

REPORT

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(British Columbia),
Canada
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Executive Committee of the International Poplar Commission

Forty-seventh Session

INTERNATIONAL POPLAR COMMISSION

Executive Committee

Report of the Forty-seventh Session

Vancouver (British Columbia), Canada, Sunday 20 July 2014

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
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INTERNATIONAL POPLAR COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Report of the Forty-seventh Session

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Forty-seventh Session of the Executive Committee of the International Poplar Commission (IPC) was hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, on 20 July 2014. The meeting, which opened at 09.00 hours, was chaired by Mr Martin Weih (Sweden), Chairperson of the Executive Committee. Mr Walter Kollert, Secretary of the IPC, was responsible for the work of the IPC Secretariat. Eighteen participants attended, including representation of eight of twelve Elected Members, four Co-opted Members, four Chairpersons, Vice-chairpersons or Technical Secretaries of its seven Subsidiary Bodies, one observer from Germany, and the Secretary of the IPC (*Appendix 2*). An updated list of all members of the Executive Committee is attached in *Appendix 3* for ease of reference.

II. OPENING AND WELCOME

2. Mr Martin Weih (Sweden), Chairman of the IPC Executive Committee, welcomed all participants and expressed his satisfaction for the good attendance of the meeting. He mentioned that discussions between IPC, FAO and member countries had raised valid questions as to the current role and relevance of the IPC outputs in achieving the intended outcomes of member states. He noted that these doubts were calling for a comprehensive IPC reform to modernize and update the mandate of IPC which had been established 67 years ago. He emphasized that today's meeting would have to make some significant decisions on the ongoing IPC reform process including the delivery mechanisms and the scope of the future work of IPC. With twelve out of sixteen members of the Executive Committee present, a quorum of a two-thirds majority had been reached to support such decisions on the proposed IPC reform.

3. After Mr Weih had invited all participants to introduce themselves, he pointed out that there was a considerable difference between the mandate of the International Poplar Commission (IPC) and the International Poplar Symposium (IPS) which had been organized by the IUFRO Working Group on Poplars and Willows (2.08.04) in the week following the IPC Executive Committee Meeting (21 to 23 July 2014). While IUFRO's IPS focused on research and the dissemination of scientific knowledge, the IPC had its focus on the transfer of knowledge and technology to developing countries with the aim of improving rural livelihoods, well-being and sustainable land use. In this context Mr Weih encouraged IPC members to develop programs of work that produce useful and applicable outputs, and make recommendations of direct relevance to translating scientific research for policy, legal and planning purposes. He noted that the recommendations made by IPC may be drawn to the attention of other FAO statutory bodies and most notably to the Committee on Forestry (COFO). The IPC thus, potentially, had a very powerful voice and its recommendations could reach top-level policy makers.

III. ADOPTION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

4. Mr Weih proposed the provisional agenda to the Executive Committee and asked if any amendments were deemed necessary. It was suggested to include two topics under agenda item “Other Matters”: (i) on the process of disseminating the new book “Poplars and Willows – Trees for Society and the Environment” and (ii) on the importance of establishing databases of general interest on the IPC website to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and technology. After that, the agenda was unanimously adopted without amendments (*Appendix 1*).

IV. CO-OPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

5. No new members were co-opted to the Executive Committee.

V. SUMMARY REPORTS OF THE ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS OF THE WORKING PARTIES AND THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON NOMENCLATURE AND REGISTRATION SINCE THE FORTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (INDIA, 2012), AND THEIR PROGRAMMES OF WORK TOWARDS THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE IPC

6. Mr Weih introduced the item and noted that the Working Parties were the core of the IPC. They were essential in reaching the goals documented in the IPC-Convention and offered an invaluable service to the rest of the poplar community. He also appreciated that all the work done by the Working Parties was based on voluntary contribution of their members with intellectual satisfaction as the only reward, and that the work for the IPC often came on top of other demanding professional commitments. Mr Weih then invited the representatives of the Working Parties to report on the progress achieved since the 24th Session in India and to assess with a realistic view the goals and activities for the coming two-year period.

V-a. Working Party on Environmental Applications of Poplars and Willows

www.fao.org/forestry/site/26359/en

7. Ms Sharon Doty (USA), Chairperson of the Working Party, made a presentation informing that the following office bearers had been nominated: Sharon Doty (USA), Chairperson (sldoty@u.washington.edu), Jaconette Mirck (Germany), Vice-Chairperson (jmirck@gmail.com), Andrej Pilipovic (Serbia), Vice-Chairperson (andrejpilipovic@yahoo.com), Ioannis Dimitriou (Sweden), Technical Secretary (ioannis.Dimitriou@slu.se).

