



FAO FORESTRY

Farewell to Hosny El Lakany

In January 2006, the FAO Forestry Department bid farewell to its Assistant Director-General of eight years, Hosny El Lakany, upon his retirement from the Organization. Much admired for his strategic and diplomatic skills, El Lakany led the department adroitly through a period of tightening budgets and increasing demands. Despite these constraints, both FAO's productivity and public image in forestry climbed under his administration.

Prior to his appointment as Assistant Director-General in 1998, El Lakany was Assistant Directeur de Cabinet (1995 to 1996) and Director of the Forest Resources Division (1996 to 1998).

Elected Chairman of the International Partnership on Forestry Education (IPFE) in 2006, El Lakany plans to return to academic life, where he began his professional career some 40 years ago. He takes up positions as Professor Emeritus at Alexandria University in his native Egypt, and as Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Forestry at the University of British Columbia, Canada, where he will promote the cause of international forestry to a new generation of foresters.

... and hello to Jan Heino, new Assistant Director-General for FAO Forestry Department

FAO welcomes Jan Heino, Director General of Finland's state-owned forestry enterprise Metsähallitus, who has been named Assistant Director-General (ADG) to head the Forestry Department of FAO. He will take up his duties at FAO headquarters in Rome at the end of June 2006.

He is the second Finn in FAO's history to hold this position; Nils Osara was Director of Forestry and Forest Products from 1963 to 1968.



At his retirement party in January 2006, Hosny El Lakany (right) was toasted (or rather, roasted) by FAO Deputy Director-General David Harcharik

.... and serenaded by an ad hoc Forestry Department choir



Jan Heino, newly appointed FAO Assistant Director-General for Forestry

Heino has been Director General of Metsähallitus since 2000, steering it towards increased market orientation and internationalization. Previously he was Director General (1997 to 1999) and Deputy Director General for International Affairs (1993 to 1995) of the Forestry Department in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. From 1995 to 1997 he was Special Adviser to the Minister for Agriculture and Forestry. Earlier he worked as a sales manager for forest seedlings and regeneration equipment for a private company; as Deputy City Forester for the City of Helsinki; and as a researcher in forest economics at the Finnish Forest Research Institute. He holds an M.Sc. in Forestry and Nature Conservation from Helsinki University (1973).

Heino has been the chair of FAO's Committee on Forestry (1999 to 2001) and European Forestry Commission (1998 to 2000). He was recently named chair of the newly established European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR) in Brussels, Belgium, but with this new appointment will step down from that post.

Heino considers the promotion of all aspects of sustainable forestry a central factor in reducing the global scourge of poverty and hunger, noting the importance of national forestry policies as well as functional national forest programmes that are tailored to each country.

African countries note need for additional resources to stop forest degradation

At the fifteenth session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission in Maputo, Mozambique, held from 29 March to 1 April 2006, African countries emphasized the need for additional resources to reform their forest institutions and halt forest degradation. More than 120 representatives from 36 member and observer countries attended to discuss progress made towards sustainable forest management in the region and to make



recommendations for the attention of the next session of the FAO Committee on Forestry, to be held in March 2007. The African Forestry and Wildlife Commission meets every two years.

Participants reviewed the regional results of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005 (FRA 2005) and noted that progress towards sustainable forest management was slow and uneven in the region. They suggested that a trust fund or broad-based funding mechanism be established to support sustainable forest management.

The commission requested that FAO seek new and additional resources to support countries' efforts to reform, modernize and develop their forest institutions. In addition, it urged countries to develop successful public-private sector partnerships and promote local investment in the forest sector.

The countries further recommended improved coordination of forest policies with economic, environmental and social policies in order to enhance the contribution of sustainable forest management to sustainable development and the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals.

To curb illegal logging, the commission urged improved domestic forest law enforcement and governance and strengthened transboundary collaboration in combating illegal forestry activities.

In view of the prevalence and severity of conflicts between people and wildlife, the commission recommended that FAO provide information and technical advice to address the issue.

Regional meeting reinforces progress in Asia and the Pacific

Participation was the largest ever when over 170 representatives of 29 member countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations met at the twenty-first session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC), held in Dehradun, India from 17 to 21 April 2006.

Reviewing the regional results of the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005 (FRA 2005), the commission noted the positive trend of forest plantation expansion and the net gain in forest area during the past five years in the region, but expressed concern over the continuing loss of natural forests. Illegal and uncontrolled logging, invasive species, forest fires and competition from alternative land uses were cited as the main threats to the region's forests. The countries addressed strategies for eliminating the main constraints to resolving these issues: insufficient budgetary resources, weak institutional capacities and inadequate political will. A main topic of discussion was securing financing for sustainable forest management. Mechanisms for realizing payments for environmental services of forests were discussed in a special in-session seminar.

