

January 2002



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Organización
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Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE (ECA)

Thirty-second session

Rome, 7-8 March 2002

**Sustainable Management of Land and Water Resources:
Combating Desertification and Prevention of Land Degradation**

APPENDIX 1:

COUNTRY-LEVEL ACTION TO IMPLEMENT THE UNCCD

A. STATUS OF PROGRESS IN COUNTRIES OF THE ANNEX IV GROUP

1. The reports to COP-4 submitted in 2000 by Annex IV countries show the status of the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification (NAP): it is in preparation in Spain (first draft in 1997 and the guidelines in June 2000); the summary of Greece's NAP was approved in 1999; the NAP for Italy was approved in February 2000; and the NAP for Portugal in June 1999. The NAP for Turkey is currently being defined on the basis of a draft and should be in final form for approval at the end of March 2002; The National Environmental Action Plan for Turkey is still to be harmonised with the NAP. Greece, Portugal, Spain and Turkey mention among the priority programmes the national strategies for forest development and fire control, protecting watersheds, combating erosion and water management. Italy refers to the links existing between the various sectors of industry, energy, urbanisation and tourism in its environmental policies. The strategies proposed within the NAP framework mainly refer to the determination of areas affected by desertification and information and awareness-raising for the people living in these areas; the preparation of a compendium of droughts related problems; a review of past experience; the establishment of monitoring and warning systems, generally based on remote sensing; and networks for meteorological measurements. Measures dealing with land-use planning in relation to the vulnerability of land and methods to monitor action taken within the NAP framework are still to be incorporated into existing programmes. Strengthening scientific research (including international co-operation) is also envisaged.

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2. Portugal's NAP describes its five strategic objectives, namely: soil and water conservation; ensuring that the population remains in the more depopulated areas; the recovery of degraded areas; increased public awareness on the question of desertification; and making the fight against desertification an integral part of policies for economic and social development. Spain's draft NAP is considering five thematic areas or general objectives for action: prevention and reduction of degradation in cropland and forest lands; land restoration in areas affected by desertification; sustainable management of water resources; drought forecast and reduction of vulnerability to drought in arid and semiarid areas; and protection against forest fires. Spain also mentions its LUCDEME programme to combat desertification in the Southeast, launched in 1981 after the Nairobi Conference on Desertification (1977), as well as eight sector plans already under way. Greece has selected pilot areas under its NAP, namely, the hilly area of Central Thessaly, Eastern Crete, Attica, the Western part of Lesvos Island, the Central Aegean islands and the Kilkis Plain in Central Macedonia.

3. The reporting countries show interest in benchmarks and indicators, pointing out that monitoring systems have been in existence for a number of years and need to be harmonised. Greece, Spain and Turkey are relying on the DPSIR system of indicators (State, pressures, response), being co-ordinated by the UNCSD and undertaken by numerous affected Parties. Portugal, combining the climate index, the soil loss index and the drought index has determined that the areas most susceptible to desertification correspond to some parts of the interior of Alentejo and some parts of the North of the country (about 11%). There is a moderate risk of desertification in 60% of the Portuguese territory.

INSTITUTIONAL, LEGAL AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS IN ANNEX IV COUNTRIES

4. All Annex IV countries have created a co-ordination body for the implementation of the Convention, but the reports indicate that it is not a legal entity but a co-ordination mechanism consisting of a national committee, commission or steering committee and a specifically designated national focal point. Portugal has, moreover, created five regional focal points. In most of the countries, these committees or commissions have been created by the ministries responsible for the environment or agriculture. After having adopted its NAP, Portugal established a national committee to co-ordinate the NAP, as well as a national desertification observatory. Spain plans to set up a national committee for NAP implementation. These co-ordinating mechanisms have been placed under the responsibility either of the Ministries of Agriculture (Greece, Portugal) or of the Ministries of Environment (Italy, Spain, Turkey).