8. The presentations and posters of the working party delivered at the last IPC Session in Dehradun, India were made available for download at the following address: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/80796/en/>. In addition a SWOT analysis had been conducted as part of the business meeting, which recommended among others strategies to increase the profile of the website and the visibility of the technical outputs of the working party, and to increase coordination and collaboration between individual working parties in the preparation of technical outputs between IPC sessions. A major hurdle in enhancing the impact of the webpage of the working party was found to be difficult in accessing the IPC-main page and updating the working party site.

9. In March 2014 the group organized a working party meeting in Gisborne, New Zealand, that was hosted by the NPC New Zealand represented by Mr. Ian McIvor. The meeting was attended by 32 participants and dealt with broad areas of research concerning the environmental uses of poplars and willows worldwide. The presentations of the meeting can be downloaded from the following webpage: <http://www.poplarandwillow.org.nz/pages/reports/international-poplar-commission/working-party-6-gisborne-2014/>

10. Representatives of the working party participated in a number of public events to promote poplar and willow culture and to increase the public awareness and visibility of IPC. Among them were an event organized by the NGO Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN) and an exhibition at the Pacific Science Center in Seattle.

V-b. Working Party on Harvesting and Utilization of Poplar and Willow Wood

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/ipc/69631/en/>

11. Mr Joris Van Acker (Belgium), Chairperson of the Working Party, reported on activities and outputs of the oldest IPC Working Party since the last IPC-Session in Dehradun, India, and on the Working Party's Action Plan for the period 2014-2016.

12. The following office bearers had been elected during the 24th IPC Session in Dehradun: Joris Van Acker (Belgium), Chairperson (Joris.VanAcker@UGent.be), Yukun Hua (China), Vice-Chairperson (huayukun@njfu.com.cn), Ahmed Koubaa (Canada), Vice-Chairperson (ahmed.koubaa@ugat.ca), Raúl Suárez (Argentina), Vice-Chairperson (rosuarez@medanito.com.ar), Lieven De Boever (Belgium), Technical Secretary (Lieven.DeBoever@ctib.tchn.be). The Working Party agreed to appoint three vice-chairs to promote global participation and share the workload. The executives of each Working Party (chair, vice-chair, technical secretary) were redefined as a group of "regional network managers".

13. The working party established a new network for both, experts on harvesting and utilization, and experts on wood processing and products of poplar and willow to strengthen cooperation among the IPC member countries and to improve interaction with industrial networks, e.g. in Europe with Pro-Populus. In addition a database containing publications related to harvesting, utilization and product properties had been established.

14. New research activities of the working party are expected to evolve from improved networking, but might need a boost from young, committed scientists. There is also a need for a support system for young scientists, e.g. in form of grants for short-term scientific missions or support for conference participation. A clear threat to the activities of the working party is the low interest in forest plantations in Europe. However the trend to create renewable sources of energy might provide a new opportunity for bioenergy plantations.

15. A list of priority actions for future work were ranked according to the following topics: (1) networking; (2) establishing a state-of-the-art database; (3) compiling country-based information; (4) supporting young scientists; (5) organizing workshops and conferences; and (6) initiating new research.

V-c. Working Party on Poplar and Willow Diseases

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/ipc/69632/en/>

16. Ms Marijke Steenackers (Belgium), Chairperson of the working party, reported on activities and outputs since the last session of the IPC in Dehradun, India, and on the working party's action plan for the period 2014-2016.

17. The following office bearers had been elected during the 24th IPC Session in Dehradun: Ms. Marijke Steenackers (Belgium), Chairperson (marijke.steenackers@inbo.be), Mr. Y.P. Singh (India), Vice-Chairperson (singhyp@icfre.org), Ms. Silvia Cortizo (Argentina), Vice-Chairperson (silviacortizo@gmail.com), Ms. Edilene Machado Buturi (Brazil), Vice-Chairperson (edilene.machado@swedishmatch.com.br), Mr. Mauritz Ramstedt (Sweden), Technical Secretary (Mauritz.Ramstedt@slu.se). Ms Steenackers informed that, due to other professional commitments, Mr Mauritz Ramstedt (Sweden) would take over as chairperson of the working party for the next two years while she would cover the post of Technical Secretary.

18. Activities and outputs planned at the last IPC session were: (i) to continue the update of the membership list of active researchers in poplar and willow diseases to be added to the Directory of Poplar and Willow specialists of the IPC website; (ii) to report on poplar and willow selection and breeding programmes for disease resistance in the world; (iii) to develop an action plan for improving selection and breeding programmes for resistance to diseases in developing countries; and (iv) to organize a working party meeting, concurrently with the Session of the Executive Committee in Vancouver, July 2014.

