conferences has rarely been more than about 400, and the atmosphere has always been low-key and informal, facilitating discussion and the exchange of experiences between Commonwealth foresters.

The World Forestry Congress

World Forestry Congresses serve as a forum for governments, universities, civil society and the private sector to exchange views and experiences and to formulate recommendations for implementation at national, regional and global levels. The Congress also provides an opportunity for the sector to produce an overview of the state of forests and forestry in order to discern trends, adapt policies and raise awareness of issues among decision-makers, the public and other parties concerned.

The first and second World Forestry Congresses were organised by the International Forestry Institute, in 1926 in Rome and in 1936 in Budapest. Subsequent Congresses have been held approximately every six years, organised by a host country and sponsored by FAO, which provides the permanent Secretariat. Themes were introduced from 1970.

The functions of the Congress are advisory, not executive, and participants attend it in their personal capacity. The implementation of recommendations is a matter solely for those to whom they are addressed – for example, governments, international organisations, scientific bodies or forest owners. The outcomes are brought to the attention of the FAO Conference, which may consider endorsing any declaration coming from the Congress.

One of the most influential World Forestry Congresses was the Eighth with its theme of *Forests for People*. It led to greater global appreciation of the need for the participation of communities and individuals (“stakeholders”) in planning and decision-making in forest management. The XIII Congress (Argentina) was the best-attended, with over 7,000 participants from 160 nations. It was also remarkable for the message sent to COP-15 (see below) which stated that the Congress “notes with concern the impacts of climate change on forests and strongly emphasise[d] the important role forests play in climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as the need for forest-dependent people and forest ecosystems to adapt to this challenge”. The message stressed that forests represent far more than just carbon sequestration.

The host of the next Congress will be decided at FAO’s Committee on Forestry in October 2010.

The IUFRO World Congress

IUFRO is one of the world’s oldest professional bodies. The IUFRO World Congress, the first of which was held in 1892, is a general assembly of its members. It brings

Venues and Themes of Post-WW2 World Forestry Congresses TABLE 7.2

Number	Year	Location	Theme*
III	1949	Finland (Helsinki)	
IV	1954	India (Dehra Dun)	
V	1960	USA (Seattle)	Multiple use of forest and associated lands
VI	1966	Spain (Madrid)	Role of forestry in world economic changes
VII	1972	Argentina (Buenos Aires)	Forests and socio-economic development
VIII	1978	Indonesia (Jakarta)	Forests and people
IX	1985	Mexico (Mexico City)	Forest resources in the integral development of society
X	1991	France (Paris)	Forests, a heritage for the future
XI	1997	Turkey (Antalya)	Forestry for sustainable development: towards the 21st century
XII	2003	Canada (Québec City)	Forests, source of life
XIII	2009	Argentina (Buenos Aires)	Forests in development: a vital balance

* There were no themes before 1960.



together, normally at five-year intervals, scientists from all parts of the world to discuss technical and scientific issues related to forestry research and development.

International forestry-related years

There have been a number of international years, each formally declared by the UN General Assembly, which have been related to forests.

The International Year of Mountains (YoM), 2002, drew attention to the importance of mountains and other watersheds in maintaining the flow of rivers and water quality for millions of people in the lowlands. Approximately 28% of the world's closed forests were mountain forests at the time of the Global Forests Resources Assessment 2000 (FAO, 2001); they are complex ecosystems with high biological diversity but sensitive to fluctuations in climate. Mountain forests are also very important to the livelihoods of mountain people and if climate change leads to more frequent and intense storms, mountain regions will become more hazardous to live in, and the downstream effects of these storms could be even more destructive.

One of the main outcomes of the YoM was the Mountain Partnership, which is a voluntary alliance of partners dedicated to improving the lives of mountain people and protecting mountain environments around the world. Presently 51 countries, 16 intergovernmental organisations and 98 major groups (e.g. NGOs and the private sector) are members. See www.mountainpartnership.org.

