



TEHRAN PROCESS STRATEGY AND
ACTION PLAN FOR THE
LOW FOREST COVER COUNTRIES

LFCCs Secretariat

NOVEMBER2000
PREPARED BY TWO FAO CONSULTANTS:
Mr.Hassan Abdel Nour &Mrs. Rosali McConell



TEHRAN PROCESS STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN FOR THE LOW FOREST COVER COUNTRIES

Introduction

As a result of the International Meeting on Special Needs and Requirements of Developing Countries with Low Forest Cover and Unique Types of Forests, hosted by the Islamic Republic of Iran and held in Tehran 4-8 October, 1999, agreement was reached to launch the Tehran Process to address common issues and concerns. Shortly after the session, a Secretariat was established by the Islamic Republic of Iran to lead and coordinate regional and international efforts in terms of follow-up, namely to:

- place key concerns on the political and policy agenda in future international deliberations;
- prepare draft approaches and strategies, for approval, based on the report of the Tehran meeting;
- enhance cooperation among LFCCs and partnerships with organisations, institutions and donor countries, including the exchange of information and experience; and
- implement the recommendations of the meeting.

This document reflects an analysis of the components of the Tehran Process that require further action and proposes a mandate and action plan for the LFCC Secretariat over the next five years. Activities should be reviewed on an annual basis, modified in light of gains made and updated as new information becomes available to ensure the Secretariat responds to current and emerging trends. As important is the need to ensure all elements of the programme of work complement, rather than duplicate, efforts undertaken elsewhere. For example, close collaboration with national action programmes for desertification and biological diversity will be essential when considering regional projects in related areas.

All proposed activities are deemed relevant to accomplishing the tasks identified by LFCCs during their deliberations. However, the extent to which they can be carried out will depend, in large measure, on available funding. Much of the success of the Tehran Process will also be related to the level of commitment of LFCCs, individually and as a group.

It should be noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran has already invested significant resources for the cause of LFCCs and for the Tehran Process, in addition to those expended to host last year's international meeting of experts referred to above. During the previous twelve months, it has spent approximately USD50 000 and over the same coming period, it expects to spend up to USD250 000 to support the Secretariat, in the hope that partners will each, at a minimum, match this level of funding. As part of its contributions, the Government of Iran is providing office space, equipment and full-time



personnel. It is also undertaking several initiatives to raise the profile of LFCC issues in Iran and to increase collaboration and team work among its relevant ministries and organisations. On a broader scale, the Secretariat published the proceedings of the International Meeting on the Special Needs and Requirements of Developing Countries with Low Forest Cover and Unique Types of Forests and distributed the document to more than 150 countries. It also established a web site for the Tehran Process and was active in several key regional and international meetings such as the Costa Rica-Canada Initiative in December 1999, the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests in February 2000 and the Near East Forestry Commission in July 2000.

A Strategy for the Implementation of the Components of the Tehran Process

The Tehran Process, through the Secretariat, is intended to serve as a focal point to address a range of issues related to information, data and experiences; policy, planning and institutions; participatory processes; funding and investment; technical matters; and future international arrangements and mechanisms. Some recommendations arising from the meeting of experts of LFCCs are directed to governments while others urge international and regional organisations, instruments and institutions to take action. Where primary responsibility and authority to implement initiatives rest with states, the Secretariat generally should limit its involvement to facilitating the exchange of information among member countries. Where proposed actions are broader in scope and extend beyond country borders, the Secretariat has a key role to play in fostering collaboration and in coordinating efforts.

