



# Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation

## Summary of Decisions, Recommendations and Discussions

### Second Meeting of the APFNet Council

10-11 May, 2016 Siem Reap, Cambodia

#### **Present**

##### **18 Member Economies**

Australia  
Bangladesh  
Cambodia  
Canada  
P. R. China  
Fiji  
Hong Kong, China  
Indonesia  
Lao PDR  
Malaysia  
Mongolia  
Myanmar  
Nepal  
The Philippines  
Sri Lanka  
Chinese Taipei  
Thailand  
Viet Nam

##### **2 Member Organizations**

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)  
International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)

#### **Observer**

Mr. Stephen MIDGLEY, APFNet Board member  
Dr. Sadanandan NAMBIAR, APFNet Board member  
APFNet-Kunming Training Center (KTC)

#### **Meeting support**

Mr. Qu Guilin, Executive Director, APFNet Secretariat  
Ms. Rosalie McConnell, facilitator, APFNet Consultant  
Mr. Mahendra Lal Joshi, APFNet Senior Consultant  
Ms. Alexandra Wu, minutes taker, APFNet Secretariat  
Ms. Wang Yingyi, APFNet Secretariat  
Ms. Chen Lin, APFNet Secretariat

The Second Meeting of the APFNet Council has been hosted by the Forestry Administration of Cambodia on 10-11 May, 2016 in Siem Reap, Cambodia. Participants representing 20 members attended the meeting. The decisions and discussions are summarized below.

## **Opening Session**

### ***Remarks by the Head of the Forestry Administration, Royal Government of Cambodia***

Dr. Chheng Kimsun warmly welcomed all participants and expressed his pleasure at the opportunity to host the second meeting of APFNet's Council and Board of Directors in Siem Reap and the UNESCO World Heritage site of Angkor Wat. He thanked the Secretariat and the Institute of Forest and Wildlife Research and Development for their collaboration in co-organizing the sessions.

He noted the impacts of climate change that various regions are experiencing around the world as a result of both natural and human factors, including drought, erratic patterns of rainfall, storm surges, flooding and other catastrophes. Unsustainable development has also led to substantial loss of forest cover. Although efforts are being made to implement more effective planning processes to maintain the integrity of forest ecosystems and achieve sustainable outcomes, the growing demands of society continue to exert significant pressure on remaining forests. To address these problems, the Royal Government of Cambodia is implementing the National Forest Programme (2010-2029) which is designed around 6 themes: Forest demarcation, classification and registration; Forest resource management and conservation; Forest law enforcement and governance; Community forestry development; Capacity and research development; and Sustainable forest financing.

Various donors, including APFNet, are supporting projects and Dr. Kimsun described two of them: 1) Multi-function Forest Restoration and Management of Degraded Forest Areas in Cambodia (Kampong Thom and Siem Reap provinces) which improved the skills of local communities and field officers to restore community forests and raised awareness of the need to practice integrated watershed management; and 2) Landscape Approach to the Sustainable Management of Forests in Prek Thnot Watersheds which aims to develop a comprehensive plan for the sustainable development of the economy's watersheds.

In closing, he expressed his sincere gratitude to APFNet for its continued support for the development of Cambodia's forest sector and thanked participants for taking the time to attend this meeting. He wished everyone fruitful deliberations and an enjoyable stay in this historical city.

### ***Remarks by the Executive Director of the APFNet Secretariat***

Mr. QU Guilin thanked Cambodia for hosting this second meeting of the Council. He expressed his appreciation for the past guidance APFNet received from the Focal Points and the Steering Committee and is grateful for the current guidance now being provided under the new administrative structure.

In each economy, forests fall under the care of governments, local people and forest agencies. APFNet is pleased to be able to assist them to reach their goals as they strive to achieve sustainable forest management. He closed by stating that this Council

session is timely because targets for forestry development continue to appear on the international agenda. What is now needed is action such as that proposed during the Asia-Pacific Forestry Week which was held in the Philippines in February. He welcomed all participants, wished them a good stay, and hoped that, as partners, sustainable forest management could be attained together.

#### ***Organizational matters***

Dr. Preecha Ongprasert, Chair of the Council, also extended his thanks to Cambodia's Forestry Administration and to Council members for their support over the last year and their attendance today. He informed the group that Mr. Tunou Sabuin, representative of Vice-chair, sends his regrets at not being able to attend the meeting due to logistical problems. He then brought the updated list of Council representatives and contact persons [APFNet/Council/ENG/2016/03] to their attention and asked that changes, if any, be submitted to the Secretariat. Following this request, he invited participants to introduce themselves.

