

***REPORT***

**Antalya,  
Republic of Turkey  
29 January-2 February  
2012**

**NEAR EAST  
FORESTRY  
AND RANGE  
COMMISSION**

**Twentieth Session**



**Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations**

## PREVIOUS SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION

First session	Tehran, Iran	24-29 September 1955
Second session	Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt	27 October – 1 November 1958
Third session	Adana, Turkey	30 April – 5 May 1962
Fourth session	Beirut, Lebanon	15-22 June 1964
Fifth session	Amman, Jordan	25-30 September 1967
Sixth session	Tehran, Iran	25-30 April 1970
Seventh session	Baghdad, Iraq	30 November– December 1974
Eighth session	Khartoum, Sudan	23-28 February 1978
Ninth session	Nicosia, Cyprus	6-10 June 1983
Tenth session	Tunis, Tunisia	29 June – 3 July 1987
Eleventh session	Ankara, Turkey	15-19 October 1990
Twelfth session	Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt	21-24 October 1996
Thirteenth session	Damascus, Syria	6-9 December 1998
Fourteenth session	Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran	1-4 July 2000
Fifteenth session	Khartoum, Republic of the Sudan	28-31 January 2002
Sixteenth session	Beirut, Republic of Lebanon	24-27 May 2004
Seventeenth session	Larnaka, Cyprus	5-9 June 2006
Eighteenth session	Khartoum, Republic of the Sudan	18-21 February 2008
Nineteenth session	Hammamet, Tunisia	5-9 April 2010

**FO:NEFRC/2012/REP**

**REPORT**

**of the**

**TWENTIETH SESSION**

**of the**

**NEAR EAST FORESTRY AND RANGE COMMISSION**

**Antalya, Republic of Turkey  
29 January to 2 February 2012**

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**  
Cairo, 2012

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**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS****FOR THE ATTENTION OF  
MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE COMMISSION**

The Commission:

- recommended countries, for the sake of continuity and institutional memory, to nominate a permanent representative to the NEFRC, together with a permanent alternate.
- urged countries to continue to strengthen cooperation and coordination with national, regional and international bodies to further synergize forestry and rangelands issues in the region.
- urged countries to identify and publicize best practices and experiences of integrating forests and rangelands in the Near East and elsewhere.
- requested that FAO and NEFRC member countries continue working to further develop the proposals for sub-regional cooperation programmes and to quickly seek financial support for them.
- recommended FAO and the countries to work in order that the proposed sub-regional programmes facilitate networking, dissemination of best practices, sharing of experiences, capacity strengthening and countries' efforts to integrate climate change into the forest and range sector.
- recommended countries to set up national technical committees to follow up on the initiative at the national level and that FAO play a catalytic role in harmonizing and facilitating the monitoring and evaluation of restoration programmes in countries, in collaboration with donors.
- urged member countries to support development and validation of the Agroforestry guidelines and further adopt and implement them.
- urged its member countries to support the development of the International UPF Guidelines, and further validate, adopt and implement them.
- recommended countries to show more commitment for the networks; to designate country focal points, by high-level country authorities, to communicate with the network coordinators and to assure their financial contributions to established networks.
- recommended FAO and countries to allocate sufficient human and financial resources to the forests and rangelands programme in the region.
- requested countries to improve cooperation and mechanisms for coordination at national and regional levels.
- recommended countries to take concrete measures to access finance through international conventions and bodies related to climate change.
- requested countries to identify and appoint national correspondents where they have not already done so.
- noted the effective participation of six Near East countries and requested other countries to follow this pace and participate actively in *Silva Mediterranea*.

- requested countries to: consider using *Silva Mediterranea* as a platform for coordinating and promoting work with international organizations; strengthen communications messages on forests to show their importance; further consider how drylands can be integrated into REDD+ and in decisions to COFO; and focus on applied research projects in the region.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The Commission:

- urged FAO to undertake a case study to explore the barriers to coordination between forest and range in Near East countries.
- recommended that FAO continue to give strong emphasis to sustainable management of forests and rangelands including in protected areas, the management of forests and rangelands in low forest cover countries, reconciliation of institutional and legislative aspects in Near East countries, and forest protection.
- urged FAO to initiate studies on forests that have been subject to management for sustained yield basis for prolonged periods.
- requested that FAO and NEFRC member countries continue working to further develop the proposals for sub-regional cooperation programmes and to quickly seek financial support for them.
- recommended FAO and the countries to work in order that the proposed sub-regional programmes facilitate networking, dissemination of best practices, sharing of experiences, capacity strengthening and countries' efforts to integrate climate change into the forest and range sector.
- requested FAO to identify good practices of sustainable production of NWFPs in RNE countries and in other regions and share them with NEFRC countries.
- recommended FAO to identify, study and present to subsequent NEFRC sessions further examples of NWFPs that have environmental and socio-economic value.
- recommended FAO to conduct further analyses on: (i) the need for increasing tree composition and diversity as well as the promotion of native species (while addressing invasive species, pests and diseases); and (ii) using the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative as the entry point for the analysis in implementing countries (i.e. Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt, Mauritania, Algeria).
- (in particular Kuwait, Libya and Sudan) requested FAO support for (i) designing and planning country restoration and afforestation programmes; and (ii) developing a regional Green Belt Project for the Near East.
- recommended FAO to disseminate lessons learned as regards the use of treated waste water from all countries, especially valuable experience of the Gulf Countries, and countries to use the participatory approach to involve all stakeholders in the coordination of TWW projects.
- requested FAO to support member countries to build intersectoral approach that promote agroforestry systems as a tool for sustaining food security in the region.