19. All these activities had been initiated and were on-going, specific details could be found in the report of the working party on the IPC website. The working party meeting planned to be organized in connection with the Executive Committee meeting in Vancouver had been postponed to the next IPC-Session in 2016, at a time when the relevant reports would be ready for presentation to the working party members.

V-d. Sub-Committee on Nomenclature and Registration of Poplars

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/ipc/69637/en/>

20. Mr Stefano Bisoffi (Italy), Vice-Chairperson of the Sub-Committee, reported on activities and outputs since the last session of the IPC in Dehradun, India, and on the Sub-Committee's Action Plan for the period 2014-2016.

21. The office bearers elected during the 2012 IPC-Session in Dehradun were as follows: Julia Kuzovkina (USA), Chairperson (jkuzovkina@uconn.edu), Stefano Bisoffi (Italy), Vice-Chairperson (stefano.bisoffi@entecra.it), Lorenzo Vietto (Italy), Technical Secretary (lorenzo.vietto@entecra.it).

22. The IPC holds the International Cultivar Registration Authorities (ICRA) for the genera *Populus* (poplars, cottonwoods and aspens) and *Salix* (willows). The ICRA system operates under the *International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants* (ICNCP); it is responsible for ensuring that each plant cultivar receives a unique, authoritative botanical name. The chief aim is to prevent duplicated uses of cultivar epithets within a genus, and to ensure that names are in accordance with the latest edition of the ICNCP. The system is a voluntary, non-statutory one and it does not grant any legal protection over the name or the plant. Legal protection should be sought through national Plant Breeders' Rights or Plant Patents. However, the registration should be considered as a vital need to establish internationally-accepted taxonomic standards for cultivars of any sort. The genus *Salix* is among the woody plant genera for which the International Cultivar Registration Authority (ICRA) was not appointed until 2013 and no formal registration of its cultivars was established till then. As the clonal selections and hybridization of *Salix* are currently expanding, it is important that a similar system for *Salix* cultivar registration be in place.

23. For the next four years the following work priorities had been outlined on the occasion of the 46th Session of the Executive Committee (Dehradun, India, October 2012): (i) Complete the updating of the Poplar Registry, (ii) Establish the registration of *Salix* cultivars, (iii) Continue raising awareness of the importance of cultivar registration by identifying and contacting interested parties, and (iv) Maintain an updated documentation of cultivars in cooperation with National Poplar Commissions.

24. A report concerning the data on *Populus* cultivars had been sent to the International Commission for Nomenclature and Cultivar Registration of the International Society for Horticultural Sciences during February 2013 upon the Commission's request in preparation for the 6th International Symposium on the Taxonomy of Cultivated Plants. In return, some clarifications about the registration process were made by the members of the Commission to assist the IPC with the registration process (e.g. how to register polyclonal cultivars).

25. A first edition of the *Salix* Cultivars Checklist is in preparation and already contains more than 200 names; it will be completed in September 2014 after a thorough review by *Salix* taxonomists. The publication of this checklist would serve as the starting point for the regulation of nomenclature in the

Salix cultivars denomination class, while assuring adherence to the ICNCP rules. The registration of new cultivars to build a comprehensive Register will take place by 2016.

26. In order to promote the registration process for *Populus* and *Salix* cultivars, the active breeding programmes and research centres had been identified and would be contacted directly while addressing the importance of cultivar registration. After IPS VI, researchers and breeders involved in willow and poplar cultivars selection would be directly contacted via a 'Request Letter' to submit to the Sub-Committee applications for the new cultivars and to update the passport data concerning the previously registered cultivars by December 2014 deadline.

V-e. Working Party on Poplar and Willow Genetics, Conservation and Improvement

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/ipc/69634/en/>

27. No representative of this working party was present at the meeting, but a working party report had been submitted to the IPC-Secretariat.

28. The following officials had been elected during the 24th IPC Session in Dehradun as follows: N.B. Singh (India), Chairperson (nbsuhf@rediffmail.com), Sasa Orlovic (Serbia), Vice-Chairperson (sasao@uns.ac.rs), Teresa Cerrillo (Argentina), Technical Secretary (tcerrillo@gmail.com).

29. The mandate of the working party encompasses conservation of natural genetic resources and ecosystems, as well as genetic improvement by conventional breeding and application, molecular genetic tools and techniques, genetic transformations and new cultivars for a range of purposes. Key strategic directions of the working party comprised:

- observing sustainability criteria for poplars and willows that balance the needs of production and economics, livelihoods of people and communities with the ecological factors, including the conservation of genetic diversity;
- reinforcing the need for greater genetic diversity and new genetic materials in planted poplar and willow breeding programmes (particularly commercial plantations) to manage biological and economic risks; and
- strengthening the understanding, linkages and information flows between traditional breeding programmes and molecular genetic tools and technologies for integrated breeding programmes, in order to promote the use of genomics research in poplar and willows improvement.

