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San Marino, 20-23 November 2023

Item 6 (f) of the provisional agenda

**European Forestry Commission matters (Food and  
Agriculture Organization): Forest biodiversity mainstreaming**

**Forty-second session**

San Marino, 20-23 November 2023

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
European Forestry Commission matters: Forest biodiversity  
mainstreaming****Note by the Secretariat***Summary*

This document which was prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) summarizes the FAO global and regional level initiatives and activities. Delegates will be informed about the FAO Global Programme on Forest Biodiversity Mainstreaming and relevant regional level activities and provide background information to facilitate the discussions of the Commission.

Delegates will be invited to provide guidance on the implementation of the program and the relevant regional work.



## 1. Forest biodiversity mainstreaming

### 1.1. Introduction

1. At its twenty-fifth session, held from 5 to 9 October 2020, the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) highlighted the importance of forest biodiversity for ecosystem services and food security. It expressed concerns about the continued loss of biodiversity and stressed the need to deliver on global commitments, including in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Committee requested FAO to conduct a review of biodiversity mainstreaming in forestry and share good practices on solutions that balance conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity, and report on progress made at the 26th Session of the Committee of Forestry.

### 1.2. Global level works and initiatives

2. Forests harbour most of Earth's terrestrial biodiversity. Forests, both natural and planted, have a significant role in biodiversity conservation as they provide habitats and refuges for a huge number of wildlife species and improve habitat connectivity. Forests and their biodiversity are essential to ecosystem health and human well-being as they provide a wide range of products and services, including securing watershed functions, disaster risk mitigation, storing carbon, regulating local climate, preventing soil erosion, providing wood and non-wood forest products, supporting food security and livelihoods, offering recreation and preserving cultural heritage. Production forests generate income that can be reinvested in forest management and biodiversity conservation. Further, a large proportion of the world's poorest people are dependent on forest biodiversity.

3. In spite of its global importance, forest biodiversity continues to decline at an alarming rate across enormous areas, mainly due to deforestation, forest degradation, unsustainable forest and land use practices, illegal harvesting and overexploitation of wood and non-wood forest products, including wild meat, and negative interactions between people and wildlife leading to increasing human-wildlife conflicts (HWC) worldwide. The uncontrolled encroachment of agriculture has severe harmful impacts on biodiversity as it develops at the expense of forests. Biodiversity loss compromises the ecological functioning and stability of forests, therefore undermining the provision of ecosystem services. Climate change has increasingly negative impacts on forest biodiversity as it can lead to shifts in ecological zones, changes in water and nutrient cycles and it can also exacerbate the spread of invasive species.

4. In December 2022, at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15)<sup>1</sup>, the world community adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework<sup>2</sup> (KMGBF) which will guide the global work on biodiversity in the years to come. The KMGBF, which is structured into 4 overarching goals and 23 targets, is of strategic relevance for the work of FAO, in forestry and wildlife in particular. Forestry, even though not always explicitly mentioned, is very relevant for several KMGBF targets, including - but not limited to - ecosystem restoration (Target 2), protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECM) (Target 3), impacts of climate change on biodiversity (Target 8), sustainable forest management (Target 10), and benefits from green spaces by mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity (Target 12).

5. On request from COFO, FAO and CIFOR/ICRAF prepared a FAO Forestry Paper on Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Forestry<sup>3</sup>. The report reviews progress and outlines the

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<sup>1</sup> In particular, the Programme contributes to the implementation of Target 3 (preserving 30% of the world's resources by 2030), Target 10 (ensuring that areas under agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry are managed sustainably) and Target 12 (mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity);

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/e6d3/cd1d/daf663719a03902a9b116c34/cop-15-l-25-en.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/fr/c/cc2229en/>

technical and policy tools available for countries and stakeholders, as well as the steps needed, to effectively mainstream biodiversity in forestry. The results of the study were presented at the 15th World Forestry Congress in May 2022 in Seoul. The publication was formally launched during the 26<sup>th</sup> session of COFO in October 2022. The Committee recommended FAO to support sustainable land management approaches within the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors and the draft 2024-27 Action Plan, acknowledging that sustainable forest management and sustainable intensification approaches can play a role at the landscape level to simultaneously support biodiversity outcomes and help meet global wood demand.

6. To respond to this request and to the recommendations of the FAO-CIFOR Study, and to contribute to the implementation of the KMGBF and to FAO's Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors, the FAO Forestry Division has prepared a global programme on Forest Biodiversity Mainstreaming. The idea of this initiative is to consolidate the recommendations and elements of the various frameworks and to bring them into implementation.

7. The Programme has global as well as national components. It has a modular structure which allows resource partners to join the programme based on their specific thematic or geographic interests. The Programme focuses on four overarching components: policy, institutions and governance; practical approaches, tools and instruments; landscape approaches and implementation; knowledge management and innovation.

8. In the context of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and its Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources, and based on inputs from countries, the FAO Forest Division is preparing the Second Report on the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources. The report is expected to be published by mid-2024. The FAO Forestry Division is also developing a new global information system on forest genetic resources which will make the reporting tasks for countries much easier in the future.

9. In tackling HWCs, FAO provides technical guidelines for the development of national policies and legal frameworks; generates guidance on good practices and case studies; and implements field activities and projects. In 2022, in close collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Species Survival Commission (SSC), Human-Wildlife Conflict and Coexistence Specialist Group, FAO completed ten case studies<sup>4</sup> that highlight good practices of engagement with local communities and citizens to understand and address human-wildlife conflict situations. In 2023, FAO is actively working on the second phase of case studies, with plans to publish an additional fifteen case studies throughout the year.

10. The Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme<sup>5</sup> is a major multi-partner international initiative that aims to improve wildlife conservation and food security. Since 2017, the SWM Programme has been working with 15 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to reduce unsustainable wildlife hunting, conserve and sustainably use wildlife in the forest, savannah, and wetland ecosystem wildlife, and strengthen people's livelihoods and food security. In July 2023, FAO has welcomed €25 million in additional funding from the European Union (EU) to extend and scale up the SWM Programme. This second phase will run from August 2023 to May 2029 and FAO will continue to lead a consortium of partners, which includes the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.fao.org/forestry/wildlife/100886/en/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.swm-programme.info/>

### 1.3. Regional level initiatives and activities

11. The FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia is providing support to the regional countries through capacity building and operational work for the implementation of forest biodiversity mainstreaming on the ground.

12. FAO successfully completed the project “Contribution of sustainable forest management to a low emission and resilient development in Serbia” funded by the Sixth Replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF-6), which, among other things, implemented the second National Forest Inventory (NFI) in Serbia, established a Forest Information System (FIS) and introduced new approaches in forest management planning and implementation. A novel approach was used for NFI, FIS and forest management planning, putting conservation and improvement of biodiversity in the focus to let it become an integral part of the overall concept of sustainable forest management (SFM) in Serbia.

13. FAO is currently implementing the project “Forest resilience of Armenia, enhancing adaptation and rural green growth via mitigation (GCP/ARM/008/GCF)” funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), which, among other things, addresses fuelwood consumption as main driver of forest degradation and the related loss of biodiversity, as well as aims to improve biodiversity through forest restoration investments. In particular, the project intends to do enrichment planting on sites where natural regeneration for one or another reason did not succeed or where additional autochthonous tree species currently not present at a particular site can enhance biodiversity and increase resilience of forests.

14. FAO is currently implementing the project “Strengthening network of protected areas through advanced governance and management” funded by GEF, which aims at strengthening the effectiveness of Azerbaijan’s protected area system to deliver Global Environmental Benefits, using a landscape approach to governance and management. (GCP/AZE/004/GFF).

15. FAO GEF project in Kaz Daglari region of Türkiye aims to improve biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management in the region through protected areas and mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into production landscapes for environmental and socio-economic benefits (GCP/TUR/904/GFF).

16. FAO initiated the project “Post-Fire Restoration Activities of Forest and Maquis Ecosystems in Mugla Province” funded by Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) facility, which aims at developing of guidelines on species restoration, mainly for selected rare flora and fauna elements in ecosystems affected by forest fires in Türkiye (TCP/TUR/3902/C2).

17. FAO also initiated the subregional project “Improving Biodiversity and Sustainable Forestry” funded by TCP facility, which aims to equip beneficiary countries, through regional cooperation and networking, with the necessary and gender-responsive capacity and knowledge on sustainable biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management (see also reporting under the project section (GCP/SEC/025/TUR).

18. FAO developed guidelines on forest biodiversity monitoring methodologies in the Central Asia and Caucasus sub-region. The guidelines serve as a comprehensive framework for monitoring forest biodiversity in the Central Asian and Caucasus countries, which aim to provide practical guidance and recommendations for establishing effective forest biodiversity monitoring systems in each country. A 3-days training on forest biodiversity monitoring methodologies in the sub-region were carried out in 2023 in Istanbul, Türkiye.

19. FAO successfully completed the project in Azerbaijan on “Integrating pollinators into Sustainable Forest Management Plans” funded by TCP facility, which aims at developing the country’s capacity and knowledge to integrate pollinator biodiversity into sustainable forest management plans (see also reporting under the project section (TCP/AZE/3802/C1).

20. FAO also successfully completed the project “Conservation and Sustainable Management of Türkiye’s Steppe Ecosystems” funded by GEF, which aims at improving the conservation of Türkiye’s steppe ecosystems through effective protected area

management and mainstreaming steppe biodiversity conservation into production landscapes (GCP/TUR/061/GFF).

## 2. Points for consideration

21. The Commission may wish to invite Member Nations to:

(a) take note of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and its recommendations;

(b) make all possible efforts to implement the targets of the KMGBF at national level by mobilising the required political attention, technical knowhow and financial resources;

(c) consider, as appropriate to their circumstances, what further actions they can take (i) to promote efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems that consider the sustainable use of forest biodiversity; and (ii) to minimize deforestation associated with agricultural commodities.

22. The Commission may wish to invite FAO to:

(a) further develop and implement the programme on forest biodiversity mainstreaming;

(b) provide technical support to member countries for the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework;

(c) further strengthen its cross-sectoral work through supporting the process of mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into policies, strategies and practices of agricultural production landscapes.

(d) continue developing innovative approaches to manage HWCs; share relevant country case studies on sustainable use and management of wildlife, including in dissemination of key knowledge products and tools on the Sustainable Wildlife Management Programme.

23. The Commission may wish to also send a message to European Regional Conference on the application of biodiversity mainstreaming into the integrated landscape management and land use systems such as food production, land restoration / rehabilitation, and enhanced nutrition, and food security.

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