- requested FAO to assist member countries in raising awareness on the importance of urban and periurban forestry and promoting coordinated urban and periurban forestry (UPF) activities.
- recommended FAO, as part of the MDTF, to: develop early warning programmes and emergency centers in Near East countries; investigate indirect and transboundary effects of forest fires; support countries to strengthen local infrastructures and improve technical equipment; and further promote the community-based approach to engage stakeholders.
- recommended FAO to give the networks further chances and to try to find solutions to the problems; to assess with network coordinators the possibility for funding, and to disseminate information on the work of the networks.
- endorsed the creation of one Advisory Panel on Forestry Education and suggested that FAO assist with its activities.
- recommended FAO and countries to allocate sufficient human and financial resources to the forests and rangelands programme in the region.
- recommended that FAO provide financial and technical support to address environmental accounting, analyse forests and rangelands' contribution to GDP, and introduce the concept of green economy in the region.
- requested FAO's support to promote access to finance through international conventions and bodies related to climate change.
- requested FAO to provide more training, especially to women assigned to data collection, to reconsider its current grouping of countries when analyzing data for FRA, and to reflect in the future FRAs, regional specificities, particularly in dry zones where land use is dominated by rangelands and forests and rangelands are closely interrelated.
- recommended *Silva Mediterranea* to: establish a working group dealing with rangelands management; enlarge the group membership to other countries of the Near East Region; find ways to catalyse engagement of countries including through the establishment of projects; extend the Cork Oak Working Group to address other relevant NWFPs common to the whole Mediterranean; create stronger linkages from *Silva Mediterranea* to the regional commissions, including through joint meetings of country members of two commissions in the same region, and produce studies valuing the goods and services provided by forests and rangelands in the Near East. Libya also indicated that it would like to be more actively involved in the Committee.
- recommended FAO to: assess the achievements of the IYF to gather and disseminate lessons learned; find ways to promote drylands issues at the upcoming UNFCCC COP18, including putting drylands as a central theme of the meeting; give increasing attention to the subject of land tenure; help coach countries in project development and establish a monitoring and evaluation framework for projects for use by FAO offices; share best practices to inform and encourage countries to match good project performance, including those for the Great Green Wall; and streamline the countries reporting process to international bodies.



## INTRODUCTION AND OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The Twentieth Session of the Near East Forestry and Range Commission (NEFRC) and the Second Near East Forestry Week (NEFW) were held in Antalya, Turkey, from 29 January to 2 February 2012, at the kind invitation of the Government of the Republic of Turkey. The meetings attracted 95 participants. The session was attended by 29 representatives from 18 member countries and five representatives from three international and United Nations organizations, three from regional intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and one from a bilateral development agency also attended, together with five experts from five countries, the Advisory Panel on Forestry Education. Parallel to the Commission, the second NEFW was attended by 52 participants from five countries. *Appendix B* provides a full list of participants. The session was conducted in Arabic and English.
2. The 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission was held together with the second NEFW under the common theme of “*Good Governance of Forests and Rangelands: Pillar of Food Security*”. The rationale behind the NEFW theme was to contextualize the important contribution of forests and rangelands in reducing poverty, hunger and malnutrition in the Near East Region and to re-emphasize to policymakers the significance of forests and rangelands in national economies and their potential as viable sectors for improving the livelihoods of their populations. It is also to provide an opportunity for the participants of the NEFRC and a wide spectrum of other stakeholders with an interest in forest and rangeland issues to exchange experiences, knowledge, and suggestions on pertinent issues.
3. Mr Eduardo Rojas-Briales, Assistant Director-General, Forestry Department, represented the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Mr Mohamed Saket, Senior Forestry Officer, FAO Regional Office for the Near East, Cairo, served as Secretary of the Commission.
4. Mr Chadi Mohanna, Vice Chair (Lebanon) of the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission, opened the session and welcomed the participants.
5. Mr Ahmet Ipek, Head of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Training and Research of the General Directorate of Forestry of the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs in Turkey, spoke of rangelands degradation in the Near East Region and problems of fires, pests, climate change impacts and insufficient fire brigades. He emphasized the importance of meeting to consider the needs of forests and range dependent people and said the region stood ready to exchange information and play an active role in international organizations.
6. Mr Mustafa Kurtulmuşlu, Director General of Forestry, Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, Turkey, spoke of the positive effect of knowledge and information exchange in the world and stressed the need to amplify this effect, specifically for people in rural areas. He thanked FAO for its engagement in the region, including through the convening of this conference.
7. Mr Mustapha Sinaceur, Sub-regional Coordinator of the FAO Office for Central Asia, noted the trend of rising food prices and the pressure it puts on natural resources when people use these resources to obtain income. He said that improving water quality was a priority for the region and noted that the Sub-regional Office was undertaking negotiations to extend financing in 2013-2017 to address forestry activities. He recalled the Sub-regional Office’s willingness to exchange information and support initiatives in Near East countries to make their forestry policies and management sustainable.
8. Mr Moujahed Achouri, FAO Deputy Regional Representative for the Near East and Sub-regional Coordinator to Oriental Near East, thanked the Government of Turkey, on behalf of the FAO Regional Office for the Near East, for hosting the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the NEFRC and the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of *Silva Mediterranea*. He noted that forests and rangelands play a significant role in the region, particularly for fighting poverty as well as for maintaining clean water, conserving biodiversity, regulating climate change, raising livestock, providing bioenergy and sustaining livelihoods. He

called for attention to arid zone forests, noting that they remain largely invisible to policy makers and that national forest policies should take into account climate change issues.

9. Mr Eduardo Rojas-Briaies delivered a statement on behalf of the Director-General of FAO, Mr Jose Graziano da Silva, and its Forestry Department. Referring to the theme of the session, he highlighted that it is the first time the NEFRC would meet under its new name including forests and rangelands. He noted the modest, positive gains made in forest cover in the region, mostly due to high political support for forests and noted that other regions could learn from this experience. He said drylands in particular require greater attention at the international level, including in the context of REDD+. He stressed the need to strengthen collaboration, using the networks already established in the region. He emphasized the need for greater attention to forests and range issues at the policy level, to recognize the importance of these areas to the livelihoods of millions of people, the necessity of improved governance for broader national social and economic development, the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change and the urgent need for finance for forests and rangelands.

