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INFORME DE LA

15ª REUNION
DE LA COMISION FORESTAL
LATINOAMERICANA

Celebrada en San José, Costa Rica
6-10 de octubre de 1986



ORGANIZACION DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACION

FO:L AFC/86/REP

R E P O R T
of the
FIFTEENTH SESSION
of the
LATIN AMERICAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

held in San José, Costa Rica

6 - 10 October 1986

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

ROME

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Latin American Forestry Commission of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations held its Fifteenth Session in San José from 6 to 10 October 1986 at the kind invitation of the Government of Costa Rica. The session was attended by delegates from the following Member Countries: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, France, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, the United Kingdom and the United States of America; an observer from Canada; representatives of the World Food Programme and the United Nations Development Programme; and observers from the Inter-American Development Bank, the Organization of American States, and the Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza. The full list of participants is given in Annex B.

2. The Director-General of FAO, Mr. Edouard Saouma, was represented at the session by Dr. M.A. Flores Rodas, Assistant Director-General, Forestry Department. Mr. S. Salcedo, FAO Regional Forestry Officer, acted as Secretary. The inaugural session was chaired by Dr. Alvaro Umaña, Minister of Natural Resources, Energy and Mines.

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

(a) Adoption of the Agenda

3. The Provisional Agenda, FO/LAFC/86/1 (see Annex A), and the Provisional Timetable, FO/LAFC/86/Inf.2, were adopted with some changes. The documents submitted to the participants for consideration are listed in Annex C.

(b) Election of Officers

4. In accordance with Articles II.1 and II.5 of its Rules of Procedure, the Commission elected a Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. The following members of the Commission were unanimously elected:

Chairman	:	Ronald Vargas (Costa Rica)
Vice-Chairmen	:	R. Bazan Roca (Bolivia) R.S. Jones (Jamaica) J.B. Cardeña Rodríguez (Mexico)
Rapporteur	:	J. Segovia Inestroza (Honduras)

THE STATE OF FORESTRY IN THE REGION

(a) Country Statements

5. The Commission noted that in several countries changes had occurred in the fields of forest policy, legislation and administration, aimed at making the administration more flexible and ensuring integrated management of the renewable natural resources.

6. With regard to reforestation programmes, Argentina, Chile, El Salvador and Mexico reported progress, whereas Honduras stated that it had had problems in this field, compensated for by higher yields achieved through management of the natural pine forests. Internal problems arising from the economic crisis had made it difficult for Peru to make use of the funds approved for reforestation. Several countries reported marked interest in promoting reforestation, for which laws were being adapted and specific incentive measures identified.

7. The Commission emphasized the importance of agroforestry as a valid tool for rational management of the natural resources and requested that UNDP approve the regional agroforestry project which FAO had submitted for its consideration.

8. The Commission noted the progress made in most countries in activities relating to national parks and the conservation and use of wildlife.

(b) Overall picture

9. The Commission noted the lack of progress recorded in intermediate-level forestry education and training.

10. The Commission was informed of the progress made in the region in recognizing the role that wildlife management could play in rural development. In addition, it noted that programmes for the creation of new national parks and other reserves had continued.

THE TROPICAL FORESTRY ACTION PLAN

11. The Commission emphasized that the Plan provided an overall conceptual framework for action by the tropical countries and the entire international community in the field of tropical forestry.

12. The Commission was informed of FAO's role in implementing the Plan of Action and stressed the fact that satisfactory implementation of the Plan would depend essentially on greater cooperation between beneficiary countries, donors and aid agencies.

13. The Commission emphasized the importance of concrete actions and stressed that the first task was to translate the Plan of Action into "national tropical forestry action plans" and draw up projects and programmes coherent with the national development priorities defined by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. The Commission recommended that the mechanisms for implementing the Plan be applied in accordance with each country's requirements.

14. The Commission considered the ways in which FAO could assist in the implementation of the TFAP at country level: (i) missions to countries of the region; (ii) the organization of meetings such as seminars and round tables; (iii) the formulation of projects and programmes. The Commission recommended that seminars and round tables be organized to discuss its adaptation to the real needs and common problems of the countries and sub-regions of Latin America. It also recommended that FAO prepare the documents for discussion of the TFAP at regional and sub-regional level.