5. The reports describe the principles and objectives of the participatory processes already set in motion or about to be established. Greece, Spain and Turkey explain that these processes rely on the existence of sectional working groups which have a dual role: on the one hand they must provide for information and awareness-raising about the Convention and, on the other, gather data on desertification, as well as the views of the communities concerned: local bodies (municipalities, provincial and regional authorities), local farmer groups and environmental protection associations. Greece and Portugal indicate that the operation of the participatory processes is not always easy, because the approach is new and there is a lack of immediate response from the population, as well as difficulties of communication between stakeholders. Italy has organised a series of national awareness-raising seminars in various regions. Portugal provides an insight into the scale of the participatory process, whose public meetings have attracted some 2 200 persons, 26 public institutions and 7 private institutions.

6. The reports note that the EC Common Agricultural Policy includes agro-environmental measures appropriate to combating desertification and therefore eligible for European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) support. Furthermore, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) supports developmental action in “disadvantaged” areas of the Union, which are mostly to be found in Annex IV countries. Lastly, the reports also make reference to other EC programmes of relevance in combating desertification, such as MEDICampus and MEDALUS and the fourth and fifth framework research programmes.

7. Some reports mention legal, institutional and regulatory measures related to combating desertification. In Italy, a law is in preparation to give the NAP official status. In Greece, a law was passed in 1999 on sustainable development, which includes efforts to combat desertification, and legal provisions have been adopted concerning the cadastral survey. In Turkey, a law including provisions to combat desertification is in preparation. There is need to obtain an official status for the NAPs, either through instruments incorporating it into planning laws or by the adoption of a specific law, since the reports indicate that the co-ordination mechanisms sometimes encounter difficulties in official approval for NAP action.

8. In general, the reports give few details about financial allocations for the implementation of the Convention. However, the report from Greece indicates that the necessary funding for planned NAP activities will come from the State budget, although some funds will be requested from the EU, particularly within the ERDF and EAGGF framework, or else from special contributions. Portugal reports that funding will be obtained by redirecting resources already allocated. Turkey intends to set up a special fund to combat desertification.

B. STATUS OF PROGRESS IN OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES REPORTING TO THE COP

9. Other European countries affected by desertification which reported to the COP-4 were Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Romania. All countries refer to their national plans for social and economic development, which include the implementation of action to protect soils from erosion and other efforts relevant to the objectives of the UNCCD. It is noted that support and financial assistance from the World Bank played an important role in the preparation of strategies and national action plans for environmental protection. Furthermore, the reports show that combat against desertification and other forms of land degradation are main priorities in a wide range of sector policies and programmes. All countries single out agriculture and forestry as sectors particularly relevant to combating desertification, drought and soil erosion. Water management, energy and the social sector (rural development, improvement of living standards) are also mentioned. Land reform, privatisation and empowerment of local governments and local communities in natural resources management are considered as enabling strategies. However, it is mentioned in some reports that privatisation, as well as reform of the agro-industrial sector and of land-tenure systems, can give rise to some problems inhibiting the rational use of the land.

10. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Republic of Moldova report on the existence of a national co-ordination body (NCB) on desertification. In Armenia, Azerbaijan and Republic of Moldova relevant ministries/committees were approved by the Government as the NCB. In Georgia, the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources Protection undertook the role of NCB, but there is the option of transferring NCB functions to an intersector State co-ordinating commission to combat desertification. Romania, which has not yet designated an NCB, reported on the possibility of a national committee for desertification control. In most cases national multi-sector co-ordinating commissions have been established by NCBs, their multidisciplinary and

crosscutting character being ensured through participation of senior staff from relevant ministries and State departments, academic circles and NGOs.

11. The reporting countries are in various stages of the NAP process. The preparation of NAPs is progressing in four countries, while in the Republic of Moldova a 10-year NAP was adopted in January 2000. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are elaborating their NAPs. Romania is developing a strategy to combat desertification and drought. In Georgia a National Forestry Strategy was prepared in 1997 within the framework of the existing National Environmental Action Plan. As a follow-up, a national investment programme (State Programme of the Forestry Sector Restoration and its Further Development, 1998-2005) has been prepared aimed particularly at afforestation and restoration, with an ambitious target: an average of 2 300 ha per year to be afforested for soil protection purposes.

