

NEAR EAST FORESTRY COMMISSIONFIRST SESSION

( Teheran, 24 - 29 September 1955 )

FINAL REPORT

1. In accordance with the recommendations of the Near East Forestry Conference held at Amman in 1952, and of the Seventh Session of the Conference of FAO, the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations invited interested Member Governments to be represented at the First Session of the Near East Forestry Commission which, at the kind invitation of the Government of Iran, was held at Teheran from 24 to 29 September 1955.

PARTICIPANTS

2. The following Member Governments were represented: Ethiopia, France, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Syria and the United Kingdom. Pakistan, Sudan and Turkey were represented by observers as well as the United Nations, the League of Arab States, the International Poplar Commission, the United States International Co-operation Administration, the World Federation of United Nations Associations and the International Union of Forest Research Organizations.

Expressions of regret that they were unable to be represented were received from the Government of Afghanistan, the World Meteorological Organization, UNESCO and UNRWA.

The full list of participants is given in Appendix 1 to this Report.

OPENING MEETING

3. The session was opened by Mr. Mahmoud Zahir (Iran), Director-General of Agriculture, Iran, in the name of the Minister of Agriculture, and in the presence of Mr. Marcel Leloup, Director of FAO's Forestry Division, representing  
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the Director-General of FAO, and of Mr. Golam-Ali Banan, representing the Director-General of Forestry of Iran.

#### ADOPTION OF AGENDA

4. The Commission accepted the Provisional Agenda (FAO/NEFC/11) submitted by the Secretariat with the exception of Item 5 (d), which was deleted at the request of the Arab Governments.

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

5. The Rules of Procedure (FAO/NEFC/12) submitted by the Secretariat were unanimously adopted by the Commission, which accordingly proceeded to the election of its officers as follows :

Chairman : Mr. Mahmoud Zahir, Director-General of Agriculture, Iran.  
1st Vice-Chairman : Mr. Suleiman Hedjazi, Forestry Officer, Department of Agriculture, Libya.  
2nd Vice-Chairman : Mr. Tesfa Bushen, Director-General of Forests, Game and Fisheries, Ethiopia.  
Rapporteur : Mr. Malek Basbous, Chief of the Reforestation Service, Directorate of Forests, Lebanon.

6. The Commission decided to set up a Steering Committee composed of all accredited representatives of Governments, to discuss certain problems in private, if necessary.

#### FOREST POLICY

7. The Commission examined the progress reports on forest policy submitted by the participating Governments and studied the analysis made of them by the Secretariat (FAO/NEFC/13 and 13 Add.1). In view of the close interrelationship existing between forest policy and economic trends in timber production and trade, it was decided to take into consideration at the same time the note by the Secretariat on this latter topic (FAO/NEFC/19). The Commission, in this connection, wished to congratulate the Secretariat on the excellence of this note.

8. It also wished to put on record its appreciation of the considerable efforts made by the Governments of the region to carry out the recommendations of

the Near East Forestry Conference. It was thought advisable that, because of the magnitude of the problems involved, Member Governments should again be invited to pay the closest attention to the necessity for forest rehabilitation and development, and to provide Forest Administrations with the funds and means necessary to make further progress possible and to allow for the maintenance of past achievements.

9. Accordingly, the Commission stressed that the protection, rehabilitation and development of national forests is still hampered by a number of obstacles that require prompt action on the part of several Member Governments if they are to be overcome. In particular, it was thought advisable to draw attention to the following :

- (a) The inadequacy of existing legislation (i) for the settlement of ownership disputes which consequently renders forest demarcation a difficult task, and (ii) for securing a satisfactory supervision of privately owned forests.
- (b) Lack of a clearly defined policy on which to base the segregation of forest land from agricultural land, which also contributes to the difficulty of forest demarcation.
- (c) Inadequate knowledge of the extent of the rights of usage enjoyed by villages, tribes or individuals in respect of forest produce and grazing, together with inadequate legislation to define and stabilise these rights;
- (d) Insufficient staffing in quantity and quality of forest administrations mainly due to financial stringency and lack of educational and training facilities;
- (e) Inadequacy of research institutions to carry out proper experiments and studies, especially on the establishment of tree plantations, nursery techniques, evolution of natural forests and the improvement and management of forest-grazing lands;

(f) Poorly developed forestry propaganda machinery.