Noting the vast extent of degraded forests in the region, the Commission emphasized the need for effective approaches and technologies for forest rehabilitation, including the need to

encourage investment by the private sector and local communities. It noted the importance of non-wood forest products and agroforestry in livelihood strategies in many countries of the region, and emphasized that FAO should continue to work in these areas.

The commission drew attention to important emerging issues confronting forestry, including climate change, the demand for biofuels, water issues and the contributions of forests to poverty reduction.

The commission expressed appreciation for FAO's ongoing support in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of tsunami-affected areas. They noted the need for continued assistance in integrated coastal area planning and management, technically sound rehabilitation of mangroves and other coastal vegetation, and sustainable livelihood development in affected areas. The commission also noted the potential role of coastal forests in mitigating the impact of future tsunami events.

The commission also reviewed its main achievements over the past two years, concentrated particularly in the areas of ensuring sustainable supplies of wood and fibre; continuous improvement in forest management; participatory forestry and devolution of forest management; and cross-cutting initiatives.

Urban forestry in Western and Central Asia

Urban and peri-urban forests and other types of green space provide many benefits to urban societies around the globe. FAO especially emphasizes the contributions of urban and peri-urban forestry and greening to better livelihoods in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

Within the framework of the FAO Forestry Outlook Study for Western and Central Asia (FOWECA), FAO commissioned a thematic study on urban and peri-urban forestry and greening in 23 countries of the region. The study was supplemented by six city case studies illustrating issues, potential and prospects.

To provide an opportunity for a few of the countries that face many of the region's issues to draw recommendations for promoting urban forestry, FAO, jointly with the Danish Centre for Forest, Landscape and Planning, organized a Workshop on Urban and Peri-urban Forestry and Greening for countries of West and Central Asia. The workshop was held in Rome from 5 to 7 April 2006.

Five of the cities covered in the FOWECA case studies, namely Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates), Amman (Jordan), Izmir (Turkey), Kabul (Afghanistan) and Yerevan (Armenia) were represented at the event. Participants included representatives of international and national research and development institutions, national and municipal administrations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector. The participants represented various disciplines, including landscape architects, foresters, urban agriculture specialists and environmentalists.

The event made it clear that urban forestry has an important role



to play, as many countries in the region are urbanizing rapidly. However, the context and the problems arising from urbanization are very different from one case to another. Urbanization ranges from 22 percent in Afghanistan to 85 percent in the United Arab Emirates, for example. Poverty figures and forest cover also vary widely. Major differences also exist in terms of urban green resources and the way they are managed and used.

Participants identified several main challenges to keeping an optimum level of forest and tree resources in city development in the region, where growing conditions are often difficult in general and for trees in particular. The workshop highlighted the need for better technologies and practices for maintenance of urban and peri-urban green space, with special emphasis on species selection, soil handling and water management. Continuing efforts are needed to raise urban forestry on the agenda of municipal and governmental policy-makers and to include urban agriculture, poverty alleviation and economic valuation in the picture.

Urban and peri-urban forestry and greening is seldom recognized as a formal land use and is therefore threatened by the absence or weakness of legislative and institutional frameworks. It needs to be incorporated in national laws such as forest and environmental acts. Detailed regulations and guidelines, however, need to be specified at the local level.

Fortunately, there are many examples of good practices in the planning, management and use of urban green space in the region and of its successful contribution to better urban livelihoods and quality of life. Local and national partners and NGOs have set up several large-scale tree planting and protection campaigns.

Workshop participants recommended first of all that the importance of urban and peri-urban forestry and greening as a contributor to urban livelihoods and quality of urban life has to be stressed at different levels. Its many social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits need to be assessed and marketed. Moreover, it should be implemented in a cross-sectoral way and in partnership among all stakeholders. Workshop participants stressed the need for a coordinating body for urban and peri-urban forestry and greening, preferably at the municipal level.

Further networking and capacity building at the regional, national and local levels will be needed to meet these recommendations. FAO and its partner institutions will have an important role to play, for example in facilitating further workshops and specific pilot projects as well as in assisting with knowledge transfer.