#### ***Adoption of the agenda***

The Chair called for adoption of the agenda after informing members that Mr. Sairusi Bulai from the Secretariat of Pacific Community could not attend the meeting. Therefore only two, not three, projects would be presented in session 3. The Council adopted the agenda, as presented [APFNet/Council/ENG/2016/01].

### **Session 1 APFNet Membership**

The facilitator informed members that Uzbekistan and Pakistan indicated an interest in joining APFNet but did not submit their complete application documents on time for Council to consider. Given that membership is open to all economies in Asia-Pacific and APFNet's recent involvement in the Greater Central Asia region, the Secretariat will follow up and keep Council apprised of developments.

### **Session 2**

#### **APFNet Progress and Financial Report 2015**

Mr. Qu presented the 2015 report [APFNet/Council/ENG/2016/04] for the Council's information. He highlighted that institutional governance improved as a result of more input from economies in the region. APFNet refined its policies and procedures to regulate operations, and that better planning and monitoring of activities and projects raised the quality of outputs and outcomes. He noted that the development of the second 5-year strategic plan was a key initiative in 2015 and that Dr. Mahendra Joshi, the main author, will present the most recent draft later in this session. After reviewing activities in terms of institutional development, partnerships, regional policy dialogues, projects/programs, capacity building, information/communications, and administrative matters, Mr. Qu informed participants that APFNet received about USD4.41 million and spent about USD4.45, the details of which can be found at the end of the report, along with a chart that shows all activities in the work plan largely completed. Following an examination of financial records, an internationally known firm (Ruihua Certified Public Accountants) were of the opinion that APFNet's financial statements "present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of

the Network as of 31 December 2015, and the results of its business activities and cash flows for the year ended [are] in accordance with Accounting System for Non-profit Organizations and relevant statutory requirements in China.”

### **APFNet Plan and Budget 2016**

At the request of the Chair, Mr. Qu presented the proposed annual work plan and budget for 2016 [APFNet/Council/ENG/2016/05]. He mentioned that APFNet continues to look forward to receiving advice and guidance from the Board and Council as it carries out its programs and activities in the current year. He then highlighted the following points:

- The Secretariat will engage in more frequent communication with members between meetings to better inform them of APFNet’s operations and initiatives.
- Memorandum of Understanding will be renewed with ITTO and a new one is expected to be signed with IUFRO which is convening a regional congress for Asia and Oceania in Beijing in October.
- With regard to policy dialogues, the Secretariat will work with member economies to identify a host for the 4th meeting of APEC ministers responsible for forests - one of the highest level gatherings in the region.
- A first meeting of ministers in Greater Central Asia will be held in Kazakhstan at the end of May and will focus on strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation on forestry and on mainstreaming the sector into socio-economic development plans.
- A new Project Appraisal Panel for the period 2016-2018 will soon be established to give expert advice to the Secretariat on the technical merits and feasibility of concept notes and proposals.
- The Secretariat will provide training and support to enhance project capacity to plan, implement and report on activities and it will introduce a more robust monitoring and evaluation system to track the effectiveness and efficiency of management and outcomes.
- Improvements will be made to the Scholarship Program and about 20 more students will be sponsored to attend either Beijing Forestry University or Nanjing Forestry University to obtain Master degrees.
- Training workshops will be organized in China and Sri Lanka, in addition to a study tour for directors working in Greater Central Asia.
- The Asia-Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism will continue to improve the quality of education and capacity in the region through a number of initiatives - certifying online courses and facilitating mutual recognition of courses in regional institutions, for example.
- In terms of information sharing, the Secretariat intends to update APFNet’s website, release regular newsletters, publish notable project outcomes and strengthen the communication component in new project proposals. It will also maintain a presence at key regional and international events to increase its profile and promote major projects.
- Worthy of note is the significant increase in APFNet’s budget - from USD4.41 in 2015 to about USD9.71 million for 2016, most of which was obtained from China.

Following Mr. Qu's summary, the Chair invited comments from the floor. Members expressed their continued support for activities contained in the document, including APFNet's scholarship program and projects it is co-funding with partners. Support was also given to more frequent communication with Council members and to increasing the multi-cultural aspect of the Secretariat through secondments and internships from other Asia-Pacific economies. The importance of passing on experiences and learning from such arrangements was noted. Collaboration on issues of mutual interest and concern was seen as a key element, not only to avoid duplication, but to build on the comparative advantages of each partner. It was also mentioned that APFNet's strong ties to APEC presents a unique opportunity to access leaders and keep forestry on the political agenda. In this regard, it was suggested that a concerted effort be made to link the outcomes of major events, such as the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission's Forestry Week, with meetings of APEC ministers responsible for forests. The Secretariat was also asked to take geographic distribution into account to a greater extent when selecting projects for funding.

