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NEAR EAST FORESTRY AND RANGE COMMISSION

TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION

18 – 21 October 2021

INPUT TO FAO GOVERNANCE

Executive Summary

Regional Forestry Commissions are playing an important role in connecting regional and global dialogues and providing regional input to decisions governing the Organization. They report to the respective Regional Conferences and to the Committee on Forestry (COFO), and they are instrumental in shaping the agenda of COFO and FAO's programme of work in forestry.

The current document invite members to provide their guidance on how to further strengthen the interaction and collaboration of the Near East Forestry and Range Commission (NEFRC) with the other Regional Forestry Commissions as well as with FAO Governing Bodies.

Suggested action by the Commission

The Commission may wish to:

- develop its recommendations for the Near East Regional Conference (NERC), COFO and the forestry programme priorities and request the Secretariat to share them with other Regional Forestry Commissions as well as with the secretariats of the Regional Conference and COFO;
- invite the Secretariat of the Regional Conference to give adequate attention to the recommendations of the Near East Forestry and Range Commission when developing the agenda of the Conference.

Queries on the content of this document may be addressed to:

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I. Preparations for the 26th Session of COFO and the 36th Session of NERC

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, 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 priorities for the activities of FAO in forestry.
2. In its recent sessions, COFO included dialogues with chairpersons of the Regional Forestry Commissions, thus strengthening further the global-regional collaboration and benefitting strongly from the views of the regions regarding key global challenges.
3. During its 25th 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”¹ (see agenda item 7).
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. 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 Steering Committee, should regularly translate the outcome of the discussions on different agenda items into possible actions and present these for the Commissions' consideration, linking them clearly with FAO's Strategic Framework, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Global Forest Goals of the UN Strategic Plan for Forest and other relevant international goals and processes.
6. The 36th Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East will be held during the week of the 7th of February 2022. The Conference is being hosted by Iraq and is planned to be held in hybrid modality, depending on the evolving COVID-19 situation.
7. The agenda of the session includes, among others, four substantive thematic discussion papers: Rural transformation through inclusive and sustainable intensification of smallholder agriculture and agri-food value chains; Promoting Food Security and Healthy Diets for All; Greening agriculture: towards sustainable recovery and climate change action; and Building resilient agri-food systems to multiple shocks and stresses through a holistic risk management approach. The papers will be discussed in a round-table format.
8. 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).

¹ COFO/2020/REP paragraph 34

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

Priority issues for COFO to consider	Expected outcome (information/discussion/decision)	Possible follow-up activities for COFO and FAO	Reference to other NEFRC recommendation

Annex 2: NEFRC recommendations for the attention of the NERC

Priority issues for NERC to consider	Expected outcome (information/discussion/decision)	Possible follow-up activities for FAO

Annex 3: NEFRC recommendations for the FAO Programme of Work in Forestry related to the agenda of the current session

Area/ action for FAO programme of work	Priority (High, Medium, Low, De-emphasis)	Type (new, continued)	Level of action (sub-regional/ regional/global)	Link to relevant PPAs ²	Global Forest Goal of UNSPF

² <http://www.fao.org/3/ne577en/ne577en.pdf>