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	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	联合国 粮食及 农业组织	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture	Продовольственная и сельскохозяйственная организация Объединенных Наций	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura
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## NORTH AMERICAN FOREST COMMISSION

### TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Madison, Wisconsin, USA, 11 - 13 June 2014

**SHAPING THE FAO FIRE MANAGEMENT UMBRELLA PROGRAMME,  
MANAGING WILDFIRE-RELATED RISKS AT THE LANDSCAPE LEVEL, AND  
IMPROVING INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION**

#### Secretariat Note

*The tragic loss this year of so many members of an elite firefighting team in Arizona was clearly being felt around the world and our thoughts and prayers are with those who have died, and their families, as well as with those who continue to fight the fires and put their own lives at risk.*

#### Summary

- The FAO fire management programme reflects an integrated approach which deals with vegetation fires throughout all land uses. This note gives an overview of relevant developments and actions taken by FAO and its partners in implementing previous recommendations by the North-American Forest Commission, other Regional Forestry Commissions and COFO. The paper concludes with some suggestions for discussion and consideration by the Commission in order to strengthen the FAO Fire Management Programme.

### **FOLLOW-UP TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH NORTH AMERICAN FOREST COMMISSION (NAFC) SESSION AND ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION RELATED TO THE FAO FIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME**

1. During the last session the Commission agreed that FAO should continue to focus on three key issues as long-term priorities; climate change with the focus on water, fire management, and

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continued improvements on FRA and capacity building for FRA. The Multi-Donor Trust Fund, presented by FAO at the last NAFC session, should facilitate the prioritization of fire management. It has now been endorsed by FAO as the Umbrella Programme. However, resources from inside the Organization or from Member countries have not yet been identified.

### **FOLLOW-UP ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TWENTY FIRST SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY, OF OTHER REGIONAL FORESTRY COMMISSIONS AND FAO FIRE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

2. The Committee requested FAO to strengthen the FAO fire management programme by actively seeking financial support for the Multi-Donor Trust Fund proposal, now called the “Smart Fire” Umbrella Programme. This Programme will be mainly included in the new FAO Strategic Objective 5 (SO5): *Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises*, and to a lesser extent in Strategic Objective 2 (SO2): *Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner*. As such, it will be part of the efforts of both the Forestry Department and of the Strategic Objectives’ teams to promote its implementation, including resources mobilization. Support to fire management at country level was requested at the last sessions of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (2012), of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (2012), at the Near East Forestry and Range Commission (2013), and also at the FAO Conference held in June 2013.
3. The requested attention for fire management can only be realized through additional allocation of resources. The new GEF-6 cycle, which will start in June 2014, has included Disaster Risk Reduction and Fire Management as areas of work. Preparatory work has started to come up with suitable project proposals by then and FAO is planning to initiate discussions with potentially interested countries and regions. In order to strengthen the programme, partner countries should manifest their interest and provide the necessary support for the implementation of the programme.
4. At headquarters level, human resources related to fire management are now partly assigned to the development of the new FAO Strategic Objective 5: *Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises*. This is considered to benefit the future implementation of the FAO Forestry Programme, especially in the prevention of forestry and trees being affected by emergencies but also where forests and trees can help to prevent or mitigate other emergencies.
5. The Committee also requested FAO to propose a coordination mechanism between the different UN agencies and programmes working on topics related to fire management by making full use of its comparative advantages and avoiding duplication with the work of other agencies such as the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) and the Global Fire Monitoring Centre (GFMC). In implementing this decision, discussions have started with UNISDR on this issue and more progress and tangible results, like a coordination meeting of UN agencies, are expected in 2014.
6. The Committee on Forestry (COFO) had described forest fires as a major source of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and called upon countries to include forest fire management in their programmes for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD). FAO has designed and implemented a fire management project in Kalimantan, Indonesia, that is funded through REDD funds from Norway to reduce GHG emission by substituting fire with other agricultural methods on and nearby peatlands and by preventing wildfires in the community-owned rubber plantations. A greater focus on alternatives for using fire in agriculture also was a recommendation of the last International Wildland Fire Conference in South Africa, 2011. The Smart Fire Umbrella Programme also includes one component on fire management and climate change. The recently published *Climate change guidelines for forest managers (FAO Forestry Paper 172)* includes recommended adaptation actions and mitigation strategies for forest managers related to expected increase in the number, frequency, size or severity of wildfires.
7. Finally, the Committee requested FAO to develop, in partnership with other relevant institutions and based on the Fire Management Voluntary Guidelines, a set of international guidance tools for managing wildfire-related risks at the landscape level, including transboundary fire issues.