***Decision C.02/01*** *The Council requested the Chair to provide the comments noted above to the Board of Directors, for its consideration, when it meets on 12 May.*

#### **APFNet Strategic Plan (2016-2020)**

The Chair invited Dr. Mahendra Joshi, lead author of the Strategic Plan (2016-2020) [APFNet/Council/ENG/2016/06], to introduce the document and the process used to develop it. He explained that he met with more than 90 people when gathering information to assess the extent to which the first five-year plan was implemented. In the next version, he considered it important to balance the need to provide direction yet not be too prescriptive or detailed. He also was of the view that the structure and objectives of the new strategy should be consistent with the previous one to ensure continuity in an organization that was still young. Respondents to the survey expressed their appreciation for APFNet's work and suggested that a section on geographical coverage be added and that priorities be slightly revised. Although they called for a concise and focused document, many additional activities were proposed so it was difficult to include all comments. There was general agreement that forest rehabilitation was an area where APFNet could add value and that it could help economies to better connect to global discussions, including those which went beyond the forest sector. Dr. Joshi stressed the importance of using the new strategy as a communications tool to inform politicians, policy makers and the public of APFNet's work and secure their support. To be effective in this regard, the document must be short, precise and flexible. It must also be careful to match expectations with resources available.

Before the Chair called for discussion, the facilitator explained that, although the document states this version is the third draft, in fact, it is only the second one circulated to Council. Dr. Joshi wrote the first draft based on findings of the survey. It

was further refined and labeled as draft 2 for internal purposes. Slight changes were then made and distributed as draft 3.

Following Mahendra's overview of the process used to draft the next five-year plan, the following suggestions were made:

- The importance of improving the skills and knowledge of the grassroots was stressed, given that practitioners on the ground are the ones who implement policies and get things done.
- The strategy is more focused than the first one. Thus, it has the potential to be an effective communications tool and ways to use it as such should be explored.
- Text should be added on how to sell forestry to policy-makers, on the fundamental role of forests in sustainable development and on how to raise the profile of forestry in international fora. However, caution was urged not to include too much information in the strategy but flesh out the details in work plans instead.
- The urgency to finalize the document was recognized, given that 2016 is nearly half over.
- A cross-sectoral approach to dealing with issues that impact on forests is key to achieving desired results and APFNet should do what it can to foster such collaboration.
- Ways must be found to avoid duplication, for example, by consulting organizations that historically fund projects before approving new ones and, in this regard, APFNet should devise a mechanism to put practical steps in place.
- It was further suggested that the institutional framework be retained as a priority and that priorities 2&3 be combined, perhaps under the heading of Promoting sustainable forest management to enhance the ecological functions of forests and their resiliency.
- The matrix could be reworked to more directly link the implementation tools listed to the individual priorities of the organization.
- Drafting the final report on APEC's aspirational goal should be added as a key activity.

***Decision C.02/02*** *The Council requested the Chair to provide the comments noted above to the Board of Directors, for its consideration, when it meets on 12 May.*

### **APFNet training programs and plans (2016-2020)**

Ms. Pan Yao of the APFNet-Kunming Training Center (KTC) provided an overview of previous and proposed training workshops as part of APFNet's capacity-building component, under the themes of forest resource management and forestry and rural development. The aim of these activities is to achieve a better understanding of urgent regional needs, identify key issues, develop future scenarios and seek solutions. Equally important was the need for a network to be established to share best practices on forest rehabilitation and management which can be applied at a broader scale. Since training began in 2009 and since the inception of the APFNet-KTC in 2012, some 233 senior forestry officials and other representatives from 20 economies

attended 15 workshops. Evaluation of these sessions revealed that all appreciated the rich exchange of information and mutual learning that took place among participants and resource persons.

APFNet's Strategic Plan (2016-2020) will guide operations over the next five years by creating a platform to enhance forest rehabilitation, promote sustainable forest management and strengthen collaboration among Asia-Pacific economies. The APFNet-KTC will offer quality training, build capacity and serve as an outreach mechanism to communicate and collaborate with partners. More specifically, it will identify topics that meet regional needs, including those related to policy, technical aspects and management. In addition it will convene at least one workshop per year outside China, in response to requests from other economies. It will also standardize the process of nominating and selecting candidates to ensure only the most qualified attend the courses.

