



MINUTES OF FOREST INVASIVE SPECIES NETWORK FOR AFRICA (FISNA) MEETING

1 March 2016, 16:00

Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute (FABI), University of Pretoria

Pretoria, South Africa

Chairing: Clement Chilima (Malawi)

Minute Recording: Sithembelenkosini Moyo

Present: Brett Hurley (FABI)
Peter Kiwuso (Uganda)
Gerald Meke (Malawi)
Shiroma Sathyapala (FAO)
Madhina Tonderai (Zimbabwe)
Keddy Mbindo (Zambia)
Mduduzi Tembani (Zimbabwe)
Dave Moyo (Zambia)

Agenda:

1. Welcome and opening remarks by the Chairman
2. General update by the Secretariat
3. Review of minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising
4. Brief updates on alien forest invasive species in participating countries (to include brief presentations on new forest invasive pests of special interest in Africa)
5. FISNA administrative issues
5. The Way Forward on the FISNA Flagship Proposal
6. Any other business

1. Approval of agenda

The meeting's agenda was approved.

2. General update by the Secretariat

The Secretariat gave a brief history on FISNA, since many countries were represented by new members. He highlighted that FISNA was formed in 2004 after realizing that countries had the same problems with forest pests and diseases and a need to find a common solution to the problems. FISNA is supported by FAO and is coordinated from KEFRI in Kenya. The reason for creating FISNA was to coordinate the collation and dissemination of information relating to forest invasive species in sub-Saharan Africa for sustainable forest management and conservation of biodiversity.

The main objectives of FISNA were highlighted which include:

- To facilitate exchange of information and provide a link for communication about forest invasive species
- To alert and provide policy advice on transboundary movement, phytosanitary measures and other relevant information
- To raise regional awareness on forest invasive species issues
- To encourage the publication and sharing of research results, management and monitoring strategies
- To facilitate taxonomic support
- To act as a link between and among experts, institutions, networks and other stakeholders concerned with forest invasive species
- To facilitate the mobilization of resources for critical activities in the management of invasive species
- To provide technical guides on research and control of invasive species for sustainable forest protection and health issues in Africa

3. Review of minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

It was highlighted that during the last meeting it was mentioned the website would be handled by Malawi since the person who was managing the website at FAO had retired.

The issue of financial support to the country handling the website also came up but was not finalized since most of the members were not present to make a decision.

4. Brief updates on alien forest invasive species in participating countries (to include brief presentations on new forest invasive pests of special interest in Africa)

A. Zimbabwe

The update was presented by Mduduzi Tembani who highlighted that Zimbabwe has two major pests: *Leptocybe invasa* and *Thaumastocoris peregrinus*. The most important pest of Zimbabwe is *Leptocybe invasa*. To control the pest a biocontrol agent was imported from FABI through a project supported financially by FAO and technically by FABI. The rearing of the agent was done and Zimbabwe has released it in some sites and is now in the process of monitoring.

In 2013, the red gum lerp psyllid (*Glycaspis brimblecombei*) was discovered in Zimbabwe and to date little has been done to manage it, except chemical control and some isolated activities. The observation is that the pest is spreading very fast and is now becoming a problem especially in research plots where the country had invested in seed banks.

B. Malawi

The presentation was done by Gerald Meke. The most notorious pest of Malawi is *Leptocybe invasa* though other pests are present. *Leptocybe invasa* is such a problem that it has even caused the cessation of nursery projects in some parts of the country. Malawi has been involved in awareness campaigns and there has been a lot of panic and the growers are now promoting indigenous tree species and naturalized acacias. Farmers have switched to importing seeds of other alternative tree species even without permits. It was noted that Malawi conducted species screening and found that *Eucalyptus maidenii* has natural resistance to *L. invasa* but it is not a preferred tree species for farmers. Most seedling treatment by farmers is through chemical control.

Malawi also highlighted that *Prosopis juliflora* is a woody species that has invaded the country. Introduced through agroforestry programmes it has since become invasive and there is a need for control measures.