10. The Commission, consequently, invited Member Governments to take the measures necessary to overcome the obstacles mentioned above, and requested the Director-General of FAO :

- (a) to organize as soon as possible, a training centre for forest administration, with particular emphasis on methods of controlling rights of usage, under the Expanded Technical Assistance Programme, for the benefit of Near Eastern Governments ;
- (b) to prepare a pamphlet as a further contribution to the implementation of the recommendation of the 4th World Forestry Congress, on the principles of forest conservation applicable to the conditions prevailing in the Near East, with the ultimate aim of having such a subject introduced as an integral part of the general curriculum of elementary schools.

11. The Commission recognized, however, that while the region is facing an ever increasing shortage of wood, in particular industrial timber, the measures advocated above will only yield results in the distant future. It was agreed therefore that additional measures should be taken if the economic development of the region is not to be hampered. In view of the conditions existing in the Near East, the Commission considered that about one half of the anticipated increase in needs for industrial timber for the next ten years will have to be met by the produce from newly afforested areas and, to a much greater extent, from tree plantings outside the forest. In this connection it was emphasized that a forest service should be fully acquainted with the general economic and social policy of its country to determine and put into effect the part to be played by trees and forests in any type of land use, and that certain lands are to be dedicated in perpetuity to forestry for soil and water conservation purposes.

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12. The Commission strongly urged Member Governments to make all possible efforts to plant rapid growing species at an accelerated pace, having regard, also, for the protection of agricultural crops, in the form of windbreaks, road plantations and community forests. It was suggested that much of this could be achieved within the general framework of community development projects. It was specifically recommended that a certain percentage of land and water of any new irrigation schemes should be devoted to such a purpose.

13. Finally, the Commission was informed of the international problems involved in watershed management when a river drains from several countries and recommended that the countries concerned should work in close liaison to take all measures necessary to prevent the silting of reservoirs sited in each other's territories.

#### FOREST RESEARCH

14. The Commission discussed the Secretariat's proposals for the setting up of a Regional Committee on Research and a Forest Research Organization for the Near East (FAO/NEFC/14-A and FAO/NEFC/14-B). An ad hoc Committee on Research was established to meet in the course of the session to study the practical aspects of the establishment of the central unit of the Forest Research Organization, which was proposed by the Amman Forestry Conference in 1952 and approved by the Seventh Session of the FAO Conference in 1953.

15. In view of the advisability of research on the forestry problems of the region being conducted mainly by national research stations, the Commission asked FAO to assist in the establishment of such stations when requested to do so by interested governments, and expressed its wish that the central unit mentioned above should first engage in documentation and co-ordination, proceeding to conduct certain special research at a later date under the direction of the Permanent Committee when established.

16. Having been informed of the outcome of the meeting of the ad hoc Committee on Research, the Commission approved the above proposals for the Near East Forest

Research Organization and noted with gratitude that the Government of Syria will furnish the necessary accommodation for the central unit and assume responsibility for its maintenance, guarding, lighting and heating. The Commission also requested FAO to furnish the central unit mentioned above with a forest research expert to serve as its director, and to contribute towards the cost of purchasing equipment and paying personnel for this central unit under the Expanded Technical Assistance Programme.

17. Finally, the Commission requested Member Governments to inform the Director-General of FAO not later than 15 November 1955 of the name of their representative for the Permanent Committee on Research, and whether they agreed to the following scale of contributions for the first year of operation of the central unit :

Afghanistan . . . . .	US \$ 1,000	Jordan . . . . .	US \$ 2,000
Egypt . . . . .	" " 3,000	Lebanon . . . . .	" " 2,000
Ethiopia . . . . .	" " 2,000	Libya . . . . .	" " 1,000
France . . . . .	" " 2,000	Saudi Arabia . . . . .	" " 2,000
Iran . . . . .	" " 4,000	Syria . . . . .	" " 4,000
Iraq . . . . .	" " 4,000	United Kingdom . . . . .	" " 2,000
Italy . . . . .	" " 2,000	Yemen . . . . .	" " 1,000

#### FORESTRY EDUCATION

18. The Commission approved the Secretariat's proposals for the creation of a Regional Forestry School for the Near East (FAO/NEFC/15) where the course of instruction would cover two years, with a minimum of 20 students in each year, and teaching in Arabic. The school was the subject of a recommendation made by the Amman Forestry Conference in 1952 and of a decision taken at the Seventh Session of the FAO Conference in 1953.

19. It was further decided that interested Governments should contribute to the cost of establishment as well as to the annual running cost of the forestry school, in proportion to the number of pupils they wished to send to it.

20. A governing body for the school in question was discussed by the Commission and representatives of the countries concerned held a meeting in the course of

the Commission's session to study the operation of the school in detail.

