

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FRA 2010
REGIONAL WORKSHOP
FOR NATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS
AND FOCAL POINTS
FOR THE NEAR EAST REGION

ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT
13 TO 16 OCTOBER 2008



October, 2008



Forestry Department
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Forest Resources Assessment Working Paper

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The Global Forest Resources Assessment Programme

Sustainably managed forests have multiple environmental and socio-economic functions which are important at the global, national and local scales, and they play a vital part in sustainable development. Reliable and up-to-date information on the state of forest resources - not only on area and area change, but also on such variables as growing stock, wood and non-wood products, carbon, protected areas, use of forests for recreation and other services, biological diversity and forests' contribution to national economies - is crucial to support decision-making for policies and programmes in forestry and sustainable development at all levels.

FAO, at the request of its member countries, regularly monitors the world's forests and their management and uses through the Global Forest Resources Assessment Programme. The Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010 (FRA 2010) has been requested by the FAO Committee on Forestry in 2007 and will be based on a comprehensive country reporting process, complemented by a global remote sensing survey. The assessment will cover all seven thematic elements of sustainable forest management, including variables related to the policy, legal and institutional framework. FRA 2010 is also aimed at providing information to facilitate the assessment of progress towards the Global Objectives on Forests of the United Nations Forum on Forests and the 2010 Biodiversity Target of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Results are expected to be published in 2010.

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More information on the Global Forest Resources Assessment programme can be found at: www.fao.org/forestry/fra

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The FRA Working Paper Series provides an important forum for the rapid release of information related to the FRA programme. Should users find any errors in the documents or would like to provide comments for improving their quality they should contact fra@fao.org.

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REPORT

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In collaboration with

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Dahlia Radwan - Secretary, Near East Region (Cairo)

Professor Omran Talat - Consultant, University of Alexandria

1 Introduction

During the Global Forest Resources Assessment FRA 2010 meeting held in March 2008 in Rome it was decided to form the Near East group of countries gathering only the Arabic speaking countries. This would facilitate the exchange and understanding of technical information related to FRA for the countries using Arabic as official language. The Near East group is formed of 17 countries that could be sub-divided into sub-groups so called: the *North Africa* French speaking sub-group: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania; the *Mediterranean group*: Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Libya and Jordan; the *Arabic Peninsula* group: Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Yemen; the *Gulf countries* group: Bahrain, Kuwait, United Arabic Emirates, and Qatar. Each group has specific issues related to forestry.

Most of the countries nominated a FRA correspondent except for Oman, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain, Jordan. The nominated correspondents attended the Global meeting in Rome (March 2008) except Libya and Algeria.

In August 2008, the Near East Assistant Director General sent an official letter to remember Oman, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain, Jordan to nominate a FRA correspondent and to attend Alexandria workshop. Jordan and Kuwait reacted positively.

Most of the FRA correspondents provided their draft report before the workshop. All draft reports were reviewed and commented by the consultant Professor O. Talat and the FRA focal point J. L. Blanchez.

2 Objectives of the workshop

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Provide technical assistance and guidance to the FRA correspondents in order to ensure high-quality reporting and to meet the specifications established for FRA 2010
- Evaluate the progress made in preparing the country reports of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010,
- Identify problems and data gaps, if any, for each of the 17 tables in each participating country and suggesting ways to address these;
- Promote exchange of information and interest between the FRA correspondents and facilitate the establishment of a regional FRA network.

3 Date and venue

The workshop was organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO) in close collaboration with University of Alexandria.

The workshop took place at the Faculty of Agriculture, Alexandria University, Alexandria (Egypt) from 13 to 15 August 2008. All participants left on 16 to fly back to their respective countries. The University provided the meeting facilities (rooms, audio equipment, internet) whilst all participants were hosted in the Lagoon Hotel, Alexandria. A bus service of the University transported the participants between the hotel and the University. All participants arrived in Cairo by air and were transported by bus to Alexandria. Their return was organized the same way. All participants received a bag with some stationary. Banderoles informing about the workshop were fixed at the entry of the University and in the meeting room.

