



FOOD *for* THE CITIES

Forest and trees, improving livelihood through healthy green cities



Tehran Parks and Green Space Organization

Tree and forest products, such as wood, firewood, fodder, medicine and food, generate income, employment and improve livelihoods. Tehran outskirts, Iran

Challenges...

The urban demographic situation across the world puts the environmental sustainability of the cities and the wellbeing of the inhabitants at stake. The intensification and extension of cities without taking into account the land-use capacity and the local need for woody building material and fuelwood, has contributed to a drastic depletion of tree and



F. Saibitiano

Tree cover has a positive impact on community well-being and recreational activities

forest cover in and around cities. This is a common situation in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Cities consequently suffer from floods, dust encroachment, water shortage, soil erosion and landslides associated to significant costs in terms of lost infrastructure and human death. Other natural disasters, conflicts and wars exacerbate the situation.

The major challenge is to give trees and forests their essential place in urban development. A green sustainable city is a mosaic of hedgerows, windbreaks, home gardens, orchards, recreation parks and tree-lined streets distributed over private, communal and public lands. Trees and forests are appreciated at the same time by various categories of urban dwellers. They are productive agroforestry systems, recreational green spaces, beautification elements, and contribute directly to the

livelihood of the poor, as well as to the wellbeing of the society as a whole. But land insecurity, the poverty of the population and institutional weaknesses remain major constraints to the conservation and restoration of tree systems in a harmonious way and a long-term perspective.

FAO's response...

By gathering world expertise, knowledge and best practices, FAO helps promote urban and periurban forestry with special attention to poverty alleviation, food security and environmental sustainability. FAO assists countries in developing national and local strategies, legal and institutional framework and programmes that ensure harmony between sectors, disciplines and institutions. Dialogue is central for designing and agreeing on fair and equitable options also based on local knowledge. Some major forum where FAO is an active actor and could raise urban forestry in the international agenda, are the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Mountain Forum, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and UN-Habitat and its World Urban Forum. In line with the Millennium Development Goals, attention is given to poverty alleviation, livelihood improvement of poor dwellers and environmental sustainability. FAO promotes the optimization of trees and forests for a healthy green city designed and managed in response to its specific socioeconomic identity, and its landscape and ecosystemic context.



E. Umit

Lack of trees results in economic losses. Trees save energy for cooling and heating as they reduce high temperatures and protect from cold winds. Urbanization around Izmir, Turkey

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FAO/G. Bizzarri



The depletion of trees and forests in and around cities may produce infrastructure losses and human deaths

FAO's actions...

FAO's support to the development of urban forestry includes:

- developing policies and strategies for urban and peri-urban forestry with the participation of urban dwellers, institutions and authorities involved at national and decentralized levels, e.g. municipal, government and NGOs;

- building synergy and collaboration in actions related to urban agriculture, mountain and watershed management, integrated landscape management, urban development; and promoting cooperation among practitioners from various disciplines and sectors;

- implementing good practices in the domains of resource management, e.g. use of waste water, arboriculture and agroforestry, and integrated urban planning, e.g. resources

assessment, economic valuation, participatory approaches and watershed management;

- encouraging worldwide dialogue, where governments, local authorities, communities, smallholders, NGOs, municipalities, universities and private enterprises can exchange on needs, opportunities and collaboration.

Examples of FAO's activities:

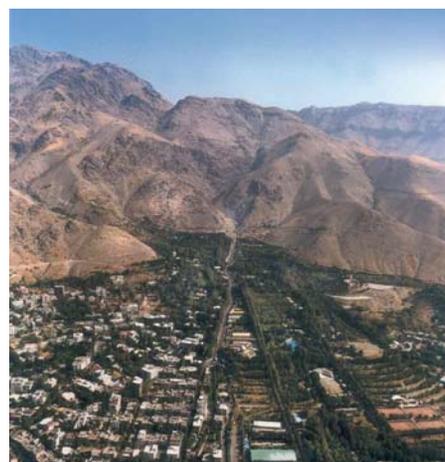
- policy briefs development to provide guidelines for municipal and national policy-making on urban and periurban forestry;
- strategies for urban forestry and priority action plans development, such as those for Bamako (Mali) and Bangui (Central African Republic);
- information, need analysis and awareness raising, e.g. case studies on the status of urban forestry in Amman, Abu Dhabi, Astana, Cairo, Dakar, Izmir, Kabul, Niamey, Quito, Teheran and Yerevan;
- regional studies on the role of the forestry sector in urbanization, such as the regional Forestry Outlook for West and Central Asia (FOWECA);
- thematic studies on the analysis of the social and environmental impact of the wood-energy demand and supply on urban development, for example, in East Africa and South-East Asia.

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Urban trees mitigate air pollution and help to preserve human health

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The integration of trees and forests in and around urban areas is an indispensable element of sustainability for the whole society



Food for the Cities - Multidisciplinary Area
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
www.fao.org/fcit/index.asp

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