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**Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations****Economic Commission for Europe  
Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry****Food and Agriculture Organization  
European Forestry Commission****Seventy-ninth session**

Rome, 22-25 November 2021

Item 5(f) of the provisional agenda

**FAO European Forestry matters: Preparations for ERC 33  
and COFO 26 and for the XV World Forestry Congress****Forty-first session**

Rome, 22-25 November 2021

**Preparations for the thirty-third session of the Food and  
Agriculture Organization Regional Conference for Europe,  
the twenty-sixth session of the Food and Agriculture  
Organization Committee on Forestry and the XV World  
Forestry Congress****Note by the Secretariat***Summary*

This document provides information about preparations for the thirty-third session of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Regional Conference for Europe (ERC), the twenty-sixth session of the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) and the XV World Forestry Congress.

This document invites Members to provide their guidance on the above areas in a coordinated manner to strengthen the interactions and collaboration with the other Commissions as well as with FAO's Governing Bodies. The Commission will also identify its regional priorities for the FAO Forestry programme.

This document also provides information, as requested by the last session of COFO, and seeks inputs on possible options for further linking the work of the forest-related FAO Statutory Bodies to the work of FAO's Forestry Division and other policy areas with relevance for forestry to increase their relevance and efficiency and to create synergies and enhance participation.



## I. Preparations for the twenty-sixth session of COFO

1. The coordination between the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and the Regional Forestry Commissions is a major element of the Multi-year Programme of Work of COFO. This coordination enables aligning agendas, identifying common items and developing meeting calendars to allow for timely inputs to the Regional Conferences and to COFO in strategy and priority setting, budgetary planning, and in developing advice on global policy and regulatory matters. The Commissions' inputs are directly contributing to developing the agenda of the next session of COFO, and they are also the basis for setting up priorities for the activities of FAO in forestry.
2. In its recent sessions, the COFO included dialogues with chairpersons of the Commissions, thus strengthening further the global-regional collaboration and benefitting strongly from the views of the regions regarding key global challenges.
3. During the twenty-fifth session, COFO "stressed the importance of the Regional Forestry Commissions and the need for them to have a more policy-relevant role in the FAO Regional Conferences"<sup>1</sup>. Through this recommendation, the Committee encouraged closer integration of the Commissions in regional policy dialogues and strengthening the cross-sectoral linkages for forests (see Section D).
4. In FAO's renewed governance structure, Regional Conferences play an important role in determining operational priorities for the Organization. For this reason, it is extremely important that forest issues be discussed also at the regional level where two of FAO's main delivery mechanisms - the Regional Initiatives and the Country Programming Frameworks - are key components of the deliberations of the Regional Conferences.
5. It is important to recall in this context that, when discussing the transformation of agriculture and food systems to halt deforestation and promote the sustainable production and consumption of forest products, COFO also recommended to "promote synergies and address trade-offs between forestry and agriculture in initiatives and projects, including through COVID-19 pandemic recovery measures"<sup>2</sup> and to "enhance FAO's cross-sectoral work to address impacts of certain agriculture production systems and related food systems on forests"<sup>3</sup>.
6. Regarding the work of the Organization, COFO invited FAO to "explore options for further linking the work of these Statutory Bodies [i.e. the Regional Forestry Commissions] to the work of the Forestry Division and other policy areas with relevance for forestry, in order to increase their relevance and efficiency and to create synergies and enhance participation." Through this recommendation, COFO called for an even stronger coordination between activities at the regional and global levels, both in target setting and in implementation.
7. The Commission may wish to formulate its recommendations for the COFO agenda (Annex 1), the Regional Conference (Annex 2), and the programme of work in forestry (Annex 3).
8. Regarding the COFO agenda, the Commission may wish to identify the topic, the suggested actions for COFO to undertake and, to the extent possible, the follow-up actions recommended for the Committee and/or FAO. Regarding the recommendations for the programme of work, the Secretariat, under the guidance of the Executive Committee, should regularly translate the outcome of the discussions on the different agenda items into possible actions and present these for the Commission's consideration, linking them clearly with FAO's Strategic Objectives, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Global Forest Goals of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests.

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<sup>1</sup> COFO/2020/REP paragraph 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, paragraph 23. b.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, paragraph 23. c.

