



NEAR EAST FORESTRY AND RANGE COMMISSION

TWENTY-THIRD SESSION

Beirut, Lebanon, 11 - 14 December 2017

SILVA MEDITERRANEA PROGRESS REPORT

Executive Summary

The Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions – *Silva Mediterranea* is an FAO Statutory body, currently chaired by Spain. The proposed Secretariat note reports on the main achievements and activities conducted by the Committee during the last two years with secretariat support provided by FAO Forestry Department and France.

I. Meetings of the Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions - *Silva Mediterranea*

1. A meeting of the Executive Committee of *Silva Mediterranea* was organized on 8 April 2016 in Rome to address the working plans of the working groups of *Silva Mediterranea*. An extraordinary meeting of the Committee was organized on 22 July 2016 during the Committee on Forestry of FAO and followed up on decisions taken by the Committee in 2015, the preparation of the Mediterranean initiative on restoration, the preparation of the 5th Mediterranean Forest Week and the preparation of the new edition of the State of Mediterranean Forests.

2. The Committee held its 22nd Session on 22 March 2017 in Agadir, Morocco, during the 5th Mediterranean Forest Week. The Committee elected Mr José Manuel Jaquotot Sáenz de Miera, Spanish Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Food and Environment as the new Chair of *Silva Mediterranea*. The Committee:

- a) took note of the progress in the implementation of the decisions taken by the Committee during its extraordinary meetings from 2012 to 2017;
- b) recognized the Strategic Framework on Mediterranean Forests adopted in 2013, as a voluntary tool to prioritize forestry questions in the region and monitor progress on the key forestry questions;

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- c) recommended to give impetus to the establishment of a specific strategy for *Silva Mediterranea*;
- d) took note that the Mediterranean Forest Weeks have replaced the technical content of the former sessions of the Committee;
- e) adopted the overall organization process of the 6th Mediterranean Forest Week to be held in 2019;
- f) validated the concept for a Mediterranean Agro-silvo-pastoral Memento as a complementary book to the State of Mediterranean Forests 2018;
- g) recommended to suppress the working group on sustainable financing mechanisms, and to reconsider the existence of the working group on climate change;
- h) adopted the working plans for the biennium 2017-2019 of the other working groups;
- i) gave its support to the ongoing regional dynamics on Forest and Landscape Restoration in the Mediterranean.

II. Working groups of *Silva Mediterranea*

3. A statement on Mediterranean forest fires was presented at the 6th International Wildland Fire Conference in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, organized on 13 October 2015 by the working group on forest fires of *Silva Mediterranea* acting as member of the Mediterranean and Near East Wildland Fire Network.

4. Activities were implemented within the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) Action FP1202 on “Strengthening conservation: a key issue for adaptation of marginal/peripheral populations of forest trees to climate change in Europe (MaP-FGR)” as part of the working plan of working group 4 on forest genetic resources. A policy brief on “Marginal and peripheral forests: a key genetic resource for enhancing the resilience of European forests to global change” has been published. The final conference of the COST Action was organized on 26-29 September 2016.

5. A series of eleven documents were published as outcomes of the regional project “Maximize the production of goods and services of Mediterranean forest ecosystems in the context of global changes” that was implemented under working group 5 on climate change. Two digital products (a data base and digital maps) and an 11’ video were also produced by the project. In the framework of this project, the working group organized a side-event “Mediterranean forests and us facing climate change” in the Climate Generations area of the UNFCCC COP21 in Paris on 7 December 2015, as well as a two-day workshop in October 2016 to review the REDD+ activities in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Lebanon and the role of the forest sectors in the Nationally Determined Contributions of these countries.

6. A policy brief on urban and peri-urban forestry in the Mediterranean has been prepared by the working group on urban and peri-urban forestry. The working group has also established a data base of case studies and a set of indicators for the assessment of urban and peri-urban forestry and green infrastructure in the Mediterranean.

7. A workshop “Desertification and Restoration in Mediterranean Drylands” was organized by the corresponding working group on 16 October 2015 in Ankara, Turkey, during COP 12 of UNCCD, to define the road map of the working group and initiate a regional initiative on forest and landscape restoration in the Mediterranean region.

III. The Agadir Commitment towards forest and landscape restoration

8. At the high-level segment of the 5th Mediterranean Forest Week on 24 March 2017, nine Mediterranean countries – Algeria, France, Iran, Lebanon, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia, and Turkey – endorsed the Agadir Commitment to improve Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR), Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and biodiversity conservation efforts in the Mediterranean region.

The Agadir Commitment proposes to establish a new regional Mediterranean initiative on FLR to support the achievement of the Bonn Challenge and Sustainable Development Goal 15 (SDG15).

9. This regional Mediterranean initiative also encourages political and administrative authorities at the national level, as well as stakeholders involved in the management of Mediterranean forest ecosystems and other wooded lands, to strengthen their respective FLR efforts in the context of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 of the United Nations Forum for Forests (UNFF) and in line with the global FLR objectives of the Rio Conventions and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

10. This regional Mediterranean initiative, which aims to restore at least 8 million hectares by 2030, is focused on the four main components: (1) Assess the ongoing national efforts on FLR; (2) Reinforce regional cooperation on Forest and Landscape Restoration and Land Degradation Neutrality; (3) Cooperate, among interested partners, to develop a consensual and diversified strategy for the financing of FLR efforts and reinforce national capacities; (4) Assess the respective efforts of countries through the establishment of a voluntary monitoring and notification system for FLR and LDN efforts in the Mediterranean context.

IV. Other activities

11. The Committee co-organized with partners the 5th Mediterranean Forest Week (MFW) on 20-24 March 2017 in Agadir, Morocco, on the topic of restoration of Mediterranean forests and landscapes. The 5th MFW was attended by more than 280 participants from 31 countries. The main outcome of the 5th MFW was the adoption of the Agadir Commitment. The 6th MFW in 2019 will be hosted by Lebanon.

12. The preparation of the new edition of the State of Mediterranean Forest (SoMF) was initiated in January 2016. Two meetings of the contributors to the new edition of the SoMF were organized in 2016. The writing of the thirteen chapters of this new edition is under way under the responsibility of chapter coordinators. The publication of the new edition of the SoMF is expected in 2018. As a complement to the SoMF, a concept note for a Mediterranean Agro-silvo-pastoral Memento has been developed. A chapter on Mediterranean forests has been published in the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) flagship report *Mediterra 2016*.

13. Young entrepreneurship in the bioeconomy was addressed in a project idea called Blue Forest developed with the Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL), the Mediterranean Office of the European Forest Institute (EFIMED) and CIHEAM. Blue Forest aims at developing an incubator to turn ideas of forest-based projects in the Mediterranean green economy into implementable business plans.

V. Points for consideration

The Commission may wish to:

- encourage the development of activities related to the young entrepreneurship in the bioeconomy as a way to address the challenges faced by Mediterranean forests in the context of global changes;
- encourage the development of activities on forest and landscape restoration in the Mediterranean region;
- encourage countries to contribute to the activities of the working groups of *Silva Mediterranea*;
- contribute to the preparation and commit to high-level participation in the 6th Mediterranean Forest Week to be held in 2019 in Lebanon.