The International Year of Desertification, 2006, aimed to raise global public awareness of the advancing deserts, and of ways to safeguard the biological diversity of arid lands covering one-third of the planet and protecting the knowledge and traditions of the two billion people affected by the phenomenon. Desertification affects one-third of the earth's surface and over one billion people. It is caused by human-

<i>Number</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Theme*</i>
X	1948	Zurich (Switzerland)	
XI	1953	Rome (Italy)	
XII	1956	Oxford (UK)	
XIII	1961	Vienna (Austria)	
XIV	1967	Munich (Germany FR)	
XV	1971	Gainesville (USA)	Research's role in the intensification of forestry practices and activities
XVI	1976	Oslo (Norway)	Forestry in a world of limited resources
XVII	1981	Kyoto (Japan)	Research today for tomorrow's forests
XVIII	1986	Ljubljana (Yugoslavia)	Forest research serving society
XIX	1990	Montreal (Canada)	Science in forestry: IUFRO's second century
XX	1995	Tampere (Finland)	Caring for the forest: research in a changing world
XXI	2000	Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)	Forests and society: the role of research
XXII	2005	Brisbane (Australia)	Forests in the balance: linking tradition and technology
XXIII	2010	Seoul (South Korea)	Forests for the future: sustaining society and the environment

* There were no themes before 1971.

induced factors and by climate change and causes land degradation with potentially devastating consequences in terms of social and economic costs. See www.iydd.org.

An International Year of the Forest was held in 1985, with the theme of *Forestry and Food Security*. It was organised by FAO. In 2011, the *International Year of Forests* will be celebrated, with the aim of raising awareness and promoting global action to sustainably manage, conserve and protect the world's forests. The UN General Assembly, which proclaimed the Year, requested the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to serve as the focal point for the implementation of activities for the observance of the Year,



in collaboration with Member States, and with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) among others. The Year will follow the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010, which is being organised by the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Year will be officially launched at UN Headquarters New York during the ninth session of UNFF (24 January-4 February 2011). A concept paper is being developed which will be presented in 2010 (see www.un.org/esa/forests/2011).

International and national forestry-related Weeks and Days

The first World Forest Week was organised by FAO in March 2009, in conjunction with FAO's Committee on Forestry (COFO). It focused on two topics:

- Sustainable forest management and climate change; and
- Adapting forest policies and institutions to change.

It built on the success of two regional forest weeks held in 2008:

- Asia-Pacific Forestry Week, April, Hanoi, Vietnam (www.fao.org/forestry/44155/en/); and
- European Forest Week, October, Rome, Italy and Brussels, Belgium (www.europeanforestweek.org/home/en/).

The first Arbor Day was celebrated in Nebraska, USA in 1872. The FAO Conference proposed in 1971 that a World Forestry Day should be held on 21 March 1973, but it does not seem to have been acted upon by FAO¹. There is a World Environment Day, 5 June, established by the UN General Assembly in 1972 to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, which is organised by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). The theme for 2009 was *Your*

¹ Editor's note: I recall being involved in discussions on re-instating the World Forestry Day in FAO in the 1990s, but a major problem is finding a season suitable for planting trees for all countries.

Planet Needs You – Unite to Combat Climate Change (see www.unep.org/wed/2009).

A Forest Day has been celebrated at the annual COP of the UNFCCC since 2007. Forest Day 3, at COP-15 in Copenhagen, considered how to include forests in climate change considerations, moving on from considering whether to include forests in the previous two Days.

Since 2003 International Mountain Day has been celebrated on 11 December each year. It aims to create awareness about the importance of mountains to life, to highlight the opportunities and constraints in mountain development and to build partnerships that will bring positive change to the world's mountains and highlands. See www.fao.org/mnts/intl_mountain_day.

A number of countries have national forestry days. Maple Leaf Day, celebrated on the last Wednesday of September, during National Forest Week, is the day on which Canadians are urged to reflect on the link between their lives and the maple leaf – symbolising Canada's historic economic and environmental link with trees. New Zealand has celebrated its national Arbor Day since 1892, and since 1977 on 5 June yearly. Malaysia holds World Forestry Day on a date close to 21 March each year, with an appropriate theme; in addition each of the 12 states of the Malaysian Federation also do so. The states of Victoria and New South Wales in Australia celebrate World Forestry Day, the former on 27 September, the latter on 21 March every year. Jamaica commemorates National Tree Planting Day yearly in October.

■ Commonwealth countries and international forestry fora and forestry-related agreements

"Climate change cannot be won without the world's forests. This, however, will be a complex and challenging feat. Nonetheless, it is one of the best large-scale investments we can make against climate change that could result in an equally large-scale dividend."



Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General, September 2008.
 “Given the scale of emissions from deforestation, any climate change deal that does not fully integrate forestry will fail to meet the necessary targets.”

Nicholas Stern, 2006.²

Commonwealth countries are strongly involved in all of the main international forestry-related fora and conventions. Links are given in *Annex 7.1* and membership of each in *Annex 7.2*.

For those wishing to follow the international debates on forestry and forestry-related issues, the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* is strongly recommended. To subscribe to the free electronic mail distribution list contact: www.iisd.ca/email/subscribe.htm.

Forestry-related fora

The UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1992. It issued the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 (a programme of action for sustainable development, of which Chapter 11 refers to forests), and the non-legally binding authoritative statement of principles for a global consensus on the management and sustainable development of all types of forest. From UNCED came the major environmental agreements, the CBD, UNFCCC and UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), described below, as well as the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD).

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) met in 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa, 10 years after UNCED – hence the alternative title “Rio+10”. It adopted two documents: the Johannesburg Plan of Action and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development. The emphasis moved from the environment to people.

² www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/stern_review_economics_climate_change/stern_review_report.cfm.



LEFT
 Ban-ki Moon:
 climate change
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 without the
 world's forests.

Before that the Millennium Summit had been held in 2000 in New York. It adopted the Millennium Declaration whose themes were elaborated into the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The MDG comprise eight overarching goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators; MDG 7 – “achieve environmental sustainability” – is directly related to forests, although the others are also linked to differing degrees.

UNFF was established in 2000 by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC), in its

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Resolution 2000/35. UNFF succeeded the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF), which had been established in 1995, and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). The principal objective of UNFF is the promotion of "... the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end..." based on the Rio Declaration, the Forest Principles, Chapter 11 of Agenda 21 and the outcome of the IPF/IFF Processes and other key milestones of international forest policy. UNFF has adopted over 270 proposals for action towards sustainable forest management, which had previously been identified by the IPF/IFF processes (see www.un.org/esa/forests/).

Sessions of UNFF are held every two years, the most recent being in 2009 at UN Headquarters in New York. Perhaps the most significant outcome of these was the adoption of the Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (NLBI) at the 7th Session in 2007, a reiteration of the agreement reached at UNCED in 1992 (the Forest Principles). A report on UNFF-7 can be found in *CFA Newsletter*, No. 37 of June 2007, which drew attention to one of the positive features of the agreement in that it makes reference for the first time to "sustainable forest management (SFM), as a dynamic and evolving concept, aiming to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental values of all types of forests, for the benefit of present and future generations". Some countries, however, were dissatisfied with the NLBI and a group of 30 "like-minded countries" met by invitation during UNFF-7 to consider a Canadian draft for a legally binding instrument.

Since the time available at regular sessions is limited for in-depth discussion, several member countries have organised expert meetings to review, before the two-yearly sessions, the complex and often politically sensitive forestry issues included in the UNFF multi-year programme of work. Two recent examples of Common-

wealth involvement in country-led initiatives (CLI) are the Workshop on Forest Governance and Decentralisation in Africa, (South Africa and Switzerland) and the Australian-Swiss Region-led Initiative on regional input in support of the UN Forum on Forests, both in 2008.

The Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) is a voluntary arrangement among 14 international organisations and secretariats with substantial programmes on forests.³ Its mission is "to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forest and strengthen long-term political commitment to this end". One of its objectives is to support UNFF and its member countries through the provision of major inputs to UNFF and other important international forest dialogues, including the UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD. In 2008 it prepared the CPF Strategic Framework for Forests and Climate Change, a proposal for a coordinated forest-sector response to climate change (see www.fao.org/forestry/16639-1-0.pdf).

ITTO's origins lie in the fourth session of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) which negotiated the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) in 1983 (see below under forestry-related agreements). ITTO was established in 1986 amidst increasing worldwide concern for the fate of tropical forests and in the belief that the tropical timber trade was one of the keys to economic development in developing countries with tropical forests.

ITTO is both a commodity agreement – related to trade and industry – and environmental agreement, concerned with the sustainable management of forests. Its members are divided into producing and consuming countries, of which there are 33 and 26 respectively.

