

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES CENTRAL AMERICA, CUBA AND MEXICO

Turrialba, Costa Rica, 24–29 November 2002

The Regional Workshop on Forest Genetic Resources in Central America, Cuba and Mexico, was organized from 24 to 29 November, 2002, at CATIE, Turrialba (Costa Rica). It was part of the FAO support activities to different eco-regions of the world to prepare national and regional assessments on forest genetic resources (FGRs) and regional plans of actions for their conservation and sustainable use. In collaboration with international, regional and national organizations, the process aims at assisting countries in defining gaps and needs, and identifying areas for co-ordinated actions, focussing on a limited number of forest priority species and activities. Thirty-two participants attended in representation of the Central American countries (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama), Cuba, Mexico, and on behalf of some international organizations (DANIDA, IPGRI, CAMCORE and IUFRO).

The sessions works were focussed on:

- the FGRs assessments by countries,
- an eco-regional synthesis,
- the new developments in legal aspects related to access, transfer, exchange and trade in forest reproductive material, related basically to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD),
- the species priority sitting at the national and regional levels,

- brief statements on the invited international organizations.

Lists of forest species of high national and /or regional priority were elaborated and areas for future co-operation were identified, forming the basis for a regional action plan.

IUFRO activities related to the FGRs topic were presented as well as its main actions in Latin America. Besides the usual work on FGRs of some Division 2 Units, a new Task Force on 'Management and Conservation of Forest Gene Resources' was established in 1997, in accordance with the request of the FAO Panel of Experts on FGRs. On the other hand, a special Division 2 meeting on Genetics and FGRs was held in China in 1998. The SilvaVoc collaboration in the development of a reference glossary on terms frequently used in the FGRs field was also highlighted.

The field trip was outstanding. In the morning, the cable-car trip of the Braulio Carrillo National Park allowed the participants to have a quite surprising view of the rain forest canopy. The evening was dedicated to the visit of the National Institute of Biodiversity (INFOR – Costa Rica), showing the advances made by Costa Rica in environmental services payments and its legal progress in intellectual property rights.

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