As a matter of priority, the Secretariat recognises the urgency of placing the issues of LFCCs on the political and policy agenda during international deliberations. It also advocates the importance of securing stable sources of funding and of implementing national forest programmes (nfps). Information and data collection, analysis and dissemination; capacity building, including training; and research and education figure prominently as well.

a) Placing issues of LFCCs on the political and policy agenda

Noteworthy is the decision by the General Assembly of the United Nations to declare 2001 the International Year of the Dialogue on Civilisations, following the suggestion of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Throughout the year, there could be ample opportunity to include LFCC issues in discussions since one of the key subjects, in addition to diversity, is the environment. The importance of forests, in this latter regard, is undisputed. Several key meetings at the regional and international levels were also identified: G77 Foreign Ministers in 2001, chaired by Iran; Rio+10 in 2002; the Near East Forestry Commission in 2002; the World Forestry Congress in 2003; and the United Nations Forum on Forests 2001-2006. In this regard, the Secretariat should make every effort to ensure sufficient time is set aside to discuss forestry issues in LFCCs by making contact, well in advance, with senior officials to convince them of the importance of matters to be raised. Brief documents should outline the main issues and contain solid



arguments that would persuade decision-makers to address LFCC issues over competing demands.

More immediately, once the strategy and action plan for the Secretariat is approved, it should be sent to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in all LFCCs, with copies to each Minister responsible for forests. Thereafter, they should be kept informed of progress in implementation on a regular basis and a first ministerial meeting should be convened in Tehran, perhaps within a year. Subsequent high level sessions could be organised in the margins of forestry related ministerials such as the FAO Conference and Committee on Forestry and the United Nations Forum on Forests. Again, the Secretariat must ensure that the agenda and working documents contain sufficient substance to attract ministers by producing high quality papers that addressed key issues.

In a similar fashion, the Secretariat should also prepare and convene meetings of forest experts in the margins of international discussions, along similar lines to the G77 and China, the African Group, the Group of G8 Forest Experts and the Montreal Process. Side events at these sessions could also be used to inform other developing countries and developed countries of the progress being made in the Tehran Process. As with the ministerials, the onus is on the Secretariat to be well prepared for each meeting to facilitate focused and productive discussions and establish credibility. While it is not anticipated that forestry experts would often need to attend international meetings that focused on related sectors, such as agriculture and the environment, this may occur from time to time. When such is the case, there will be resource implications.

b) Enhancing cooperation and partnerships

In the short term, efforts are required to inform international organisations, including NGOs, key institutions and UN conventions of the Tehran Process and the establishment of the Secretariat. Efforts should also focus on establishing regular communications with the Secretariats of conventions, beginning with the three most relevant: the Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

It is equally important to establish a sense of ownership and commitment among LFCCs, taking care to include those not in the immediate geographic vicinity, such as in Latin America and the Caribbean and Small Island Developing States. Although efforts to inform members of follow-up activities as a result of the Tehran meeting is a good beginning, additional steps are required. These are covered in the sections addressing funding and modalities of the Secretariat.

c) The Tehran Process regarding the focus for :

Information collection, analysis and dissemination : In the short, medium and long terms, the collection, analysis and dissemination of data and information; exchange of information and experience; and capacity building should be key activities of the



Secretariat. Moreover, every effort needs to be made to complement that which already exists, not duplicate it.

As one of its first priorities, the Secretariat should develop and distribute a questionnaire to LFCCs to gather base line data. Information should be sought on, *inter alia*, forest data, policies, legislation, problems related to sustainable forest management, scientific and technical capacity, and research needs, asking each country to identify its own priorities. Based on responses, the Secretariat should compile a list of common issues on which urgent action could be taken on a regional basis. The questionnaire should also seek basic information on where each country is at with regard to implementing the recommendations arising from the Tehran meeting of experts so that progress can be measured in subsequent reports. Notwithstanding that there is a need to gather significant amounts of information, care must be taken not to make the questionnaire too lengthy. Otherwise, countries might have difficulty responding.

As a result of this exercise, the Secretariat should be in a good position to establish a roster of regional experts on which to draw and determine the need for specific technical workshops it should convene to enhance capacity in the region. This needs analysis should be conducted, on a priority basis, when sufficient responses from the questionnaire are received. Prior to finalising any list, the Secretariat should review the roster of experts of the three most relevant international conventions to ensure complementarity. It should also work closely with officials of these Secretariats when establishing priorities with regard to the technical workshops it intends on convening, as there is considerable potential for collaboration. Greater use also needs to be made of the Tehran Process's web site and the international forest community needs to be made aware of its existence.