ITTO develops internationally agreed policy documents to promote sustainable forest management and

3 These are CIFOR, FAO, ITTO, IUFRO, CBD, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNCCD, UNFF, UNFCCC, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), UNEP, ICRAF, the World Bank and IUCN.



forest conservation and assists tropical member countries to adapt their policies and implement them through projects. ITTO also collects, analyses and disseminates information on the production and trade of tropical timber and funds a range of projects and other action aimed at developing industries at both community and industrial scales.

Forestry-related agreements

The forestry-related agreement that has been most in the news in recent years is the UNFCCC. It set out a framework for action to stabilise greenhouse gases⁴ (GHG) to avoid “dangerous anthropogenic interference with the world’s climatic system”. It came into force in 1994 and 190 countries have now ratified it. Climate change is believed to be one of the greatest threats to sustainable development with serious impacts on the environment and natural resources, human health, food security, economic activity and poor and disadvantaged groups. The need for international action to ameliorate climate change was recognised in the Commonwealth Climate Change Action Plan, issued by CHOGM in 2007⁵ for example.

The world’s climate varies naturally, but scientists agree that rising concentrations of anthropogenically-produced GHG in the Earth’s atmosphere are leading to changes in it. Anthropogenic climate change is the result of increasing GHG emissions caused or influenced by development factors such as economic growth, technology, population and governance; and evidence of climate change impacts on both natural and human systems is increasing. There are, however, large differences in emissions of GHG among countries, and *Annex 1.2* shows the wide range in CO₂ emissions, from 0.1 tonne/head/year in Mozambique or Rwanda to 20

tonnes/head/year in Canada or nearly 30 tonnes/head/year in Guyana.

A review of the economics of climate change, with some mentions of forestry, which continues to attract international notice, is the Stern Review Report on the Economics of Climate Change which was made to the UK Treasury in October 2006 (*reference at footnote 2*). It makes a strong economic case for international action, noting there is a 70% chance of temperatures increasing by 3°C if GHG emissions are stabilised at 450 parts per million carbon dioxide equivalent (ppm CO₂e) and a 10% chance of temperatures exceeding 5°C if GHG emissions are stabilised at 550 ppm CO₂. Stern stated that the global community should aim to stabilise GHG emissions in the range of 450-550 ppm CO₂ since 450 ppm CO₂ would be difficult to achieve given the current stock of GHG in the atmosphere. Furthermore, the risk of “very harmful impacts” increases significantly at stabilisation above 550 ppm CO₂.

Negotiations of the UNFCCC have been assisted by the comprehensive assessments of climate change

Commonwealth Members of ITTO in 2009 TABLE 7.4

<i>Producing countries</i>	<i>Consuming countries</i>
Africa	Australia
Cameroon	Canada
Ghana	New Zealand
Nigeria	United Kingdom
Asia & Pacific	
Fiji	
India	
Malaysia	
Papua New Guinea	
Vanuatu	
Latin America	
Guyana	
Trinidad & Tobago	

4 The gases include CO₂ but also methane and nitrous oxide.

5 See www.thecommonwealth.org/document/34293/35144/173014/climateactionplan.htm.



prepared by the IPCC. The IPCC, which was established by the World Meteorological Organisation and UNEP in 1988, has undertaken four global Assessment Reports (AR) – in 1990, 1995, 2001 and 2007. The next is due in 2014. The IPCC has stated that the effects of climate change have already been observed, and precautionary and prompt action is necessary to mitigate and adapt to the effects. The Fourth AR calculated that about 20% of anthropogenic CO₂ emissions during the 1990s resulted from land use change, primarily deforestation, although 25% of total emissions were believed to be absorbed by terrestrial ecosystems.

Forests are considered by the UNFCCC as sinks (which remove and store greenhouse gases from the atmosphere) or as sources of those gases, depending on the age of the forest, the management regime and the effects of disturbances such as insect or pest attack or forest fires. The reduction of deforestation and land degradation and the increase in forest cover are vital for both mitigation and adaptation.

The Kyoto Protocol was agreed at COP-3 of the UNFCCC in Kyoto, Japan in 1997. It came into force in 2005 and currently has been ratified by 184 countries. It commits industrialised countries and countries in with economies transition to a market economy (known as Annex I parties) to emission reduction targets of six greenhouse gases by an average of 5.2% below 1990 levels between 2008-2012 (known as the first commitment period), with specific targets which vary among countries.