10. Mr Lütfi Akça, Undersecretary, Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, Turkey, officially opened the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Near East Forestry Week. In his statement, he expressed his Government's honour to host the NEFRC and noted the importance of knowledge and information exchange during the session. He noted Turkey's willingness to strengthen collaboration with other countries and explained how his country had increased training in the country and boosted its engagement with the private sector. He noted that Turkey would host the upcoming session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) in 2013.

#### **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Item 2)**

11. The Agenda (*Appendix A*) was adopted. The documents considered by the Commission are listed in *Appendix C*.

#### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS (Item 3)**

12. In accordance with the provisions of Rules II-1 and II-5 of its Rules of Procedure, the Commission elected the Chair, two Vice-Chairs and one Rapporteur. The composition of the Bureau is as follows:

Chairman:	Mr Ali Temerit (Turkey)
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice-Chairperson:	Mr Isa Al Shobaki (Jordan)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chairperson:	Mr Youssef A Mohammed Bin Gharsa (Libya)
Rapporteur:	Mr Alladeen Mohamad Abdalla Al-Sharjabi (Yemen)

#### **FOLLOW-UP ON REQUESTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION (Item 4)**

##### **(i) The mandate and activities of the regional forestry and rangeland bodies in the Near East: An Overview**

13. The Commission considered Secretariat note FO:NEFRC/2012/4, which presented the milestones of the NEFRC, culminating in November 2010 with the approval by the FAO Director-General of the change to the Rules of Procedure. The secretariat commented on the findings of the review of the mandate and activities of regional bodies, including that forests and rangelands are closely interrelated natural resources often operating as one ecosystem. The secretariat referred to the groups of regional bodies (UN and International Bodies/Organizations; Regional Development Bodies; Regional Research Bodies; Regional Multilateral Financing Bodies; Regional Education and Training Bodies; International Bilateral Development Agencies; and National Forestry and Range Bodies) and stressed the need for integration between NEFRC and these bodies to achieve full conservation, sustainable development and management of forests and rangelands.

14. The Commission recommended countries, for the sake of continuity and institutional memory, to nominate a permanent representative to the NEFRC, together with a permanent alternate

and urged FAO to undertake a case study to explore the barriers to coordination between forest and range in Near East countries. The secretariat noted the opportunities to strengthen attention to drylands issues, including in the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the UNFF, and to rangelands in the upcoming Regional Conference.

**(ii) Secretariat report on FAO and country activities in the Region and follow-up on the requests and recommendations of the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission**

15. The Secretariat presented an overview of FAO and countries' activities in the region over the past two years. The Commission appreciated the follow-up actions taken by FAO on the recommendations and requests addressed to it at the last session of the Near East Forestry Commission (NEFC).

16. The Commission noted with satisfaction the achievements made by FAO since the 19<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission, particularly to integrate rangelands and climate change issues in the FAO programme of forestry in the Near East Region and to strengthen the capacity of the Forestry Unit in the FAO Regional Office for the Near East.

17. The meeting urged countries to continue to strengthen cooperation and coordination with national, regional and international bodies to further synergize forestry and rangelands issues in the region. The meeting also urged countries to identify and publicize best practices and experiences of integrating forests and rangelands in the Near East and elsewhere.

18. The Commission recommended that FAO continue to give strong emphasis to sustainable management of forests and rangelands including in protected areas, the management of forests and rangelands in low forest cover countries, reconciliation of institutional and legislative aspects in Near East countries, and forest protection. The Commission urged FAO to initiate studies on forests that have been subject to management for sustained yield basis for prolonged periods.

**FAO AND COUNTRY ACTIVITIES IN THE NEAR EAST REGION: PRIORITY ISSUES FOR THE 20<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION (Item 5)**

**(i) Adaptation of forest sector and sustainable development**

**a. Forests, range and climate change**

19. The Commission was informed of the decisions of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on adaptation, including a call for strengthened regional cooperation on adaptation. The Secretariat recalled the decisions of the NEFC 19th session, which envisaged a role of the Commission in strengthening regional cooperation on adaptation in the forest and range sectors, and reported on the development of concept notes for four sub-regional cooperation programmes based on the outcomes of a meeting of NEFRC members held in Cairo in September 2011. The Secretariat also reported on FAO's work to develop guidelines to integrate climate change into forest and range sectors at both policy and field level.

20. The Commission noted with appreciation the efforts of FAO. Underlining the important role of NEFRC in fostering regional cooperation in climate change adaptation, the Commission requested that FAO and NEFRC member countries continue working to further develop the proposals for sub-regional cooperation programmes and to quickly seek financial support for them.

21. The Commission recommended FAO and the countries to work in order that the proposed sub-regional programmes facilitate networking, dissemination of best practices, sharing of experiences, capacity strengthening and countries' efforts to integrate climate change into the forest and range sector.

22. The Commission highlighted areas where assistance is needed, including monitoring for climate change impacts and adaptation as well as for mitigation (i.e. REDD+), assessing ecosystem

vulnerability and adaptation options, addressing heightened risks of pests and diseases, designing forest interventions to reduce the impacts of sea level rise, and preparing project documents and mobilizing funding for climate related actions.

23. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) informed the Commission of their related work and indicated their interest in contributing to the proposed efforts to strengthen regional cooperation on forest and range adaptation.

b. Experiences of the Near East countries on the utilization and processing of Non-Wood Forest Products

24. The Commission was informed about examples of the environmental and socio-economic benefits of non-wood forest products (NWFPs) based on case studies from five countries in the Near East and their contribution to the livelihoods and food security of the rural poor.

25. In the ensuing discussion, the Commission underlined the need for more studies and knowledge on NWFPs and an evaluation of the real contribution of the forest sector to national economies. The Commission requested FAO to identify good practices of sustainable production of NWFPs in RNE countries and in other regions and share them with NEFRC countries. The meeting recommended FAO to identify, study and present to subsequent NEFRC sessions further examples of NWFPs that have environmental and socio-economic value.