Valuation of forest goods and services in national accounts : With regard to reflecting the full range of forest values in national accounts, many activities are taking place in the international arena, led by such organisations as the World Bank and the FAO. Indeed, the notion of exclusively assigning economic values to forest goods and services is being re-thought. More and more, experts are recognising that issues pertaining to valuation belong more in the realm of politics and policies related to rural development and participatory management and decision making. The Secretariat's involvement should not go beyond keeping tabs on these various deliberations and initiatives with a view to sharing the information within the region.

Criteria and indicators : On criteria and indicators, there is ample scope to use the relevant ones found within existing processes, especially the Near East and Dry Zone Africa. Work on improving and implementing those specific to LFCCs could be carried out by establishing a technical committee of experts, including NGOs, on a priority basis.

Education and research : A technical committee of experts, including NGOs, should also be established to look at issues related to education and research, including curriculum development and joint research on the management and rehabilitation of



natural forests and woodlands. Again, care needs to be taken to avoid duplication. For example, in the case of curriculum development, every effort should be made to support

the FAO and other potential partners by providing input into the planning participate in the organisation of the expert meeting in Morocco, to be held in the coming year.

d) Policy, planning and institutions

Most issues in this category are directed to individual countries. However, the Secretariat should facilitate the exchange of information on policies, planning and institutional capacity, including on nfps, with emphasis on participatory management and decision-making.

e) Participatory processes

Similar to the points made above, the extent to which interested parties participate in management and decision-making is up to each country. For the moment, the Secretariat should emphasise the importance of this aspect when it develops its framework for a model of nfps in the region. Consideration might be given to additional activities at a future point in time.

f) Funding for the Secretariat and its activities

LFCCs currently seek funding from a number of sources to assist with their efforts to improve sustainable forest management on a bilateral basis, from existing provisions in UN conventions and from partners such as the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Asian Development Bank (AsDB) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). Given the importance of securing stable funding sources for LFCCs, on a priority basis, additional funding opportunities should be sought through all or any of the following possibilities :

- By soliciting support from wealthy LFCCs to establish a common fund to be used for assigning staff from other LFCCs to the Secretariat and for regional forest activities. The latter could include the management of common watersheds; greenbelts; unique forest types, such as mangroves, cedar forests, Juniperus forests, riparian forests and montane semi-arid and Mediterranean forests. Funds could also be used to support research and education efforts. Funds under this arrangement should be administered by the Secretariat according to a set of guidelines and criteria approved by member countries and subscribers, such as donor countries.
- By persuading LFCC countries that have existing funding mechanisms for social and economic development to make special provisions for forestry activities.



- By approaching donors from developed countries to either contribute to the common fund, establish trust funds with relevant organisations or fund forestry projects in LFCCs on a bilateral basis.
-
-
- By approaching influential member countries in such regional and international organisations as IFAD, AsDB, AfDB and Islamic Development Bank, to support forestry projects in LFCCs.
- By convincing international financial institutions, such as World Bank, UNDP, Global Environmental Facility, to also provide support.

g) Technical matters

It was noted that the recommendations from the Tehran meeting of LFCCs on technical issues focused on the application or development of suitable technologies and called on governments to seek assistance for the transfer of technology and support services. In this regard, the Secretariat should play a key role in facilitating the transfer of technology on a regional basis for initiatives that are regional in scope. Examples of collaborative projects include the management and rehabilitation of natural forests, woodlands, trees and rangeland resources; non-wood forest products; small scale industries; conservation of natural ecosystems and unique types of forests; plantations and planted trees; and renewable energy programmes based on wood.

In light of the importance of some of the technical issues which formed the basis of papers that were written for the meeting, the Secretariat should facilitate work in key areas not now being addressed. The need for certified seeds from suitable provenances or sources and seedlings for plantation purposes was cited as a preoccupation in most LFCCs, as were the need to protect unique forest types and the need to pay more attention to non-wood forest products.