Annex 1 countries may include in their target the emissions and removals of GHG deriving from certain direct human-induced land-use change and forestry activities, including removals from afforestation⁶ and reforestation⁷ and emissions from deforestation, as well

6 Defined as planting of new forests on lands that have not been forested for a period of at least 50 years.

7 Limited in the first commitment period to those lands that did not contain forest on 31 December 1989.

as possible emissions and removals from forest management, the management of cropland and grazing land, and re-vegetation. In addition, project-based activities under two flexible mechanisms created by the Kyoto Protocol – Joint Implementation (JI) and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)⁸ – could count towards an Annex 1 country's reduction commitment.

At COP-11 (2005, Montreal, Canada) forests were discussed under the agenda item "Reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries: approaches to stimulate action", proposed by Papua New Guinea among nine other countries.

Two workshops were held on this issue in 2006 in Rome, Italy, and in 2007 in Cairns, Australia then discussions continued at COP-13, where the Bali Action Plan was adopted. This addressed enhanced national and international action on climate change mitigation, including, *inter alia*, "consideration of policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries". In further talks on a financial mechanism to compensate developing countries for the recovery and maintenance of carbon stocks in forests, it has been suggested that it should cover three areas:

- Reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD);
- Conservation, sustainable management of forests, and stock enhancement in addition to REDD (REDD+); and
- All terrestrial carbon in addition to REDD+ (REDD++).

8 JI projects are those undertaken jointly by two Annex I countries while CDM projects are those undertaken in developing countries.



There is also the UN Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries, known as the UN-REDD programme, developed by three partners – FAO, UNDP and UNEP. It was created to assist developing countries to answer some of the questions related to REDD and to help them prepare to participate in a future REDD mechanism. There are nine initial country programme activities in Africa, Asia and Latin America, including Papua New Guinea, Tanzania and Zambia with Sri Lanka as one of the observer countries.

The Prince's Rainforests Project (PRP) which was set up in 2007 by HRH The Prince of Wales has the goal of "making the forests worth more alive than dead". The project focuses on two objectives:

- To identify appropriate incentives to encourage rainforest nations to slow their deforestation rates; and
- To raise awareness of the link between rainforests and climate change.

An Informal Working Group on Interim Finance for REDD (IWG-IFR) was established in 2009, which has issued its first report outlining an interim Emergency Package that could deliver reductions in deforestation of around 25% by 2015, with an estimated funding requirement of between €15 and €25 billion. The Emergency Package would fill the current funding gap that exists before the money to be raised under the UNFCCC negotiations is widely available to rainforest nations.

The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) of the World Bank aims to assist developing countries in their efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation by providing value to standing forests. It will help to build the capacity of developing countries in tropical and subtropical regions to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and to tap into any future system of positive incentives for REDD – a form of Payment for Environmental Services (PES).

The Adaptation Fund was established by the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes in developing countries that are Parties to the Protocol. It is financed by 2% of the Certified Emission Reduction (CERs) issued for projects of the CDM and with funds from other sources.

The negotiations of COP-15, held in Copenhagen, Denmark in December 2009 attracted strong international attention well before the event. It was one of the largest gatherings of the world's leaders ever in its final two days, and for that reason it had been hoped that the outcome would be a legally binding agreement with quantified emission reduction targets. It was not to be; given the very large difference in stage of development and CO₂ emissions between countries (see *Annex 1.2*) it is not surprising that many developing economies felt it was hardly up to them to make economic sacrifices. Some countries, however, including members of the Commonwealth, agreed the text of the Copenhagen Accord but this was only "taken note of" in the final plenary session. The Accord (see http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/cop_15/application/pdf/cop15_cph_auv.pdf) includes text on future consultations and analysis, and countries willing to do so were able to register support for the Accord by the end of January 2010.

But the outcome for the forestry sector was more positive: a new body was established on REDD+ and six nations (including Australia and the UK) had already pledged US\$3.5 billion between 2010 and 2012 as contribution to a much larger fund of US\$25 billion which the six nations stated was to "slow, halt, and eventually reverse deforestation" (UK Government Press Release, 17 December 2009) in developing countries – the gathering of pledges to which had been led by the Prince's Rainforest Project. But targets and timetables were still lacking for the aim of slowing or stopping deforestation.