## II. Preparations for the thirty-third session of ERC

9. The thirty-third Regional Conference for Europe (ERC) will be held from 10 to 13 May 2022. The Europe Regional Group (ERG), at its meeting on 7 April 2021, discussed the proposal of Poland to host the thirty-third session of the ERC. Based on this consultation, FAO Director-General decided on Poland to host the thirty-third session of the ERC. It is tentatively planned to be held in physical modality, but also considering other modalities in light of the pandemic situation.

10. Two important topics pertinent for the region are expected to be discussed under the Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Issues agenda item. Three topics were proposed for the consideration of the Members during the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) Informal Consultation meeting in July 2021, which were: (i) greening agriculture and food production for a transformative food system in Europe and Central Asia, (ii) leaving no one behind in Europe and Central Asia, (ii) Sustainable Food Value Chains for Nutrition, a practical approach for transforming food systems for healthy diets in REU. Final decision about the topics will be made following the consultation with ERG in September 2021.

11. The latest sessions of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) as well as the other two regional article VI bodies – the European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC) – would report to the ERC.

## III. Preparations for the XV World Forestry Congress

12. The XV World Forestry Congress, originally scheduled from 24 to 28 May 2021, will be held instead from 2 to 6 May 2022 in Seoul, Republic of Korea, at the Coex convention centre. The postponement was necessary because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Preparations for the Congress are being steered by a secretariat composed of staff of the Korea Forest Service and the FAO Forestry Division.

13. Consultations with FAO Members started in 2019 when the FAO Regional Forestry Commissions provided their guidance on the preparations and continued through the twenty-fifth session of COFO. Most recently, the Congress was presented to the forty-second session of the FAO Conference. These fora identified priority issues that could form the basis of technical sessions at the Congress. The secretariat has also been seeking advice from various stakeholder groups and is being supported by the Consultative Group of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and the Congress' own Advisory Committee, which is composed of representatives of all stakeholder groups and regions.

14. The consultations led to selecting *Building a green, healthy and resilient future with forests* as the theme of the Congress, reflecting the integral role that forests play in ensuring the health, well-being and stability of the planet and its people. It also seeks to recognize forests' contributions to the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and to promote nature-based solutions as the most efficient means to achieve progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

15. To achieve its objectives, the programme continues to be built around six sub-themes that cover the most important current issues concerning forests and the products and services they provide. The sub-themes also guide the review of progress in implementing the recommendations of previous Congresses, especially the Durban Declaration. The sub-themes are:

- (a) Turning the tide: reversing deforestation and forest degradation
- (b) Nature-based solutions for climate-change adaptation and mitigation and biodiversity conservation
- (c) The green pathway to growth and sustainability
- (d) Forests and human health: revisiting the connections
- (e) Managing and communicating forest information and knowledge

(f) Forests without boundaries: enhancing management and cooperation

16. Following guidance received from the Congress' advisory bodies, the thematic and topical focus of the programme will be maintained despite the postponement and relevant recent developments will be included. This will ensure that the Congress discussions remain topical and timely. The proposed draft programme of the Congress was posted on the website (<https://wfc2021korea.org/sub02/programme.html>) in July 2021.

17. The Congress aims to serve as a platform for the global forest sector to exchange views and experiences on the state of forests and forestry in order to discern trends, adapt policies and raise awareness among decision and policy makers, the public and other stakeholders, as well as to consider recommendations for appropriate follow-up actions. The outcomes of relevant global fora including the Conferences of the Parties of the Rio Conventions, the United Nations Food Systems Summit, and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress, as well as the United Nations Forum on Forests will be taken into account during the Congress deliberations. Should any of these gatherings be postponed beyond the Congress, the outcomes could be presented at those events as input from the Congress. The Congress also seeks to make substantive contribution to enabling progress in the United Nations Decade of Family Farming and the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the Secretary-General's initiative on turning the tide on deforestation.

18. The programme schedule will encompass high-level dialogues; plenary sessions; technical sessions; a variety of events that provide an opportunity for sharing expertise, good practices and innovations; poster sessions, publicizing research carried out around the world; and speakers' corner providing a flexible opportunity for participants to present their views.

19. The Congress will include an exhibition featuring products, technologies, and services available to the forestry sector and field trips to sites of interest in the Republic of Korea. Time has been built into the programme to ensure that participants will have the opportunity to network and informally share ideas and experiences.

20. Congress preparations are progressing smoothly with the amendment of session plans, the re-opening of voluntary submissions for side-event proposals, papers, posters and videos and renewed outreach efforts. Early bird registration is open until 30 November 2021 and a financial support scheme for participants is being prepared. The scheme will seek to ensure equitable representation of all regions, countries and stakeholder groups. Further details on the financial support scheme as well as on sponsorship opportunities are presented on the Congress website.

