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Engelberg, 2-6 November 2015

Item 8(d) of the provisional agenda

FAO European Forestry Commission matters**Food and Agriculture Organization****European Forestry Commission****Thirty-eighth session**

Engelberg, 2-6 November 2015

**Progress in *Silva Mediterranea* and the
Working Party on the Management of Mountain
Watersheds**

Note by the secretariat

**I. Activities of the Working Party on the Management of
Mountain Watersheds****A. Activities of the Working Party**

1. The European Forestry Commission (EFC) Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds was established in 1952. In its 36th session in Rovaniemi, Finland, in 2013, the EFC endorsed a new mandate and modus operandi of the Working Party and approved a number of actions for further follow up.

2. Since the session in Rovaniemi, the Working Party undertook the following activities:

(a) A “Governance and Strategy paper” for the Working Party was developed and consulted thoroughly by the Steering Committee of the Working Party. The new “Governance and Strategy paper” was approved by the Steering Committee in May 2015.

(b) Two Working groups (WG), WG1 “Forest and water”, and WG2 “Hazards and disaster risk management” were established, strategies and work plans were created for both groups. The Working Groups are coordinated by lead countries (WG1: Turkey, Finland, Poland; WG2: France, Austria). All member countries of the

EFC are encouraged and invited to join these working groups according to their interest and priorities.

(c) The WGs have produced first outcomes: WG1 has developed a project proposal on headwaters (ECORES). WG2 is engaged in two workshops, one held one planned, to enhance knowledge exchange among practitioners dealing with disaster risk management and forests. Further a FAO workshop on event documentation and hazard zone mapping for the south east Europe and central Asia region was supported and shaped by WG2.

(d) The homepage of the Working Party was redesigned and simplified as was the overall communication strategy. There is a new newsletter which will be delivered twice a year. The newsletter comprises news of the Working Groups and global actions in the field of the Working Party. Further the newsletter includes relevant news items and announcements for the Focal Points to share with other members.

(e) In order to mobilize active engagement of member countries, the Secretariat of the Working Party approached all member countries of the EFC to designate or confirm the Focal Point for the Working Party. This is expected to result in additional involvement in the Working Groups and activities of the Working Party.

(f) The Working Party held its 30th Session in Pieve Tesino, Italy, from 22 – 24 September 2015. The overall theme of the session was “Mountain Watersheds and Ecosystem Services: Balancing multiple demands of forest management in head-watersheds”.

B. Points for Consideration

3. The Commission may wish to take full advantage of the services of the Working Party and facilitate its work by:

- (a) strengthening further their commitment to the Working Party, including through the designating a focal point to serve on the Working Party;
- (b) providing continued guidance for the Working Party.

II. Activities of *Silva Mediterranea*

A. Follow-up of the Strategic Framework on Mediterranean Forests

4. The Strategic Framework on Mediterranean Forests (SFMF) presented during the 3rd Mediterranean Forest Week in Tlemcen in March 2013 and endorsed by the high-level segment of this conference under the Tlemcen Declaration is a voluntary tool for policymakers in the forest sector in the Mediterranean.

5. Between 2013 and 2015, the SFMF has been implicitly or explicitly referred to in several strategic documents across Mediterranean countries, such as the National Program for Rural Renewal 2014-2019 of Algeria, the Strategy for Sustainable Development of Forests and Ranges 2015-2024 of Tunisia, the new forest strategy of Portugal, the 2015-2025 ten-years plan of the High Commission for Water, Forests and Fight Against Desertification in Morocco, or the 2015-2025 National Forest and Wood Programme of France.

B. Fourth Mediterranean Forest Week (Barcelona, Spain)

6. Together with other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests, *Silva Mediterranea* organized the IV Mediterranean Forest Week in Barcelona (MFM), Spain, from 16 to 21 March 2015. The topic of this MFM was “Improving livelihoods: the role of Mediterranean forest value chains in a green economy.”

7. The *proceedings* and conclusions of the MFM were published in a special issue of the journal *Forêt Méditerranéenne* (volume 36, number 2, 2015).

C. Extraordinary sessions of the Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions-*Silva Mediterranea*

8. Two extraordinary sessions were held, on 27 June 2014 in Rome on the occasion of the Committee on Forestry of FAO, and on 18 March 2015 on the occasion of the IV Mediterranean Forest Week in Barcelona. The 2014 extraordinary session was dedicated to the preparation of the IV Mediterranean Forest Week, the next presidency, and the evaluation of the Committee. The 2015 extraordinary session was dedicated to this evaluation.

