



gtz International Forest Policy

commissioned by
Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development



Pre-Congress Workshop on Regional Forest Cooperation

Side event to the XIII World Forestry Congress

Buenos Aires, 17 October 2009



WFC 2009

XIIIth World Forestry Congress

Buenos Aires | Argentina

18 - 23 OCTOBER 2009

Outline

1. Introduction

An increasing number of development partnerships address regional institutions and processes as an adequate means of further promoting and articulating the implementation of sustainable forest management. At the eighth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF 8), in April 2009, the Dominican Republic, with a high degree of support from Member states and major group representatives, proposed to hold at the WFC a one-day Workshop on regional forest cooperation. The **overall purpose** of this workshop would be to strengthen regional forest cooperation by clarifying its functions, potential and limitations which are due to mandates and capacities. Moreover the Workshop will create awareness of the high diversity of regional organizations, processes and initiatives and will highlight their strengths.

The Workshop **builds on previous events** in support of the work of the UNFF and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), such as the South-South Exchange Meeting on the conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity held in Montreal July 2009, the Region-Led Initiative held in Geneva January 2008, the Bali Country-Led Initiative (CLI) February 2007, and the Berlin CLI November 2005, as well as on UNFF8 documentation, in particular the 2009 Report of the Secretary General on Regional and Sub-Regional Inputs¹. The proceedings and documentation illustrate the scope and value of regional forest cooperation emerging from different processes, initiatives and approaches. It also reveals regional and global interactions and their respective contributions. In this regard, explicit calls from the global level have been supportive of greater regional cooperation and action.

With FAO being engaged in and prepared for intensifying regional cooperation through its Regional Forestry Commissions, the **World Forestry Congress** offers a perfect setting for the Workshop. The conceptual and thematic link to the Congress is through Thematic Session No. 6.1. "International dialogue and processes and their impact".

The workshop is scheduled for the **whole day of October 17**. It will be jointly organized by FAO and German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. The date and place of venue – WFC - will guarantee the presence of many stakeholders interested in the issue.

¹<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/> and <http://www.biodiv.org>

2. Rationale

Many problems in forest management and conservation are **trans-boundary** in nature and so are the solutions. Experts and organizations at national as well as at international level, have **high expectations** vis à vis trans-boundary and **regional work**. **Regional organizations and initiatives** are expected to **bridge the gap between international negotiations, dialogue and national implementation** and to facilitate sharing experience and lessons learned on common problems. In addition, regional activities aim at helping to build positions and strengthen voices which are not so often heard.

Regional initiatives and approaches related to forest ecosystems have also emerged for **several reasons and purposes**. Their scope ranges from an informal exchange of information among key stakeholders, to broader multi-stakeholder networks with their own budgets and programs, to formal institutions having a common agenda to deal with regional cooperation and integration affairs.

Some forms of regional cooperation have a history of several decades (EU, FAO Regional Forestry Commissions), others have been established only recently in response to growing awareness of regional and global processes. While some regional processes started from a technical basis, others have their origins in market aspects, global environmental considerations or in the desire of stakeholders to better voice their interests and concerns. Finally they all have **different mandates, functions, degrees of freedom, strengths and weaknesses**. At the same time, not all expectations about regional processes have come true. A better understanding is required of what they do best and of the issues they are not (yet) dealing with successfully.

3. Objectives, working mode and outcome

The **objective** of the Workshop is to create awareness and promote exchange on the strengths of the different types of regional organizations, initiatives and processes, to increase the potential for innovation and political commitment in regional forest cooperation while maintaining realistic expectations about what they can deliver.

The Workshop will provide an **informal platform** for **experts** dealing with regional forest cooperation for the systematic exchange of experiences, ideas and visions. Inputs will be based on the wealth of experience generated at regional level. A thorough documentation will make these experiences available to a wider audience after the workshop.

Work will be done in plenary and group work sessions. Written inputs, presentations and group discussions will deal with the following three key questions:

- **What are our successes?** A common understanding of the roles, value added and potential of the various forms of regional cooperation initiatives, and their challenges.
- **What is better done by others (national and international organizations)?** A common understanding of “comparative disadvantages” of regional organizations and initiatives.
- **How will we all together become even better?** A common understanding of the key issues to be addressed and the necessary conditions to enhance regional cooperation.

By clarifying these issues the Workshop will strengthen the role of regional initiatives in addressing the big questions around forests and forestry today. At the same time, it will identify areas that are better dealt with at other forums and levels of cooperation.

A **Message from participants or Chair's summary** will be formulated and forwarded to the **WFC**, to **UNFF 9** and possibly also to UNFCCC and, if adequate, to other forums, processes and institutions dealing with forests and forestry.

4. Participants:

Two-thirds of the approx. 100 participants will come from forest related regional and sub-regional organizations such as COMIFAC and ASEAN, processes and initiatives such as MCPFE, CBFP, AFF or the IMFN, to name but a few of a long list from all over the globe. Another 30 participants will come from relevant institutions (e.g. FAO Regional Forestry Commissions, CBD and UNFF Secretariat), research organizations (CIFOR, IUFRO, ICRAF, EFI), and representatives of multilateral and bilateral donors.