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NEAR EAST FORESTRY COMMISSION

NINETEENTH SESSION

NEAR EAST FORESTRY WEEK

HAMMAMET, TUNISIA
5 – 9 APRIL 2010

**Forests and range: adapting to global changes for sustainable
development**

SECRETARIAT REPORT ON FAO AND COUNTRY ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION AND FOLLOW-UP ON REQUESTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 18TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

1. This note has been prepared to inform the Near East Forestry Commission (NEFC) about FAO forestry activities of interest to the region which were carried out in 2008-2009. The activities undertaken in response to the requests and recommendations of the Eighteenth Session of the Commission are summarized in *Annex A*.

REVIEW OF NEFC AND OTHER FAO FORESTRY ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING FOLLOW-UP TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF NEFC 18th FOREST POLICY

Institutional capacity building

2. The organization of a regional expert consultation on forest policies in the region was requested on several occasions. Accordingly, the Forest Policy and Economics Team (FOEP) in FAO will present to the Commission the "Guidelines for Forest Policy Development", which were completed recently. This will provide an opportunity to discuss and validate the document in light of experiences in countries such as Algeria, Egypt, Jordan and Syria which have benefited from FAO support. This exercise should also help to identify the main issues in implementing newly developed policies and related capacity building needs.

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Most FAO meeting documents are available on the Internet at www.fao.org

Support by the National Forest Programme Facility

3. The National Forest Programme Facility (NFP) assistance is geared towards the strengthening of capacity and the involvement of stakeholders in the national forest programme (nfp) planning and implementation process. Among the 70 countries with which the Facility has partnerships, five are in the Near East Region (Jordan, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen). Lebanon is currently preparing a proposal for submission to the Facility at the beginning of 2010.

SUB REGIONAL COOPERATION

Inter-session activities of the Near East Forestry Commission

4. An inter-session task force meeting was held in Cairo, Egypt, from 2 to 4 December 2008 and was attended by members of the Bureau of the 18th Session, representatives of the existing regional networks and FAO staff. A number of key issues pertaining to the follow-up of discussions and recommendations of the 18th Session were reviewed. These mainly related to the amendment of the name and mandate of the NEFC; the conduct of a study on the economic contribution of the forestry sector in the region and a consultation to provide an opportunity to enhance cooperation and exchange of experiences among countries of the region.

5. It was strongly recommended that RNE through its Policy Assistance group should look into possibilities of mobilizing resources from various sources in the region. The Task Force further discussed the draft position paper prepared to facilitate the participation of the Near East countries in the 19th Session of COFO. The NEFC was represented in the COFO Steering Committee meeting (held in September 2008 in Rome) by its rapporteur. In addition, the participation of the Near East countries in COFO 19 and the 13th World Forestry Congress, Buenos Aires, Argentina, October 2009, was also discussed, including the organization of the Near East Forestry Day.

Silva Mediterranea

6. Activities of The AFWC/EFC/NEFC Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions, *Silva Mediterranea*, are reported separately in the Secretariat Note “*Silva Mediterranea*: progress report on activities”.

Forests and climate change

7. Climate change has become a universal concern, as evidenced by the unprecedentedly high level of political participation in the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Copenhagen in December 2009.

8. In response to the recommendation related to climate change of the 18th Session, of the Commission, Khartoum, February 2008, and to similar requests made to FAO at the global level at the Nineteenth Session of the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) held in March 2009, FAO HQ and the FAO Regional Office for the Near East (RNE), in collaboration with the University of Alexandria, Egypt, launched a study on forests and climate change in the Near East Region. Its aim is to identify key issues, needs for national action and potentials for regional collaboration. A draft of the study is to be presented at the 19th Session of the NEFC for initial reaction and discussion of a work programme under NEFC, leading to increased regional collaboration in climate change.

9. FAO was involved in two major efforts to raise the profile of sustainable forest management in the context of climate change: i) FAO took leadership of the preparation of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests’ (CPF) “Strategic framework on forests and climate change”, which was presented to the UNFCCC’s COP14 (December 2008), and ii) FAO organized a special session on climate change at the World Forestry Congress (October 2009) which resulted in a statement for UNFCCC, which was presented at COP15 (December 2009).