**(ii) Forest and range sustainable management**

a. Analysis, lessons learnt from afforestation & landscape restoration in drylands

26. The Commission was informed of the FAO initiative for a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of afforestation and restoration programmes and projects, which is being undertaken in collaboration with its member countries and partner organizations active on the subject. The initiative aims at developing operational guidelines for the restoration of degraded forests and lands within difficult environmental and socio-economic conditions in arid zones, to benefit local livelihoods.

27. The Commission emphasized: (i) the need for capacity development in the use and production of native species and gene banks; (ii) the importance of integrated landscape approaches and activities focusing on local communities and smallholders needs; and (iii) the need for considering the land capability/carrying capacity and original land use, tree density and rainfall before planning any restoration activity.

28. The Commission recommended FAO to conduct further analyses on: (i) the need for increasing tree composition and diversity as well as the promotion of native species (while addressing invasive species, pests and diseases); and (ii) using the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative as the entry point for the analysis in implementing countries (i.e. Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt, Mauritania, Algeria). The Commission also recommended countries to set up national technical committees to follow up on the initiative at the national level and that FAO play a catalytic role in harmonizing and facilitating the monitoring and evaluation of restoration programmes in countries, in collaboration with donors.

29. The Commission (in particular Kuwait, Libya and Sudan) requested FAO support for (i) designing and planning country restoration and afforestation programmes; and (ii) developing a regional Green Belt Project for the Near East.

b. Use of treated waste water in forestry & agroforestry systems

30. The secretariat informed the Commission of FAO's work, initiated in partnership with Italy to support some countries in the Near East, on the use of treated waste water (TWW) in forestry and agroforestry systems, using state of the art technologies. The secretariat presented project activities

carried out in Algeria, Egypt and Morocco during 2011 and activities planned for 2012 in the four project countries, which include Tunisia. The secretariat asked the Commission to endorse the project in order to empower further fund raising activities, to ensure the project's continuation and its enlargement, and called for better involvement of the NEFRC member countries by engaging in networking and exchange of information on TWW.

31. The Commission stressed the importance of the use of TWW in forestry, and the role of this in meeting people's resource needs, restoring degraded landscapes, combating desertification, contributing to climate change mitigation by expanding the carbon pool in forests and transferring knowledge and technology in these areas.

32. The Commission endorsed the project, with Tajikistan, Libya, Pakistan, Jordan and Uzbekistan officially requesting to join the project. The Commission recommended FAO to disseminate lessons learned as regards the use of treated waste water from all countries, especially valuable experience of the Gulf Countries, and countries to use the participatory approach to involve all stakeholders in the coordination of TWW projects.

33. The Commission noted the region's changing climatic conditions and the potential of agroforestry in meeting local people's needs and requested FAO to support member countries to build intersectoral approach that promote agroforestry systems as a tool for sustaining food security in the region. It urged member countries to support development and validation of the Agroforestry guidelines and further adopt and implement them.

34. The Commission requested FAO to assist member countries in raising awareness on the importance of urban and periurban forestry and promoting coordinated urban and periurban forestry (UPF) activities. It urged its member countries to support the development of the International UPF Guidelines, and further validate, adopt and implement them.

#### c. Progress in preparation of the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources

35. The Secretariat informed the Commission on the progress made in the preparation of the State of the World Forest Genetic Resources report, which is due to be completed in 2013, and the role of the countries of the Near East Region in this process.

36. The Commission noted the tangible progress made so far by FAO and the countries in the preparation of their respective country reports. Two members requested FAO for additional support in developing their country reports.

#### **(iii) Forests protection and wildlife conservation**

##### a. Responding to increasing demands in Fire management

37. The secretariat introduced the agenda item and reported on the recent activities in the area of fire management, including on wildfire protection approaches that integrate fire-related considerations into natural resource management strategies at the landscape level. The secretariat presented a proposal for developing a comprehensive programme supported by a Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) to better respond to the needs and recommendations of member countries. The secretariat also noted that the creation of the MDTF would ensure a more permanent approach for controlling forest fires and could attract other country donors' support, as Australia and New Zealand have already expressed a strong interest to include forest fire management as part of their landscape management.

38. The Commission endorsed a comprehensive programme supported by a MDTF. It recommended FAO, as part of the MDTF, to: develop early warning programmes and emergency centers in Near East countries; investigate indirect and transboundary effects of forest fires; support countries to strengthen local infrastructures and improve technical equipment; and further promote the community-based approach to engage stakeholders. UNDP also suggested that FAO conduct a survey

in the region on the different approaches to Community-Based Fire Management and share these experiences from the region.

b. Regional networks: between needs and wills

39. The secretariat informed the Commission on the actions taken by FAO to implement the recommendations of the 19<sup>th</sup> session and the progress made with the networks. The secretariat described the three networks in the Near East: the Near East Network on Forest Health and Invasive Species (NENFHIS), the Near East Regional Network on Forest and Wildland Fires (NENFIRE) and the Near East Working Group on Wildlife and Protected Area Management (NEWPAM) and noted a number of problems with their operationalization. These include the lack of an institutional framework, funds, commitment and involvement of member countries, all of which lead to the inability of the networks to achieve their objectives.

40. The Commission noted with concern the problems associated with the networks and recommended FAO to give the networks further chances and to try to find solutions to the problems; to assess with network coordinators the possibility for funding, and to disseminate information on the work of the networks. The Commission recommended countries to show more commitment for the networks; to designate country focal points, by high-level country authorities, to communicate with the network coordinators and to assure their financial contributions to established networks.