30. The programme of work for the period 2012–2016 as agreed upon during the 24th IPC session at Dehradun comprised the following actions:

- to host a working party meeting in association with another working party (possibly Pests and Diseases) to share progress and successes in incorporating knowledge and techniques gained from molecular genetics into classical breeding programmes (e.g. DNA fingerprinting to identify specific poplar or willow clones, DNA fingerprinting of *Melampsora* rust disease races). Leadership in this project would be provided by Dr N.B. Singh.
- to update the database about the breeding programmes and pollen collections. Leadership in this project would be provided by Ms. T. Cerrillo.
- to prepare a database of clone collections and a gene banks. Leadership in this subject would be provided by Ms. Teresa Cerrillo – Activity with Lorenzo Vietto, Sub-Committee on Nomenclature and Registration.
- to advance the project about standard experimental designs for poplar and willows breeding programmes. Leadership in this project: Ms. Teresa Cerrillo - Activity with Francisco Zamudio, Genetics Working Group of IUFRO.

31. An update of the database about breeding programmes and pollen collections was made on the basis of (a) the information collected until 2012; (b) new information received in 2014 from colleagues of eleven member countries; and (c) reviewing the documents presented at the Dehradun meeting. Details of this update were shown in the report of the working party.

32. Collaborative efforts had been made during the last five years to share an assessment and evaluation of breeding programmes in several countries. In Europe, networks of experimental field trials had been established in Italy, France, Belgium, and Croatia, including *inter alia* clone testing under different environments. In France specific efforts had been made to widen the *P. nigra* breeding population based on recent studies about the geographical distribution of natural populations.

V-f. Working Party on Poplar and Willow Insect and Other Animal Pests

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/ipc/69633/en/>

33. No representative of this working party was present at the meeting and no report had been submitted to the IPC-Secretariat.

V-g. Working Party on Production Systems for Poplars and Willows

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/ipc/69635/en/>

34. No representative of this working party was present at the meeting and no report had been submitted to the IPC-Secretariat.

VI. REPORT FROM COFO 2014 AND PROGRESS REPORT ON IPC REFORM

35. Mr Walter Kollert, IPC secretary, made an introductory presentation on IPC's on-going reform process that highlighted the function, mandate and organization of the IPC, its key outputs and achievements, and the main challenges IPC was facing in the future. He elaborated on the formal recommendations that had been made earlier by COFO 2012, the IPC Executive Committee in Dehradun 2012, and COFO 2014.

36. Mr Kollert informed that the options given for the proposed IPC reform were based on two consultancy reports commissioned by the IPC-Secretariat (September 2012 and January 2014)¹; the official report of the 24th IPC-Session and the 46th Meeting of its Executive Committee (January 2013)², two strategy papers prepared by the IPC-Secretariat (July and October 2013)³, as well as on extensive consultations with the IPC Executive Committee and the IPC reform task force. Mr Kollert explained that these reports recommended that maintaining the *status quo* of IPC was not a viable option for long-term relevance and impact of the IPC in environmental and development programmes in member countries. They recommended adopting a comprehensive reform that include poplars, willows and other genera/species of high socio-economic or ecological significance for livelihoods, food security and poverty alleviation, on the assumption that expanding the developmental and environmental scope of the Commission would increase its relevance and impacts, invigorate membership interest, and attract a wider range of partners and donors. This option would require amendments to the IPC Convention text, and accordingly, modifying arrangements for the working parties, the national poplar commissions and the IPC-Secretariat to better integrate the various activities.

37. Mr Kollert further informed about the envisaged time schedule for the accomplishment of the reform process. He explained that the proposed adjustments would have to be decided upon in today's 47th IPC Executive Committee meeting. Subsequently, the reform proposals made by the Executive Committee would have to be documented in an adjusted version of the text of the IPC-Convention that would have to be approved by the FAO's Committee on Institutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and

¹ Carle, J., Options for International Poplar Commission Reform. Concept Note, September 2012, and Mekouar, A.M., Reform of the International Poplar Commission: legal and institutional considerations. Consultancy report, April 2014.

² IPC. Report of the 24th Session of the Commission and of the 46th Session of its Executive Committee. Dehradun, India, 29 October-2 November 2012. January 2013.

³ IPC-Secretariat, How to pursue and achieve the reform objectives of the International Poplar Commission (IPC)? A strategy paper, July 2013, and IPC-Secretariat, Options for an expansion of the thematic scope of the International Poplar Commission (IPC). A discussion paper, October 2013.

by the FAO Council. If agreed, the reform proposals would then have to be endorsed by the Commission members at the 25th IPC Session in 2016 following which, the IPC recommendations and decisions would have to be submitted to the FAO Conference for information and approval.