21. The Congress is planned to be a physical event and it is expected that in addition to broad participation from a wide range of stakeholders, the Congress will also attract the attention of leaders of governments, scientific and business communities and stakeholder associations. The organizers aim to ensure strong representation of youth, women and indigenous peoples. Korea is developing a programme to sensitize middle-school aged youth to forest issues and will provide a special programme for them to learn about forests through the Congress.

22. The host country is fully prepared to provide the safest conditions for Congress participants under the health regulations in place. The Congress venue has the highest standard sanitary measures in place, and will be adapted to social distancing requirements, as needed for the Congress. In the unfortunate event of the mass COVID-19 vaccinations around the world does not bring about the needed changes supporting in-person participation in the next year, the Secretariat will consider employing virtual elements to allow for good participation in the Congress.

23. The key findings of the Congress' deliberations will form the Congress outcomes formulated through an open and transparent consultative process involving forest-sector stakeholders at the global, regional and national levels. It seeks to contribute to:

(a) Renewed commitment to halt deforestation, prevent forest degradation and increase forest area through increased investment in forests and forestry-related activities;

- (b) Enhanced appreciation for the critical role that forests, trees, forest products and services play in a green, healthy and resilient future of the planet;
- (c) Acknowledge the role of forests and forestry in sustainable development and specifically in the efforts to build back better post COVID-19.

## **IV. Linking the work of the forest-related FAO Statutory Bodies to the work of the FAO Forestry Division**

### **A. Introduction**

24. Following its dialogue with Statutory Bodies during its 25th Session, the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO):

- (a) Requested FAO to consult with the Regional Forestry Commissions on ways to help facilitate their policy dialogues and technical exchanges to assist them in achieving their Members' goals and contributions to international processes and goals<sup>4</sup>.

- (b) Invited FAO to explore options for further linking the work of these Statutory Bodies to the work of the Forestry Division and other policy areas with relevance for forestry, in order to increase their relevance and efficiency and to create synergies and enhance participation<sup>5</sup>.

25. The purpose of this document is to support discussion by the Regional Forestry Commissions (RFCs) on ways to help facilitate their policy dialogues and technical exchanges to assist them in achieving their Members' goals and contributions to international processes. It also seeks inputs on possible options for further linking the work of the forest-related FAO Statutory Bodies to the work of the Forestry Division and other policy areas with relevance for forestry to increase their relevance and efficiency and to create synergies and enhance participation.

26. FAO has the following forest-related Statutory Bodies, six of which are RFCs, namely:

- (a) Regional Forestry Commissions:
  - (i) African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC);
  - (ii) Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC);
  - (iii) European Forestry Commission (EFC);
  - (iv) Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC);
  - (v) Near East Forestry and Range Commission (NEFRC);
  - (vi) North American Forest Commission (NAFC).
- (b) Other Forest-Related Statutory Bodies:
  - (i) Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries (ACSFI);
  - (ii) AFWC/EFC/NEFRC Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions "Silva Mediterranea";
  - (iii) International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment (IPC);
  - (iv) Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources (ITWG-FGR);
  - (v) Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources.

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<sup>4</sup> Para 35, C 2021/24.

<sup>5</sup> Para 40, C 2021/24.

27. The Regional Forestry Commissions, which cover the whole world, were established between 1947 and 1958. Each commission provides advice on the formulation of forest management policy; reviews and coordinates implementation at the regional level; exchanges information; advises on suitable practices and actions with regard to technical problems and makes appropriate recommendations. In addition to forests, the AFWC mandate includes wildlife and the NEFRC mandate includes rangelands. The legal framework for the RFCs is provided by Article VI.1 of the FAO Constitution and their membership is open to Member Nations and Associate Members. The RFCs report to COFO and to their respective FAO Regional Conferences. The RFCs normally meet every two years to consider both policy and technical issues. They also provide a link between the global dialogue at the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and national implementation. Most of the RFCs have technical working groups that undertake inter-sessional work on issues of regional priority<sup>6</sup>.

28. The RFCs typically discuss a number of common items and receive reports on country activities and progress by their working groups. At recent meetings, common items have included implementation of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests and collaboration with the UNFF; preparations for the 2020 COFO Session and the XV World Forestry Congress; FAO's work on biodiversity; climate change; forest landscape restoration and forest value chains. Other matters of regional significance have included illicit exploitation and trade of forest and wildlife products (AFWC); forests for peace and well-being (APFC); forests and the circular economy (EFC); sustainable agriculture and resilience to climate change (LAC); and forest protection (NEFRC)<sup>7</sup>.