A field trip was organized on Tuesday morning and the participants visited a forest planted by the new municipality of Borg El Arab. The 80,000 people Municipality is trying to create a recreation forest close to the city with recuperation of treated sewage water. They are doing it in collaboration with the forest service. Discussions were held about the constraints about collaboration between official services and the use of sewage water.

The University of Alexandria organized a diner for all participants in a fish restaurant along the sea as well as a visit of the modern and famous Library of Alexandria.

4 Workshop organization and content

Attendance and support

Eighteen participants attended the workshop. 12 FRA correspondents from Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen,

Egypt (plus the alternate) Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria attended the workshop. Algeria registered but couldn't attend the workshop. Libya didn't respond to the invitation.

The Near East Regional office sent 4 members including the Senior Forestry Officer (Pape Kone) the secretarial support (Dahlia Radwan) and Dina Moussa (Communication officer). The FAO Head Quarter (Rome) sent a Senior Forestry Officer - FRA focal point for the Near East Region (Jean Louis Blanchez). The workshop benefited from the support of a consultant – Professor Omran Talat from University of Alexandria. The consultant provided assistance in reviewing the FRA tables in Arabic and translation into English when requested. Professor Omran Talat was involved in the review of the FRA 2005 reports and he was well aware about dealing with the proposed report tables.

Workshop implementation

The country correspondents were grouped into three groups. Each group was formed of neighboring countries of a geographical zone as follows:

- 1- The North Africa group (Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia) – French speaking
- 2- The Arab Peninsula group (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen)
- 3- The Mediterranean group (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria)

Workshop opening

The workshop was opened by Prof. Moursy Elsoda, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Alexandria University. He wished a successful workshop to the participants and expressed his thanks to FAO to hold the workshop in Alexandria University. He was followed by Mr. Pape Djiby Koné, Senior Forestry Officer who recalled the importance of the workshop in the Global FRA process on behalf of Dr. Mohamed Albraithen, FAO Regional Representative for the Near East Region. At the end of his speech, he asked the Participants to introduce themselves.

Mr. Jean Louis Blanchez, FRA focal point for the Near East countries made a general presentation and gave a short overview of the FRA 2010 process. He also provided a short presentation on the methodology used to adapt and forecast the information collected. He introduced Professor Omran Talat and his role in the workshop implementation and discussed the workshop agenda with the participants. Jordan delegate expressed his concern that he could not attend the Global meeting in March. He received assurance from FAO officers that adequate guidance will be provided to fill the national FRA report.

Presentation of the country FRA report progress and main issues

All country correspondents were provided with an opportunity during the three days workshop to present their main constraints and problems they are facing in filling the report tables. Only Jordan, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia did not have prepared a draft

report. Most of the presentations were made before starting the various sessions to review the report tables.

Review of the tables

All tables were systematically reviewed during the three days of the workshop (see agenda). Reporting tables 1-3 were reviewed in the first day, 3-9 in the second day and 9-17 in the third day. Professor Omran Talat reviewed the 17 tables with a power point presentation translated into Arabic. Discussions were held mainly in Arabic with sometimes some interventions in French or English when the participants were seeking advice from the FRA focal point or the Regional Senior Forestry Officer.

Main questions raised or discussed during the review process

1. Table 1 – extent of forest and other wooded land

The main emerging questions on table 1 were the lack of data resources in most countries and the absence of forest surveys to collect reliable data. A long discussion was held about the regional program for NFRA as formulated by Mohamed Saket. The interest for such regional program is obvious but the correspondents do not really know why the program has never been started.

2. Table 2 – forest ownership and management rights

In most countries, the forest ownership and management rights are public. A question was raised by the representative of Yemen about forests owned by the Ministry responsible for the Islamic affairs. The FRA focal point insisted on the fact the public ownership could not be used to hide existing traditional rights for using the forests. Comments should be used to explain some specific situations which could be of interest as traditional rights or ownership.

3. Table 3 – forest designation and management

Forests were designated as multipurpose in many countries. It was agreed to avoid the easy answer to just provide multipurpose function for all forests. There is a need to look for specific designation for the public forests. The Lebanon correspondent pointed out that a forest survey is currently carried out in 2008 - the results will then be published in the FRA 2015.