10. FAO has entered into partnership with UNDP and UNEP in the UN Collaborative Partnership on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD), which was officially launched in September 2008. UN-REDD is supporting early actions on REDD in nine countries and a range of international support activities. FAO has the lead on supporting the development of methodologies and country capacity in measuring forest carbon stocks and stock changes.

11. FAO has initiated two sets of guidelines for integrating climate change into the forestry sector, one at the policy (national forest programme (nfp) level and the other at forest management unit level. These are expected to be completed in 2010. Countries are invited to participate in the testing and later the use of the guidelines with FAO support.

12. FAO has commissioned a global study with the Stockholm Environment Institute to determine the scope and potential for woodfuels to replace fossil fuels, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation. The study will analyze the potential for and implications of increased woodfuel development for climate change mitigation and address the current woodfuels offset mechanisms in place and their relative emissions reduction potentials.

State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources

13. At its Nineteenth Session, the Committee on Forestry discussed and supported the preparation of the first *State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*, to be presented in 2013, and urged member countries to collaborate with FAO and partner organizations in producing the Report. The Committee also requested a specific reference to forest genetic resources in the FAO Forestry Strategy.

14. The primary source of data and information for the preparation of *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources* will be Country Reports on Forest Genetic Resources. Detailed guidelines for the Country Reports were prepared to assist countries in their preparation of them as strategic assessments of the status and trends of forest genetic resources as well as the state of management capacities and needs. In this way, Country Reports will both serve as a strategic tool for national efforts to enhance the use, development and conservation of forest genetic resources as well as provide the basis for preparing the global report on *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*. The need to establish national mechanisms to ensure opportunities for the participation of national stakeholders in the preparation of the Country Report is emphasised.

Regional guidelines on best forestry practices in arid and semi-arid zones

15. The document on voluntary guidelines on good forestry and range practices in arid and semi-arid zones has reached its final stage thanks to the great work of the ad hoc group of experts and partner regional organizations. It was published in 2009. The NEFC Task Force recommended the conversion of this group into a regional arid zone forestry network to play an active advisory role in the implementation and follow-up of these guidelines.

Joint publication on Arid Mountain Ecosystems with UNCCD Secretariat

16. The Mountain Partnership Secretariat, hosted in FAO's Forestry Department, and the UNCCD Secretariat are preparing a publication for release in 2010 focusing on issues related to the sustainable management of arid and semi-arid mountain ecosystems. The document will target decision-makers and practitioners, promoting greater awareness and action for the protection and sustainable use of dryland mountain regions, which will be of particular relevance to the Near East Region

FOREST RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Bio-energy plantations

17. In response to the recommendations of the NEFC 18, The FAO Regional Office for the Near East (RNE) organized a regional symposium on "oil trees for energy production and for

valorisation of marginal land and water resources” in Luxor, Egypt, from 10 to 13 February 2009. The meeting was attended by 34 participants representing 12 Near East countries and three private and non-governmental organizations. Through the information shared and experience exchanged, and in the light of the actual limited level of knowledge, it was stressed that more research is needed on the socio-economic and environmental effects before undertaking any introduction on a large scale.

18. The meeting recommended the formulation of a pilot regional project, with the assistance of FAO, to study the feasibility of large-scale oil tree plantations in selected Near-East countries, to identify opportunities and constraints, to strengthen national capacities in this regard and to develop regional cooperation.

Planted Forests

19. There is a need to strengthen planted forests activities in the region as they provide a wide range of wood, non-wood and fibre products. Their use in afforestation and reforestation programmes reduces the pressure on natural forests, and increases the production of quality wood. In agroforestry systems, they prove to be effective tools to combat hunger and reduce poverty through the direct or indirect provision of services that help to increase farmers’ income. Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey are members of the International Poplar Commission (IPC) and other countries of the region would be interested to join the Commission. FAO is involved in revitalising both the Planted Forests and IPC activities in the Near East countries through the submission of a number of projects on Planted Forests and more specifically on Poplars and Willows

Wildlife

20. Activities are reported separately in the secretariat note “Wildlife and Protected areas management in the Near East”.