38. Mr Stefano Bisoffi presented some observations on the reorganization of the working parties in order to strengthen their function as communities of practice in the context of the IPC reform. He stressed that the activities of the working parties relied upon voluntary work of some few experts who had mainly other duties. Currently, their main effort was dedicated to the organization of session meetings (once every four years). In between these meetings, in general working party members lose contact and their interest declines. They find it difficult to maintain a high level of collaboration and to justify their existence, despite addressing highly relevant fields of work. A possible solution to this unsatisfactory situation was to promote and facilitate interactions between members of the working parties and to share the results of their work with a larger audience by creating a knowledge base in the form of document repositories (in particular of grey literature) and databanks comprising directories, calendar of events, videos, powerpoint presentations, photos and distance learning modules. Having available such a knowledge base, each working party could act as a moderator for a certain community of practice that facilitates the exchange of information from scientists to consultants, extension services and farmers.

39. Mr Bisoffi presented as well proposals on how to restructure the existing working parties. He advised that the working parties should better connect to global challenges such as food security, environmental services, energy supply and climate change issues. He also argued for an inclusion of as yet uncovered items such as agroforestry, economics, markets, legislation, and education in new working party arrangements. In addition he pointed out that the new names of working parties should convey positive messages (e.g. plant health instead of diseases/pests).

VII. DECISIONS TAKEN ON THE IPC REFORM

40. Mr Kollert presented the decisions to be taken on the IPC-reform. After intensive consultations amongst the members of the Executive Committee and the office bearers of the represented working parties, the 12 represented members of the IPC Executive Committee decided to propose to the Commission the following amendments:

1. Expansion of the thematic scope of the Commission

41. While maintaining the existing mandate on poplars and willows, the geographic, biological and technical scope of the IPC will be expanded by including other genera/species with similar attributes for industrial and energy uses and environmental applications, such as *Acacia*, *Salix* and *Tectona*. Those genera are mentioned as examples only; work on other genera/species with similar attributes is not excluded. The corresponding Article III “Functions” of the Commission was amended as follows:

- a) to study and deliver on scientific, technical, social, economic and environmental aspects of *Populus* and other tree genera such as *Acacia*, *Salix* and *Tectona*, for production, protection, and utilization purposes, with a view to sustaining livelihoods, land-uses, rural development and the environment. This includes food security issues, climate change, biodiversity conservation and resilience against disasters, threats and crises.
- b) to promote the exchange of knowledge, technology and material between research workers, producers and users.

The proposal was unanimously accepted (12 of 12 votes)

2. Revision of the title of the Commission

42. The title of the International Poplar Commission will be modified to indicate the expansion of the thematic scope as follows: **International Commission on Poplars and Other Trees Sustaining People and the Environment**. The acronym will remain “IPC” as it is a well-introduced term in the international forestry and agroforestry community.

The proposal was unanimously accepted (12 of 12 votes)

3. Thematic restructuring of the Working Parties

43. A thematic restructuring of the existing working parties is proposed to be accomplished through the merger or termination of some of them, besides the establishment of new ones. Such changes are aimed at streamlining, integrating and revitalizing the working parties with a view to redesigning their mandates and altering their names. The restructuring of the working parties does not require amendments to the Convention. The proposed new working parties are:

1. Taxonomy, Nomenclature and Registration
2. Domestication and Conservation of Genetic Resources
3. Plant Health and Resilience to Threats and Crises
4. Sustainable Livelihoods, Land-use, Products and Bioenergy
5. Environmental and Ecosystem Services
6. Policy, Communication and Outreach

44. Working party 1 “Taxonomy, Nomenclature and Registration” replaces the Sub-Committee on Nomenclature and Registration. Until the next IPC Session in 2016, the working parties will continue to work under the existing structures and office bearers. The new working party structures will be applied for the first time to shape the scientific programme of the 2016 Session. The assignment of researchers and experts to each working party as well as the election of office bearers will be discussed and decided during business meetings in 2016.

The proposal was unanimously accepted (12 of 12 votes)

4. Revitalizing and strengthening the National Poplar Commissions (NPC’s)

45. IPC member states are encouraged to revitalize and strengthen their national poplar commissions by implementing the IPC decisions and recommendations at the national level. In addition, and in line with the agreed new name of the IPC, the NPCs are encouraged to adjust their names accordingly.

The proposal was unanimously accepted (12 of 12 votes)

5. Increased funding of the IPC-Secretariat

46. The effective functioning of the IPC Secretariat is made difficult by insufficient resources. With declining regular programme budgets and extra-budgetary donor sources, the Secretariat is considered under-resourced and inadequately equipped to fully perform its servicing tasks, in particular in view of the implementation of the on-going IPC reform. Therefore, greater support for the Secretariat should be secured including through increased funding from external resources.

