# APF Net Curriculum 3 INternational dialogue on forestry issues

## **Lecture 7 Intergovernmental Conventions and Instruments relevant to forestsTranscriptsDuration: 00:15:13**

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This is module III of the series. It's about the intergovernmental conventions and instruments relevant to forests,

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like the other three modules or other two modules. There are three lectures. Lecture number seven is about the intergovernmental conventions and instruments relevant to forests. Then lecture number eight is the mandates and activities of forestry-related to international organizations addressing forestry issues in two parts. Part one, intergovernmental organizations, part two which is lecture number nine, the NGOs, the research organizations and all other stakeholders participating in the negotiation and ratification of the conventions related to environment.

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In this lectures as I mentioned, it's about the intergovernmental conventions and instruments relevant to forests.

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You recall in the lecture six in particularly, I talked about the non-legally binding instrument for forests as the main intergovernmental agreement or instrument related specifically to forests. This came after a long time when the issue was raised in RIO 1992, but at the same time the earth summit in Rio in Brazil 1992, three other sectors managed to get themselves negotiated and at the end reaching a convention, an intergovernmental convention. These were the climate change, the biodiversity and the desertification. Now they will identify the three issues, will identify and degrade these challenges to sustainable development in the Earth Summit. As I said, forestry also was one of the main discussions there but forest sector did not manage to collect enough support from the countries to start the process of having three conventions that's why we ended up with three conventions which I'm going to detail later on and non-legally binding instruments on forests.

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The first convention is the United Nations framework convention on climate change, or for short UNFCCC. Now what's the relationship, I am going to talk mainly about the relationship between forestry and, or how these conventions are related to forests. We talked about sustainable forest management, recall the first two lectures and which may include things like reducing deforestation, forest conservation, afforestation, reforestation, reducing forest degradation, all of these under the umbrella of sustainable forest management which include other things by the way but these specific issues within sustainable forest management strategies, they can contribute towards carbon sequestration and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. This is what the convention takes it.

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So the convention itself sets an overall framework for tackling the challenges posed by climate change so the convention is about the problems of climate change or global warming and how we as countries can tackle these, how can we deal with it. In the convention the governments committed themselves to first gather and share formation on greenhouse gas emissions so each country is supposed to collect information about its emissions of greenhouse gases and share the information report on it, that's why we know for example the greatest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world, either the U.S. or China both of them are competing on the first place. So each one you miss, a country you may, a country you may say something like 20 to 23% of the total global missions. So between two countries you have about half of the global emission of greenhouse gases. In the meantime the countries committed themselves to develop national policies and best practices including strategies for mitigation and adaptation. What does this mean? When a country, in either industry, the energy whatever, cars, deforestation all of these emit greenhouse gases, the countries would have to develop national policies under this convention and master practices to mitigate means reducing the harmful effect of the greenhouse gas emissions which leads eventually to global warming and climate change. So they try to mitigate it for example, one of the mitigation measures is to reduce deforestation or reduce the numbers of cars in the street which is almost impossible in many countries. Now you can reduce deforestation but it's very difficult to stop people from driving cars and they're great enmeshed in matters of greenhouse gases or stop the producing restricted using coal for example or now petroleum products, these or whatever. And the second part of this is the adaptation which means you try to get the societies, the plants, the animals the whole ecosystem to adapt to growing greenhouse gas emissions.

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There is in the convention itself, there are provisions for financial and technical support for developing countries, that was one of them very sensitive issues that when the developed countries, the rich countries told the poor countries, the developing countries that we need you to stop or reduce emissions, they say we need to be compensated for that because it costs money to reduce emissions. There is an inter-governmental committee on climate change or intergovernmental panel on climate change IPCC, many societies and many many scientists around the world actually formed about 5 years ago so they won the Nobel Prize after the IPCC report before, there are about 2000 of them are scientists contributing so each one got mentioned that he or she is part of a Nobel Prize team. This committee is mainly scientists. They look at the climate change from all dimensions and they produce assessment report every five years or so, the last one or the latest one was produced in 2015, early 2015.