12. All reports recognise that the NAP process should review the existing legislation and institutional framework and recommend measures to update legislation to ensure a coherent and functional legal and regulatory framework for proper and comprehensive implementation of the UNCCD requirements. Some reports note that the present environmental legislation does not fully correspond to the requirements of new international standards, treaties and conventions and that action to adjust national legislation is needed, including institutional arrangements dealing with desertification issues. Armenia singles out the need to improve legislation to strengthen existing enforcement measures and to provide incentives through economic mechanisms to implement compulsory land conservation measures.

C. FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS IN THIS GROUP OF COUNTRIES

13. There is need for further strengthening international co-operation as well as for synergies between all environmental programmes and conventions. All reporting countries appreciate the catalytic support provided by international organisations and bilateral donors at the initial stage of the UNCCD process. At the same time, it is generally felt that only a considerable increase in financing, both internal and external, will allow these Parties to maintain the momentum and to proceed more rapidly in implementation. Acute shortage of funds as well as overall economic difficulties may force national authorities to change priorities in favour of pressing social needs to the detriment of environmental protection. There is also a trend towards new national financial mechanisms to finance environmental protection. Georgia mentions that revenues from “ecological” taxes at local level on emissions/discharges of harmful substances, retail fuel and natural resources use should, in accordance with legal requirements, be spent on environmental protection, including combat against desertification. In other cases, there is the idea of a national fund financed jointly by the central government, the private sector and donors. Azerbaijan reports the existence of a fund for the protection of the environment, administered by the Ministry of Finance and the State Committee for Ecology. The fund is financed through fines and payments for environmental pollution. Yet this fund has very limited resources. On the other hand, experience obtained in trans-boundary projects relevant to land conservation gives reason to believe that sub-regional co-operation in the field of combating land degradation may prove to be cost effective, particularly between bordering countries with similar socio-economic development patterns. International co-operation within regional projects, such as the Caspian Ecological Programme and the European Regional Working Team on Drought, is mentioned.

APPENDIX 2:

FAO PROGRAMMES WHICH CAN SUPPORT NATIONAL ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

A. PROMOTION, CO-OPERATION AND STRATEGIC ADVICE

1. The World Food Summit (WFS 1996), issuing the Rome Declaration on World Food Security, asserted that poverty was the major cause of food insecurity and stressed the need to increase food production within the framework of sustainable management of natural resources. Sustainable agricultural and rural development in the drylands implies the need to combat desertification. The FAO strategic framework and Medium Term Plan 2002-2007 give emphasis to programmes and projects addressing conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, protection of fragile ecosystems, as well as disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness. Sustainable management of natural resources is one of the four key areas of concentration of FAO's mission Statement for Europe, the emphasis being on integrated management (in particular in watersheds) and on the rehabilitation and protection of ecologically fragile environments in Central and Eastern European countries. Therefore the Organization should be in a better position to respond to the specific needs of drought and desertification-affected countries in the Mediterranean, Balkans and Caucasus.
2. FAO has been active for decades in combating desertification through monitoring and normative programmes, as well as field projects. Action related to the conservation and management of fragile ecosystems in arid, semi-arid and sub-humid regions ranges from land and water management to legal aspects, and includes soil conservation, management of rangelands and animal production, forest management, reforestation, sand dune reclamation, salinity control in irrigated land and promotion of sustainable energy sources. The keynote paper for the 1987 meeting of COAG formed the basis of an FAO strategy for the sustainable development of drylands. FAO presented in 1993 an important contribution to the implementation of Chapter 12 of Agenda 21 of UNCED by defining the principal elements of a strategy for sustainable dryland development. The aim was to increase the productivity of both cropland and rangeland, while alleviating poverty and arresting or reversing processes of land degradation. FAO also decided to provide special support to the UNCCD process by establishing the *ad hoc* Interdepartmental Working Group on Desertification to coordinate the relevant FAO programmes and internal mechanisms in the area of dryland development, desertification control and drought mitigation.
3. Following discussions with the UNCCD Secretariat, where priorities were identified in which FAO was well equipped to assist, a Memorandum of Collaboration (MOC) was signed in December 1998 covering six areas: i) Implementation of Action Plans and networks at national and regional levels to which FAO could provide technical assistance; ii) Support to UNCCD regional networks; iii) Production and dissemination of technical best practices and related awareness documents; iv) Awareness documents to provide convincing information on the status, trends and costs of desertification and its control, suitable for the media and general public and for decision-makers, donors, NGOs and institutions; v) Assessment and monitoring of desertification and drought at global, regional and national levels; vi) Technical support to the UNCCD bodies, in particular