15. The Commission considered that another priority task was to draw up regional and sub-regional programmes and projects to tackle common problems, facilitate the exchange of experience and regional cooperation, and encourage donor participation. Implementation of the TFAP at sub-regional level was particularly important for Latin America owing to the existence in the region of groups of countries with common conditions and requirements.

16. The Commission stressed the need for countries to make their own internal preparations to implement the TFAP and recognized that it was necessary for governments to commit themselves to supporting the Plan, and for decision-makers in the government to recognize its importance for the country's development within national development plans. The Commission recommended that assistance within the framework of the Plan have priority for the countries that fulfilled these conditions. In response to a question put by some countries, it was clarified that the TFAP could be implemented in all countries in the region.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN FOREST PRODUCTS

17. Some delegations drew attention to the difficulty of exporting a wider range of species. In this connection, the experience acquired by Brazil in trying to resolve this problem could be very useful. The Commission therefore urged that FAO promote technical cooperation among developing countries in this field. The Commission requested FAO to prepare a study analysing intra-regional trade, the reasons for its stagnation and the possibilities of increasing it.

FINANCING FORESTRY FOR DEVELOPMENT

18. The Commission noted that there were obstacles to a greater flow of investment resources towards forestry. There were two related problems regarding financing: how to increase the flow of funds to forestry activities, and how to use these funds more effectively. The Commission agreed that the increase in the flow of funds could only be resolved by making investments in forestry competitive with other investment opportunities. There was also a variety of mechanisms available for making efficient use of forestry financing and Latin America had experimented with a number of them. But experiments had not been based on sound studies. The Commission concluded that very little was known about the relative effectiveness of each of the financing mechanisms available and tried, and that there were therefore few elements to use as a guide in designing future economic policies.

19. The Commission noted that a problem that often arises is that the people who conduct negotiations for loans have little or no knowledge of the technical characteristics of the projects, and this often prevents rapid approval of the loan. Political factors must always be borne in mind in designing financing alternatives. Financing by the private sector must also be kept very much in mind, among other things because policies towards private enterprise are usually more stable.

20. The Commission agreed that projects should have a territorial basis, since this makes it easier to structure the financing, ensure that the economic aspects complement each other, and identify the benefits, particularly the external economic effects that are so important in forestry.

21. The Commission noted that food aid to execute projects could often be used, and the World Food Programme was already investing an appreciable amount of resources in forestry activities in the region.

22. The Commission recommended that FAO conduct a more detailed analysis of the financial mechanisms available and their relative advantages and disadvantages, and publicize the results, preparing training and information material to make decision-makers aware of the characteristics and benefits of investments in forestry. It also recommended that FAO organize meetings for the discussion and promotion of forestry projects at national level, including representatives of the private sector and of policy decision levels, particularly within the framework of the Tropical Forestry Action Plan; and that it increase assistance to the countries of the region for pre-investment analysis and training in the matter.

FORESTRY AND FOOD

23. The Commission noted the fact that the connection between forestry and food security was important, although not always well understood.

24. It was pointed out that the forestry sector played a vital role in maintaining the resource base necessary for agricultural production. It also provided a reserve of land for the expansion of agricultural production. These aspects were well known, but an impact less understood was that of the direct production of food by the forest.

25. The Commission also noted that there was now a clearer perception of the sector's potential for generating employment and incomes that ensure access to food sources. The importance of fuelwood in ensuring that food is adequately cooked and preserved and in maintaining and improving hygiene, particularly in rural areas, and the importance of forest materials used in agricultural production, were noted.

26. The Commission recognized the importance of these links between forestry and food security and agreed that these aspects should receive more attention in the future. More importance should be given to the development of rural enterprises based on forest materials and to the introduction of agroforestry systems that made food security requirements compatible with forestry activities. The forms in which agroforestry techniques could be applied should be analysed, including technical elements and economic implications; and that decision-makers should be made aware of the potential of agroforestry methods in food security.