A report on the workshop's findings will be published by the end of 2006. For further information about this workshop, please contact: Michelle.Gauthier@fao.org

FAO/Netherlands Partnership Programme promotes sustainable forest management

In 2001, FAO and the Government of the Netherlands began a new type of partnership with the goal of strengthening the

planning and policy-making capability of least developed countries in three key areas: food security, agricultural biodiversity and sustainable forest management. The FAO/Netherlands Partnership Programme (FNPP) is currently in its second phase (2004 to 2007) and is well on the way to meeting its objectives.

The novelty of the initiative is that donor support is not tied to particular projects or specific departments within FAO, but instead goes to support a broad range of activities sharing common objectives and carried out in close cooperation by diverse FAO units. The donor exercises almost no constraints on project inputs; it is only concerned with achieving the agreed outcomes. The assistance is targeted specifically to the poorest countries – those classified by the World Bank as eligible for International Development Association loans.

In the forests theme, the programme focuses on reforming forest policy, strengthening forest law enforcement, implementing integrated land use assessments and promoting innovative approaches to sustainable forest management. The goal is to make progress in each of these areas in three to five least developed countries within the time frame of the partnership. A secondary dimension of the partnership is to strengthen the ability of FAO to work across disciplines.

The following examples demonstrate progress being made.

- New forest policies and legislation have been drafted in Angola and Timor-Leste.
- Local workshops, assessments and training have helped strengthen decentralized forest management and community participation in Honduras, Mali, Mozambique and Viet Nam.
- The first integrated land use assessments have been initiated in Kenya and Zambia.
- In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, FAO has assisted in the negotiation of compensation agreements between communities and companies under the new forest law.
- Existing forest policies and the status of illegal harvesting and poaching have been evaluated in seven French-speaking countries of Central Africa (the member countries of the Conference of the Ministers of Central African Forests [COMIFAC]).

FNPP is also supporting projects in Bhutan and the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as a regional project in Central America.

The Netherlands pledged €20 million to support the second phase of FNPP, bringing the total amount of FNPP funding to around €35 million. This support is in addition to the regular contribution made by the Netherlands to FAO's operating budget. The forestry share is about 30 percent of the total.

The Government of the Netherlands and FAO are closely monitoring FNPP. A similar partnership has since been formed with Norway, and another is under preparation with Sweden.



Conserving Cameroon's mangroves

An FAO project in Cameroon is helping to raise awareness among coastal communities of the need to conserve the resources of their country's fragile mangrove ecosystems. The project, "Participatory Management of the Biological Diversity of Mangrove Ecosystems in Cameroon", has sensitized fishing communities to the damage of indiscriminate cutting of mangroves for fuelwood. The project has also promoted a more fuel-efficient type of oven which allows small-scale fish-processing businesses to smoke more fish while using much less wood.

The mangroves of Central Africa's western coast are important in a number of ways. In addition to fuelwood and charcoal, coastal communities also depend on mangroves for timber used in home construction and boat building. Additionally, mangroves provide water-resistant roof thatching as well as fodder for feeding some domestic animals.

Mangroves also play a number of important ecological roles. They serve as spawning grounds and nurseries for large populations of fish and shellfish, which are in turn used as food by other animals and humans alike. Mangroves trap silt from uphill erosion and provide coastal protection from winds and waves.

A thematic study on mangroves prepared within the framework of FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005 reveals that the world's mangrove area was reduced from approximately 18.8 million hectares in 1980 to 15.2 million hectares in 2005, mainly as a result of conversion to other land uses, such as aquaculture ponds or agriculture. Many mangrove areas have also been degraded by pollution and unsustainable levels of wood harvesting. In Cameroon, where mangrove area declined from 272 000 to 252 000 ha in 2005, the primary threat is rapid urban development and growing coastal populations.

In the policy arena, the FAO project helped Cameroonian authorities address mangrove management by helping them develop strategies for the sustainable use of mangroves in cooperation with the communities whose livelihoods depend on them.

The collaborative efforts of FAO, local communities and non-governmental organizations, such as the Cameroonian Wildlife Conservation Society, to promote the sustainable use of mangroves have had notable effects at the policy level. On 13 January 2006, Cameroon ratified the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, an intergovernmental treaty that provides a framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, including mangrove habitats. Signing the convention is expected to provide the country with the domestic political momentum needed to make changes.

ANNOUNCEMENT: PHOTO CONTEST

The FAO Forestry Department is launching a photo contest to recognize the beauty of forests and trees and their place in people's lives. Winning photos will be displayed at the eighteenth session of the FAO Committee on Forestry in March 2007 and will be published on the FAO Forestry Web site and in a future issue of *Unasylva*.

The deadline for submissions is 31 October 2006. For details, please consult the FAO Forestry Web site: www.fao.org/forestry