advisory and technical support to the Global Mechanism and submission of technical papers to international, inter-regional and sub-regional meetings organised by the Secretariat.

4. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to promote collaboration in assisting countries in the implementation of the UNCCD. Negotiations are also under way with the Global Mechanism to support the FAO/UNCCD programme. Other institutional arrangements FAO include a MOU between FAO and the Ministry of the Environment of the Italy which includes the establishment of an FAO/Italy working group and provision of two Italian officers on desertification in FAO. An Italian Trust Fund project has been approved to back this co-operation. FAO, together with UNEP and Unesco have provided support to the Center for Studies of Traditional Knowledge, located in Matera, Italy, that has been operating for the UNCCD Secretariat, and is connected with other centres for traditional knowledge studies.

5. FAO organised, in collaboration with UNEP, the UNCSD Secretariat, the NGO Caucus and other partners, two successive electronic conferences in March and May 2001, on "Land and Agriculture" in order to catalyse stakeholder involvement in the preparations for the World Food Summit-five years later and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg in September 2002. These discussions stimulated collaborative assessment of progress made on key issues, based on experiences and lessons learned and of the challenges and opportunities for sustainable agriculture, land management and combating desertification. Together with information gathered from a wide range of organisations and on-going programmes, the electronic conferences contributed to the identification of priority areas for further action and their inclusion in the Task Managers' report for CSD-10 on Land and Agriculture which addresses Chapters 10, 12 and 14 of Agenda 21.

B. GUIDELINES AND TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY

6. The development and dissemination of technical guidelines and training courses is a major feature of FAO's programme. Technical guidelines and reports cover subjects such as soil conservation, irrigation, pasture and livestock management, forest conservation and sand dune fixation. More than 100 of these publications are now accessible on a CD ROM and more is available on the FAO Web site on desertification. Some main publications are the position paper "Sustainable development of drylands and combating desertification" (1993) which details FAO's experience and policies; "Land, food and people" describing potential population supporting capacities; "Protect and produce" describing soil erosion and conservation; "How good the earth" describing the land resources; and "Cherish the earth" outlining the modern approach to land management. In cooperation with the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), and in particular with its Priority Actions Programme Regional activity Centre (PAP/RAC) in Split, Croatia, FAO produced two guidelines: i) "Guidelines for Mapping and Measurement of Rainfall-induced Erosion Processes in the Mediterranean Coastal Areas", published in 1997; and ii) "Guidelines for erosion and desertification control management with particular reference to Mediterranean Coastal Areas", published in 2000. FAO also maintains a wide range of activities aimed at promoting awareness addressed to the general public, the media, technicians and policy makers.

C. DATA BASES, MONITORING AND EARLY WARNING

7. FAO has two major activities with a climate component: the Agro-Ecological Zones Project, to estimate the food production potential of developing countries, and the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture, to continuously monitor the crop prospects and food situation throughout the world and alert the international community of impending serious food shortages. Both have led to the development of climate databases and methods for assessing the impact of climate on agriculture for planning and monitoring. On the other hand the Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS) was established jointly by FAO, ICSU, UNEP, UNESCO and WMO in 1996 to provide policy makers, resource managers and the research community with the long-term data they need to detect global change and to assess the capacity of terrestrial ecosystems to support sustainable development. The GTOS Secretariat is located in FAO.