REVIEW OF 1984-85 ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET FOR 1986-87

27. The Commission noted with satisfaction that some changes had occurred in priorities and emphasis so as to reinforce certain sectors, in conformity with the recommendations made by the Committee on Forestry at its Seventh Session and endorsed by the FAO Council at its Eightysixth and Eightyseventh Sessions. These specific sectors related to forest development in the tropics, including implementation of the Tropical Forestry Action Plan, control of desertification,

rationalization of shifting agriculture and the conservation of mountain land, forest protection, the contribution of forestry to rural development and food production, forest resources assessment and outlook studies, appropriate forest industries, the development of techniques and institutions related to forestry activities, including support for forestry research, the promotion of employment through forestry, and improvements in the supply and use of fuelwood in rural communities.

FORESTRY FIELD ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION

28. The Commission stressed that although UNDP was channelling less funds to the region, the forestry sector could continue to take advantage of them provided the national authorities were convinced of the role that the sector could play in the country's social and economic development. It was essentially the responsibility and concern of the respective forestry services in each country to ensure this; but they could obtain assistance from FAO.

29. The Commission agreed that one of the best prospects for development of the field programme was offered by international financing institutions such as the Inter-American Development Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank and the World Bank.

30. The Commission agreed that the activities to promote the field programme in Latin America and the Caribbean required the adoption of a joint, dynamic and flexible strategy. One of the options that best fitted this approach was the Tropical Forestry Action Plan, whose launching in various countries in the region should lead to the timely implementation of sectoral missions and the formulation of projects with good prospects of finding finance.

31. The Commission was informed by one country about the efforts made to offset in part the lack of resources, by using Inter-American Development Bank pre-investment funds in combination with UNDP contributions.

32. Another country expressed the need for specific technical assistance from experts highly qualified in disciplines not available in the country. FAO should decentralize its assistance more and its Regional Office should strengthen the activities of the technical cooperation networks.

TECHNICAL COOPERATION NETWORKS

33. The Commission noted that FAO had been promoting through the Technical Cooperation Networks a series of activities which overlapped with the fields of action of some of the Latin American Forestry Commission's subsidiary bodies.

34. The Commission recognized the valuable help provided by the FAO/UNEP project on the management of forest areas, protected areas and wildlife in Latin America and the Caribbean. At the same time it expressed its fear that termination of the project, scheduled for next year, would slow down the activities of the regional technical cooperation network on this subject. It therefore recommended that UNEP study the possibility of extending the project for at least two more years.

ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION'S SUBSIDIARY BODIES

35. The Commission was informed by the Chairman of the Committee on Forestry Research of the final report prepared by the Committee on the work carried out following resumption of its activities in October 1983.

36. The Commission commended the quality of the work done by the Committee and recommended that FAO assign funds for the organization of another session of the Committee before the next session of the Latin American Forestry Commission.

37. Considering the difficulties encountered by most of the other subsidiary bodies in developing continuous activities, and the work being undertaken by the Technical Cooperation Networks in the field of forestry, the Commission unanimously approved suppression of the following subsidiary bodies: (i) the Committee on National Parks and Wildlife; (ii) the Committee on Forest Products; and (iii) the Study Group on the Marketing and Industrialization of Tropical Species.

MATTERS TO BE REFERRED TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

38. None.

OTHER BUSINESS

39. The Commission was informed of a letter received from the Chairman of the Committee of Alternates of the North American Forestry Commission, expressing the wish to strengthen links with the Latin American Forestry Commission and promote technical cooperation.

40. The Commission urged that FAO take the necessary steps to organize and sponsor a Latin American forestry conference designed to expose top level government leaders to forestry problems and opportunities and develop support for forestry action plans within the context of the Tropical Forestry Action Plan. It was also recommended that this conference be held as a part of the Sixteenth Session of the Latin American Forestry Commission, and that the North American Forestry Commission be invited to participate.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION

41. The delegation of Argentina extended an invitation to hold the Sixteenth Session of the Commission in Argentina. Later a similar offer was made by Panama. The Commission thanked both delegations and requested the Secretariat to transmit these offers to the Director-General of FAO for decision, after consultation with the relevant authorities.