The proposal was unanimously accepted (12 of 12 votes)

6. Use of official languages acc. to geographical distribution of members

47. The language policy of FAO is grounded on the principle of parity and balance in the use of FAO's languages, combined with the need to maintain a pragmatic approach in this respect. Within this framework, the IPC may decide the language composition for its meetings taking into account the geographical distribution of members and their working languages.

The proposal was unanimously accepted (12 of 12 votes)

7. Elimination of the “General Committee”

48. Under Article VI-5 of the IPC Convention, provision is made for the setting up, at each session of the Commission, of a General Committee consisting of the Chair and two Vice-Chairs of the session, as well as the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee. In practice, the General Committee has not been formed at IPC sessions for an extended period of time, which is a clear indication that it has become obsolete. Since no particular purpose would be served by forming the General Committee, it is to be eliminated from the Convention.

The proposal was unanimously accepted (12 of 12 votes)

8. Use of gender-neutral language

49. In the text of the IPC Convention, the words “chairman” and “chairmen” are used several times. In keeping with Resolution 7/99 on the use of gender-neutral language in the FAO Basic Texts, adopted by the Conference in 2009, wherever such terms appear in the Convention, they should be replaced with “chairperson” or “chairpersons”, which are unbiased on account of gender.

The proposal was unanimously accepted (12 of 12 votes)

VIII. SUMMARY REPORT ON POPLAR-RELATED EVENTS SINCE THE 24th SESSION OF THE IPC, DEHRADUN, 2012

50. Mr Walter Kollert reported briefly on poplar-related events since the 24th Session of the IPC in Dehradun, India (2012). The Argentinian NPC hosted the Fourth International Congress of Salicaceae in Argentina with the theme "Willows and Poplars for Regional Development", at La Plata, Argentina, in March 2014 (<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/salicaceae/9xpi9rre9wY>) and the Sixth Meeting of GEMFO (*Genética y Mejoramiento Forestal del Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (INTA)*), which was held from 7 to 10 April 2014 in Campana (Buenos Aires), Argentina. He informed about the meeting of Working Party 6 “Environmental Applications” held in Gisborne, New Zealand, from 10-12 March 2014 (<http://www.fao.org/forestry/26214/en/>), the side event “Promotion of the International Poplar Commission” held during COFO 2014 at FAO HQ, Rome, Italy, on 25th June 2014 (<http://www.fao.org/forestry/ipc/86964/en/>) and the forthcoming International Poplar Symposium (IPS VI) organized by IUFRO at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver from 21 to 23 July 2014 (<http://www.2014ipsvi.com/>).

IX. PROPOSALS FOR THE DATE AND PLACE OF THE 25th SESSION OF THE IPC AND THE 48th SESSION OF THE IPC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

51. Mr Weih welcomed Mr Jürgen Geldbach as representative of the German Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Bonn. Mr Geldbach had arrived for the afternoon session and had been invited as observer with the approval of the members of the Executive Committee to present to the meeting the formal proposal submitted by the German Government to the IPC-Secretariat to host the 25th Session of the IPC and the 48th Session of the IPC Executive Committee in Berlin in 2016.

52. Mr Geldbach highlighted in his presentation the good framework conditions and infrastructure facilities that would be available for the participants of the 25th Session of the IPC in Berlin in 2016. He stressed the expertise and experience of the concerned institutions in organizing high-level international events and explained the various options given to organize field excursions on poplar and willow cultivation in Germany and neighbouring countries. Eventually, he also presented the numerous touristic attractions in and around Berlin.

53. The members of the IPC Executive Committee voted unanimously in favour of the German proposal to host the IPC-Session in 2016 (12 of 12 votes). They made it clear that the burden of organizing such event was shared between FAO and the Government of Germany. Mr Walter Kollert mentioned that it was common practice that FAO and the host country conclude a standard Memorandum of Understanding, detailing the responsibilities and services to be provided by FAO and the host country respectively. He requested Mr Geldbach to organize, in cooperation with FAO and the IPC-Chair, a preparatory meeting in Berlin in the second half of 2014 to further discuss details on planning and organizing the 2016 Session.

X. IMPROVEMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH OF THE IPC

54. Mr Jim Carle (New Zealand) reported on one of the outcomes of the earlier meeting of the Working Party “Environmental Applications” that was held in Gisborne, New Zealand, from 10 to 12 March 2014. The meeting concurred in its observation that IPC should strengthen its communication and outreach amongst its members and also with non-members through improving its webpage and making use of new information technology such as social media.

