

Board of Commissioners

Information Note: Memo No 01/23

10 February 2023

FR (& FC) International Representation

1. Purpose

To provide an information note with additions from Anna Brown and Mike Seddon on IPCC and APHA and connections in Europe, respectively.

2. Recommendations

The Board are asked to note the current range of international activities and representation undertaken mainly by FR

3. Background/Introduction

Historically the FC had some international presence, but this has dissipated in recent years, whereas FR has increased its international presence in part due to its support of Defra's international forestry activities.

4. Details

Aside from its contracted role to support Defra's international forestry activities, FR have staff involved in several key international forestry bodies. These include, amongst others, Chris Quine being on the main council of the International Union of Forest Research Organisations, James Pendlebury being on the board of the European Institute of Planted Forests and Gary Kerr being Chair of the European Forest Institute Scientific Advisory Committee.

Most importantly, FR's Mulumba Agaba leads on our international activities in support of Defra. As a consequence, Agaba attends several events worldwide on behalf of the UK government and his main activities are given in Appendix 1.

In addition to these activities FR has a long history of collaboration with research institutions across Europe and further afield in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, India, China, Brazil, Canada, USA, South Africa, Vietnam and Japan. This list isn't exhaustive but highlights some countries where FR has long standing connections or is currently active.

5. Resource Implications

FR currently receives £140k per annum from Defra as part of the FC's breakup devolution settlement to cover Agaba's activities. However, Defra is ceding its international forestry activities to a new team being created by BEIS & the FCDO. This team, headed by Maggie

FR (& FC) International Representation

Charnley, recently visited FR at NRS and are keen to keep Agaba on until next March whilst they review their approach. In addition, they are now aware of FR's range of activities and current interests and projects and how we might be in a position to support their renewed country focus in places like China and India.

6. Risk Assessment

Risk None other than reputational and this is already covered in FR's risk register.

7. Communication Issues

FR's activities are either publicised in conjunction with Defra where appropriate or largely in conjunction with partners in relation to specific projects.

8. Implementation and Evaluation Proposals

None

Appendix 1.

UK international forestry meetings – Summary

FR represents the UK government at several international forest-related meetings. This is aimed at promoting transparency and coordination of the UK approach when looking at forthcoming issues within the international forestry policy landscape. Below is a list of the main bodies/events currently covered by FR. A calendar of these events is also presented. A more detailed description of the events is also provided after the summaries.

The United Nations System

- UN Forum on Forests (UNFF)
 - Policy forum – May 2022
 - UNFF Expert Group Meetings
- FAO Committee on Forests (COFO)
 - COFO 26 - 3-7 Oct 2022
- UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI)
 - 80th session of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry 02-04 Nov 2022
- Regional Forestry Commissions
 - European Forestry Commission of the FAO (EFC)
- Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management
 - 01-03 June 2022
- International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment (IPC)
 - 5-8 Oct 2021

Regional Bodies

- Forest Europe
 - Ministerial Conference
 - Forest Europe Expert Level Meetings (ELM)
 - Forest Europe Expert Group Meetings (EGM) – theme-specific
 - EGM on SFM (workstream 1)
 - EGM on the Forest Risk Knowledge Mechanism (workstream 2)
 - EGM on green jobs (workstream 3)
 - Forest Europe High-Level Policy Dialogue
- International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO)

- *58th Session of the International Tropical Timber Council and Sessions of the Associated Committees -7–12 November 2022 – Discussions on membership issues are ongoing.*

International Bodies/Conferences

- UNFCCC Climate COP
- The IUCN World Conservation Congress
 - 3-11 September 2021
- World Forestry Congress (WFC)
 - World Forestry Congress – Seoul, South Korea – 1-7 May 2022
- European Forest Institute (EFI) - annual conference
 - 5-7 October 2022
- UN CBD Biodiversity COP – TBC
- World Conference on Ecological Restoration
 - 21-24 June 2021
- Commonwealth Forestry Conference
 - 16-18 August 2021
- The International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment (IPC)
 - 5-8 October 2021
- World Congress on Agroforestry
 - 17-20 July 2022
- IUFRO World Congress
 - Next in 2024
- The World Teak Conference (WTC)
 - 5-8 September 2022

FR (& FC) International Representation

Major international forestry policy-relevant events and their usual timings during the year.