29. The Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries (ACFSI) was established in 1960 as the Advisory Council on Paper and Wood Products, but its name was changed in 2012 as part of a renewal process. It provides advice to FAO and its member countries on the sustainable production and consumption of forest industry products, including related policy work and regulatory matters; assists FAO in identifying key issues across forest industry value chains; seeks to maximize benefits from innovations and more efficient processing of forest products; and improves knowledge and training on best practices. ACSFI operates under Article VI.2 of the FAO Constitution and its members are appointed in their personal capacity<sup>8</sup>.

30. "*Silva Mediterranea*" was established in 1948 to review trends in the use of forest land in the Mediterranean area and assess the impact of changes; to identify forestry research priorities; and to carry out technical studies and surveys related to the formulation and implementation of national forest policies. The legal framework is provided by Article VI.1 of the FAO Constitution. Its members comprise those members of AFWC, EFC and NEFRC with an interest in the Mediterranean basin. "*Silva Mediterranea*" currently has six working groups on: forest fires; cork oak and non-timber forest products; forest management and sustainable development; forest genetic resources; urban and peri-urban forestry; and desertification and restoration in Mediterranean drylands<sup>9</sup>.

31. The International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment (IPC) was established in 1947 as the International Commission on Poplars. Its legal framework is provided under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution by the Convention on the International Commission on Poplars and other Fast-Growing Trees, which was amended in 2019 to include other fast-growing trees in addition to poplars and willows. It has 38 members, all of whom are Member Nations that have acceded to the Convention. The role of the IPC is to foster the sustainable management of fast-growing trees through the facilitation of technical exchange on sustainable management practices and joint research programmes. It has six working parties, dealing with taxonomy, genetic resources, plant health, sustainable livelihoods, environmental and ecosystem services, and policy, communication and outreach<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Further detail of the mandate for each Statutory Body is available at <http://www.fao.org/unfao/govbodies/gsb-subject-matter/subject-matter/en/>.

<sup>7</sup> Further detail is available at <http://www.fao.org/forestry/30106/en/>.

<sup>8</sup> Further detail is available at <http://www.fao.org/forestry/industries/en/>.

<sup>9</sup> Further detail is available at <http://www.fao.org/forestry/silva-mediterranea/en/>.

<sup>10</sup> Further detail is available at <http://www.fao.org/ipc/overview/en/>.

32. The Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources (ITWG-FGR) was established by the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture at its twelfth Regular Session in 2009. The purpose of the ITWG-FGR is to review the situation and issues related to forest genetic resources and to advise and make recommendations to the Commission on these matters. The Working Group also considers the progress made in implementing the Commission's programme of work on forest genetic resources, as well as any other matters referred to it by the Commission. The terms of reference and regional composition of the Working Group are described in its Statutes<sup>11</sup> adopted by the Commission. The Working Group is composed of 28 Member Countries (five from Africa; five from Asia, five from Europe, five from Latin America, four from the Near East, two from North America and two from the Southwest Pacific), which are elected every two years during regular sessions of the Commission. The ITWG-FGR normally holds one session every biennium. The Secretariat of the ITWG-FGR is hosted by the Forestry Division.

33. The Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources was established by the Director-General in 1968 at the request of the Fourteenth Session of the FAO Conference (1967) with a mandate to “help plan and coordinate FAO's efforts to explore, utilize and conserve the gene resources of forest trees and, in particular, help prepare detailed short- and long-term programmes of action, and to provide information to Member Governments”. The members of the panel - appointed by the FAO Director-General - represent various regions of the world and cover a broad range of technical and scientific areas in the field of forest genetic resources. Following the establishment of the ITWG-FGR, the functions of the Panel were largely taken over by the ITWG-FGR.

34. The FAO Statutory Bodies have strong links with other bodies, institutions and networks at the national, regional and global levels. In addition to participation by FAO and its Member Nations, meetings of RFCs are normally attended by representatives of institutions of the United Nations system (including the UNFF secretariat) as well as observers from related regional and sub-regional organizations and processes, non-governmental organizations, research institutions and other bodies (such as the International Forestry Students' Association). In addition, the RFC and “*Silva Mediterranea*” working groups provide opportunities for engagement with wider networks of technical experts. Participation in IPC also reflects the technical nature of its activities. The members of ACSFI are senior executives from the private industry sector and representatives of forest growers' associations.