C. Mozambique

The presentation was delivered by Cacilda Chirinane. She reported that the three eucalyptus pests, *L. invasa*, *T. peregrinus* and *G. brimblecombei*, are present in Mozambique. The most serious pests are *L. invasa* and *G. brimblecombei*. *Thaumastocoris peregrinus* is only found in the southern part of the country and in very low populations. She mentioned that the country has been using chemicals to control all the pests but they want to start using biological control methods. She further informed the meeting that there is still need to convince the government to start taking forestry issues as a matter of priority because the country focuses more on crop than forestry issues.

D. Zambia

The presentation was done by Keddy Mbindo. Zambia has two major pests - *G. brimblecombei* and *L. invasa* - both discovered in the country in 2014. Observations indicate that *L. invasa* is more widespread though surveys are still being carried out to verify the notion. He cited that *L. invasa* was spreading faster than the red gum lerp which is still restricted to the southern parts of Zambia. Fortunately, the major eucalyptus plantations are found in the northern parts.

E. South Africa

Brett Hurley gave the presentation on the pests found in South Africa. He mentioned the following pests:

- a) *Glycaspis* - very serious, discovered in 2014.
- b) *L. invasa* - biological control agents have been released to control the pests.
- c) *Thaumastocoris* – the pest is almost managed since the biological control agent was released in 2013 in a number of sites.
- d) *Gonipterus* - This is a recurring problem but South Africa has done a lot of work on siredex.
- e) *Spondyliaspis* sp., shell lerp psyllid - detected in 2013 in KwaZulu Natali. While the pest has not been found on commercial plants, beekeepers are affected since the pest covers the whole tree.
- f) *Ophelimus maskelli* - detected in Gauteng province. The pest has not been found in commercial forests. It is known to be a very serious pest of eucalyptus. He further highlighted good news in that it came with its own natural enemy and the populations found in Johannesburg were already parasitized.

F. Uganda

Peter Kiwuso presented for Uganda. Research on host resistance and distribution of *Leptocybe invasa* and its biological control agents has been carried out and it has become the priority of the country. In 2015, the country detected the introduction of *Thaumastocoris peregrinus* which manifested in high numbers from the start. A paper was distributed to district levels for farmers' information and warning system. The country has red gum lerp but it's not yet a serious problem.

5. FISNA administrative issues

It was concluded that FAO would continue to update the website while countries decide on the feasible option. It was also mentioned that there is a need to create a platform where a discussion forum can be created for members to interact. Participants were encouraged to send email addresses to Gerald Meke so as to be added as new members. There was also an encouragement to use the Africa Tree Health Net created by FABI for technical issues since FISNA is just an information sharing platform. Members were encouraged to copy what other networks do in terms of uploading e-newsletters to the websites.

6. The Way Forward on the FISNA Flagship Proposal

For the project proposals countries were encouraged to go through the FAO country offices. Clement informed the meeting that he had submitted the regional project proposal through the FAO country office in Malawi and he will also send a copy to Shiroma for follow up purposes. Countries agreed to prepare quarterly e-newsletters and deadlines were set. Countries will work as couples in the e-newsletter production.

- Second quarter 2016 - Uganda and Malawi
- Third quarter 2016 - Zambia and Zimbabwe
- Fourth quarter 2016 - Secretariat will follow-up

Members also highlighted that it will also be good to have FABI upload their general overview paper to the website. Before the above issues are actioned it was highlighted that there is need to go back and talk to the regional co-ordinators.

Countries were encouraged to report to their national plant protection organization (NPPO) before they inform FISNA of any pests and diseases occurring in their countries.

As an action plan countries were asked to write what they were reporting according to the outline that Shiroma gave so that it could be uploaded to the website and as part of the minutes of the meeting and the due date for that was set as the 14th of April 2016.

The meeting was adjourned without any other business and the Secretariat thanked everyone for attending and especially FABI for hosting.