Forests and water

21. Watershed management and the role of trees in water management are receiving increasing attention in the Near East region. A Workshop on Forests and Water, which was convened from 12 to 14 May 2009 in Antalya, was co-organised by Turkey, Switzerland, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Water Convention and FAO. Experts from four NEFC member countries participated in the Workshop (Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia). The workshop resulted in a strong call for a particular future focus on forests and water in low forest cover countries in the UNECE and the wider Mediterranean region.

FOREST HEALTH AND WILD FIRE MANAGEMENT

Forest and Fires

22. Activities are reported separately in the secretariat note “Forests and fire management”, the secretariat paper “working groups and networks”. Actions undertaken are also summarized in the table in Annex A).

Forest Health (cooperation and networking – Near East Network on Forest Health and Invasive Species (NENFHIS))

23. The first issue of the NENFHIS newsletter was endorsed by the NEFC intersessional meeting and has been made available through the website at the following link: [HTTP://WWW.FAO.ORG/FORESTRY/51295/EN/](http://www.fao.org/forestry/51295/en/). It was also agreed that the Coordinator of the network would contact all member countries in order to obtain the nomination of NENFHIS country focal points and to ensure their more active participation, as to date only three countries are active within the network. A presentation about NENFHIS and its objectives was included

during a side event on “Working together through formal and informal invasive species networks” which was held during the World Forestry Congress, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in October 2009. Further information is provided in the Secretariat note “working groups and networks”.

FOREST AND RANGE INFORMATION

Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2010

24. In the Near East Region, one of the key features of the FRA 2010 process was the training workshop held in Alexandria, Egypt, from 13 to 16 October 2008. Twelve national correspondents from Near East countries attended the workshop (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen). Its aim was to provide National Correspondents with the technical assistance and guidance necessary to ensure high-quality reporting which meets the specifications established for FRA 2010.

State of the World's Forests (SOFO)

25. The theme of the 2009 edition of *The State of the World's Forests* was *Society, Forests and Forestry: adapting for the future*. It addresses several questions, among which the impacts of actual global and regional trends on forests, due to unprecedented challenges the world faces today.

SUPPORT TO COUNTRY INITIATIVES

26. FAO continues to support various projects, some of which have recently been terminated. FAO assistance includes among others:

Forest policies, legislation and institutions:

- support to the implementation of national forest policy in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Syria through the FAO TCP programme; and
- support to the project on Co-management of Tunisian Forestry Resources

Forest and Rangeland Fire Management

- projects and activities are reported separately in the secretariat note “Forest and Fire management”

Sustainable Mountain Development

- support to the development of a national strategy for mountain areas and the development of high-quality mountain products in Morocco through the FAO TCP.
- support to the formulation of a project on Watershed Management in Syria.

FORESTRY FIELD PROGRAMME

27. FAO in the Near East focuses on priority issues such as forest policy and sustainable forest management. Also, a number of regional meetings and workshops were organized, in which wildlife, forest fires, bio-energy and climate change have been at the center of discussions and exchange of information and experience.

28. At national level, countries are continuing their efforts to implement their respective forestry programmes but, at the same time, the pressure on natural resources is increasing, resulting in rapid degradation of forest ecosystems. The situation is expected to worsen in the future due to the impact of climate change.

29. The social, economic and environmental roles of forests and the necessity of forestry development are increasingly recognized at national and regional levels. However, the priority

given to the sector when integrating forestry into national development plans and strategies is still very low. The constraints which were identified include the lack of adequate resources, non-coherent policy framework, inappropriate legislation and non-existing long term vision and political will.