42. The Commission recommended that its next session be held early in 1988.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

43. The draft report, presented by the Secretariat, was adopted.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Election of Officers
4. The State of Forestry in the Region
5. Review of 1984-85 Activities and Programme of Work
and Budget 1986-87
6. Forestry Field Operations in the Region
7. International Trade of Forest Products: Problems and Potentials
8. Financing Forestry for Development
9. Forestry and Food
10. The Tropical Forestry Action Plan
11. Technical Cooperation Networks
12. Commission's Subsidiary Bodies
13. Matters to be referred to the attention of the Committee on
Forestry
14. Other Business
15. Date and Place of the Next Session
16. Adoption of the Report

APENDICE B

ANNEX B

ANNEXE B

LISTA DE DELEGADOS Y OBSERVADORES

LIST OF DELEGATES AND OBSERVERS

LISTE DE DELEGUES ET OBSERVATEURS

Presidente
Chairman
Président

R. VARGAS
(Costa Rica)

Vicepresidentes
Vice-Chairmen
Vice-Présidents

R. BAZAN ROCA (Bolivia/Bolivie)
R.S. JONES (Jamaica)
J.B. CARDEÑA RODRIGUEZ (México/Mexico/Méxique)

Relator
Rapporteur

J. SEGOVIA INESTROZA (Honduras)

Secretario
Secretary
Secrétaire

S. SALCEDO (FAO)

MIEMBROS DE LA COMISION/MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION/MEMBRES DE LA COMMISSION

Argentina/Argentine

Delegado: H. KUGLER
Interventor
Instituto Forestal Nacional (IFONA)
Av. Pueyrredon 2446
Buenos Aires

Belice/Belize

Delegate: H.C. FLOWERS
Chief Forest Officer
Forest Department
Ministry of Agriculture
Belmopan, C.A.

Bolivia/Bolivia

Delegado: R. BAZAN ROCA
Director Ejecutivo
Unidad Técnica Desconcentrada
Centro Desarrollo Forestal
Av. Inara esq. Ejercito Nacional
Santa Cruz

Costa Rica

Delegado: R. VARGAS BRENES
Director General Forestal
Dirección General Forestal
Apartado 10094
San José

Suplentes: M.V. ARAYA BARRANTES
Jefe del Departamento de Reservas
Forestales y Cuencas Hidrográficas
Dirección General Forestal
Apartado 10094
San José

G. CANET BRENES
Jefe, Depto. Desarrollo Campesino
Forestal
Coordinador Proyecto Madeleña
Dirección General Forestal
Apartado 10094
San José

A. MATAMOROS DELGADO
Subdirector General Forestal
Dirección General Forestal
Apartado 10094
San José

J.L. SALAS ZURIGA
Dirección General Forestal
Apartado 10094
San José

D. VINDAS CHAVES
Jefe, Depto. Repoblación y Protección
Forestal
Dirección General Forestal
Apartado 10094
San José

Observadores: H. BIANCHI
CODEFORSA
Apartado 1952
San José

G.A. CANESSA
Director, Secretaría de Planificación
Ejecutivo de Recursos Naturales
Ministerio de Recursos Naturales,
Energía y Minas
San José

F. CHARPANTIER ARIAS
Depto. de Recursos Naturales
Secretaría Ejecutiva de Planificación
Sectorial, Agropecuaria y de Recursos
Naturales Renovables
Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería
San José

J. FALLAS
Director, Escuela Ciencias Ambientales
Universidad Nacional
Heredia

R. GONZALEZ RUIZ
Sectorialista de Recursos Naturales
MIDEPLAN
Apartado 10127-1000
San José

Costa Rica

Observadores: P. GAMBOA MARIN
Asistente Gerencia
Banco Cooperativo Costarricense
Avenida Séptima
San José

J.J. MADRIGAL HIDALGO
Consejo Nacional de investi-
gaciones científicas y
tecnológicas
Apdo. 10318
San José

L.G. MENDEZ MOLINA
Director, Servicio de Parques
Nacionales
Dirección General Forestal
Apartado 10094
San José