#### **REPORT OF THE INFORMAL MEETING ON FOREST EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE**

41. The secretariat reported on the outcome of the informal expert meeting on Forest Education and Knowledge, which was held on the margins of the NEFRC. The Commission endorsed the creation of one Advisory Panel on Forestry Education and suggested that FAO assist with these activities in a number of manners: (i) conduct a regional needs assessment through the establishment of a regional project to identify true gaps in knowledge and education in the region; (ii) short term training to strengthen training for teaching staff (e.g. through a forest policy training course similar to the one in RAP); and (iii) work in conjunction with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and other regional bodies (e.g. the European Forest Institute - Mediterranean Regional Office -EFIMED). A few participants also noted the need to update forest curricula in order to accommodate socio-economic and environmental variables and strengthen cooperation and capacity. The Commission welcomed the new Mediterranean Forest Master's degree, which is being promoted by EFIMED and supported by the EU. Participants from Jordan, Turkey and Tunisia were nominated to represent the region at the upcoming meeting on forest education and knowledge at COFO, in September 2012.

#### **IN-SESSION SEMINAR: FAO PRIORITIES AND ACTIVITIES IN THE SUB REGIONS: NORTH AFRICA, GULF & YEMEN, ORIENTAL NEAR EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA: (Item 6)**

42. An in-session seminar on FAO priorities and activities in the subregions was held during the session. Participants were informed about the priorities of each sub-region that were developed building on the national priorities for forestry, rangelands and climate change and with the aim of ensuring strong linkage between FAO's work and countries' priorities and promoting cooperation opportunities within the sub-regions and at the international level.

43. The Commission appreciated FAO's initiative to include its activities and priorities in the sub region in the NEFRC agenda and welcomed FAO's efforts to integrate rangelands into its regular programme of work and encouraged it to strengthen its actions in this regard. The Commission recommended FAO and countries to allocate sufficient human and financial resources to the forests and rangelands programme in the region. The Commission requested countries to improve cooperation and mechanisms for coordination at national and regional levels. Delegates stressed the need for local communities' direct involvement and inputs into the implementation and development of forest and rangelands projects and programmes.



## **HEADS OF FORESTRY DIALOGUE: FINANCING SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FOREST AND RANGELAND RESOURCES IN THE NEAR EAST: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES. (Item 7)**

44. In considering document FO: NEFRC/2012/7, participants appreciated the new initiative and the issues presented for discussion. The secretariat highlighted some of the challenges related to mobilizing resources for sustainable forest management as well as emerging opportunities, including climate change finance. In this respect, the Commission was informed of FAO support in the area of forest finance and to establish a new regional platform to enhance coordination on finance within international agreements and dialogues on forests and rangelands.

45. Each Head of Forestry reported on the experience with forests and rangelands finance in his country. Libya noted the difficulty in engaging the private sector. Sudan noted that forests' contribution to the country's GDP is underestimated, including due to the lack of accounting for environmental services, wood and NWFPs, as forest products are collected directly by people for nothing and as much transactions for such products take place in informal markets. The Treasury only acknowledges revenue from exports of NWFPs. Turkey noted the importance of accounting for NWFPs and improving mechanisms for payment for environmental services. Yemen expressed the hope that once its new forestry law is approved, forest finance will improve.

46. The Commission recommended that FAO provide financial and technical support to address environmental accounting, analyse forests and rangelands' contribution to GDP, and introduce the concept of green economy in the region. The Commission recommended countries to take concrete measures to access finance through international conventions and bodies related to climate change and requested FAO's support to promote this access. The Commission noted the difficulties in convincing policy makers that forests make a real contribution to the economy.

## **STATE OF INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT FORESTS AND RANGE RESOURCES IN THE NEAR EAST (item 8)**

### **(i) Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA): long-term strategy for the FAO FRA programme**

47. The secretariat introduced the agenda item on long-term strategy 2012-2030 for the forest resources assessment (FRA) programme of FAO, in support of sustainable forest management. The secretariat noted the trends in forest cover in the region, and that the response rate to FRA questionnaires from countries in the region could be improved. It is expected that as a result of FRA's new long-term strategy, the data reporting burden would be reduced, analytical outputs would be tailored to user needs, and future global resource assessments and reporting would be improved.

48. The Commission noted with appreciation the draft long-term strategy for the FRA programme that was presented in response to the request from the 20th Session of COFO. The Commission highlighted problems encountered by countries in reporting, particularly on topics related to forest ecosystems and rangelands, and noted the need to build capacity in these areas.

49. The Commission requested countries to identify and appoint national correspondents where they have not already done so. It was noted that having one or two national correspondents is precarious. It is perhaps more prudent for countries to consider having one correspondent and two alternates, one of them being a female forester, where the situation allows it. The Commission also requested FAO to provide more training, especially to women assigned to data collection, to reconsider its current grouping of countries when analyzing data for FRA, and to reflect in the future FRAs, regional specificities, particularly in dry zones where land use is dominated by rangelands and forests and rangelands are closely interrelated.

**REGIONAL ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE 20<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE 21<sup>st</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY (COFO) AND THE 31<sup>st</sup> REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE NEAR EAST (Item 9)**

50. The secretariat provided the rationale for creating a multi-year programme of work (MYPOW) for the next two years, which resulted from the FAO Immediate Plan of Action. The secretariat noted the need to make recommendations to feed into this programme. Since forestry also has Regional Conferences, the secretariat noted the need to prepare recommendations for both the 21<sup>st</sup> session of COFO and the Regional Conference.

51. The Chairperson of COFO, Mr Anders Lönnblad (Sweden), recalled the importance of these recommendations, noting that they would help shaping the agenda for the COFO session in September this year and help elaborating a programme of work that is even more responsive to the needs and wishes in the regions and at the country level.