21. Having been informed about the work of this body, the Commission noted with great appreciation the undertaking of the Government of Syria to supply the necessary accommodation for the school and to assume responsibility for its maintenance, guarding, lighting and heating. Furthermore, the Commission requested FAO to consider in its Expanded Technical Assistance Programme the provision of the necessary funds for the establishment of the school, to supply a director and to guarantee an annual payment of part of the wages of the teaching staff.

22. It also recommended to the Arab Governments who wish to avail themselves of the facilities offered by the forestry school in question to inform the Director-General of FAO, not later than 15 November 1955, of the number of places they wish to reserve for their students, and the name of their representative who will be on the governing body.

23. Finally, the Commission requested the Director-General of FAO to call a meeting of the governing body of the school as soon as possible to draw up the details of the syllabus and organization of the Regional Forestry School for the Near East.

#### FOREST GRAZING (Range Management)

The Commission took note of the report of FAO's Technical Meeting on Forest Grazing and approved in principle its conclusions. It wished, however, to call attention to some aspects peculiar to forest grazing policies in the Near East region, resulting from the character of its forests and the prevailing economic and social conditions.

25. The Near Eastern forests, misused since time immemorial and growing in a very particular environment, are essentially unstable. Although its major functions are production and protection, the latter being paramount, the forest has several other roles to play and grazing policies will therefore vary. The

main function of some woodlands is production of fruits and these areas are traditionally managed for grazing, while in certain timber producing forests grazing is completely prohibited.

26. Whatever the adopted policy, the Commission was firmly of the belief that the forest should be preserved regardless of its condition, not just to serve as a source of timber and accessory products, but rather as a means of checking surface run-off through better infiltration of rainfall, which in the region is very unevenly distributed throughout the year. In this connection it was emphasized that deliberate burning, owing to the physical and social conditions prevailing in this region, should be used with extreme caution. Paragraph 18 of the report under reference should therefore be interpreted in a very restrictive sense.

27. To formulate and implement a forest grazing policy, ranging from the complete prohibition of grazing in the forest to the optimum utilisation of all its resources, the Commission particularly stressed the importance of :

- (a) informing political circles of the reasons on which any given policy is based, in order to create an atmosphere favourable to the implementation of the measures that need to be taken ;
- (b) developing such a policy within the more general framework of a complete land utilisation policy, in cooperation with agriculture and livestock management, taking into due account agrarian structure - in certain cases this policy should require livestock keeping to be contingent on holding land ;
- (c) widening the field of responsibility of foresters so that they should not only be concerned with checking and controlling grazing abuse, but should also be entrusted with taking measures to provide people deprived of grazing areas with alternative means of living (for example, by planting fruit trees at the same time as soil rehabilitation work is carried out) ;



- (d) creating alternate supplies of forage particularly by planting fodder trees and other forage plants ;
- (e) fostering the use of modern equipment for the conversion of fodder into silage and its conservation ;
- (f) carrying out publicity campaigns through the medium of field demonstrations and schools ;
- (g) undertaking practical research with a view to determining sound grazing techniques and particularly the carrying capacity of grazing grounds, and of initiating studies of the types of forests to be protected - the Commission recommended to Governments that funds be made available for such research and studies.

28. Because grazing is such an important problem to forestry as well as to the whole social and economic structure of the Near East region (FAO/NEFC/16), the Commission recommended that a Permanent Working Party on Forest Grazing be established within the Near East Forestry Commission, which would consist of experts chosen by the Member Governments. This Working Party would study and promote action on forest grazing problems within the region and should cooperate closely with education and extension specialists to bring grazing in the forest under control and management and teach the people the values of the forest and the need for its proper management.

29. Finally, the Commission thought it advisable that close liaison be established between bodies concerned with grazing questions. In particular, the Commission expressed the wish that there be close liaison between its Permanent Working Party on Forest Grazing and FAO's Working Party on the Development of the Grazing and Fodder Resources of the Near East, both at the secretariat level and through joint participation of delegates in the meetings of both bodies whenever possible. The Commission also expressed the wish that foresters be included in the National Pasture and Fodder Development Committees that have already been or will be set up in the future.

## EUCALYPTS

30. The Commission noted the conclusions of the First Session of the FAO Working Party on Eucalypts held in Morocco in October 1954, in which the representatives of the National Working Teams on Eucalypts participated, and recommended that the report of that session containing technical information of great interest should be translated into Near Eastern languages with the help of FAO.

The Commission further recommended that Member Governments should take part in the work of the Permanent Working Party on Eucalypts, either direct or through the central unit of the Near East Forest Research Organization.

The intention of the Forestry Division of FAO to call a world conference on eucalypts in the near future was also noted with great interest.