The Chair then invited members of the Council to provide their comments on the presentation. They stressed the need to select participants who will contribute positively to the learning aspects of the workshops, noting that this has not always been the case. They also mentioned that when more than one candidate is submitted for consideration, it raises expectations and can be disappointing for those not chosen. On the matter of possible topics, it was suggested that they not only respond to local demand but that they also address new developments in terms of forestry technologies and innovations.

### **Establishment of an Asia-Pacific Forestry Strategic Planning Network**

The Chair invited Ms. Alexandra Wu, Program Manager, APFNet Secretariat, to introduce a note which proposes the establishment of a forestry strategic planning network in the region [APFNet/Council/ENG/2016/07]. She explained that the idea originated during a workshop in New Zealand in 2013 and further elaborated at a meeting in Cambodia in 2014 in response to the need to strengthen development and implementation of forestry strategies and master plans in member economies. The network would consist of regional forestry personnel responsible for such matters and a working group would act as a consultative body to guide its efforts. The network's functions include establishing linkages among relevant policy-makers; sharing experiences, knowledge, case studies and publications; conducting regional analyses of forest strategies; building a library of pertinent materials; and organizing study tours, workshops and other activities suggested by the working group. As an initial task, the Secretariat intends to conduct a survey to determine interest in such an initiative, what the needs might be, and whether it is feasible. In this regard, Ms. Wu solicited comments from Council members on the notion and on the suggested participants listed in annex A of the note. She also sought names of others who could be contacted.

During discussions, the Council recognized the need to strengthen capacity in the area of forest plans and noted that further discussion needs to take place with the Secretariat on how the proposed network will address cost-effectiveness, given that such undertakings are expensive to establish and maintain - both in terms of financial and human resources. It was proposed that the identification of network members should consider not only what they might gain but also what they can contribute to the network. A word of caution was also given about adding to the reporting burden. If such a network were to be set up, it should use reports that are available or are currently being produced.

***Decision C.02/03*** *The Council supported the proposal to examine the need for and the feasibility of establishing a network which focuses on forestry strategic planning in the Asia-Pacific and looks forward to the Secretariat following up with members on the list of experts it should contact for this purpose.*

### **Session 3**

#### **Achievements and lessons learned through APFNet-funded projects**

At the invitation of the Chair, presentations were made on 2 APFNet projects to showcase outcomes and lessons learned: 1) Multi-functional Forest Restoration and Management of Degraded Forest Areas in Cambodia and 2) Community-based Sustainable Forest Management of the Sungai Medihit Watershed in Sarawak, Malaysia. After each report, Council members had an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments. A rich exchange of information ensued.

#### **APFNet Project Appraisal Panel (2016-2018)**

The facilitator explained that, according to the APFNet Operational Framework, the Project Appraisal Panel should consist of no less than 6 and no more than 11 experts. The Secretariat issued a call for nominations in March 2016 and received five names. To ensure there was an adequate number of candidates for the Council's consideration, the Secretariat added two more to the list, for a total of seven. At the same time, it sent out the selection criteria it developed, based on the terms of reference which the Council approved at its first meeting.

Council members acknowledged that all nominees were highly qualified and hoped that women would be added to the list in future. Although desirable, they recognized that it was difficult to achieve a balanced geographical distribution with so few submissions. For the period beyond 2018, it would be good if members made more of an effort to nominate suitable resource people for this task. It was also requested that the list of nominees be circulated to members two weeks in advance of a meeting so they have sufficient time to review it.

***Decision C.02/04*** *The Council endorsed the list of nominees, as presented, and agreed to have the Chair bring it forward to the Board of Directors for its approval at its meeting on 12 May.*



#### **Session 4**

##### **Date and venue of the third meeting of the Council**

The Council welcomed the offer from Sri Lanka to host the next Council meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 2017, preferably before May. The specific date will be determined in the coming months.

***Decision C.02/05** The Council accepted Sri Lanka's kind invitation and looks forward to having the date confirmed in due course.*

##### **Closing session**

Wrap up of all decisions, comments and recommendations to the Board

The facilitator provided a summary of decisions and main discussion points.

The Council adopted the decisions, as presented [APFNet/Council/ENG/2016/08].

##### **Close of the meeting**

In closing the meeting, the Chair expressed his appreciation to participants for their active engagement and for achieving successful outcomes. He also thanked Cambodia and the APFNet Secretariat for their many efforts to make this event a success. There being no further business, he called the meeting to a close.