52. The Commission recommended, based on the template (*Appendix D*) provided:

To COFO:

- The Commission recommended countries, for the sake of continuity and institutional memory, to nominate a permanent representative to the NEFRC, together with a permanent alternate and urged FAO to undertake a case study to explore the barriers to coordination between forest and range in Near East countries.
- The Commission recommended that FAO continue to give strong emphasis to sustainable management of forests and rangelands including in protected areas, management of forests and rangelands in low forest cover countries, reconciliation of institutional and legislative aspects in Near East countries, and forest protection. The Commission urged FAO to initiate studies on forests that have been subject to management for sustained yield basis for prolonged periods. The Commission requested FAO to identify good practices of sustainable production of NWFPs in RNE countries and elsewhere and share them with NEFRC countries. The meeting recommended FAO to identify, study and present to subsequent NEFRC sessions further examples of NWFPs that have environmental and socio-economic value.
- The Commission recommended FAO, as part of the MDTF, to: develop early warning programmes and emergency centres in Near East countries; investigate indirect and transboundary effects of forest fires; support countries to strengthen local infrastructures and improve technical equipment; and further promote the community-based approach to engage stakeholders. UNDP suggested that FAO conduct a survey in the region on the different approaches to Community-Based Fire Management and share these experiences from the region.
- The Commission endorsed the creation of an Advisory Panel on Forestry Education and suggested that FAO assist with related activities in a number of manners: (i) conduct a regional needs assessment through the establishment of a regional project to identify true gaps in knowledge and education in the region; (ii) short term training to strengthen training for teaching staff (e.g. through a forest policy training course similar to the one done in RAP); and (iii) work in conjunction with CGIAR and other regional bodies (e.g. EFIMED).
- The Commission recommended that FAO assist member countries to address environmental accounting, analyze forests and rangelands' contribution to GDP, and introduce the concept of green economy in the region. The Commission recommended countries to take concrete measures to access finance through international conventions and bodies and requested FAO's support to promote this access.
- The Commission requested FAO to support member countries to build intersectoral approach that promote agroforestry systems as a tool for sustaining food security in the region. It urged member countries to support the development and validation of the Agroforestry guidelines and further adopt and implement them.
- The Commission requested FAO to assist member countries in raising awareness on the importance of urban and periurban forestry and promoting coordinated urban and periurban

forestry (UPF) activities. It urged its member countries to support the development of the International UPF Guidelines, and further validate, adopt and implement them

To the Regional Conference:

- The Commission recommended countries, for the sake of continuity and institutional memory to nominate a permanent representative to the NEFRC together with a permanent alternate and urged FAO to undertake a case study to explore the barriers to coordination between forest and range in Near East countries.
- The Commission recommended FAO and countries to allocate sufficient human and financial resources to the forests and rangelands programme in the region.
- The Commission recommended FAO to disseminate lessons learned as regards the use of treated waste water from all countries, especially valuable experience of the Gulf Countries, and countries to use the participatory approach to involve all stakeholders in the coordination of treated waste water projects.
- The Commission recommended countries to take concrete measures to access finance through international conventions and bodies related to climate change and requested FAO's support to promote this access. The Commission noted the difficulties in convincing policy makers that forests make a real contribution to the economy.

#### **UPDATE ON CURRENT AND EMERGING INTERNATIONAL ISSUES (Item 10)**

##### **(i) Second Mediterranean Forest Week and 2010-2011 Progress report of *Silva Mediterranea***

53. The secretariat introduced the agenda item on the second Mediterranean Forest Week and progress report of the *Silva Mediterranea* Committee for the period 2010-2011 and informed the Commission of the latest developments undertaken by the Committee. The secretariat presented the 2009-2012 work programmes of the working groups and how the Committee increased communications for networking, policy and advocacy to raise the profile of Mediterranean forests. The secretariat questioned how to enhance active participation of other Mediterranean country members of the NEFRC in *Silva Mediterranea* and the Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests (CPMF), and how to create a dynamic like the one activated within *Silva Mediterranea* and CPMF in the NEFRC, as a whole.

54. The Commission congratulated the secretariat for the good achievements and the reactivation of the collaborative dynamic within the *Silva Mediterranea* Committee. The Commission noted the effective participation of six Near East countries and requested other countries to follow this pace and participate actively in *Silva Mediterranea*.

55. The Commission recommended *Silva Mediterranea* to: establish a working group dealing with rangelands management; enlarge the group membership to other countries of the Near East Region; find ways to catalyse engagement of countries including through the establishment of projects; extend the Cork Oak Working Group to address other relevant NWFPs common to the whole Mediterranean; create stronger linkages from *Silva Mediterranea* to the regional commissions, including through joint meetings of country members of two commissions in the same region; and produce studies valuing the goods and services provided by forests and rangelands in the Near East. Libya also indicated that it would like to be more actively involved in the Committee.

##### **(ii) Update on other current and emerging international issues**

56. The Commission was informed of the recent outcomes of the 2011 International Year of Forests (IYF); the recommendations of the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee on Forestry (October 2010); the National Forest Programmes and the National Forest Programme Facility; UNFCCC negotiations; and the First African Drylands Week in June 2011. The secretariat noted that countries could potentially benefit from the location of the upcoming UNFCCC COP18 in Qatar, as it could give

increased visibility to dryland issues given that the event is being held in a Low Forest Cover Country. The secretariat questioned how to increase momentum on communications after the IYF and what other opportunities existed to highlight drylands in international conventions and bodies.

57. The Commission recommended FAO to: assess the achievements of the IYF to gather and disseminate lessons learned; find ways to promote drylands issues at the upcoming UNFCCC COP18, including putting drylands as a central theme of the meeting; give increasing attention to the subject of land tenure; help coach countries in project development and establish a monitoring and evaluation framework for projects for use by FAO offices; share best practices to inform and encourage countries to match good project performance, including those for the Great Green Wall; and streamline the countries reporting process to international bodies.

58. The Commission requested countries to: consider using *Silva Mediterranea* as a platform for coordinating and promoting work with international organizations; strengthen communications messages on forests to show their importance; further consider how drylands can be integrated into REDD+ and in decisions to COFO; and focus on applied research projects in the region.