## UTILIZATION OF WOOD PRODUCTS

### Rationalization of exploitation

31. The Commission recognized the need to improve forest exploitation techniques (FAO/NEFC/18), particularly in order to reduce waste and to use the region's scarce forest produce to the best effect. It therefore recommended that forest services of all Member Governments should direct their efforts towards the rationalization of forest exploitation by planning and supervising fellings, having particular regard for market trends.

32. The central unit of the Near East Forest Research Organization was requested to study, in collaboration with forest services, the conditions under which forest workers operate, and to provide Member Governments with advice on new tools suitable for introduction.

33. The Commission requested FAO to organize practical courses for the creation of a professional class of forest workmen through mobile training teams and woodcutter training centres, the first to be organized in Iran.

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Liquid fuels to substitute wood and charcoal

34. The Commission considered that every effort should be made to reduce the pressure on the already dwindling supplies of forest produce in the Near East region by substituting liquid fuels for wood fuels. Accordingly, it recommended Member Governments to keep the price of liquid fuels as low as possible to encourage the conversion of wood burning stoves and ovens to oil burning.

35. The Commission also urged forest services to provide the Secretariat with detailed information on all categories of wood burning stoves and ovens, and on any conversion to fuel oil that has already been made.

ACACIAS

36. After considering the role played by acacias in the vegetation of the arid and semi-arid areas of the Near East region, and their importance to the local populations for fodder, fuel, gum and other produce of domestic use, the Commission recommended that FAO should undertake a systematic study of acacias comprising identification, biological needs, value as fodder, other uses and reproduction techniques.

FUNCTIONS OF THE REGIONAL FORESTRY OFFICER WITH REGARD TO TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

37. The Commission considered that one of the main tasks of the FAO Regional forestry officer is to give advice to Member Governments on the elaboration of national technical assistance programmes, and to supervise their implementation. Consequently, the Commission requested the Director-General of FAO that in the application of the technical assistance rules and regulations, the requests formulated by the Regional Forestry Officer be considered as if they emanated from a resident expert in the country, and to authorize the Regional Forestry Officer to make regular and prolonged visits to the countries of the region.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION

38. The Commission took note of the wish expressed by the Government of Iraq

to be host to the Second Session of the Commission in 1957, and recorded its gratitude to the inviting country.

39. The exact date and place of the next session will be decided in due course by the Director-General of FAO after consultation with the host government.

STUDY TOUR.

40. The Commission expressed its warmest thanks to the Government of Iran for the excellent preparation of the study tour to the northern forests.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Chairman : Mahmoud ZAHIR (Iran)  
First Vice-Chairman : Suleiman HIGIAZI (Libya)  
Second Vice-Chairman : Tesfa BUSHEN (Ethiopia)  
Rapporteur : Malek BASBOUS (Lebanon)  
Secretary : Jean MOSER (FAO)

Mr. Marcel LELOUP, Director of the Forestry Division, represented the  
Director-General of FAO

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A. Member Governments of the Near East Forestry Commission

ETHIOPIA : Tesfa BUSHEN, Director-General of Forestry,  
Ministry of Agriculture, Addis-Ababa

FRANCE : Jean de VAISSIERE, Conservateur des eaux et forêts,  
Direction général des eaux et forêts, Paris.  
André METRO, Conservateur des eaux et forêts,  
Station de recherches forestières, Nancy

IRAN : Mahmud ZAHIR, Directeur général du Ministère de  
l'Agriculture, Teheran  
Rahim AFIFI, Chef du bureau d'information du Service  
forestier, Meydan Ferdowsi, Teheran  
Ghelam Ali AMIR-MALEK, Service forestier, Meydan Ferdowsi, Teheran  
Gholam-Ali BANAN, Membre du Comité directeur du Service  
forestier, Meydan Ferdowsi, Teheran.  
Reza HEJAZI, Directeur du Laboratoire forestier,  
Karaji,  
Javad IRANFAR, Chef de la Division du pâturage,  
Meydan Ferdowsi, Teheran  
Morteza KHAVARI, Conseiller pour la Carbonisation,  
Tachte Djarachide No. 14, Teheran  
Ismail MIRDAMADI, Chef de la Section de populiculture,  
Service forestier, Meydan Ferdowsi, Teheran  
Nasser MODJTAHEDI, Chef d'administration du Centre pour  
la carbonisation, Service forestier,  
Meydan Ferdowsi, Teheran.  
Habibollah SABETI, Chef du Centre de recherches écologiques  
et d'essais de semences, Nov-Char.  
Kiabi SADEG, Chef de la Section de sylviculture,  
Service forestier, Meydan Ferdowsi, Teheran  
Reza SADEGHIANI, Directeur adjoint du Service forestier,  
Meydan Ferdowsi, Teheran  
Hassan SAMBI, Inspecteur général des forêts, Service forestier,  
Meydan Ferdowsi, Teheran

IRAQ : Hassan KITTANI, Assistant Director-General of Forests,  
Baghdad.