The CBD, which entered into force in 1993, has been ratified by 190 countries. It is an international legal

**RIGHT**

The outcome of COP-15 for the forestry sector was more positive – delegates attend Forest Day 3.

instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity whose website describes it as recognising “that biological diversity is about more than plants, animals and micro organisms and their ecosystems – it is about people and our need for food security, medicines, fresh air and water, shelter, and a clean and healthy environment in which to live”. Its Strategic Plan (adopted in 2002) commits the signatories “to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth”. One of the Thematic Programmes of the CBD is concerned with Forest Biodiversity, which notes that forests are: “biologically diverse systems, representing some of the richest biological areas on Earth. They offer a variety of habitats for plants, animals and micro-organisms. However, forest biodiversity is increasingly threatened as a result of deforestation, fragmentation, climate change, and other factors.”

The UNCCD, whose full title is the Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification Particularly in Africa, entered into force in 1996 and now has 192 member countries. The Secretariat is in Bonn, Germany but the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), based in Rome, administers the Convention’s Global Mechanism (GM).

The UNCCD recognises the physical, biological and socioeconomic aspects of desertification, the importance of redirecting technology transfer so that it is demand-driven, and the involvement of local communities in combating desertification and land degradation.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, whose full title is the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, is one of the oldest of the environmental treaties; it has been ratified by 159 countries. It is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the



conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The treaty was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975.

CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, includes a number of forest species (see *Annex 7.3*). There are five forest tree species included in Appendix 1, which are endangered due to international trade and whose trade is only permitted in exceptional circumstances. There are 19 Appendix 2 forest tree species – including one tree fern – that may become endangered if trade is not regulated through controls to prevent unsustainable use, including several that occur in Commonwealth countries such as *Prunus Africana* from West Africa and several *Taxus* spp. (South Asia). There are eight Appendix 3 tree species (species that are subject to domestic regulation), none of which have been declared by Commonwealth countries.

The ITTA is the international treaty under which ITTO operates. It entered into force on 1 January 1997, superseding the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 1983. It focuses on the world tropical timber economy and the sustainable management of the resource base, encouraging both the timber trade and the improved management of the forests. In addition, it contains provisions for information sharing, including non-tropical timber trade data, and allows for the consideration of non-tropical timber issues as they relate to tropical timber.

■ Commonwealth countries in regional groupings

All Commonwealth countries are members of regional groupings, which often have developed, or are developing, forestry programmes or bodies to coordinate policies or activities. The following are some examples:

■ Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC). There are 11 member countries, including Cameroon. It

has a coordinating role in forest policy development among member countries. It also has a Council, which meets at Ministerial level.

- Southern African Development Community (SADC, formerly SADCC). There are 13 member countries, including Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zambia. It has developed a forest strategy.
- The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE – www.mcpfe.org) has 40 member countries, including Cyprus, Malta and the UK. It holds Ministerial Conferences of the ministers responsible for forests in Europe, which take decisions on common aspects of highest political relevance regarding forests and forestry. It has developed a Criteria and Indicators Process.
- The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has 10 member countries, of which Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and Singapore are Commonwealth members. It has a number of agreements on environmental matters (several of which concern the issue of smoke haze) and a Working Group of Senior Officials on Forestry (ASOF).
- The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) has 25 members, of which Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines and Trinidad & Tobago are Commonwealth members. The aims of ACS are *inter alia* the strengthening of regional cooperation; preserving the environmental integrity of the Caribbean Sea; and promoting the sustainable development of the Greater Caribbean. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) established a free trade area, while the Caribbean Regional Environmental Programme (CREP) was designed to strengthen regional cooperation and build greater awareness of environmental issues.



- FAO has six regional forestry commissions of which all Commonwealth countries are members of one, sometimes of two. The regional commissions serve as regional fora and complement the global sessions of UNFF.

■ Forest law, enforcement and governance

The threat to sustainable forest management has already been described in *Chapter 2*. This section describes the international background to the problem.