| Event | Freq uenc y | J a n | F e b | M a r | A p r | M a y | J u n | J u l | A u g | S e p | O c t | N o v | D e c |
|---|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. UN Forum on Forests | Ever y year | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. UNFF Expert Group Meetings | Varie s | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. FAO Committee on Forests - COFO 26 - 3-7 Oct 2022 | Ever y 2 year s | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) - 80th session of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry 02-04 Nov 2022 | Ever y year | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Regional Forestry Commissions - European Forestry Commission of the FAO (EFC) | Ever y 2 year s | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment (IPC) | Varie s | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. Forest Europe (Ministerial) Conference | Ever y 3-5 year s | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8. Forest Europe Expert Level Meetings (ELM) | 1-2 times a year | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9. Forest Europe Expert Group Meetings (EGM) – theme-specific - EGM on SFM (workstream 1) - EGM on the Forest Risk Knowledge Mechanism (workstream 2) - EGM on green jobs (workstream 3) | Varie s | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10. Forest Europe High-Level Policy Dialogue | Varie s | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11. International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) - Session of the International Tropical Timber Council and Sessions of the Associated Committees. | <i>Not at ten ded - awa it ing mem bers hip decis ion</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |

International Conferences

FR (& FC) International Representation

| Event | Freq uenc y | J a n | F e b | M a r | A p r | M a y | J u n | J u l | A u g | S e p | O c t | N o v | D e c |
|---|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 12 UN Climate COP | Ever y year | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 The IUCN World Conservation Congress | Ever y 4 year s | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 World Forestry Congress (WFC) - World Forestry Congress – Seoul, South Korea – 1-7 May 2022 | Ever y 6 year s | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 European Forest Institute (EFI) - annual conference - 5-7 Oct 2022 | Annu ally | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 UN Biodiversity COP | Ever y 2 year s | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 World Conference on Ecological Restoration | Ever y Year | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 Commonwealth Forestry Conference | Varie s | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19 The International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast- Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment (IPC) - 5-8 Oct 2021 | Varie s | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 20 The World Teak Conference (WTC) - 4th World Teak Conference - 5-8 Sep 2022, Accra, Ghana | Varie s | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 21 World Congress on Agroforestry | Ever y 3 year s | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22 IUFRO World Congress - Next in 2024 | Ever y 5 year s | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Detailed description of the events

The United Nations System

UN Forum on Forests (UNFF)

The UNFF is a high-level intergovernmental policy forum established in 2000 by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with the main objective of promoting the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and strengthening long-term political commitment to this end. An example of a notable outcome of the forum is the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030. The Strategic Plan features a set of six Global Forest Goals and 26 associated targets to be reached by 2030, which are voluntary and universal. It includes a target to increase forest area by 3% worldwide by 2030, signifying an increase of 120 million hectares.

1.1.1 UNFF Expert Group Meetings

Between the UNFF meetings, the expert group meetings discuss emerging forest-related issues. The EGM meets once or twice a year depending on the secretariat's needs.

FAO

1.1.2 Committee on Forests (COFO)

COFO is the highest FAO Forestry statutory body. It is a global Technical Committee and one of FAO's governing bodies. The biennial sessions of COFO bring together heads of forest services and other senior government officials to identify emerging technical and policy issues, seek solutions and advise FAO and others on appropriate action.

Some of the topics discussed (in 2020) include the impacts of COVID-19 on the forest sector and how to respond; the State of the World's Forests 2020, key findings of FRA 2020 and ways forward, focusing on digitalization.

1.1.3 Regional Forestry Commissions (RFC)

The six Regional Forestry Commissions of FAO (RFCs) are part of the governance system and meet every two years. These forestry statutory bodies advise on the formulation of forest and wildlife management policies and review and coordinate their implementation at the regional level; exchange information and, generally through special Subsidiary Bodies, advise on suitable practices and action regarding technical issues; and make appropriate recommendations to the Regional Conferences and Technical Committees, in particular COFO. The Commissions play a key role in the international arrangement on forests, serving as a link between global dialogue at the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), and national implementation.

Created in 1947, the European Forestry Commission (EFC) is one of six Regional Forestry Commissions established by FAO to provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis. It meets every two years. The EFC has several associated subsidiary bodies,

including the Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds; the UNECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management; and the UNECE/FAO Teams of Specialists.