Once the Secretariat prioritises issues based on the responses to the questionnaire noted in section c) and by other means, such as asking advice from the roster of experts and consulting the Secretariats of the three most relevant international conventions, attempts should be made to establish a few centres of excellence in the region and phase in others over time, as resources allow. These centres would be an extension of existing research facilities, housed in government premises, at universities or in research institutes. They would become the focal points in the region and the recognized experts on specific issues, such as those noted in the preceding paragraph.

As a first step toward establishing centres of excellence, the secretariat should form a technical committee to develop a five-year work plan. For this task, members would need to review all technical issues of concern to the region, list those that should be addressed as a matter of priority, assess regional capacity to respond and identify the countries and institutes best able to lead in particular areas.



Success in establishing centres of excellence could well depend on the willingness of countries to volunteer their facilities; on the ability to raise the profile of the special needs and requirements of LFCCs in research institutions (e.g., ICFRAF and CIFOR); on building a network among experts; and on the experts' willingness to offer their time.

Modalities

As previously noted, the Islamic Republic of Iran established the Secretariat to the Tehran Process more than one year ago and has provided significant support through the Deputy Minister and Head of the Forest and Range Organisation (FRO). In addition, the FRO established a steering committee of high level representation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), FRO, Environment and the University of Tehran to provide advice and guidance on matters relating to follow-up as a result of the international meeting of LFCC experts.

h) Steering Committee

With a little more than a year's experience, it may now be opportune to broaden partnerships within the steering committee until the Secretariat hires more staff and becomes more operational. In this regard, invitations to name a representative should be extended as soon as possible to the Ministry of Agriculture, the Planning and Budget Organisation, a non-governmental organisation, the FAO and UNDP offices based in Tehran. The enlarged steering committee would then continue to perform tasks related to the Tehran Process until the Secretariat is fully established, hopefully within 12 months.

i) Secretariat

With regard to the Secretariat, additional full-time staff should be brought in as soon as possible : three experts from LFCCs, on a rotational basis, one from UNEP and one from FAO. In the case of the FAO, it would be most helpful to have a staff member who was fully knowledgeable in nfps of LFCCs.

Until country representatives can be elected at the first opportunity, perhaps at a technical meeting of LFCCs, one expert should be drawn from among LFCC regions : Latin America and the Caribbean; Small Developing Island States; Near East and Asia; and Africa. When the Secretariat becomes fully functional, the steering committee should phase out, with key expertise being incorporated into the expanded arrangement.

j) Technical Committees

The Secretariat cannot expect to have, at its disposal, the resources necessary to have a number of technical experts on staff on a full-time basis. Thus, it was thought that it could convene technical committees, as the need arose, to assist it with specific tasks in the action plan. These committees would be of limited duration and would not operate all at the same time, given that the Secretariat may not be able to support the activities that



would be generated simultaneously. As a priority, consideration should be given to establishing three to deal with nfps, the implementation of criteria and indicators, and education and research. Membership in each committee would be identified from a roster of regional experts that the Secretariat should establish as one of its first tasks and every effort should be made to ensure they are truly inter-sectoral.

k) Executive Council

To be truly representative of the many developing countries with low forest cover, it is proposed that a governing body be established, composed of a Chair and three elected ministers. As host of the Tehran Process, the Minister or Deputy Minister responsible for forests in the Islamic Republic of Iran would be a permanent member of the executive council. On behalf of LFCCs and partners, he should continue to oversee the work of the steering committee until it is phased out and guide the activities of the Secretariat, receiving and distributing progress reports on a regular basis, perhaps every six months. The Chair and the other two members should be elected at the first meeting of ministers responsible for forests in LFCCs in Tehran within a year. Elections could then be held every three or four years.

l) Approval of LFCC strategy and action plan

Once cleared by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the FAO, the proposed strategy and action plan would become provisional, pending the approval of LFCCs. In this regard, Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs should dispatch it to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in all LFCCs, with copies to each Minister responsible for forests for comment and endorsement. Should agreement on the strategy and action plan be difficult to reach by written communication, it would remain provisional until a meeting of ministers responsible for forests could be held at the first opportunity, perhaps in Tehran, as suggested in the preceding paragraph. However, the Secretariat should not wait for formal approval to continue its work. At the very least, it should begin by carrying out activities that do not require extensive resources, i.e., those that complement ongoing initiatives, such as FAO's information and data collection.