The G-8, meeting in Birmingham, England in May 1998, launched the G-8 Action Programme on Forests, and considered the impact of illegal forest activities so great that a resolution (VI) was included to reduce illegal logging⁹. The preamble stated: "Illegal logging robs national and sub-national governments, forest owners and local communities of significant revenues and benefits, damages forest ecosystems, distorts timber markets and forest resource assessments and acts as a disincentive to sustainable forest management". Illegal logging has continued to be mentioned in the final communiqué of more recent meetings, for example the Gleneagles summit of 2005 (see *CFA Newsletter*, No. 30 of September 2005).

Besides the G-8 Action Programme on Forests other international action has included:

- Forest Law, Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) Conferences in East Asia 2001, Africa 2003, Europe and North Asia 2005;
 - EU Forest Law, Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan, 2003 – the heart of which is legislation to require evidence of legality at point of import;
 - US President's Initiative against Illegal Logging, 2003;
 - G-8 Environment/Development Ministerial 2005;
 - Discussions in other fora including ITTO, CITES, CBD, WSSD, FAO, UNECE, WTO.
- Action by the UK, the world's fourth biggest net importer of timber, illustrates some of the challenges and options in tackling illegal logging.
- Some 71% of UK timber volume is imported, of which only 6.5% is from the tropics, mainly plywood and hardwoods. The UK government will now only buy timber from legal and sustainable sources¹⁰, while big building companies, which account for 70% of consumption, are adopting the same policy.
- The Timber Trades Federation¹¹, which represents the timber industry in the UK, is taking action through:
- An Indonesian Action Plan (with the Netherlands and Belgium);
 - The EU €7 million Timber Trade Initiative (UK, the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Malaysia, Indonesia) under which audited timber now comes from 183 mills and forests;
 - Sourcing verified legal timber from 147 mills in Indonesia, Malaysia, Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville and Cameroon;
 - A responsible purchasing policy (assessment of supplier base, risk management system, advice to suppliers, building credibility through independent auditing, alternative evidence of legality/sustainability, elimination of potentially illegal suppliers).
- Action is clearly being taken by some Commonwealth countries to combat illegal logging and to promote good governance of forests. But there is a long way to go and more international commitment to collaboration is required.

9 The full text of the Action Programme is available from the website of the meeting of Foreign and Finance Ministers before the Summit: <http://web.archive.org/web/19981212012854/http://birmingham.g8summit.gov.uk/>.

10 See *CFA Newsletter*, No. 27 December 2004.

11 UK Timber Trade Federation www.ttf.co.uk and *CFA Newsletter*, No. 30 of September 2005.



■ Debt for nature swaps

A method of financing conservation projects in developing countries is through debt-for-nature swaps. Conservation and other international organisations purchase a portion of a developing country's commercial debt at a discount, or else persuade creditor banks to donate some of debt. Foreign debt can be purchased at 50 to 90% of its actual value and sometimes far less.

In 2006 two African countries agreed debt for nature swaps. The first was brokered by WWF between Cameroon and France in June 2006 (WWF Press Release, 22 June 2006), while the second, a Tropical Forest Conservation and Debt Reduction Agreement, was signed between Botswana and the USA (*The Voice*, Francistown, 10 October 2006).

■ Summary

Forests and forestry are the focus of a great deal of international attention, and Commonwealth

countries have played an important part in international forestry-related conventions, agreements and meetings.

Climate change is the international environmental issue attracting most attention at present; in relation to forests the provisions of the Kyoto Protocol could have considerable potential for attracting funds through various mechanisms including the newly-established REDD+ to the conservation and establishment of forests because of their role in sequestering carbon. It still remains to be seen, however, whether this potential will be realised, and how.

The other major forestry issue is the reduction of illegal logging through Forest Law, Enforcement and Governance (FLEG). There is considerable scope for Commonwealth producer and consumer countries to take a lead in combating illegal logging and promoting the good governance of forests.



LEFT
Processing roundwood in Venda, South Africa – initiatives to buy timber only from legal and sustainable sources are helping to promote the good governance of forests.