30. The last Task Force meeting of the Commission recognized that the forestry field programme in the region is declining. It was therefore strongly recommended that possibilities of mobilizing resources from the region should be sought, including financing through Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF) projects like in Morocco and Tunisia.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

31. The Commission may wish to discuss:
- priority activities concerning the sector in the countries of the region and identify ways to address them with better coordination and synergy, including collaboration with other regions through *Silva Mediterranea*;
 - necessary ways and means to mobilize financial resources and technical skills in the region, in order to ensure greater development of the sector and to find responses to the new challenges inherent to global changes.
 - FAO programme in the region and how to enhance its implementation through regular and field Programmes.
 - endorsement of the results of the Lattakia workshop on fires, especially the newly created network on fire management.
 - a recommendation for the topic related to the important role of forests and other trees-outside-forest systems, including agroforestry, in the context of urbanization an area which is receiving increasing attention from international and national fora and decision-makers. Urban and peri-urban forestry should be systematically taken into account in integrated land use and biodiversity approaches, based on regional conditions and local specificities. The 5th Africa Summit held in Marrakech from 16 to 20 December 2009 highlighted this concern in the current context of climate change and the two food and financial crises. Participatory development of decision-making tools as well as building of national and international networking of stakeholders should be put in place to design solutions for the region.

**Annex A. FOLLOW-UP TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EIGHTEEN SESSION
OF THE NEAR EAST FORESTRY COMMISSION**

The following table presents a summary of the recommendations formulated at the Eighteenth Session of the Commission and the action taken or proposed:

<p>SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS (as appeared and cited in the summary of recommendations for the attention to the member countries as well as to FAO – within the report of the NEFC 18th Session)</p>	<p>ACTION TAKEN OR PROPOSED</p>
<p>LAND TENURE AND PARTICIPATORY FORESTRY</p> <p>Paragraph i. member countries strive to create synergies and strengthen cooperation among all institutions and sectors dealing with forest-related activities and trees outside forests, including urban forests and trees, protected areas and other ecosystems</p> <p>Paragraph ii. member countries undertake forest tenure reforms that could provide favourable conditions for rural communities, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders to sustainably manage forests</p> <p>Paragraph iii. member countries to seek support from FAO to conduct a regional workshop on participatory forestry, to take stock of on-going participatory forestry initiatives, clarify the concept of participatory forestry, share best practices, raise awareness and to decide how to further promote participatory forestry in the region</p>	<p>No action is reported</p> <p>No action is reported</p> <p>No action is reported</p>
<p>FAO SUPPORT TO MEMBER COUNTRIES THROUGH PROJECTS</p> <p>Paragraph v. FAO to assist member countries in priority issues identification, financial opportunities and contributions and increase size of forestry regional programme:</p> <p><i>a) and referred to also in paragraph xx a) identify the priority forestry issues to be addressed through a coherent field programme portfolio;</i></p>	<p>FAO has initiated several regional workshops: Fire management (Syria), wildlife (Syria), oil trees (Egypt)</p> <p>A draft project concept was prepared by FAO/RNE on capacity building for forest and rangeland management to mitigate climate change impacts in the Near East Region. The document needs to be reviewed and its formulation finalized.</p>

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS (as appeared and cited in the summary of recommendations for the attention to the member countries as well as to FAO – within the report of the NEFC 18 th Session)	ACTION TAKEN OR PROPOSED
<p><i>b) and referred to also in paragraph xx b). FAO and member countries increase efforts to seize opportunities offered by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and which remain under-tapped, the newly-established Arab Environmental Funds for Forestry Development and other donors.</i></p> <p><i>c) and referred to also in paragraph xx c) priorities to be given to regional projects, countries requested to endorse such projects within adequate time frame</i></p> <p><i>d) and referred to also in paragraph xx d) countries to seek contributions from the newly established Arab Environmental Funds for Forestry Development. FAO welcomed to assist preparation of project proposals</i></p>	<p>FOMC with the FAO Representation in the Islamic Republic of Iran is supporting the Iranian Government in the preparation of a GEF full-fledge project on “Rehabilitation of forest landscapes and degraded lands”.</p> <p>A draft project document on “Enhancing regional capacities for biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of protected areas in the Near East” was formulated by RNEO. The revised workshop proceedings are a major resource and baseline/reference document for further activities. So far, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Tunisia have delivered the requested information on all discussed aspects of wildlife and protected area management in their countries, and the on-going revision of the TCP project proposal has been focusing on them (it may have to be re-formulated for individual countries if a common approach cannot be found).</p> <p>No action is reported</p>
<p>INCREASED COLLABORATION AND PARTICIPATION WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE SECTOR</p> <p>Paragraph iv. Participation of and partnership with all stakeholders concerned in forest-related activities to be increased. This would lead to greater visibility and importance of the sector in order to obtain enhanced political, institutional and financial support from national authorities</p>	<p>FAO collaborated with Tunisia in the design and development of the forest concessions system that will increasingly involve the private sector, local communities and NGOs in the management of the forest and rangeland resources. The results of this collaboration, though a TCP project, are likely to have a positive effect on the forestry sector in Tunisia for years to come. The strong political will in Tunisia made the national debate on strategic (forest concessions) issues widely participative and rich. The project established a strong legal basis for the forest concessions in Tunisia.</p>