59. UNDP also informed about its communication strategy to promote Turkey's forests during the IYF and encouraged countries to use different types of media to promote forest-related work.

### **Side events**

60. In parallel to the Commission, the Second Near East Forestry Week (NEFW) was held with large participation of stakeholders. The programme of side events including stand, poster and photos exhibition are included in *Appendix E*.

### **Forests, Rangeland and Climate Change in the Near East Region: Fostering Regional and Sub-regional Cooperation**

61. The parallel event took place on 31 January, afternoon. It was attended by over 60 people including from GIZ, UNDP and, FAO. FAO presented the benefits in strengthening regional cooperation in climate change adaptation in the forest and range sectors and outlined actions taken recently under the auspices of the NEFRC to achieve this. A briefing was provided on the FAO and GIZ co-sponsored workshop for NEFRC, which was held in Cairo in September 2011 and at which logframes for sub-regional cooperation programmes to help address common needs of the countries were developed. Participants in the Cairo workshop presented the four sub-regional concept notes developed on the basis of the outcome of the Cairo meeting. Comments and advice were offered from the floor on content, approach and possible sources of financing of the programmes. Next steps were discussed, including formal dispatch of the concept notes to NEFRC members, issuance of invitation to countries unable to participate in the Cairo workshop (Jordan, Mauritania, Pakistan and Sudan) to join the initiative, nomination of a focal point by each country and consolidation of a resource mobilization strategy for the programmes. At the conclusion of the event, FAO highlighted various opportunities for countries to raise awareness of the importance of forest and rangelands to climate change adaptation. These include: organizing or participating in side events at UNFCCC COP18 and Forest Day 6, to take place in Qatar in November/December 2012; participating in the UNFCCC technical workshop on climate change and water, to be held in 2012; and, for least developed countries, working to ensure that forests and range are sufficiently visible in their respective National Adaptation Plan.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Item 11)**

62. There was no proposal for other business.

### **DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Item 12)**

63. The Commission noted with appreciation the offer of the delegations of Jordan and Ethiopia to host the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Near East Forestry and Range Commission in the early part of 2014. It

advised member countries, which had expressed interest in hosting the session, to send an official letter to the Director-General of FAO. The exact dates of the meeting would be further determined in consultation with the country concerned after appropriate logistical consultations.

**ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE 20<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE NEAR EAST FORESTRY COMMISSION (Item 13)**

64. The Commission reviewed the report, which was subsequently adopted by acclamation.

**CLOSURE OF THE 20<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE NEAR EAST FORESTRY AND RANGE COMMISSION AND OF THE NEAR EAST FORESTRY WEEK (Item 14)**

65. In their closing statements, the Chairperson thanked all participants and agencies for their active participation in the session and side events. FAO Deputy Regional Representative for the Near East and Sub-regional Coordinator to Oriental Near East, thanked the Government of Turkey, on behalf of FAO, for hosting the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the NEFRC and the excellent arrangements that had contributed to the meeting's success. The Secretary of the Commission made a special mention to the Turkish organisations and institutions that had provided valuable materials for display during the Second Near East Forestry Week. The Secretary reiterated his appreciation for the efforts of his colleagues in the FAO Forestry Department and his assistants in the Regional Office and of all counterparts in member countries.

66. Mr Ali Temerit, representative of the Republic of Turkey, closed the session on behalf of the Minister of Forestry and Water Affairs of Turkey. He emphasized the importance of forests to the region. He commended the good standard of debate and work of the Commission and the high level of participation by countries which reflected the growing awareness of the importance of the Commission, and of forests and rangelands and their roles in countries of the region. He concluded by thanking FAO for various aspects of technical support.

**APPENDIX A****AGENDA**

1. Opening of the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the Near East Forestry and Range Commission (NEFRC) and of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Near East Forestry Week
2. Adoption of agenda
3. Election of officers
4. Follow-up on requests and recommendations of the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission
  - (i) The Mandate & Activities of the Regional Forestry and Rangeland Bodies in the Near East: An Overview
  - (ii) Secretariat report on FAO and Country activities in the Region and Follow-up on requests and recommendations of the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission
5. FAO and countries activities in the region: priority issues for the 20<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission
  - (i) Adaptation of forest sector and sustainable development
    - a) Adaptation in the forest sector and sustainable development
    - a) Experiences of the Near East countries on utilization & processing of non-wood forest products
  - (ii) Forests and Range Sustainable Management
    - a) Participation of NEFRC in “Analysis, lessons learning from afforestation & landscape restoration in drylands”
    - b) Use of treated waste water in forestry & agroforestry systems
    - c) Progress in preparation of the State of the World’s Forest Genetic Resources
  - (iii) Forest protection and wildlife conservation
    - a) Responding to increasing demands in Fire Management
    - b) Regional networks: between needs and wills

Advisory Panel on Forest Knowledge (APFK)
6. In-session seminar: FAO Priorities and Activities in the Sub regions: North Africa, Gulf & Yemen, Oriental Near East and Central Asia (Presentations by the Sub regional Coordinators)
7. Heads of Forestry Dialogue – *NEAR EAST FOREST SECTOR*: Forest financing: challenges and opportunities
8. State of information and knowledge about forests and range resources in the Near East:
  - (i) Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA): *long-term strategy for the FAO FRA programme*
9. Regional issues identified by the 20<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission for the attention of the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Committee on Forestry (September 2012) and of the 31<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference for the Near East (March 2012)
10. Update on current and emerging international issues
  - (i) 2<sup>nd</sup> MFW & Silva Mediterranea progress report 2010-11
  - (ii) Other current and emerging international issues
11. Any other business
12. Date and place of next session

13. Adoption of the report

14. Closure of the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the Near East Forestry & Range Commission and of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Near East Forestry Week

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**APPENDIX C****LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

