

Second Meeting of the APFNet Interim Steering Committee

**APFNet secretariat, 6th floor, Baoneng Center
Beijing, China 18 April 2012**

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

Opening session

On behalf of Madame Yin Hong, Vice Minister of State Forestry Administration (SFA) of P.R.C. and Chair of the APFNet Interim Steering Committee, Mr. Su Chunyu, Director General, Department of International Cooperation of SFA, welcomed participants to the second meeting of the group.

In his opening remarks, he expressed his sincere appreciation for the support that APFNet continues to receive from the membership as the organization assists economies in the region to achieve sustainable forest management through capacity building, information exchange, policy dialogue and pilot projects. He then invited comments on the provisional agenda, which was adopted as presented, and obtained the consent of members to have Ms. Rosalie McConnell, APFNet Senior International Consultant, to act as facilitator of the meeting.

Mr. Su next introduced three new representatives on the Interim Steering Committee: Ms. Margaret Caton, Deputy Director of the US Department of State's Office of Ecology and Conservation, Dr. Ruth Turia, Director of Forest Policy and Planning in Papua New Guinea's Forest Authority and himself in SFA of China. Meanwhile, as key co-sponsors of APFNet, the United States and Australia restated their commitment to its mission, objectives and activities as well as their support to help it carry out its mandate.

Session 1: Rules of Procedure on Membership of the Interim Steering Committee

Members reviewed the proposed new wording in section VII of the Rules of Procedure with regard to the composition of the Interim Steering Committee and concluded that no changes were required. However, they agreed that, from time to time, they would assess the extent to which representation reflected the range of APFNet partners. As deemed necessary, an invitation would be extended to the wider APFNet membership to fill any perceived gaps. Without further deliberation, the committee welcomed the ITTO as its newest member.

Session 2: Review of the APFNet Operational Framework

Some members noted that the latest version still contains language that could be interpreted as legally binding and asked that such terms be replaced with more neutral wording. It was also suggested that the current wording which makes membership in APFNet conditional upon adherence to the operational framework be replaced with wording which instead calls on members to accept and support the mission, vision and objectives of APFNet.

Mr. Lu De of the APFNet Secretariat emphasized the importance of having a document which defines the mandate of the Executive Director, among others. He also reminded the Interim Steering Committee, as an advisory body, was to make recommendations / provide guidance. Thus, the document was not intended nor should be construed as legally binding.

It was agreed that members of the Interim Steering Committee would send written comments to the Secretariat within 3 weeks - not later than 9 May. The Secretariat will then produce and distribute another version and members will have 2 weeks after that to indicate their acceptance.

Session 3: Activity Report (2011) and Work Plan (2012)

Mr. Qu Guilin, Executive Director of APFNet Secretariat, reported on activities undertaken in 2011 and sought guidance from the Interim Steering Committee on the proposed annual work plan for 2012.

With regard to the 2011 activity report, main achievements include the following:

- Interim Steering Committee established
- Working Mechanism for APFNet Focal Points improved
- Operations of the Secretariat formalized
- Strategic Plan 2011-2015 finalized
- Interim governance structure put in place
- Training workshops held (31 participants from 15 developing economies)
- Scholarships offered to 8 additional students for postgraduate studies in forestry
- First APEC meeting of ministers responsible for forestry convened
- The ASEM Symposium on SFM and climate change organized
- Website revamped to include a learning hub
- Documentary filmed to showcase best practices
- Partnerships expanded
- Demonstration projects approved (6 implemented in 12 economies)
- Monitoring ongoing projects implemented

The work plan proposed by the APFNet Secretariat for 2012 lists seven priorities and outlines several activities in the areas of institutional development, demonstration projects, capacity building, and communications and information. It also describes the support it intends to provide to regional policy dialogues, the ways it will improve administration and examples of partnerships it will nurture. To operationalize the work plan, approximately USD 5 million is needed: USD 2.07 for operations and USD 2.83 for projects.

At the request of the Chair, members made the following suggestions to the work plan:

- include an additional priority which captures the need to support national and regional initiatives to achieve a green economy;
- add the ITTO/FAO/APFNet workshop on tropical forest statistics to the list of events under capacity-building;
- indicate continued support to projects approved in previous years, not only new ones

- consider holding training workshops in other economies to foster different learning, experiences and information exchange;
- make it clear that the organizations found in section III under partnerships are examples only and that the list is not exhaustive.

Members expressed their support for continuing to expand partnerships to organizations such as RECOFTC and CIFOR and possibly inviting them to join the Interim Steering Committee, along with an economy from East Asia, as long as the number of members did not exceed the maximum.

In addition, the point was made that many small-scale demonstration projects provide innovative approaches for broader replication and efforts should be made to publicize them widely. The regional work on policy dialogue is also essential, especially the assessment of technical developments in the context of policy environments so that constraints can be removed. It was noted that there are many opportunities for APFNet to collaborate with others to advance this important component of its mandate.

Session 4: Procedures for the development of APFNet membership

Members were asked to comment on the procedures for expanding membership in APFNet during the transition period. Based on suggestions received, minor changes were made and it was agreed that the revised version would be presented to the Focal Points the following day for further review.

Session 5: Other matters

No other matters were raised.

Session 6: Date and venue of the next meeting

The Chair invited members to consider hosting the next meeting in about a year. He indicated that if no offer was received within a reasonable timeframe, China would be pleased to convene the meeting again, either in Beijing or at another location to be determined.

Concluding Remarks

The Chair thanked members for their excellent participation in the meeting, stating that discussions were informative and outcomes productive. He wished them a pleasant stay for the remainder of their time in Beijing and a safe journey home.