C. MONTERO DIAZ
Técnico
Dirección General Forestal
Apartado 10094
San José

E.M. ORTIZ
Director de Depto. Forestal
Instituto Tecnológico de Costa
Rica
Apartado 159
Cartago

F. PANIAGUA GAMBOA
Presidente, Asociación Guana-
casteca de Desarrollo Forestal
Apartado 36
Nicoya, Guanacaste

A. PERALTA
Presidente, CODEFORSA
Apartado 1952
San José

Z. PORRAS
Apartado 3048
San José

R. QUIROS HERRERA
Organización para Estudios
Tropicales
San Pedro de Montes de Oca

G. E. RODRIGUEZ QUIROS
Oficial Mayor
Ministerio Recursos Naturales, Energía
y Minas
Apartado 435-1100
Tibás

C. SCHNELL
Director Residente
Organización para Estudios Tropicales
c/o Universidad de Costa Rica
San José

R. SOLORZANO SOTO
Director Técnico
Fundación Neotrópica
Apartado 236-1002
San José

G. BUDOWSKI
Coordinador Programa "Recursos Naturales
y Calidad de Vida"
Universidad para La Paz
Apartado 435-2300
Surrudabat, San José

G. SOTO JIMENEZ
Coordinadora Ejecutiva de CANEFOR
Paseo Colón, Av. 1 Calles 24-28
San José

R. VASCO CAMPILLO
Jefe Unidad Forestal
Instituto de Desarrollo Agrario
Barrio Rohrmoser
San José

Chile

Delegado: R. ROMERO ALPE
Gerente Técnico
Corporación Nacional Forestal
Av. Bulnes 285, Depto. No. 103
Santiago

El Salvador

Delegado: A. MOREIRA RIVAS
Centro de Recursos Naturales
Col. Bello San Juan, Polígono 8#3
Los Planes
San Salvador

Estados Unidos de América/United States of
America/Etats-Unies d'Amérique

Delegate: C. PHILPOT
Associate Deputy Chief
U.S. Forest Service
P.O. Box 2417
Washington, D.C. 20013

Alternate: J.L. WHITMORE
Forester
U.S. Forest Service
P.O. Box 2417
Washington, D.C. 20013

Observer: A. LUGO
Institute of Tropical Forestry
P.O. Box 25000
Río Piedras
Puerto Rico 00928-2500

H. TSCHINKEL
AID Regional Office for
Central American Programs
ROCAP
Embajada Americana
San José

Francia/France

Délégué: J.M. BOUVARD
Responsable, Centre de Recherche-
Formation de L'ENGREF
B.P. 316
97379 Kourou Cédex

Honduras

Delegado: J. SEGOVIA INESTROZA
Gerente General
COHDEFOR
Tegucigalpa

Suplente: R. GUEVARA MONCADA
Director, Escuela Nacional
Ciencias Forestales
Apartado Postal 2
Siguatepeque

M. HERNANDEZ PAZ
Asesor Forestal al Ministerio
de Recursos Naturales
Col. Los Angeles 100-67
Comayagua

Jamaica

Delegate: R.S. JONES
Director of Forestry and Soil
Conservation
Dept. of Forestry and Soil
Conservation
173 Constant Spring Road
Kingston 8

México/Mexico/Méxique

Delegado: J.B. CARDEÑA RODRIGUEZ
Director General de Normatividad
Forestal de La Secretaría de
Agricultura y Recursos Hidráulicos
Av. Progreso No. 5, Col. Coyoacan
México, D.F.

Suplente: M. CABALLERO DELOYA
Vocal Forestal del Instituto
Nacional de Investigaciones
Forestales y Agropecuarias
Insurgentes Sur 694, 9o piso
México, D. F.