55. Mr Carle indicated that the IPC website had been improved over the years following recommendations of the 22nd IPC Session in Santiago, Chile (2004) and the 23rd Session in Beijing, China (2008). The current website explains the history, role and mandate, and the reform efforts of the IPC and its subsidiary bodies (NPCs, Working Parties and Sub-Committee). It provides portals for Sessions and Executive Committee Meetings and other mechanisms of outreach (meetings, study tours, side events), and has started a newsletter as of June 2013. Additionally, portals were established for storing Working Party and Sub-Committee details (including office holders, programmes of work, activities, case studies, reference libraries, technical contacts and links to relevant institutions, projects etc.), and directories (NPCs, Executive Committee members and Poplar & Willow Specialists).

56. Mr Carle reported that the provision of new information from working parties had slowed down in recent years so that only limited information on activities, case studies, reference libraries, technical contacts and links were being made available to FAO for updates. In addition he pointed out that the IPC website was currently not maximizing the collection, updating and sharing of resources, data and information potentially available from IPC growers, processors, users, scientists and academics. He encouraged the members of the IPC Executive Committee to consider:

- how Working Party, Sub-Committee and National Poplar Commissions office holders could be more motivated to conduct and report activities, case studies, reference libraries, technical contacts and links,
- what options were available to ensure on-going maintenance and update of the IPC website and portals (within and/or beyond the capacity of the IPC Secretariat),
- how the IPC website could be expanded to include new photo libraries, power points, papers, reports, videos, etc. from Sessions, Meetings, Study Tours, and
- how the directory of poplar and willow specialists could be revitalized and updated to become more useful to members?

XI. OUTLOOK ON THE SIXTH INTERNATIONAL POPLAR SYMPOSIUM (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, 21-23 July 2014)

57. Ms Sharon Doty (USA), as a member of the IPS Scientific Committee, gave an overview on the programme of the Sixth International Poplar Symposium, which would take place in the Forestry Sciences Building at UBC, Vancouver, in the week after the IPC Executive Committee meeting.

58. The Symposium with the theme “*Domestication of Populus and Salix: how far have we come, and how far do we still have to go*” was divided into six sessions: (1) genetics of poplar and willow (lead by Chang-Yi Xue, Canada), (2) genomics of poplar and willow (lead by Carl Douglas, Canada), (3) physiology-integrating form and function (lead by Rob Guy, Canada), (4) pests and pathology of Salicaceae (lead by Richard Mamelin, Canada), (5) environmental applications of poplar and willow (lead by Raju Soolanayakanahally, Canada), and (6) management and application putting biology into practice (lead by Shawn Mansfield, Canada).

XII. OTHER MATTERS

59. Mr Jim Richardson (Canada) reported on the process of disseminating the new book “Poplars and Willows – Trees for Society and the Environment”. The book had been officially launched at the side event “Promotion of the International Poplar Commission” during COFO 2014 and was in high demand by experts of the poplar and willow community. The book was dispatched by the IPC-Secretariat to all authors and co-authors, IPC Executive Committee members and office holders of the working parties; it had also been distributed to all participants of the IPC side event at COFO. In addition, Mr Richardson had prepared an informative flyer on the structure and contents of the book for the participants of the International Poplar Symposium (IPS VI).

60. Ms Catherine Bastien (France) reported that it was essential for the IPC working parties to include on their websites links to databases recently developed in the frame of European or international projects. These databases, often dedicated to a large number of tree species included updated information of high interest on poplars and willows. Links on the IPC websites would facilitate the transfer of knowledge and technology to all IPC members. Examples of such databases are the *Populus* and *Salix* Registry established by the Sub-Committee on Nomenclature and Registration, the EUFGIS portal about genetic conservation units in Europe (<http://portal.eufgis.org>) and the Tree4Future/Evoltree databases (www.trees4future.eu/database-access.html) and (www.evoltree.eu/index.php/databases).

XIII. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

61. Mr Martin Weih, after having acknowledged the good work of the IPC-Secretariat for preparing the meeting and the supportive contributions of the Committee members, thanked all participants for their commitment and declared the 47th Session of the IPC Executive Committee closed.

ANNEX 1: AGENDA

9.00-10.00 hrs	Session 1: Opening Opening and welcome Adoption of the Provisional Agenda Co-optation of new members (if any)
10.00-10.30 hrs	Coffee break
10.30-12.30 hrs	Session 2: Working Parties Summary reports and programme of work for Working Parties 1 to 6 and Sub-Committee on Nomenclature and Registration (chairpersons, ca. 10 min each) Summary and conclusions
12.30-13.30 hrs	Lunch break
13.30-16.00 hrs	Session 3: IPC Reform Report from COFO 2014 and progress report on IPC reform Moderated discussion on IPC reform process, including status and perspective of Working Parties and National Poplar Commissions in a reformed IPC Summary and conclusions
16.00-16.30 hrs	Coffee break
16.30-18.00 hrs	Session 4: IPC events and other matters Summary report on poplar-related events since the 24 th session of the IPC in Dehradun, 2012 Proposals for the date and place of the 25 th session of the IPC and 48 th session of the IPC Executive Committee Improvement of communication and outreach of the IPC Outlook on the 6 th International Poplar Symposium Other matters Closing of the Session