## **B. Measures taken to improve the effectiveness of FAO forest-related statutory bodies**

35. At its twentieth session, held from 4 to 8 October 2010, COFO agreed that, in keeping with the tradition started at its 18th Session, its Steering Committee should comprise the Chairpersons of the RFCs, or their representatives. This innovation has strengthened coordination between regional and global levels.

36. The FAO Office of Evaluation assessed the forest-related Statutory Bodies during a Strategic Evaluation of FAO's work in Forestry, undertaken in 2011-2012. The evaluation report noted the action that had been taken to better coordinate the agenda of FAO's statutory bodies at global level and the steps that had been taken to ensure that inputs from RFCs were made to FAO's Regional Conferences. Following the evaluation, further action was taken to improve collaboration between the Statutory Bodies, including a mapping exercise to help coordinate the activities of the RFC thematic working groups, the renewal of the ACSFI, and the widening of the role of the IPC<sup>12</sup>.

37. COFO has subsequently continued to encourage action aimed at further improving the effectiveness of the RFCs and other forest-related Statutory Bodies:

<sup>11</sup> CGRFA/WG-FGR-6/21/Inf.1, <http://www.fao.org/3/cb3679en/cb3679en.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Paras 11 and Matrix, *Follow-up on the Strategic Evaluation of the FAO's role and work in forestry*, PC 116/10.

(a) At its twenty-second session, in 2014, COFO encouraged the RFCs to provide guidance on areas of regional priority in forestry that inform and contribute to FAO's Strategic Objectives. In addition, COFO welcomed the results of an independent evaluation report on "*Silva Mediterranea*"<sup>13</sup>.

(b) At its twenty-third session, in 2016, COFO recognized the valuable role of the RFCs in helping to set priorities for the FAO programme in forestry and recognized the continued role and relevance of ACSFI as a mechanism to channel private sector knowledge and solutions into the FAO Forestry Programme<sup>14</sup>.

(c) At its twenty-fourth session, in 2018, COFO encouraged FAO and Member Nations to further mainstream the outcome of the RFC meetings into the Regional Conferences and encouraged FAO to explore options for linking the work of the RFCs to other policy areas and working groups to strengthen attention to forest issues in FAO Regional Conferences. COFO also recommended deeper collaboration between RFCs and the UNFF<sup>15</sup>.

(d) At its twenty-fifth session, in 2020, COFO requested FAO to support increased involvement of RFCs in preparations for UNFF technical sessions and to invite RFCs to review UNFF related subjects. COFO also reiterated the need for RFCs to have a more policy-relevant role in the FAO Regional Conferences. In addition, COFO encouraged the ACSFI and the IPC to consult it on their work, and encouraged the FAO Forestry Division to share frequent updates of the work of the ACSFI and the IPC with Members<sup>16</sup>.

## V. Points for consideration for COFO, ERC and WFC

38. The Commission may wish to:

(a) Develop its recommendations for the European Regional Conference, COFO and the programme priorities and request the Secretariat to share them with other Commissions as well as with the secretariats of the Regional Conference and COFO;

(b) Identify key areas and messages for the outcomes of the XV World Forestry Congress;

(c) Recommend ways and means to best collaborate with relevant global processes and instruments and to create synergies, including in implementing the Congress' outcomes;

(d) Invite countries to support the XV World Forestry Congress by encouraging and facilitating good attendance; and countries in a position to do so, by providing financial support to the Congress to enable balanced participation.

## VI. Points for consideration on linking FAO forest-related statutory bodies

39. The Commission is invited to discuss ways to help facilitate its policy dialogue and technical exchanges to assist in achieving its Members' goals and their contributions to international processes and goals. The Commission may wish to use questions contained in Annex 4 of this paper to guide the discussion, and consider:

(a) To synchronize the calendar of future EFC sessions with the timetable of the European Regional Conference (ERC) sessions in order to provide inputs from EFC to the ERC in a more timely manner;

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<sup>13</sup> Paras 63, 83 & 89 COFO/2014/REP.

<sup>14</sup> Para 43 & 45, COFO/2016/REP.

<sup>15</sup> Paras 19a, 26a, 26b & 35d, COFO/2018/REP.

<sup>16</sup> Paras 33d, 33e, 34, 37c, 37d, 38d, & 38e, C 2021/24.