m) Reporting on progress in implementing recommendations

In order to demonstrate progress and leadership, the Tehran Process would be well served by reporting on the implementation of the recommendations to its membership and the international community. Commitment and accountability are key to establishing credibility and to securing funding from external sources. As part of the questionnaire that the Secretariat intends to develop to establish base line data, key aspects of the recommendations should be included so that progress can be measured when a first report is requested, perhaps 2 years down the road. The Secretariat should compile these reports and, to facilitate this task, develop a model for use by LFCCs.



xiv) Resource requirements

All estimates below are for a five-year period and are expressed in USD.

Support to Secretariat

2 experts from Islamic Republic of Iran	300 000
2 support staff from Islamic Republic of Iran	100 000
3 experts from other LFCCs	750 000
1 expert from FAO	300 000
1 expert from UNEP	300 000
office and equipment	125 000
transportation	30 000
telecommunications	50 000
operations	50 000
translation of documents, printing of publications, contracting papers	50 000
travel (approximately 50 trips)	300 000

Technical committees

4 committees	60 000
--------------	--------

Centres of excellence

5 centres	500 000
-----------	---------

Data and information

Questionnaire	10 000
4 regional workshops	740 000
6 sub-regional workshops	585 000

Ministerial meeting in Tehran

Facilities and logistics	15 000
Hotel accommodations for 50	20 000
Travel for 10	30 000

SUB TOTAL

4 315 000

Joint research and regional projects

Research	2 500 000
Projects	15 000 000

TOTAL

21 815 000



FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

Add completion dates and identify responsibility centres

Placing LFCC issues high on the political and policy agenda

- Inform relevant parties of the establishment of the LFCC Secretariat and action plan;
- Request ministers, senior officials, international and regional organisations, instruments and institutions to include LFCC issues on meeting agendas;
- Organise a meeting of LFCC ministers in Tehran
- Prepare brief documents outlining issues;
- Inform constituents of progress on a regular basis
- Organise events in margins of ministerial and expert meetings at regional and international levels

Enhancing cooperation and partnerships

- Invite regional representatives of FAO and UNDP and Ministry of Agriculture to the steering committee
- Request FAO and UNEP to assign staff to the Secretariat
- Establish communications with Secretariats of UN conventions

Recommendations of Tehran Process as focal point

- Establish roster of regional experts
- Identify LFCC focal point in each country
- Develop and distribute a questionnaire
- Compile results of questionnaire
- Establish information banks on forest data, policies, legislation and problems in sfm
- Advertise and make greater use of the LFCC web site
- Classify countries by ecological region and geography
- Develop a common list of issues
- Identify technical and scientific capacity in each LFCC
- Design and organise workshops to increase capacity in critical areas

Funding for Secretariat and its activities

- Solicit funds for staffing Secretariat and for common projects
- Solicit funds from existing country based bilateral mechanisms, including those in developed countries
- Solicit support from influential member countries of international organisations, instruments and institutions
- Solicit funds from traditional lending agencies



Technical matters

- Identify and seek agreement from LFCCs on regional priorities
- Facilitate regional transfer of technology
- Establish centres of excellence
- Raise profile of special needs of LFCCs in research institutions

Modalities

- Secure approval of the strategy and plan of action from LFCCs
 - Pursue the establishment of the Executive Council
 - Expand membership of steering committee
 - Expand membership of the Secretariat
 - Establish technical committees
 - Prepare and distribute progress reports of Secretariat activities every six months
 - Disband steering committee
 - Compile and distribute progress reports on implementation activities in individual LFCCs
-

LFCCs Secretariat
I.R of Iran
Tehran
Forest & Range Organization
Phone: ++98-21-6497925
Fax: ++98-21-6497926
Email: faro_high_concil@mavara.com
lfccs@noavar.com

Website: www.lfcs.net