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS (as appeared and cited in the summary of recommendations for the attention to the member countries as well as to FAO – within the report of the NEFC 18th Session)	ACTION TAKEN OR PROPOSED
<p>Paragraph vi. The Commission urges member countries to provide political support to and facilitate the participation of their respective focal points in the Network's activities</p> <p>Paragraph xv. FAO to strengthen and pursue meetings and joint programmes on forests and range</p>	<p>Several projects are under preparation in the framework of <i>Silva Mediterranea</i> to reinforce Near East Mediterranean countries in <i>Silva Mediterranea</i> Working Group Activities (see <i>secretariat note on "Silva Mediterranea: progress report on activities"</i>).</p> <p>Various meetings and workshops were organized during which forest issues in the region were discussed and experiences shared. They include the NEFC intersessional task force meeting (Dec 2008), thematic workshops (oil trees, forest fires, wildlife, forest resources assessment, Near East Forestry Day during the XIII World Forestry Congress, climate change and sustainable forest management)</p>

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS (as appeared and cited in the summary of recommendations for the attention to the member countries as well as to FAO – within the report of the NEFC 18 th Session)	ACTION TAKEN OR PROPOSED
<p>FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE</p> <p>Paragraph vii. the Commission urged member countries to :</p> <p>a) share and exchange experience on the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and voluntary market forestry projects in particular ways in which difficulties had been overcome</p> <p>b) promote the development of forest carbon projects through training, extension and policy and financial measures</p> <p>c) seek to fully engage the private sector in climate change mitigation projects in forestry</p> <p>Paragraph xxiv. FAO and other relevant organizations to pursue and increase their support to African and Near East countries in forests and climate change, including technical assistance and capacity strengthening in areas such as forest inventories, monitoring carbon stocks, development of forest carbon projects, and accessing carbon markets</p> <p>Paragraph viii. member countries to address adaptation and mitigation opportunities in their forestry sectors in a holistic way to capture synergies, incorporate them in national forest programmes (nfps) and link them with human development needs</p>	<p>No action is reported</p> <p>FAO is working on a publication, which will be finalized in 2010, to assist countries to better understand and access carbon markets.</p> <p>FAO, in response to a request from its Advisory Committee for Paper and Wood Products, is preparing a publication entitled “The effects of the global forest products industry on atmospheric greenhouse gases”, which will be released in 2010.</p> <p>FAO through the UN-REDD programme is developing methodologies for measuring forest carbon stocks and stock changes and strengthening related country capacities.</p> <p>The Forest Management Team (FOMR) assisted six countries from the region in the design and formulation of a regional project “Assessment of Forests, Trees and Range Resources to Support Policy Harmonisation in Six Near East Countries”. The project is still in search of funds. In October 2009, FAO introduced it to the Islamic Development Bank for consideration. The project constitutes a strong basis for the assessment of the effects of climate change on the natural ecosystems in the region, monitoring of carbon stocks as well as for the development of forest carbon projects.</p> <p>FAO collaborated with the General Directorate of Forests of Algeria in its project on national forest inventory by providing capacity building and advice on methodological issues</p> <p>FAO, in collaboration with the University of Alexandria, Egypt, is undertaking a study on climate change in the Near East region, with focus on forests, range and other wooded lands and with the objective of generating support for national actions and regional collaboration.</p>