ANNEX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

1. MEMBERS OF THE IPC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Elected members

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2. MEMBERS OF THE WORKING PARTIES

Working Party on Poplar and Willow Diseases

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Working Party on Harvesting and Utilization of Poplar and Willow Wood

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Sub-Committee on Nomenclature and Registration

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ANNEX 3: PRESENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(as of 20 July 2014)

Elected by the Commission:

1. Chairperson: Mr Martin H. Weih (Sweden)
2. Vice-Chairperson: Ms Marijke Steenackers (Belgium)
3. Mr Esteban Borodowski (Argentina)
4. Ms Barbara Thomas (Canada)
5. Mr Meng-Zhu Lu (China)
6. Ms Catherine Bastien (France)
7. Mr Georg von Wühlisch (Germany)
8. Mr V.K. Bahuguna (India)
9. Mr Dinesh Kumar (India)
10. Mr Naldo Anselmi (Italy)
11. Mr Sasa Orlovic (Serbia)
12. Mr Emile S. Gardiner (United States of America)

Co-opted by the Committee:

13. Mr Stefano Bisoffi (Italy)
14. Mr Judson G. Isebrands (United States of America)
15. Mr Jim Richardson (Canada)
16. Mr Jim Carle (New Zealand)

CHAIRPERSONS OF WORKING PARTIES

Working Party on Poplar and Willow Genetics,
Conservation and Improvement:

Mr N.B. Singh (India)

Working Party on Harvesting and Utilization of
Poplar and Willow Wood:

Mr. Joris Van Acker (Belgium)

Working Party on Poplar Insect and Other Animal Pests:

Ms Sylvie Augustin (France)

Working Party on Poplar and Willow Diseases:

Ms Marijke Steenackers (Belgium)
(Mr Mauritz Ramstedt will take over
this duty up to the next session)

Working Party on Production Systems for Poplars
and Willows:

Mr Theo Verwijst (Sweden)

Working Party on Environmental Applications of
Poplars and Willows:

Ms Sharon Lafferty Doty (USA)

Sub-Committee on Nomenclature and Registration:

Ms Julia Kuzovkina (USA)

SECRETARIAT OF WORKING PARTIES

Working Party on Poplar and Willow Genetics, Conservation and Improvement:

Chairperson: Mr N.B. Singh (India)
Vice-Chairpersons: Mr Sasa Orlovic (Serbia)
Technical Secretary: Ms Teresa Cerrillo (Argentina)

Working Party on Harvesting and Utilization of Poplar and Willow Wood:

Chairperson: Mr. Joris Van Acker (Belgium)
Vice-Chairpersons: Mr Raúl Osvaldo Suárez (Argentina, representing Latin America)
Prof. Ahmed Koubaa (Canada, representing North America)
Mr Yukun Hua (China, representing Asia)
Technical Secretary: Mr Lieven De Boever (Belgium)
Mr John Balatinecz (Canada)

Working Party on Poplar Insect and Other Animal Pests:

Chairperson: Ms Sylvie Augustin (France)
Vice-Chairperson: Mr John Charles (New Zealand)

Working Party on Poplar and Willow Diseases:

Chairperson: Ms Marijke Steenackers (Belgium)/Mr. Mauritz Ramstedt (Sweden)
Vice-Chairpersons: Mr. Y.P. Singh (India), Mrs. Silvia Cortizo (Argentina), Mrs. Edilene Machado Buturi (Brasil)
Technical Secretary: Mr Mauritz Ramstedt (Sweden)/Ms Marijke Steenackers (Belgium)

Working Party on Production Systems for Poplars and Willows:

Chairperson: Mr Theo Verwijst (Sweden)
Vice-Chairperson: Mr Timothy A. Volk (United States of America)
Technical Secretary: Ms Mirta Rosa Larrieu (Argentina)

Working Party on Environmental Applications of Poplars and Willows:

Chairperson: Ms Sharon Lafferty Doty (United States of America)
Vice-Chairpersons: Mr Andrej Pilipovic (Serbia)
Ms Jaconette Mirck (Canada)
Technical Secretary: Mr Ioannis Dimitriou (Sweden)

Sub-Committee on Nomenclature and Registration:

Chairperson: Ms Julia Kuzovkina (United States of America)
Vice-Chairperson: Mr Stefano Bisoffi (Italy)
Technical Secretary: Mr Lorenzo Vietto (Italy)