(b) To strengthen the cross-sectorial work of the EFC, especially on forestry and agri-food systems matters by providing relevant and useful inputs to their Members, to FAO (including through the EFC) and to other international processes on forest-related issues;

(c) Ways to further enhance the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the EFC and other FAO forest-related Statutory Bodies, notably, *Silva Mediterranea*, ACFSI, IPC; ways to increase participation in meetings of EFC and other Statutory Bodies.

40. The Commission may wish to request FAO to:

(a) Invite the EFC Chairperson to attend the Regional Conference and enhance inter-sessional activities by improving interactions between ERC and ERC Members, including Rome-based delegations, with a view to strengthening cross-sectorial policy dialogue and to ensure that important regional forestry matters are integrated in the themes of the Regional Conferences;

(b) Consider undertaking a detailed review of EFC with the aim of further enhancing its relevance, including the focus on Agenda 2030 and the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-30 and its efficiency and effectiveness;

(c) Communicate the results of the discussion on this item to the next session of COFO for its consideration.

**Annex 1: EFC recommendations for the attention of COFO  
(issues to be considered for inclusion in the Agenda)**

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<i>Priority issues for COFO to consider</i>	<i>Expected outcome (information/ discussion/decision)</i>	<i>Possible follow-up activities for COFO and FAO</i>	<i>Reference to other RFC recommendation</i>
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## **Annex 2: EFC recommendations for the attention of the ERC**

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<i>Priority issues for the RC to consider</i>	<i>Expected outcome (information/ discussion/decision)</i>	<i>Possible follow-up activities for FAO)</i>
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### **Annex 3: EFC recommendations for the FAO Programme of Work in Forestry related to the agenda of the current session**

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<i>Area/ action for FAO programme of work</i>	<i>Priority (High, Medium, Low, De-emphasis</i>	<i>Type (new, continued,</i>	<i>Level of action (sub-regional/ regional/global)</i>	<i>Strategic Objective</i>	<i>Global Forest Goal of UNSPF</i>
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## **Annex 4: Possible guiding questions for discussion**

The following questions are intended to help stimulate discussion by the Commission.

### **Issues for considering future options for the work of Statutory Bodies:**

- **Relevance** – extent to which they meet the needs of FAO and its Members in providing a platform to discuss regional forest-related issues; focus on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Strategic Framework of FAO (2022-31); contribution to international processes and goals, including to the Regional Conferences;
- **Efficiency** – what benefits do Statutory Bodies bring in terms of policy dialogues, technical exchanges and contributing to their Members' goals, timelines of decision-making based on meeting discussions and reports; links to FAO's reforms; quality of documentation, etc;
- **Effectiveness** – how useful are the Statutory Bodies in formulating and implementing policy and in studying and reporting on technical matters; role and contribution to performance in the context of the FAO Strategic Framework (2022-31).

Possible elements for consideration could include:

#### **(a) Governance of Statutory Bodies:**

- (i) Arrangements for electing Executive Committees and their roles.
- (ii) Executive Committees' links with other Governing Bodies, the Regional Conferences.
- (iii) Servicing the Statutory Bodies through their secretariats (e.g. consider Secretaries of RFCs and other Regional Commissions as standing members of the Secretariats of Regional Conferences).

#### **(b) Participation by Members and stakeholders in the work of the Statutory Bodies:**

- (i) Levels of participation in meetings of Statutory Bodies (e.g. do participants offer the necessary range of skills, experience and seniority to ensure that discussions are based upon a sound understanding of the policy context and technical considerations? Is there a good balance in terms of maintaining continuity of commitment to the Statutory Bodies, while also having turnover in membership to bring new ideas and insights?).
- (ii) Engagement with stakeholders who are not Members of the Statutory Bodies, including other regional and sub-regional bodies and processes, civil society, research institutes, and the private sector.

#### **(c) Agenda, format and timing of meetings:**

- (i) Arrangements for setting the agendas of meetings, alignment with the priorities identified by FAO Governing Bodies.
- (ii) Balance between policy-related and technical discussions.
- (iii) Involvement of RFCs in UNFF-related regional dialogues, in the review of UNFF-related subjects and in preparations for UNFF technical sessions.
- (iv) Cycle of meetings and how the timing fits with the cycle of other meetings, including Regional Conferences.
- (v) Following the experience with virtual meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic, how use could be made of technologies for virtual meetings, including implications for the periodicity and length of physical meetings.