- ITALIE : Giuseppe MARIANI, Inspecteur supérieur des forêts,  
Ministère de l'agriculture, Rome.  
Beniamino DEL GIUDICE, Fonctionnaire du Ministère des  
affaires étrangères, Direction générale pour  
la Somalie, Rome.
- JORDAN : Ihsan M. ESSAID, Jordan Minister to Iran, Jordan Legation,  
Khayaban Saba, Teheran, Iran.
- LEBANON : Malek BASBOUS, Directeur des eaux et forêts par intérim,  
Ministère de l'agriculture, Beirut.  
Aref BERJAOUI, Chef du Service de la conservation des  
forêts, Ministère de l'agriculture, Beirut
- LIBYA : Suleiman HIGIAZI, Forest Officer, Nazaret of Agriculture,  
Tripoli.
- SAUDI ARABIA : Abdulla HABADI, Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Teheran, IRAN
- SYRIA : Khuloussi KUZBARI, Directeur des forêts, Ministère de  
l'agriculture, Damascus.
- UNITED KINGDOM: Donald Falconer DAVIDSON, Acting Conservator of Forests,  
Forest Department, Nicosia, CYPRUS.

B. Non-Member Governments

- PAKISTAN : Mohammad Ikram MALIK, Commercial Attaché, Embassy of  
Pakistan, Teheran, IRAN.
- SUDAN : Mohammed Kamil SHAWKI, Chief Conservator of Forests,  
Forests Department, Khartoum.
- TURKEY : Macid GÜLCUR, Director, Forest Research Institute,  
P.O. Box 4524, Bahçelievler, Ankara.

C. International Organizations

- United Nations: T.F. POWER Jr., Resident Representative of the  
Technical Assistance Board, Teheran, IRAN.
- League of Arab States: Mohammed HUSSEIN, Agriculture Advisor,  
Arab League, Cairo, EGYPT.
- International Poplar Commission: Oscar FUGALLI, Forestry Division,  
FAO, Rome, ITALY.
- World Federation of United Nations Associations: Mahmoud FATEH,  
Avenue Sepah - Rue Mobine, Teheran, IRAN.
- International Union of Forest Research Organizations: Ernesto ALLEGRI,  
Directeur Adjoint, Station Expérimentale de  
Sylviculture, Florence, ITALIE;  
André METRO, Station de Recherches forestières,  
Nancy, FRANCE.

D. United States International Cooperation Administration

Clarke A. ANDERSON, Range Manager and Forester,  
USOM to Lebanon, c/o American Embassy, Beirut, LEBANON  
George N. BROWN, Forestry Advisor, USOM to Turkey,  
c/o American Embassy, Ankara, TURKEY.  
Henry S. KERNAM, Chief Forestry Advisor, USOM to Iran,  
IRANIAN Forest Service, Meydan Ferdowsi, Teheran, IRAN.

E. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

1. Forestry Division

Marcel LÉLOUP, Director, Forestry Division, Rome, ITALY.  
Jean H.F. MOSER, Regional Forestry Officer for the Near East,  
P.O.B. 2223, Cairo, EGYPT.  
Oscar FUGALLI, Forestry Officer, Policy and Conservation Branch,  
Forestry Division, Rome, ITALY

2. Expanded Technical Assistance Programme

A.M. MUSTAFA, Chief, Technical Assistance Mission to Iran,  
31 Kouche Sabbah, Teheran, IRAN  
Ernesto ALLEGRI, Expert on forest research, Forest Service,  
Meydan Ferdowsi, Teheran, IRAN.  
François GENTY, Expert on forest policy, B.P. 1555, Teheran, IRAN  
Baki KASAPLIGIL, Forestry expert, c/o Department of Forests, Amman,  
JORDAN.  
H.R.W. KUHNE, Expert on wood technology, c/o TAB Resident Represen-  
tative, United Nations House, Teheran, IRAN.  
Jean ROLLEY, Expert on forest range management, Forest Service,  
Meydan Ferdowsi, Teheran, IRAN.  
D.A. STELLINGWERF, Expert on forest inventory, c/o Ministry of  
Agriculture, Baghdad, IRAQ.  
Henri VERNEDE, Forestry expert, B.P. 1039, Addis-Ababa, ETHIOPIA.

