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Продовольственная и  
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Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## 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**

**NATIONAL FOREST MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT**

*National Forest Monitoring and Assessment (NFMA): capacity development for collecting and reporting timely and reliable data on forest resources, forest and land-use change, forest uses and users to improve national policy and planning needs and country reporting to UN conventions and international processes.*

#### National Forest Monitoring and Assessment

1. National Forest Monitoring and Assessment (NFMA) is the process of collection, analysis and use of information about the entire forest resources in a country. NFMA also includes analysis, evaluations and scenario development for use of information in, for example, policy processes and various other forms of decision-making. National forest inventory is the principal activity of data collection within an NFMA.
2. The demand for forest and land use information has evolved from the decades-old merely economic point of view to, nowadays, a wider range of information encompassing the economic, social and environmental benefits of forest and tree resources. Near East countries are among the least endowed with forestry resources and they are also among those with the most scant information. One of the main conclusions of the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2000, later confirmed by FRA 2005, was that forestry information in the Near East is still poor and most countries have difficulties in reporting on their resources. For example in the past two decades only six countries provided reports with information collected through national field surveys and another four countries, including those with the greatest forest cover such as Sudan

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and Iran, based their reports on forest maps. No other countries in the region have reported on their forest inventory processes.

3. The scarcity of forestry information in the Near East is the result of a number of factors, including:

- (i) lack or insufficient financial and human capacity of some countries;
- (ii) information and knowledge about the forestry resources are often not among the countries' priorities; and
- (iii) low awareness among decision-makers about the importance of national forest inventory process as the foundation for policies, planning and development.

4. The FAO Forestry Department has built up a significant capacity to respond to countries' requests for assistance in NFMA processes. NFMAs are country demand-driven and designed to meet firstly the needs of national decision-makers and then international reporting requirements. Worldwide, since 2000, FAO has assisted ten countries in completing their NFMA projects and is currently supporting similar projects in ten other countries.

5. In the Near East, FAO has responded to countries' requests for assistance by formulating NFMA project documents, identifying potential external donors and assisting in the implementation of the projects. So far Lebanon and Algeria have finalised their NFMAs and Kyrgyzstan is about to complete implementation of its assessment with FAO collaboration. FAO has also supported the formulation of NFMA projects for Uzbekistan and Sudan and a broader sub-regional project on forest and range resources assessment and monitoring for Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Oman, Syria and Yemen, but these projects have not yet been funded.

6. The NFMAs are designed in such a way as to enable countries to monitor and report on forest carbon, as would be required under an United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) instrument for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD-plus). NFMAs can be a tool to develop national strategies for climate change adaptation to and mitigation as well as poverty reduction. The Near East is characterised by its extensive rangeland systems. These are known to be a source of considerable amounts of GHG emissions, but also to have significant mitigation potential through sequestration and carbon storage. Considering the region's extent of both the forest and range resources and their role in climate change and sustaining livelihoods, concerted efforts in adaptation to and mitigation of climate change in the Near East will be needed.

### **Recommendation to the Commission**

7. Near East countries are facing increasing demands for timely and accurate data on their forestry and rangeland sectors. This data is needed primarily to meet national policy and development needs but also in order to respond to various requests for inputs to the international processes, including reduction of GHG emissions from forests and rangelands, carbon stock and broad climate change issues. There is increasing recognition of the important role of forests and rangeland in climate change mitigation. Consequently, international funding opportunities for NFMA and monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) are also increasing, either through the UN REDD programme, the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility of the World Bank or through other bilateral initiatives. The NEFC countries may therefore consider it beneficial to make use of these funding opportunities as well as FAO's comparative advantage within a holistic approach to national and regional capacity building and institutional strengthening of forest and rangeland resources monitoring and assessment, based on the principle of policy reform for sustainable socio-economic development.