Taking into account other ongoing activities two initial themes were selected to implement this decision. One is the development of Community Based Fire Management Guidelines for District Officers and NGO's. A preparatory meeting to develop such guidelines took place with global experts, at the end of 2012, in order to define the outline and focus of such a tool. A similar regional meeting took place in Arusha, Tanzania. The guidelines are planned to be ready and launched at the International Wildland Fire Conference in 2015 in the Republic of Korea. The guidelines will be based on successful field experiences and be prepared with support from experts from all regions of the world who will also contribute to its review process. The second theme, climate change and fire management, was included in the recently published *Climate change guidelines for forest managers (FAO Forestry Paper 172)*, see paragraph 6). However, more specific guidelines may be needed in the future.

#### Requests from other regions

8. FAO was requested by the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission to update regional statistics on wildfires. The next Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015 will include trends of fire incidence and areas burned over the last 12 years as measured from satellite data. This analysis will provide information on the total area burned and on forest area burned. Data will be made available to countries for revision as part of the FRA 2015 reporting process.

9. FAO was invited to participate in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Forestry Stakeholder Workshop in South Africa (2013), organized by the SADC secretariat with support from the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The workshop developed recommendations for JICA to support the SADC Forestry strategy, the SADC Fire Management and REDD+ programmes. During this meeting, FAO was asked by the SADC secretariat to help implement the Community Based Fire Management component of the SADC Fire Management Programme, developed in 2010 in Maputo, Mozambique. This would fit very well under the new "Smart Fire" Umbrella Programme, and FAO is waiting for the official request from the SADC secretariat.

#### Projects

10. Since the last session of the North American Forest Commission, fire management projects or components were concluded in Syria, Tanzania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

11. Fire management projects or components of projects executed by FAO or with FAO involvement are ongoing in Swaziland, Futa Djallon watershed (West Africa), Indonesia, Morocco, Algeria, Lebanon and Tunisia.

12. Projects or project components on fire management are in pipeline for: Algeria, the Futa Djallon basin, The Gambia and Zimbabwe.

#### Upcoming events

13. A UNECE / FAO Regional Forum on cross-boundary fire management is planned for November 2013 and is expected to elaborate recommendations for member countries of the European region and the Council of Europe to develop an agreement on international cooperation to enhance the fire management capability. The Forum will take advantage of recent insights and solutions of contemporary and expected future wildfire problems in the region, notably in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Inputs from UNECE member states and other regions from outside the UNECE will provide expertise in developing formal and informal bilateral and multilateral agreements on transboundary cooperation in fire management.

14. As part of the International Liaison Committee, chaired by the US Fire Management and Aviation Group, FAO is strongly involved in the preparation of the next International Wildland Fire Conference in 2015 in the Republic of Korea ([www.wildfire2015.kr](http://www.wildfire2015.kr)). Similar to the last Conference in 2011 in South Africa, the Forestry Department of FAO will again advocate for a programme which reflects Integrated Fire Management, including a Community Based Fire Management approach.

## POINTS FOR DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION

15. Forest and other vegetation fires continue to be a severe concern. It can be anticipated that the climate change will increase the intensity and frequency of wildfires. Increasing vegetation fire will contribute to more greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere. Individual country requests for FAO support and recommendations from the regional forestry commissions, COFO and the FAO Conference to strengthen the FAO fire management programme - through, for instance, implementing the Smart Fire Umbrella Programme, establishing a fire management UN coordination mechanism, developing new guidelines - call for an increase of resources from within the Organization and/or from Member countries. Human and financial resources for fire management, however, are limited and decreasing. The Commission may wish to:

- discuss the increasing risk of uncontrolled wildfires in the region and suggest measures to counter this development, for example through increasing intraregional cooperation as well as the establishment of a close linkage of fire management with climate change related initiatives;
- discuss ways and opportunities to include fire management in a broader landscape approach;
- recommend Member countries to support the FAO Smart Fire Umbrella Programme with allocation of resources devoted to:
  - field projects in developing countries;
  - normative global work;
- mandate FAO with identifying more and additional financial and human resources to implement the prioritization of fire management in the FAO forestry programme requested by the NAFC through the Smart Fire Umbrella Programme; and
- propose that investments in REDD+ and other climate change related initiatives may include a component on fire management.