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The second convention is the convention on biodiversity or CBD for short. It has been realized even before Rio meeting that the earth's biological resources are vital for humanity, economic and social development. We have to maintain as human beings, we need biodiversity which includes everything alive and there is a growing recognition of biological diversity as a global asset for present and future generations. It's an asset, you have diversity, you have all the living organisms, and we should not look at this as a burden, it's an asset for us, the present generation and for our children and grandchildren. When we talk about the biodiversity, it is very important because it has been estimated that about 60 to 80% of the global forest biodiversity is found in the forest or the forests of the world contain between 60 and 80% of the total global biodiversity, so forests are very rich in biodiversity. If you walk in a natural forest or even a planted forest you see a lot of biodiversity from animals to insects, to mammals, to trees, to weeds whatever. So when we talk about forest biodiversity, it's all forms of lives found in the forest. Trees, plants, animals, fungi, microorganisms and what's more important is the law in nature that is very very vital.

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When you look at the convention itself, it's an article. There are many of the articles of the convention applied to forest ecosystems because I said 60 to 80% of global biodiversity is from the forest. But the convention itself has a text, seldom mentions forest because it's taking as forest as biodiversity which is something I personally don't agree because they deserve a better recognition of it. However, this is what the convention is. Back in 2002, some 13 years ago the conference or parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted an expanded program of work on forest biological diversity. So finally they recognized that there is a very important component that we have to deal is specifically with forest biodiversity and it has three elements, conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing. So conservation of the forest, sustainable use of the forest which in forestry we say economic use, utilization, forest utilization and benefit sharing which is part of the timber and non-timber forest products.

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Third convention is the U.N. convention to combat desertification, known for short as UNCCD. It's a legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to land management so this is quite specific to dry lands especially in Africa. Those African countries have a lot of credits to have this convention agreed on and mostly environment and development in land management, in the dry lands. Its objective is to improve the living conditions of the people in dry lands, you can see in the picture how hush it is, maintain and restore land productivity and mitigate the effects of drought. So you can see these are all related to dry conditions, aridity and so on.

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As I say it is quite specific as it doesn't deal very much with the tropics like the climate change in forestry and biodiversity, there is more biodiversity in the tropics. So the convention to combat desertification is specific to arid and semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas which represent about this and just this and half of about 42% of the global forest area classified as dry-land forests. So this is a huge area, you know out of the four billion hectares of forests we have, about 14% of that, you know is 1.6 or almost 1.7 billion hectares classified as the dry-land forests, although they're very much neglected. Why that the convention addresses the deforestation as a major cause of desertification? Desertification by the way is the transforming the land from productive land to unproductive land, this is a simple definition of desertification, it's not necessarily desert although eventually it leads to desert like conditions, but when you have a piece of land for one reason or another deforestation when the water erosion, over-grazing and fire whatever when it's transformed from productive land to a non-productive land it's become desertified. So the adverse impacts come from land productivity, of course the land reduces the productivity as a result of degradation and desertification. It has an impact on human and livestock health, people who are living in the very dry areas, there are problems of their health. And there is the economic activity such as the ecotourism and so on.

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If you look at forests and tree cover, they reduce the impacts of desertification in many ways, or they reduce the potential for desertification or reduce desertification in general in several ways. One is stabilizing the soils when you plant, they have trees on the land because of the root system and so on, because the moisture regime, they standardize the soils so it's not grown by the weight. And they reduce the trees, reduce water and wind erosion. They maintain water and nutrient cycling in the soil in order that the trees they absorb water and nutrients from the soil and then they recycle it in the soil, regulate nutrient and so on. And they have in addition to all of these physical impacts, they have social economic benefits as well.

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Now I'm just giving you a list of readings, it's mainly the text of the three conventions which you can reach at what I give you here.

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This is the end of Module III (Lecture 7), thank you.

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