- FO: NEFRC/2012/1 Rev.1: Provisional Agenda
- FO: NEFRC/2012/4.1: The mandate and activities of the Regional Forestry and Rangeland bodies in the Near East: An Overview
- FO: NEFRC/2012/4.2: Secretariat Report on FAO and Country Activities in the Region and Follow-up on requests and recommendations of the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission
- FO: NEFRC/2012/5.1: Adaptation in the Forest Sector and Sustainable Development
- FO: NEFRC/2012/5.2: Experiences of Near East countries on utilization & processing of non-wood forest products: Cases of gum arabic, bee-honey, pistachios, rosemary and stone pine
- FO: NEFRC/2012/5.3: Regional initiatives for landscape restoration: Analysis and lessons learnt from Afforestation and Landscape Restoration in Drylands
- FO: NEFRC/2012/5.4: Use of treated waste water in forestry and agroforestry Systems
- FO: NEFRC/2012/5.5: Progress in Preparation of the State of the World Forest Genetic Resources
- FO: NEFRC/2012/5.6: Responding to increasing and changing demands in Fire Management
- FO: NEFRC/2012/5.7: Regional Networks, between needs and wills
- FO: NEFRC/2012/7: Financing sustainable management of forest and rangeland resources in Near East: Challenges and Opportunities
- FO: NEFRC/2012/8: Supporting Sustainable Forest management through Global Forest resources Assessments: long-term strategy 2012-2030 - Preparation of a long-term strategy for the Forest resource Assessment programme
- FO: NEFRC/2012/10.1: Second Mediterranean Forest Week and progress report of Silva Mediterranea committee for the period 2010-2011
- FO: NEFRC/2012/10.2: Update on Current and Emerging International Issues



## PROGRAMME OF THE 2<sup>nd</sup> NEAR EAST FORESTRY WEEK

<u>30 January 2012</u>	
09.00 -11.00	<i>Forest Fire Management in Turkey</i> <u>By: General Directorate of Forestry, Turkey</u> ROOM 2
16:30-18:00	Wildlife; Bird Ringing Sudan <u>By Aisha Elfaki, Sudan</u>
<u>31 January 2012</u>	
09.00 -11.00	<i>Climate Change Activities in the General Directorate of Forestry (Mitigation and Adaptation) Turkey</i> <u>By: General Directorate of Forestry, Turkey</u> ROOM 2
11.30-12.30	<u>Side event:</u> <i>"Towards Urban and Peri-Urban Forestry (UPF) Guidelines"</i> <i>A Green Agenda for Healthy Cities of Mediterranean and Near East - Improving Livelihood and Environment for All".</i>  <i>"Building a Collaborative Stakeholders Dialogue and Developing Guidelines for Decision Making"</i> <u>By: Michelle Gauthier, FAO, Rome</u> ROOM 2
11.30-12.30	<u>Side event:</u> <i>"Monitoring of wild animal disease in North "</i> <u>By: Malek Hayder and Nabil Assaf, FAO, Tunis</u>  <i>Presentations &amp; discussion on Rangeland management issues in semi-arid areas of the region</i> <u>By :Sarwat Mirza, Pakistan</u>  <i>How to Bring Back the Forests impacted by 'Forest Management' to their Original Shape - A case for Reverse Forest Management".</i> <u>By Dr Syed Mahmood, Pakistan</u>  ROOM 3
14.30-17.30	<i>Forests, Rangeland and Climate Change in the Near East Region: Fostering Regional and Sub-regional Cooperation</i> <u>By: Susan Braatz, FAO, Rome</u> ROOM 2
<u>02 February 2012</u>	
09.00 -11.00	<i>Non Wood Forest Products in Turkey; Achievements and Challenges</i> <u>By: General Directorate of Forestry, Turkey</u> ROOM 2

**STANDS, EXHIBITIONS, POSTERS AND PHOTOS ILLUSTRATED DURING  
THE 20th NEFRC and THE 2<sup>nd</sup> NEAR EAST FORESTRY WEEK**

Institutions, Country, Firm	Subject/Contents of the displaying/demonstration
General Directorate of Forestry, MFWA, Turkey	<i>New Methods and high-tech on forest fire control, observation and fighting</i>
General Directorate of Combating Desertification and Erosion Control, MFWA, Turkey	<i>Photo exhibition related to afforestation, land rehabilitation, erosion control action plan etc.</i>
General Directorate of Forestry, MFWA, Turkey	<i>Video show on the monitoring and observation systems on wildfire management</i>
Turkish Chamber of Forest Engineers (OMO)	<i>Documents such as CD, leaflets, notebook, files, calendar, etc. on the activity of the Chamber</i>
Sudan	<i>Demonstration of variety of local NTFPs in Sudan including Gum Arabic and by-products of it, leaflets, booklets about such products</i>
Inan Tarim Ecodab	<i>Demonstration of local (Antalya) produced ecologic, natural and aromatic plants (herbal) including huge number of samples including, organic plants, carrier oils, essential oils, vegetables, water, dried herbs, spices etc.</i>
Tajikistan	<i>Demonstration of national based organic and local products including almond, walnut, pistachio and some spice plants, dried herbs with leaflets, brochures, booklets as well as documents about the recently finalized FAO-TCP Home based Nursery project</i>
FAO	<i>Displaying of the recent publications including, technical papers, reports, books, periodicals about the forestry related issues in the NE region as well as world-wide.</i>
Antalya Regional Forest Directorate, Turkey	<i>Demonstration of a number of wildfire fighting material and equipment</i>
General Directorate of Forestry, MFWA, Turkey and Antalya Regional Forest Directorate	<i>Demonstration of aromatic and medicinal products including flowers, leaves oils, dried herbs, species etc.</i>

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Libyan Arab Jamahiriya  
Mauritania  
Morocco

Oman  
Pakistan  
Qatar  
Saudi Arabia (Kingdom of)  
Somalia  
Sudan  
Syrian Arab Republic  
Tajikistan  
Tunisia  
Turkey  
United Arab Emirates  
Uzbekistan  
Yemen

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