1.1.4 The International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment (IPC)

The IPC is a treaty-based body within the framework of the FAO, founded in 1947 with a mission to reduce poverty and facilitate the production of ecosystem services worldwide by fostering the sustainable management of fast-growing trees. The IPC achieves its objectives by facilitation of technical exchange, standard-setting, and conservation and sustainable use of fast-growing forests and trees. Traditionally, poplars and willows have been the main interest of the IPC but the scope was broadened in 2019 to include other fast-growing trees that sustain people and the environment.

The IPC supports research and management activities through six international, cross-disciplinary working parties dealing with taxonomy, nomenclature and registration; domestication and conservation of genetic resources; plant health, resilience to threats and climate change; sustainable livelihoods, land-use, products and bioenergy; environmental and ecosystem services; and policy, communication and outreach.

The last (26th) IPC session was held on 5-8 October 2021 in Rome, Italy. Discussions focussed on “The role of Salicaceae and other fast-growing trees in economic recovery, sustainable wood supplies and climate change mitigation”, given the current challenges in moving towards green, bio-based and climate-smart economies and the opportunities offered by fast-growing trees to contribute to these developments.

UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

1.1.5 Committee on Forests and Forest Industry (COFFI)

COFFI is a UN regional group covering Europe, USA and Canada making it of more interest to UK domestic administrations. The UNECE operates a Joint Integrated Programme of Work with FAO’s Regional Forestry Commission (EFC) and provides support to enhance knowledge data and information and supports policy development with interpretation and understanding of sound evidence, trends and outlook studies. Key messages from COFFI and EFC feed through to FAO’s global Committee on Forests (COFO).

The 78th session of the ECE COFFI was held from 4 to 6 November 2020. This session focused on "Forests in a Decade of Action", providing experts, policymakers, business leaders as well as national delegates an opportunity to engage in discussions about building back better through forest landscape restoration, urban forestry and accelerated implementation of other nature-based solutions for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section

The joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section supports the activities on forests in the UNECE region, provides the Secretariat to the UNECE Committee on Forests and Forest Industry and the FAO European Forestry Commission, and works to implement the UNECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work (IPoW).

The overall goal of the IPoW is to “support member States and regional economic integration organizations in their efforts to sustainably manage forests so that they provide forest goods and services to benefit society”.

1.1.6 Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management

The Working Party discusses activities undertaken by the Joint Section and provides guidance on future activities. Its key work areas include data and assessment, policy dialogue and advice, communication and outreach and capacity building.

1.1.7 UNECE/FAO Teams of Specialists (ToS)

ToS are engaged to support the implementation of the Warsaw Integrated Programme of Work 2018-2021(Updated to 2022-25) provide advice, or work on specific projects. Their mandates are decided by COFFI and the EFC, and they report annually to the Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management. The overall goal of all the ToS is to contribute to the implementation of the Integrated Programme of Work. Each ToS supports one or more of the main four areas of work, as well as the overall implementation of the Programme.

Regional Bodies

Forest Europe

FOREST EUROPE is the brand name of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe. It is the pan-European voluntary high-level political process for intergovernmental dialogue and cooperation on forest policies in Europe. FOREST EUROPE develops common strategies for its 47 signatories on how to protect and sustainably manage their forests.

Since 1990, the collaboration of the ministers responsible for forests in Europe has been setting the agenda for policymaking at national and European levels by providing the main policy framework for sustainable forest management and balancing its economic, environmental and social pillars. FOREST EUROPE has led to achievements such as the internationally agreed guidelines, criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

The UK recognises the significant achievements of the ministerial process and is committed to its vision: ‘To shape a future where all European forests are vital, productive and multifunctional’, and to the various Resolutions, Ministerial Decisions and Declarations. The UKFS, together with the constituent forestry policies and strategies of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, implements these commitments in UK forests and woodlands.

1.1.8 Forest Europe Expert Level Meetings

Between ministerial conferences, the decision-making body of FOREST EUROPE is the Expert Level Meeting (ELM). The ELM meets once or twice a year depending on its needs. These meetings are attended by representatives of FOREST EUROPE signatories as well as by observers from non-European countries and international organisations.

European Forest Institute

The European Forest Institute is an international organisation, established by the European States. EFI conducts research and provides policy support on issues related to forests. EFI does this through facilitating and stimulating forest-related networking and promoting the dissemination of unbiased and policy-relevant information on forests and forestry, as well as advocating for forest research and the use of scientifically sound information as a basis for forest policies. FR engages with the EFI, and Garry Kerr is currently the EFI Chair of the Scientific Advisory Board. It is also worth noting that EFI is a large contractor to FCDO providing FLEGT & REDD support to the UK government and is also lobbying for UK government support to establish a London office as part of their activities.