Asesores: R. SANTANA VELAZQUEZ
Segundo Secretario
Embajada de México en Costa Rica
Apartado 10107
San José, Costa Rica

D. QUIROZ GARCIA
Consul, Embajada de México
Apartado 10107
San José, Costa Rica

Observador: G. CERVERA
Consejero Comercial
Embajada de México
Apartado 141(1007)
San José, Costa Rica

Nicaragua

Delegado: L. FIALLOS
Vice-Ministro
Ministerio de Industria
P.O. Box No. 8
Managua

Nicaragua

Suplentes: J.C. CASTILLO O.
Director General
Instituto Nicaragüense de Recursos
Naturales y del Ambiente
Km. 12½ Carretera Norte
Managua

F.J. HERNANDEZ OTERO
Sub-Director Forestal
Instituto Nicaragüense de Recursos
Naturales y del Ambiente
Km. 12½ Carretera Norte
Managua

Países Bajos/Netherlands/Pays-Bas

Delegate: J.W. BERTENS
Ambassador
Embassy of the Netherlands
Apartado 10 285
San José, Costa Rica

Alternate: M. VAN BONZEL
Second Secretary
Embassy of the Netherlands
Apartado 10 285
San José, Costa Rica

Panamá/Panamá

Delegado: M. DEL RIO
Director General
Instituto Recursos Naturales
Renovables (INRENARE)
Apartado 2016
Paraíso, Ancón

Suplente: D.I. ARCIA
Director Técnico
Instituto de Recursos Naturales
Renovables (INRENARE)
Apartado 2016
Paraíso, Ancón

Adjunto: M. HURTADO DE GRACIA
Jefe Servicio Forestal
INRENARE
Apdo. 2016
Paraíso, Ancón

Perú/Peru/Pérou

Delegado: M. LOAYZA VILLEGAS
Director de Programación
Dirección General Forestal y de Fauna
Natalio Sánchez 220
Jesús María, Lima

Reino Unido/United Kingdom/Royaume-Uni

Delegate: A. WOLFFSOHN
Technical Cooperation Officer
Overseas Development Administration
Apdo. 2
Siguatepeque, Honduras

OBSERVADORES DE LOS ESTADOS MIEMBROS QUE NO SON MIEMBROS DE LA COMISION
OBSERVERS FROM MEMBER NATIONS NOT MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION
OBSERVATEURS D'ETATS MEMBRES NE SIEGEANT PAS A LA COMMISSION

Canadá/Canada

P. LESSARD
Forestry Sector
Natural Resources Division
Canadian International Development Agency
200 Promenade du Portage
Hull, Quebec

REPRESENTANTES DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS Y ORGANISMOS ESPECIALIZADOS
REPRESENTATIVES OF UNITED NATIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES
REPRESENTANTS DES NATIONS UNIES ET INSTITUTIONS SPECIALISEES

Programa Mundial de Alimentos/World Food Programme/Programme alimentaire mondial

A.R. FIORAVANTI
Administrador de Proyectos
Programa Mundial de Alimentos (PMA)
Via delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Roma, Italia

R. RODRIGUEZ RAMOS
Oficial de Proyectos del PMA
Naciones Unidas
San José, Costa Rica

Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo/United Nations Development Programme/
Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement

C. LANKESTER
Principal Technical Adviser
UNDP
1, UN Plaza
New York 10017, U.S.A.

OBSERVADORES DE LAS ORGANIZACIONES INTERGUBERNAMENTALES
OBSERVERS FROM INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
OBSERVATEURS DES ORGANISATIONS INTERGOUVERNEMENTALES

Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo/Inter-American Development Bank/Banque
interaméricaine de développement

A. SOLORZANO
Especialista Sectorial
Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo
Apdo. 1142, Centro Colón
San José, 1007
Costa Rica

Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza (CATIE)

R. DE CAMINO
Jefe Dpto. Recursos Naturales a.i.
CATIE
Turrialba
Costa Rica

J.G. FLORES RODAS
Economista Principal MDLN
CATIE
Turrialba
Costa Rica

R. SALAZAR FIGUEROA
Genetista Proyecto Madeleña
CATIE
Turrialba
Costa Rica *

Organización de los Estados Americanos/Organization of American States/Organisation
des États américains

J.J. CASTRO-CHAMBERLAIN
Jefe, Proyecto Plurinacional Cooperación Técnica
Energía y Desarrollo, Istmo Centroamericano
Apartado 10166
San José, Costa Rica