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS (as appeared and cited in the summary of recommendations for the attention to the member countries as well as to FAO – within the report of the NEFC 18 th Session)	ACTION TAKEN OR PROPOSED
<p>Paragraph ix. member countries to highlight the potential for dryland forests in adaptation and mitigation in the international climate change dialogue and include these forests in their climate change programme</p> <p>Paragraph x. collaboration and information exchange on forests and climate change mitigation and adaptation be strengthened and unified responses to international initiatives are to be developed (while recognizing the variability among countries)</p> <p>Paragraph xi and referred to also in paragraph xxv. Member countries to work to harmonize their efforts in climate change with their commitments under other forest-related international conventions and agreements. FAO and other members of CPF to continue and increase collaboration and cooperation in their forest and climate change programmes.</p>	<p>FAO is developing two sets of guidelines for addressing climate change concerns within the forestry sector, one at the policy (nfp) level and the other at forest management unit level. These are expected to be completed in 2010.</p> <p>A project developed by FAO-<i>Silva Mediterranea</i> and <i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)</i> on “Adapting policy framework conditions for sustainable forest management in the Mediterranean Middle East and North Africa (Algeria, Morocco, Lebanon, Tunisia, Turkey and Syria) has been approved for funding by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and will be made operational in 2010.</p> <p>No action is reported</p> <p>FAO lead the preparation of the CPF’s “Strategic framework on forests and climate change”, which was presented to the UNFCCC’s COP14 (December 2008). FAO organized a special session on climate change at the World Forestry Congress (October 2009) which resulted in a statement for UNFCCC, which was presented at COP15 (December 2009).</p>
<p>STRUCTURE AND ROLE OF NEFC</p> <p>Paragraph xv. Amendment of title and mandate of NEFC in order to include range concerns</p>	<p>The Office of the FAO Legal Office was consulted. A short explanatory paper on the proposed new name and expected implications of the change will be shared with participants at the 19th session of NEFC</p>
<p>FOREST POLICY</p> <p>Paragraph xvii. FAO to undertake a study on the forest policies, laws and institutions in the countries of the region</p>	<p>Prior to the recommended expert consultation on the subject, guidelines on forest policy prepared by FOEP will be presented as one activity of the 19th NEFC session. This will allow for discussion of the document in light of experiences in countries which have received</p>

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS (as appeared and cited in the summary of recommendations for the attention to the member countries as well as to FAO – within the report of the NEFC 18 th Session)	ACTION TAKEN OR PROPOSED
<p>Paragraph xviii. FAO to undertake a study to document and highlight the economic, social and environmental importance of forests, trees outside forests, urban forests, oases and other particular formations.</p> <p>Paragraph xix. FAO RNE to organize a workshop to share experiences in successful mechanisms to increase funding and stakeholder participation in forest-related activities.</p> <p>Paragraph xxi and xxii. FAO RNE urged to move ahead with the preparation and submission of the guidelines on good forestry practices in arid and semi arid zones to the next session of the Committee on Forestry in 2009</p>	<p>support from FAO. This could result in guidance in applying the guide and be used to identify capacity building needs.</p> <p>No action is reported.</p> <p>No experience is reported</p> <p>Guidelines finalised, edited and published under the title “Guidelines for good forestry and range practices in arid and semi-arid zones of the Near East “(working paper – RNEO 1-09). The guidelines will be submitted to NEFC 19 for endorsement.</p>
<p>FOREST PROTECTION : FOREST HEALTH</p> <p>Paragraph xxiii. Establishment of a Near East Network on Forest Health and Invasive Species (NENFHIS) as a regional platform to share information and experience on integrated and dynamic forest pest management and on the generation of baseline data for decision-making. It further recommended that the number of executive committee members be limited to five countries, to be selected on the basis of balanced geographical representation.</p>	<p>NENFHIS was created in December 2007 in response to increasing concern about common forest health issues and the threat of invasive species to the region. Its major objective is to foster integrated and dynamic forest pest management in the Near East Region and to provide decision-makers with baseline data for making informed decisions. Representatives of Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and Yemen are founding members of the network. The first issue of the NENFHIS newsletter was endorsed by the NEFC intersession meeting in December 2008. It was also agreed at the NEFC task force meeting that the Coordinator of the network will contact all member countries in order to ensure nomination of NENFHIS country focal points.</p>
<p>FOREST AND WATER</p> <p>Paragraph xiv. (i) linkages between forests and water resources to be studied further; (ii) integrated management of water and trees to be</p>	<p>Watershed management and the role of trees in water management are receiving increasing attention in the Near East Region. A Workshop on Forests and Water,</p>