Sustainable Forest Management in South Africa

Forest resources provide significant environmental goods and services that benefit South African society. Although the 43 million ha of forests cover only 35.8% of the country, the forest sector contributes R14.8 billion to the economy (DWAF, 2008), representing 11.6% of total export earnings. In South Africa forestry resources, in particular woodlands, contribute significantly to rural livelihoods and income generation through fuelwood, construction materials, medicinal plants and a range of other non-timber forest products. Seventy percent of people living in rural areas are poor with three out of four children living in households with incomes below the minimum subsistence level (Quan, 2008). This creates huge pressure on natural resources, leading to degradation and depletion. For this reason, it is necessary to put in place measures to ensure sustainable utilisation of forest resources for the continued benefit of future generations. This paper reviews sustainable forest management in South Africa and outlines programmes that have been put in place to ensure achievement of the objectives of sustainable forest management.

Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)

Sustainable forest management has broad social, economic and environmental goals. One of the driving forces behind SFM is the Rio Declaration on Development and the Environment, adopted by more than 178 governments at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

Forest resources in South Africa

Natural forests are valued for many different reasons in South Africa. They cover an estimated area of 492,700 ha, which is less than 0.4% of land surface

of South Africa (DWAF, 2007). But they have the highest biodiversity per unit area of any biome in South Africa. Woodlands represent the dominant vegetation type in South Africa covering an area of more than 39 million ha (Mucina and Rutherford, 2006), of which more than 5.7 million ha are within protected reserves. Commercial plantations cover approximately 1.26 million ha of the country and over 80% of them occur in the three provinces of Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape. Approximately 68% of the area covered by plantation estates in South Africa is planted with exotic tree species.

Programmes

The National Forests Act (NFA) of 1998 recommends the development of a set of Principles, Criteria, Indicators and Standards (PCIS) which the government uses to monitor and report on progress towards SFM. Besides the PCIS, other programmes were put in place including Participatory Forest Management (PFM), the main purpose of which is to encourage community participation in the management of forests; Forest Enterprise Development (FED) the use of forestry resources to establish forestry business and ensure that Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMME) benefit; and most recently the Forest Sector Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Charter which provides for transformation and growth of the sector. It opens opportunities for more people to participate in the mainstream economy. If communities living adjacent to forests do not participate meaningfully in their management it will result in the lack of appreciation of the value and significance of the resource. This could also result in unsustainable harvesting practices, uncontrolled fires and lead to deforestation.

Challenges

The key challenge in implementing the PCIS is the availability of human and financial resources. Reporting is also a challenge due to lack of self audits as well as District, Regional and National audits. Another challenge is that woodlands are distributed over large areas, and are often inhabited by vulnerable communities who are heavily dependent on these woodlands for sustenance. This could result in over utilisation of the resources with resultant deforestation. In terms of the implementation of the PFM programme the main challenge is to manage expectations. Participants have high expectations, such as employment opportunities and when these expectations are not realised, the objectives of the programmes tend to suffer. Implementation of the Forest Sector BBBEE Charter is still in its infancy, but the challenge rests in growing the sector, especially with limited land available for further afforestation and water constraints.

Conclusion

Participation by local communities in forestry management issues will go a long way to ensure sustainable management of forests resource. The development of the SMME Strategy will help to ensure that communities and SMMEs benefit from forestry resources by ensuring sustainability. Introducing improved information management systems will result in better ways of collecting data to ensure effectiveness of the PCIS as tools for sustainable forest management.

Andile Churchill Mkwalo and Tebog Mathiane, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Republic of South Africa.

A vibrant and sustainable forest sector for the lasting benefit of the nation



The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), as a custodian of forestry resources in South Africa, is responsible for the promotion of the sustainable management of the country's forest resources for the benefit of the nation. The vision of the forestry sector is "A vibrant, profitable, equitable, sustainable and growing forest sector to be utilised for the lasting benefit of the nation and developed and managed to protect and improve the environment".

In order to realize the vision, DAFF together with its stakeholders have developed a strategy document that maps the path the sector will embark on over the next 20 years. The strategic focus areas are, among others, the expansion of the forest estate; improvement of quality of life through forestry; conservation of forest biological diversity; enhanced and streamlined regulatory environment; securing timber supply and establishment of a knowledge-based forest enterprise.

For Forestry information contact: The DDG: Forestry

DDGForestry@nda.agric.za

Tel: 012 319 7886

DA-GF-13&14

Fax: 012 319 7841



agriculture,
forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, forestry & fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA