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Update on global processes and initiatives of relevance to the Commission

Executive summary

This document provides an overview of and updates on the following key global developments of relevance to forests and the forest sector and of interest to the Commission:

- a. 2025 edition of the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment;
- b. 2026 edition of *The State of the World's Forests* report;
- c. XVI World Forestry Congress (2027);
- d. Forestry at FAO's 80th Anniversary;
- e. Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;
- f. Collaborative Partnership on Forests;
- g. United Nations Forum on Forests and the Global Forests Goals; and
- h. Forests and the Rio Conventions: recent developments and strategic engagement.

Points for consideration

The Commission is invited to take note of the global processes and initiatives and provide guidance, as deemed appropriate.

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I. Introduction

1. Forests are affected by multiple crises and are increasingly seen as key elements of solutions for global developmental and environmental challenges; hence, they constitute an integral part of many global agendas. This document provides an overview of key global developments of relevance to forests and the forest sector and of interest to the Commission.

II. Update on the 2025 edition of the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment

2. Since 1946, FAO has been monitoring the world's forest resources through periodic assessments conducted in cooperation with its Members. The information provided by the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) presents a comprehensive view of the world's forests and how the resource is changing. Such a clear global picture supports the development of sound policies, practices and investments affecting forests and forestry.

3. The backbone of FRA is the country reporting process, where the best available and most up-to-date information from all countries and territories is compiled by FRA National Correspondents and analysed. As part of the country reporting process for FRA 2025, FAO conducted 14 regional and subregional workshops. The workshops provided National Correspondents with technical assistance and guidance on the compilation and finalization of the FRA 2025 country reports and also constituted a forum in which the National Correspondents could share their experiences with colleagues from other countries.

4. A subregional workshop on FRA 2025 for the Near East and North Africa¹ was held in Amman, Jordan, on 29 May–1 June 2023. National Correspondents and Alternates from 12 countries in the region participated in the workshop, at which the FRA 2025 national reporting process was initiated.

5. The results of FRA 2025 will be launched in October 2025. Together with the main report, which contains an in-depth analysis of the reported data, FAO will publish individual reports for the 236 countries and territories covered by the process in the form of an easy-to-access online database and downloadable documents and an interactive report on the key findings.

III. Update on the 2026 edition of *The State of the World's Forests* report

6. FAO's biennial flagship publication, *The State of the World's Forests* (SOFO), provides data and analysis on forest–people interactions, with each edition focused on a key theme. SOFOs complement the FRA, which is published every five years, and other forest-related publications.

7. The 2026 edition of SOFO, tentatively titled *Restoring Forests and Landscapes: The Way Forward for a Sustainable Future*, will examine how forest and landscape restoration efforts support global goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMBGF), the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030 (UNSPF), and the FAO Forestry Roadmap 2024–2031. It will assess global and regional progress, highlight cost-effective strategies and enabling conditions, and showcase successful case studies. Emphasizing restoration as a scalable solution for livelihoods, biodiversity and transforming agrifood systems, SOFO 2026 will be launched at the 28th Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO 28) in October 2026.

¹ <https://www.fao.org/neareast/news/details/Strengthening-forest-reporting-for-a-greener-more-sustainable-future-in-the-Near-East-and-North-Africa-region/-en>

IV. The XVI World Forestry Congress

8. World Forestry Congresses¹ have been held since 1926, when the International Institute of Agriculture (IIA) organized the first Congress in Italy. After its establishment, FAO took over several functions of the IIA and, since 1954, has co-sponsored and assisted in organizing World Forestry Congresses, generally every six years.

9. To date, 15 World Forestry Congresses have taken place, with FAO's support. World Forestry Congresses serve as inclusive fora for the exchange of views and experiences and for robust debates on key aspects of forests and forestry, leading to recommendations applicable at all levels. World Forestry Congresses provide the forest sector and those beyond the sector who deal with and care for forests with a periodic opportunity to take stock of the state of forests and forestry, discern trends, debate policies, and raise awareness among stakeholders, including decision-makers, the private sector, academia, civil society and the public.

10. At the 176th Session of the FAO Council, it was agreed that the XVI World Forestry Congress in 2027 would be hosted by Peru.²

V. Forestry at FAO's 80th anniversary

11. As part of celebrations for FAO's 80th anniversary, the Forestry Division launched a global process to recognize best practices and innovative approaches in sustainable forest production and protection. Nominations could be made for governmental institutions; national, regional or local agencies; intergovernmental organizations; non-government organizations; academia; community service organizations; the private sector; and other relevant stakeholders. The successful nominees will have made outstanding contributions to sustainable forest management, agrifood systems transformation and other efforts aligned with FAO's mandate. They will be announced at the World Food Forum (WFF) at FAO headquarters in Rome in October 2025.³

12. Also in celebration of FAO's 80th anniversary, the Forestry Division hosted a youth-focused side-event on 30 June 2025 during the 44th Session of the FAO Conference. Titled "Forest harmonies: a forestry youth event on connections between forests, wood and music", the event featured youth-led presentations on sustainable wood sourcing for musical instruments and served as a thematic lead-in to the WFF in October.

13. The first FAO global exhibition, *From Seeds to Foods*, is planned for 10–13 October 2025 during the WFF. Aligned with FAO's four betters,⁴ the exhibition will showcase the achievement of Members and partners across agrifood value chains – crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries – alongside innovations in science, technology, seed systems, fertilizers and food safety, with interactive features such as food tastings.

VI. Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

14. At the 20th Regular Session⁵ (24–28 March 2025), the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) welcomed *The Second Report on the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*⁶ and took note of its findings. The report provides a global assessment of the genetic resources of forest trees and other woody plants and examines progress in implementing the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic

² CL 176/REP 26.1.

³ <https://www.fao.org/forestry/home/fao-80-global-forestry-recognition/en>

⁴ Better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life – leaving no one behind.

⁵ CGRFA-20/25/Report <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/ffe6cafc-8f0e-4f78-a98b-74ae3e7381f6>

⁶ FAO. 2025. *The Second Report on the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*. FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Assessments. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd4838en>

Resources,⁷ adopted by the FAO Conference in 2013. The report finds that progress has been made in this regard, but that limitations and gaps exist that require continued and reinforced action to improve the management of forest genetic resources. It also urges efforts to increase international awareness of the importance of these resources; as part of this, FAO published an in-brief version of the report⁸ and an interactive story⁹ in six languages. CGRFA also welcomed the launch of the Global Information System on Forest Genetic Resources (SilvaGRIS)¹⁰ for monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action and encouraged all Members to submit their data to SilvaGRIS.

15. Based on the findings of the second global assessment and the recommendations of the Eighth Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources,¹¹ CGRFA reviewed and revised the Global Plan of Action and a draft Conference Resolution and invited the Director-General to bring them to the attention of the FAO Conference. At its 44th Session in July 2025, the FAO Conference adopted the revised Global Plan of Action and invited Members to strengthen their efforts in managing forest genetic resources.¹²

VII. Update on the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

16. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), chaired by FAO, is a voluntary partnership among 16 international agencies with substantial programmes on forests. The CPF supports the United Nation Forum on Forests (UNFF) and its Member States in implementing the UNSPF, including its Global Forest Goals (GFGs), forest-related SDGs, and other internationally agreed commitments. The CPF held a virtual briefing in April 2025¹³ on its response to guidance from the Mid-term Review of the International Arrangement on Forests, and UNFF19, as per United Nations Economic and Social Council Resolution 2024/15.

17. The recently released CPF Work Plan for 2025–2028,¹⁴ aligned with the UNFF’s quadrennial programme of work, reflects inputs from the UNFF and CPF members. It builds on existing achievements and defines priorities, joint actions, resource needs, outputs and indicators; it will be updated annually. In implementing the Work Plan, the CPF will prioritize information-sharing to identify common priorities and synergies, provide technical inputs to the UNFF, coordinate participation in the Rio Conventions and the governing bodies of other CPF members, and develop messages to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on forest–SDG linkages.

18. CPF’s Joint Initiatives¹⁵ (JIs), led by one or more CPF member, deliver scientific and technical support. Enabling JIs support coordination, policy development, science-based decisions, monitoring, finance, reporting, education, and awareness. The following six enabling JIs are ongoing: Forest-related reporting; Forest Finance Facilitation; Forest Education; Global Forest Expert Panels; Wangari Maathai Forest Champions Award; and Communication. Thematic JIs address emerging priorities; they are typically time-bound but may evolve into larger projects. There are seven current thematic JIs: Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World; Turning the Tide on Deforestation;

⁷ FAO. 2014. Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources. FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Rome.

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/i3849e>

⁸ FAO. 2025. *The Second Report on the State of the World’s Forest Genetic Resources in brief*. FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture assessments. Rome.

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd4888en>

⁹ <https://www.fao.org/interactive/2025/safeguarding-forest-genetic-resources/en/>

¹⁰ www.fao.org/silvagriss

¹¹ CGRFA-20/25/10.1

¹² C 2025/Rep, Appendix D (Resolution 2/2025)

¹³ <https://www.fao.org/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/events/briefing-on-the-work-of-the-collaborative-partnership-on-forests/en>

¹⁴ FAO. 2025. *Collaborative Partnership on Forests Work Plan 2025–2028 – Strategic Directions for Collaborative Forest Action*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd5238en>

¹⁵ www.fao.org/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/initiatives

Conservation of Primary Forests; Integrated Fire Management in Tropical Forests; Forests for Food Security and Nutrition; the KMGBF and the GFGs; and the CITES Tree Species Project.

VIII. The United Nations Forum on Forests and the Global Forests Goals

19. UNFF20 was convened on 5–9 May 2025 as a technical session under the UNFF’s quadrennial programme of work for 2025–2028. Discussions focused on implementation of the UNSPF, interlinkages between the GFGs and the SDGs under HLPF review in 2025 and 2026, and synergies with global agendas on, *inter alia*, climate change, biodiversity, land degradation, restoration and sustainable development. Progress on GFGs 1, 3 and 5 was reviewed, with deliberations reflected in the Chair’s summary.¹⁶

20. Consistent with its mandate, FAO made important contributions to the technical discussions¹⁷ and co-organized and contributed to several thematic side-events, in partnership with other CPF members and other partners and stakeholders.¹⁸ Key topics included support for forest monitoring and reporting through the Global Core Set of Forest-related Indicators, with new data to be released in FRA 2025; integrated approaches to dryland forest management, highlighting initiatives such as the Grazing with Trees and the Dryland Sustainable Landscapes Programme; contributions to the communication strategy of the UNSPF, including International Day of Forests¹⁹ activities; and promotion of sustainably sourced wood products through the “Grow the Solution” campaign. As CPF Chair, FAO delivered a joint statement²⁰ on CPF’s joint work and future focus – policy coherence, data and governance improvements, and financing coordination. The CPF proposed “forests and economies” as the IDF 2026 theme to showcase the vital roles of forests in economies worldwide.

21. UNFF21, which will be convened in 2026 as a policy session, will continue to focus on GFGs 1, 3 and 5. UNFF22, the next technical session, will convene in 2027 to focus on GFGs 2, 4 and 6.

IX. Forests and the Rio Conventions: recent developments and strategic engagement

A. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – COP 29 and preparations for COP 30

22. Building on COP 28, where forests were formally recognized in the Global Stocktake outcome, COP 29 (held in Baku in 2024) reinforced the role of forests in climate action, prioritizing climate finance, implementation of the Paris Agreement, and greater ambition for mitigation and adaptation. Key outcomes included agreement on a new collective quantified goal on climate finance to support developing countries; finalization of Article 6 rules on international carbon markets; and adoption of the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), which could strengthen forest-based strategies in national planning and improve access to finance.

23. FAO advocated for the key role of forests in climate action during these conferences, through both support for the COP Presidency action agendas and the convening of side-events. FAO participated as a speaker in 33 forest-related events at COP 29, leading or co-leading 20 of these. Topics included mobilizing finance for conserving primary forests, climate action in peatlands and mangroves, and innovations in forest monitoring.

¹⁶ UNFF20 Chair’s Summary (advanced unedited version), Section B.

¹⁷ [https://www.fao.org/new-york/events/detail/fao-at-the-20th-session-of-the-un-forum-on-forests-\(unff20\)/en](https://www.fao.org/new-york/events/detail/fao-at-the-20th-session-of-the-un-forum-on-forests-(unff20)/en)

¹⁸ <https://www.fao.org/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/events/cpf-at-unff-20/en>

¹⁹ The IDF spot, produced in 41 languages, was view more than 6 million times. Some 14 000 social media posts have reached more than 85.2 million people.

²⁰ https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/UNFF20_CPF-joint-statement.pdf

24. A CPF-hosted event²¹ at the COP29 Forest Pavilion highlighted the forest-based bioeconomy for climate-change mitigation and adaptation, emphasizing transparent data, sustainable wood use, and investment mobilization. Five CPF “Forest Talks”²² were produced at the Forest Pavilion, in partnership with the Global Landscapes Forum.

25. The incoming Brazilian Presidency for COP30 has prioritized forests in climate action, Indigenous Peoples, and ecosystem restoration, including by hosting the upcoming conference in the country’s Amazon region. FAO is engaging actively to support forest-related priorities and Member Nations in updating their nationally determined contributions and adaptation plans.

B. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) – COP 16

26. CBD COP 16, held in Cali in 2024, was the first since adoption of the KMGBF; it focused on enabling mechanisms for the effective implementation of this framework, including resource mobilization, monitoring, planning, reporting, and capacity development. Key outcomes included a decision on the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund under the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which was operationalized with the aim of mobilizing USD 200 billion per year by 2030, in line with Target 19. Initial pledges were announced, and Parties agreed on priorities for programming the first allocations.

27. Parties endorsed revisions to headline indicators and agreed on further methodological development. FAO, as custodian for several indicators, including areas under restoration and sustainable forest management (SDG indicator 15.2.1), continues to provide technical support to refine and implement the indicator framework. FAO leads the Taskforce on Monitoring as part of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and supports the monitoring methodology for KMGBF Target 2. FRA is a key source of forest data relevant to multiple GBF targets. The Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on indicators presented its initial work at CBD COP 16, and its mandate was extended. FAO participates in the AHTEG as an observer, contributing expertise on forest and biodiversity monitoring.

28. The expanded programme of work on forest biodiversity (PoWFB) adopted in 2010,²³ provides detailed guidance to Parties for the conservation and sustainable management of forest biodiversity. At the 27th Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 27) on 20–24 October 2027, Parties will consider a strategic review and updates of the PoWFB, in the context of the KMGBF, and other emerging developments in international forestry governance, policy, knowledge and data.

29. The Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme contributes to the implementation of decisions related to the sustainable use of wildlife, and the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW) supports the development of methodologies for KMGBF targets 4 and 5. In addition, FAO is developing the Global Programme on Biodiversity Mainstreaming in Forestry to enhance the role of sustainably managed forests and trees outside forests in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, building on the findings of the FAO–CIFOR global review on biodiversity mainstreaming in forestry.

C. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification – COP 16

30. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) COP 16 (Riyadh, 2024), held under the theme “Our Land. Our Future.” and marking the UNCCD’s 30th anniversary, focused on progress, drought resilience, restoration, and agrifood systems.

²¹ Co-organized by FAO, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

²² <https://www.youtube.com/@CPFvideochannel>

²³ <https://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/default.shtml?id=7196>

31. Significant financial pledges were made to combat desertification, land degradation and drought, particularly in the world's most vulnerable regions under the Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership, the Great Green Wall Initiative, and the Saudi Green Initiative.
32. FAO organized and participated in major events on sustainable land restoration, particularly in drylands, and sustainable dryland forest management.
33. Seven crucial decisions to advance land restoration and resilience were adopted at UNCCD COP 16, including promoting sustainable management and restoration of rangelands and strengthening the science-policy Interface to drive transformative action on land restoration and drought resilience.
34. FAO's engagement aligns with its contributions to combat land degradation and desertification, contributing to global goals through initiatives like the GEF and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.