ORGANIZACION DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACION
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ALIMENTATION ET L'AGRICULTURE

M.A. FLORES RODAS
Subdirector General
Departamento de Montes

M. REIS
Coordinador
Programa de Acción Forestal en Los Trópicos
Departamento de Montes

S. SALCEDO
Oficial Regional Forestal
FAO
Casilla 10095
Santiago, Chile

A. CONTRERAS
Oficial Forestal Principal
Departamento de Montes

O.J. RAMIREZ MIXTER
Oficial de Programa
Representación FAO en Costa Rica
Apartado 8198, San José

K. BOSTRÖM
Coordinador de Proyecto, GCP/RAS/106/JPN
Bangkok, Thailand

M. NEYRA-ROMAN
Consultor Forestal MAG/FAO
Proyecto GCP/COS/009/ITA
Apartado 8198-1000
San José

J. DANOIS
Profesional asociado
Proyecto GCP/COS 009/ITA/FAO/MAG
Apartado 8198, San José

G. BRONZONI
Profesional asociado
Oficina FAO
Apartado 8198, San José

A. PROVAN PERRINI
Oficial administrativo
Departamento de Montes

ANNEX C

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Title</u>
2	FO:LAFC/86/1	Provisional Agenda
4	FO:LAFC/86/2	The State of Forestry in the Region
5	FO:LAFC/86/3	FAO Forestry Activities: Review Biennium 1984-85 and Programme of Work and Budget for 1986-87
6	FO:LAFC/86/4	Forestry Field Operations in the Region
7	FO:LAFC/86/5	International Trade in Forest Products
8	FO:LAFC/86/6	Financing Forestry for Development
9	FO:LAFC/86/7	Forestry and Food
10	FO:LAFC/86/8	The Tropical Forestry Action Plan
11	FO:LAFC/86/9	Technical Cooperation Networks

Information Documents

FO:LAFC/86/Inf.1	General Information
FO:LAFC/86/Inf.2	Provisional Timetable
FO:LAFC/86/Inf.3	List of Documents

National Progress Reports submitted by:

Belize
Chile
Costa Rica
El Salvador
Jamaica
Mexico
Nicaragua
Panama

SESIONES PRECEDENTES DE LA COMISION

1 ^{er} Período de sesiones	Río de Janeiro, Brasil	23 de mayo de 1949
2 ^o Período de sesiones	Lima, Perú	14 de noviembre de 1949
3 ^{er} Período de sesiones	Santiago, Chile	11 de diciembre de 1950
4 ^o Período de sesiones	Buenos Aires, Argentina	16-23 de junio de 1952
5 ^o Período de sesiones	Caracas, Venezuela	4-15 de octubre de 1955
6 ^o Período de sesiones	Antigua, Guatemala	4-15 de noviembre de 1958
7 ^o Período de sesiones	México D.F., México	3-6 de agosto de 1960
8 ^o Período de sesiones	Santiago, Chile	13-19 de noviembre de 1962
9 ^o Período de sesiones	Curitiba, Brasil	5-12 de noviembre de 1964
10 ^o Período de sesiones	Port of Spain, Trinidad y Tabago	4-9 de diciembre de 1967
11 ^o Período de sesiones	Quito, Ecuador	16-21 de noviembre de 1970
12 ^o Período de sesiones	La Habana, Cuba	2-7 de febrero de 1976
13 ^o Período de sesiones	Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, México	18-22 de febrero de 1980
14 ^o Período de sesiones	Lima, Perú	15-18 de noviembre de 1982

MIEMBROS DE LA COMISION

Argentina	Honduras
Barbados	Jamaica
Belice	México
Bolivia	Nicaragua
Brasil	Países Bajos
Colombia	Panamá
Costa Rica	Paraguay
Cuba	Perú
Chile	Reino Unido
Ecuador	República Dominicana
El Salvador	San Cristóbal y Nieves
Estados Unidos de América	Suriname
Francia	Trinidad y Tabago
Guatemala	Uruguay
Guyana	Venezuela
Haití	