8. FAO maintains a vast range of information systems and data bases which are under constant upgrading. WAICENT, the World Agriculture Information Centre, provides and disseminates on Internet FAO data and statistics on agriculture and land use by country. LRIS (Land Resource Information and Decision Support System), is a toolbox providing information on world soils distribution, with basic survey data, agro-ecological zones information to calculate production potentials, crop adaptation and response data and a system to model land use and production systems. FRA (Forest Resources Assessment programme), in co-operation with the ECE for Europe, provides regional statistics forest resources and deforestation. FIVIMS (The Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping System) is a decision geo-referenced support tool developed to indicate areas and populations affected by risk of hunger and malnutrition and factors contributing to food insecurity. ECLO (Emergency Centre for Locust Control Operation) is an information and geo-referenced system about the desert locust in affected countries. FAOCLIM, the agroclimatic database, currently covers monthly data for 28 100 stations and for up to 14 observed and computed agroclimatic parameters. For rainfall and temperatures it includes time-series next to both long-term averages (1961-90). AGROMET includes monitoring and modelling of crop development and extreme events (droughts, pests) as an input to early warning systems on food security. As a contribution to the UNCCD, FAO made a compilation of existing statistical data related to desertification, aggregated at national level, available in a CD-Rom.

D. ASSESSMENT OF DESERTIFICATION

9. FAO participated in the preparation of the general recommendations from the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) of the UNCCD and the ad hoc working group on benchmarks and indicators (finalized in Geneva in September 1998) which emphasised the need to implement adequate, well defined information systems, with clear monitoring responsibilities at national level. At the request of the UNCCD Secretariat, FAO led the design of an "Overall assessment of desertification" (OAD) at a one to two million scale, which would aim to provide at global, regional and national level a reliable assessment of the level of desertification occurring in countries and of its possible trends in the near future. This preliminary design involved significant discussions with several institutions.

10. The LADA project (Land Degradation Assessment in the Drylands) was discussed during COP-5 at the CST and at a UNEP/GEF side event. LADA is a global initiative covers more than 100 countries affected by desertification and was technically initiated by FAO some two years ago. The objectives of the fully fledged LADA project would cover: i) the provision of standardised information (maps, databases, etc.) on state, causes and impacts of land degradation in drylands, and possible remedial measures to combat it at regional and global levels, as well as in hotspots at (sub) national levels; ii) the development of harmonised methods for land degradation assessment at all levels; and iii) building up capacities at all levels for LADA implementation. It is expected that outputs from the LADA project will reach international and local users and in particular, the national decision-makers involved in the NAPs. Data on land degradation would cover soils, water resources, vegetation resources (woodlands, croplands, rangelands), animal resources, climate and biodiversity, as well as carbon stocks in soils and biomass. LADA is now entering into a preparatory phase, recently approved for funding by UNEP/GEF, and given for implementation to FAO. The preparatory phase will involve extensive reviews on methods, data and capacities, as well as expert consultations, pilot projects, networking, regional workshops, partnerships and fund mobilisation. The first meeting of the Advisory Group and Steering Committee was held in Rome 23-25 January 2002. As requested by COP-5, the next COP should be informed on progress concerning the LADA initiative. Finally, it should be mentioned that FAO, in collaboration with the International Soil Reference and Information Centre (ISRIC) in the Netherlands, implemented the project SOVEUR on land degradation status and soil vulnerability in Central and Eastern Europe. This project established geographical databases on soil and terrain and produced thematic maps at scale 1:2.5 million on human-induced land degradation and soil vulnerability, as tools for corrective management measures.