9. The evaluation of *Silva Mediterranea* that was decided at its 21st session and was led by an independent panel chaired by Ms Christine Farcy. The final version of the evaluation report was sent to all member countries of *Silva Mediterranea* in April 2014 and presented during the extraordinary session in June 2014.

10. Based on the recommendations made by the evaluation panel and on the management response prepared by the Forestry Department of FAO, *Silva Mediterranea* took a list of decisions regarding

- (a) a renewed framework for the Committee;
- (b) more readable links with partners;
- (c) a smoother internal functioning;
- (d) interface subsidiary bodies;
- (e) better structured voluntary contributions.

11. These decisions were taken into account during the high-level session of Directors in charge of Forests organized on 20 March 2015 during the IV Mediterranean Forest Week, and several key decisions were endorsed by this high level session under the Barcelona Declaration.

D. Working groups of *Silva Mediterranea*

12. Activities have been conducted by the working groups of *Silva Mediterranea*, including the two additional groups on urban and periurban forestry, and on desertification and restoration of dryland forest ecosystems that were created during the 21st session in 2012 in Antalya.

13. Working group 1 on forest fires has carried on its cooperation with EU/JRC within the European Forest Fire Information System with annual reporting on forest fires from non-European Mediterranean countries.

14. Working group 2 on cork oak has extended its activities to non-timber forest products following the recommendation of *Silva Mediterranea* during its 21th session. It has co-organized Vivexpo'2014 from 11 to 13 June 2014.
15. Working group 3 on sustainable development has conducted activities under components 2 and 3 of the regional project "Maximize the production of goods and services of Mediterranean forest ecosystems in the context of global changes" funded by the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM).
16. Working group 4 on forest genetic resources has conducted activities under the COST Action "MaP-FGR - Strengthening conservation: a key issue for adaptation of marginal/peripheral populations of forest tree to climate change in Europe".
17. Working group 5 on climate change has conducted activities under the GIZ regional project "Adapting forest policy conditions to climate change in the MENA region".
18. Working group 7 on urban and periurban forestry has conducted activities under the COST Action "Green Infrastructure approach: linking environmental with social aspects in studying and managing urban forests".

E. Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests

19. *Silva Mediterranea* is one of the founding members of the Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests (CPMF) that was launched on 29 September 2010. The CPMF aims at improving the cooperation between its members and at harmonising the efforts and the funds of the organisations working for the forests of the Mediterranean basin in five beneficiary countries (Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey).
20. The 5th steering committee meeting of the CPMF was held from 28 to 30 January 2015 in Rabat and dealt with the evaluation of the CPMF and the organization of a Mediterranean booth at the World Forestry Congress in September 2015. The evaluation of the CPMF was decided in 2013 by the 4th steering committee and was led by an independent expert, Ms Bianchini. The final version of the evaluation report was sent to all member of the CPMF in July 2014.
21. Activities of *Silva Mediterranea* within the CPMF were performed under a regional project funded by the FFEM "Maximize the production of goods and services of Mediterranean forest ecosystems in the context of global changes". *Silva Mediterranea* coordinated two components of the projects, one dedicated to the production of data and development of tools to support decision and management of vulnerable Mediterranean forest ecosystems affected by climate change and the ability of these forest ecosystems to adapt to global change, and the other one dedicated to the optimization and valorisation of the mitigation potential of Mediterranean forests (carbon sinks) through the development of methodological tools to value local efforts of protection/restoration. Activities were carried out on pilot sites in five countries (Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey). Vulnerability assessments of the forests were performed, as well as analyses on the drivers and causes of deforestation and forest degradation. A database on bibliographical references on Mediterranean forest landscapes in the context of climate change was produced. The main results of the project were synthesized in a policy brief to be presented at the Mediterranean booth at the World Forestry Congress, together with the main reports of the project.

F. Points for consideration

22. The Commission may wish to:
- (a) take note of the:
 - i. Strategic Framework on Mediterranean Forest as a voluntary tool for forest policy and make recommendations for its implementation by *Silva Mediterranea* member states;
 - ii. decisions taken after the evaluation of *Silva Mediterranea* and facilitate their implementation;
 - iii. evaluation report on the Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests;
 - (b) encourage countries to contribute to the working groups of *Silva Mediterranea*.
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