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<p>encouraged, including incorporating forestry in watershed management plans; and (iii) innovative mechanisms, including payments for environmental services, be put in place to ensure efficient and sustainable water, trees and forest management</p>	<p>which was convened from 12 to 14 May 2009 in Antalya and which was co-organised by Turkey, Switzerland, the MCPFE, the UNECE Water Convention and FAO. The workshop resulted in a strong call for a particular future focus on forests and water in low forest cover countries in the UNECE and the wider Mediterranean region. Experts from Jordan, Lebanon Morocco and Tunisia participated in the workshop.</p>
<p>FOREST PROTECTION : FOREST AND FIRE</p> <p>Paragraph xiii. (i) local communities to be trained and engaged in forest management; (ii) regional cooperation to be promoted, including the development of transboundary strategies; and (iii) intersectoral approached to be adopted for integrated fire management at local and national levels</p> <p>Paragraph xxvii. FAO to assist member countries in their efforts to implement the voluntary guidelines and to develop national and regional fire management plans.</p>	<p>A regional workshop on forest fires was organized at Lattakia, Syria, on 15-17 November 2009. It was attended by 13 participants from ten Near East countries. The principal objective was the creation of the regional network on the management of fires, and to offer a framework to formalize and revitalize the regional cooperation in this domain. The meeting results are to be submitted for the attention and the endorsement of the 19th Session of NEFC which had recommended the creation of such a network.</p>
<p>WOOD ENERGY SYSTEMS</p> <p>Paragraph xii. member countries to evaluate with care the costs and benefits of investing in bio-energy, as such investments may compete with food production and increase deforestation</p> <p>Paragraph xxvi. FAO to assist member countries in their efforts to enhance national and regional capacities for the development, implementation and monitoring of wood energy systems, including the establishment of information systems.</p>	<p>FAO has commissioned a global study with the Stockholm Environment Institute to determine the scope and potential for woodfuels to replace fossil fuels thereby contributing to climate change mitigation. The study will undertake an in-depth analysis of the physical and economic potential and the possible social and environmental consequences of substituting woodfuels for fossil fuels.</p>
<p>FOREST ASSESSMENT</p> <p>Paragraph xxix. FAO to increase its efforts to strengthen the capacity of national FRA correspondents and provide them with the</p>	<p>A training workshop held in Alexandria, Egypt, from 13 to 16 October 2008 to provide FRA national correspondents with the technical assistance and</p>

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS (as appeared and cited in the summary of recommendations for the attention to the member countries as well as to FAO – within the report of the NEFC 18 th Session)	ACTION TAKEN OR PROPOSED
necessary support for procuring accurate data of high quality on all types of forests and other land uses.	guidance necessary to ensure high-quality reporting which meets the specifications established for FRA 2010. 12 national correspondents from Near East countries attended the workshop.
FAO FOREST STRATEGY Paragraph xxvii. FAO to circulate the draft strategy in mid-2008, to the national heads of forestry (through official communication) and be posted on the FAO Forestry and forestry strategy websites. They agreed to engage actively in the process. FAO to present the new strategy to the 19 th Session of COFO in March 2009 for its consideration	At its 19 th Session, COFO endorsed the new FAO Strategy for Forests and Forestry, subject to the clarification that references to governance referred to governance “at all levels” and the addition of a specific reference to forest genetic resources in the sixth Organizational Result, together with the inclusion of a reference to work directed towards supporting innovation in the fifth Organizational Result. It acknowledged the alignment of the Strategy with the preparation of the new FAO Strategic Framework and Medium-Term Plan and lauded the open process used to prepare the draft strategy, particularly its review by all six regional forestry commissions.