



## Regional Forest Cooperation – removing barriers, taking chances

Side event to the XIII World Forestry Congress  
Buenos Aires, 17 October 2009



### **Pre-Congress Workshop on regional forest cooperation Message of participants**

30 experts from regional organizations and initiatives, as well as 25 experts from research organizations, national / international institutions and multilateral and bilateral donors met on October 17 in Buenos Aires to discuss regional forest cooperation. The objective of the Workshop was 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 event was jointly organized by FAO and German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Participants conveyed the following messages on how regional organizations and initiatives as well as their national and international partners might collectively increase effectiveness and impact of their work:

#### **Successes and impacts of the work of ROI and related prerequisites**

- Regional Organizations and Initiatives are important emerging instruments that complement international and national approaches to SFM
- Regional organizations enable the creation of a shared vision among stakeholders from various countries and the presentation of joint positions and approaches
- To benefit from these comparative advantages, ROI need political commitments and mandates from their members and adequate human and financial resources
- Regional organizations and initiatives have the most impact (are the most effective) when they mobilize the participation of and support from a wide range of stakeholders, incl. private sector and Civil Society Organizations
- Regional Organizations and Initiatives can benefit substantially of strategic alliances and partnerships and South-South-Cooperation, such as COMIFAC and CBFP, Puenbo+CCAD+OTCA+COFLAC, or ASEAN-OTCA-COMIFAC

#### **Comparative advantages and challenges of ROI**

- Political will and leadership are the keys to mobilize national action and take advantage of the opportunities to implement SFM by regional and international organizations.
- International organizations provide a platform for international negotiations, knowledge generation and management, monitoring forest resources and promoting public participation.
- International and national level entities are well positioned to mobilize resources (financial, technical) to implement SFM on the national level, but for transboundary aspects more support is needed on the regional level.



## Regional Forest Cooperation – removing barriers, taking chances

Side event to the XIII World Forestry Congress  
Buenos Aires, 17 October 2009



### Focus of ROI with regard to SFM and cross cutting issues

- (Sub)-regional organizations of political integration facilitate the dialogue between technical and political entities and the intermediation between the national and international levels.
- The international community should make better and more use of the comparative advantages of regional organizations and initiatives to
  - build regional capacity
  - address technical and sensitive political issues
  - take into account the rights and interests of indigenous and forest-dwelling people
  - attract and channel funds
  - develop and promote common positions
  - to promote SFM and related subjects, such as REDD, ABS, PES

Welcome addresses were given by Eva Mueller, Chief Forest Policy Service FAO, Daniel Haas, Department of Environment and sustainable use of natural resources (BMZ), and by Jan McAlpine, Director and Head of the Secretariat of UNFF. The workshop rationale and objectives were presented by Evy von Pfeil, GTZ. The Workshop was moderated by Suhel al-Janabi, Geomedia, Germany.

Group work was chaired by Evy von Pfeil, GTZ, Godwin Kowero, Executive Secretary African Forest Forum and Ambassador Manuel Picasso, Secretary General OTCA.

A poster session “setting the scene” was held to familiarize participants with each other and to document the diversity of regional organizations and initiatives which participated in the event.

Substantive inputs were given on:

- Opportunities for and next steps in South-South Cooperation between COMIFAC, OTCA and ASEAN in the framework of the forest, biodiversity conservation, and environmental sustainability (*Raman Letchumanan, Director, Environment Division ASEAN*)
- Continent wide networking and positioning – the African Forest Forum (*Godwin Kowero, Executive Secretary AFF*)
- Organisational development in OTCA, (*Manuel Picasso, Secretary General OTCA*)
- Cross-sectoral cooperation for forests within Central America, (*Jorge Rodriguez, Environment Minister Costa Rica*)
- Support to regional scientific cooperation and knowledge management (*Frances Seymour, Director General CIFOR*)
- Coordination approaches and partnerships (*Martin Tadoum, Vice Executive Secretary COMIFAC*)

Buenos Aires 17.10.2009

Contact: Evy von Pfeil GTZ-IWP, [Evy.Pfeil@gtz.de](mailto:Evy.Pfeil@gtz.de)

IISD coverage of the event: <http://www.iisd.ca/yimb/forest/wfc13/> and <http://www.iisd.ca/yimb/forest/wfc13/17oct.html>