International Bodies/Conferences

COP26 – IPCC

The COP is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention. All States that are Parties to the Convention are represented at the COP, at which they review the implementation of the Convention and any other legal instruments that the COP adopts and take decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention, including institutional and administrative arrangements.

A key task for the COP is to review the national communications and emission inventories submitted by the Parties. Based on this information, the COP assesses the effects of the measures taken by the Parties and the progress made in achieving the ultimate objective of the Convention.

The World Forestry Congress

The World Forestry Congress is the largest and most significant gathering of the world's forestry sector, and it has been held every six years since 1926. It is a forum for the sharing of knowledge and experience regarding the conservation, management and use of the world's forests, and covers such issues as international dialogue, socio-economic and institutional aspects, and forest policies.

The WFC provides a unique opportunity for the global forestry community to consider the state and future of world forestry, particularly in the context of the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, while striving to achieve Sustainable Development Goals. The last Congress in May 2022 focussed on defining the role of forests in the global developmental agenda (2030 Agenda) and other major agreements (Global Forest Goals, Paris Agreement, post-2020 global biodiversity framework).

COP15 - Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

The CBD provides a global legal framework for action on biodiversity. It brings together the Parties in the Conference of the Parties (COP) which is the Convention's governing body that meets every two years, or as needed, to review progress in the implementation of the Convention, to adopt programmes of work, to achieve its objectives, and provide policy guidance.

Has an influence on Forest Europe through Resolution H2 - Forest Europe Signatories are committed to implementing the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity of the CBD and the Proposals for Action of the IPF/IFF at all levels.

IUFRO World Congress

IUFRO is an international network of forest scientists, which promotes global cooperation in forest-related research and enhances the understanding of the ecological, economic and social aspects of forests and trees. IUFRO is "the" global network for forest science cooperation. It unites more than 15,000 scientists in around 650 Member Organizations in over 125 countries. The IUFRO World Congress, held at 5-year intervals, is one of the largest global forest events. It brings together scientists and stakeholders from all parts of the world to discuss scientific and technical issues related to priority areas of forest research, policy and management.

IUCN World Conservation Congress

Held once every four years, the IUCN World Conservation Congress brings together several thousand leaders and decision-makers from government, civil society, indigenous peoples, business, and academia, with the goal of conserving the environment and harnessing the solutions nature offers to global challenges. Themes at the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2021 included managing landscapes for nature and people; conserving freshwater to sustain life; accelerating climate change mitigation and adaptation, etc.

International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO)

The ITTA is a succession of intergovernmental legally binding agreements negotiated under the UN system, agreed between timber-producing (developing) states i.e., producer countries and consumer (industrialized) countries. The ITTA is administrated by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) which comprises 36 producer and 38 consumer member countries.

The 2006 ITTA's objective is to promote the expansion and diversification of international trade in tropical timber from sustainably managed and legally harvested forests and to promote the sustainable management of tropical forests. The UK ratified the ITTA in March 2009. The UK contributes to tropical forest production and trade reports by providing data to the ITTO through the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire in partnership with Eurostat, the FAO Forestry Department, and the UNECE Timber Section. The data are also published and analysed in the Biennial Review and Assessment of the World Timber Situation.

The International Tropical Timber Council is ITTO's governing body. It meets once a year to discuss wide-ranging issues of interest to members, including those related to the legal trade of tropical timber and the sustainable management of tropical forests.

The UK has not engaged with the ITTO for the last few years. Discussions on future engagement are ongoing.

Commonwealth Forestry Conference

The Commonwealth Forestry Conference is an informal forum for foresters, and all those with an interest in the forestry sector to exchange knowledge and experience. It is organized by the Standing Committee on Commonwealth Forestry and occurs every 4–5 years. The Conference relates to general aspects of forest management and governance and a focus on the changing priorities of the forestry sector.

World Teak Conference

The 4th World Teak Conference (WTC) with the theme "Global teak market: Challenges and opportunities for emerging markets and developing economies" is being organized by the International Teak Information Network (TEAKNET) in collaboration with Forestry Commission Ghana, with the support of the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO), Japan, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Teakwood Working Party of International Union Forest Research Organisations. The WTC will focus on the current state of knowledge and future challenges for the sustainable development of the global teak sector in a changing world.