E. NETWORKING AND TECHNICAL EXCHANGE

11. The Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions (*Silva Mediterranea*) founded in 1922, now comprising 26 countries and the European Union, is a forum for exchange of experience and the coordination of joint efforts (i.e. Mediterranean Forestry Action Plan). It has six research networks: Forest Fires; Multipurpose Species (especially geared to combating desertification); Silviculture of Cedrus species; Silviculture of cork oak species; Silviculture of stone pine species; Selection of genetic resources of resinous species. Of ESCORENA's 13 research-oriented networks, the following, jointly sponsored with CIHEAM, are of special interest to Mediterranean countries: Nuts; Pasture and Fodder Crops; Sheep and Goats; and Sustainable Rural Environment and Energy (SREN). Also WOCAT (World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies) is a network which has compiled a database and updated land degradation and rehabilitation maps, of more than 200 reported successful soil and water conservation techniques and institutional implementation approaches from almost 30 countries. The Global Network on Integrated Soil Management for Sustainable Use of Salt-affected Soils and the Network on Protected Soils in Central and Eastern European Countries held workshops in 2000 and 2001. The latter involved co-operation among 43 national institutes and aims at exchange of experience, promoting projects, pilot activities and studies on integrated management practices for enhancing soil productivity and controlling degradation. The European Forestry Commission's Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds, to commemorate the 50th anniversary at the 23rd session in Davos, Switzerland, has an extensive network of specialists in areas such as torrent control soil and water conservation, revegetation, land restoration and socio-economic issues. More than half of the sessions of the Working Party have been held in the Northern Mediterranean.

F. ASSISTANCE IN THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANS AND PROJECTS

12. FAO technical divisions and the Investment Centre provide assistance to governments in formulating action programmes, policies and plans. Examples are the Special Programme for Food Security, the National Forest Programmes (NFP), soil and water national strategies, water resources master plans, etc. FAO has assisted a number of countries in the formulation and implementation of their NAP. In the case of Turkey, where the NAP is not finalised yet, FAO has suggested in an evaluation report that there may be scope for FAO involvement during the implementation phase in areas such as: a) cooperation with the Turkish NGO TEMA in its "return to the village" project, where soil conservation, feed production and livestock production are encouraged; b) prevention of soil degradation and improvement of salt affected soils. c) Rehabilitation of rangelands (pastures, meadows); d) Prevention of forest fires; e) Participatory watershed management; f) Organic Farming; g) Drought analysis prediction, determining the areas vulnerable to desertification, early warning and drought forecasting. At the World Bank's request, the FAO/World Bank Co-operative Programme has recently completed the formulation of Georgia's National Forestry Development Programme. The total programme cost is tentatively estimated at US\$ 37 million over five years. The main components are: support to the national policy analysis/planning capacity; strengthening of the forestry institutions; investments supporting the private sector, forest management and protection and afforestation, as well as forest restoration; forest harvesting and transportation.

13. Hundreds of FAO field projects have, in the past years, contributed to the battle against land degradation. In 1999, some 100 FAO field projects had a direct relationship to the assessment and control of desertification. They covered a very wide range of activities such as erosion control; improvement of water, forest and pasture management, local rural development through extension and participative approach programmes, assistance for the implementation of national information systems and statistics and formulation of investment projects. TCP/TUR/6713 "Development of Modern Forest Fire Prevention and Control Strategies", was approved in 1997 and has recently been completed. The objective was to produce a draft of Turkey's Forest Fire Management Policy. FAO currently has projects in the Northern Mediterranean countries providing assistance for the preparation of national forestry programmes. A small TCP project in Cyprus is carrying out a feasibility study for the installation and utilisation of an automatic fire detection system. A TCP project on integrated management of salt-affected and polluted soils was developed in Romania.

G. CONTROL AND PREVENTION OF FOREST FIRES

14. The International Expert Meeting on Forest Fire Management, organised by FAO in co-operation with the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO), was held at FAO Headquarters in Rome from 7 to 9 March 2001 as a follow-up to the FAO meeting on "Public Policies Affecting Forest Fires", held in Rome in October 1998. The Public Policies meeting had identified the need for regional and bilateral agreements for collaboration in forest fire management, including identification of technical and financial inputs, improved sharing of information and knowledge, and support to strengthen technical co-operation among developing countries. Furthermore, the Minister of Agriculture of Greece in late 2000 requested that FAO sponsor a meeting to explore possible development of international fire agreements so that countries could better assist each other during times of fire emergencies.

FAO established the International Fire Management Network (IFMN) after the March 2001 meeting as a way to continue on-going communications among the fire experts regarding key fire issues. The IFMN was asked to prioritise the recommendations so that an Action Plan could be developed. The Fire Action Plan specifies 19 priority activities for consideration and future action by FAO, Member countries, and collaborating agencies.