4. Table 4 – forest characteristics

A question was raised by the representative of Egypt on the difference between the introduced species under other naturally regenerated forest and planted forest.

5. Table 5 – forest establishment and regeneration

A question raised was related to the dead trees replanted in an afforested area – should they be considered as reforestation?

6. Tables 6, 7 and 8 – growing, biomass and carbon stock

Questions raised:

- In sand dune areas, the diameter (cm) above soil surface or at the stump height changes with the movement of the sand. What should be done?

- How the above ground biomass is calculated? If the tree has more than one stem how it can be calculated?

The Tunisian correspondent could explain to the participants how he calculated all that information as he contributed to the Tunisian UNFCCC convention report.

7. Table 9 – forest fires

- Why the number of fires is calculated on the average of 5 years not for the year mentioned in the table?
- The wild fires are interfaced with the fires of field crops. How we can calculate that?

8. Table 10 – other disturbances affecting forest health and vitality.

Emerging questions were:

- How to determine a partial disturbance happened by insects in the forest?
- Does the forest consider disturbed with the presence of invasive species?
- Can the % affected be calculated on the % of infected trees instead of the area?

About Other biotic agents (such as physical damage caused by animals) - Is grazing indirect or direct human activity or not was a matter of debate. If indirect activity or damage, it should be included. The FRA focal point advised to write the interpretation of the author in the comments if there is any problem.

9. Table 11 – Wood removal and value of removals

- A question was raised by the Lebanon correspondent on the possibility of using the measuring unit in tons instead of the volume units.
- Do the trees removed for road construction or fire line removals or not?
- If the wood is removed but not sold and used locally, should it be recorded?

10. Table 12 – NWFPs removals and value of removals

Long discussion on various experiences but no specific questions

11. Table 13 - Employment

What do services mean?

12. Table 14 – Policy and legal framework

Long discussion was held about the policy statement. Many countries in the region benefit from FAO assistance but their policy reforms are not yet achieved.

Can the nfp be considered as a forest policy statement?

13. Table 15 – Institutional framework

- Persons from other sectors and working permanently in the forest sector should be added or not?
- A box (Other) should be added to level of subordination to accommodate situation such as “Haut Commissariat” or “Autonomous Agency” not attached to a specific Ministry.

14. Table 16 – Education and research

- Does the graduation number of students within the country is calculated for one year or as an average of 5 years?

15. Table 17 – Public revenue collection and expenditure

- No emerging questions for table 17. However it was emphasized that many countries can provide information on that matter. The difficulty is to collect information from other Ministries.

Additional information provided at the closure

Information about the remote sensing program has been provided. The prepared presentation has been given and many countries have shown interest in participating in the proposed activities and in nominating a RSS focal point for the training in 2009. So far only Tunisia is involved in the pilot activity.

The participants were informed that they will receive further information on the thematic studies as soon as the terms of references are prepared.

The FAO team promoted the World Forestry Congress and invited the participants to write articles. The Saudi Arabia participant has already sent his registration form.

As concluding remarks to the workshop, the FRA focal point (J. L. Blanchez) provided some recommendations to the participants including:

- The need to communicate between us to exchange information and to fill the tables adequately. The FRA team is always available;
- The clear interest to provide comments in the tables;
- To continue collecting information as soon as the correspondents are back home.

The draft version of the FRA report has to be delivered by March 2009;

- The information collected has to be of good quality. The FRA report can be used to generate new development programs and to justify more research and activities in the forestry sector. There is a need for the forestry sector in the Near East Region to be credible and to provide reliable information on what is the forest resource and how it is managed.

On Wednesday, the lunch was skipped and the workshop closed at 15h00 to permit the visit of the Alexandria Library.

A CD was provided containing all presentations made during the workshop, the Arabic version of the FRA guidelines and specifications, the list of participants and some pictures.

The efforts of the University of Alexandria and all people who collaborated to the success of the workshop were fully acknowledged and applauded by all participants.

5 Results of the workshop

The workshop has fully achieved its objectives. All FRA nominated correspondents of the Near East Region attended the workshop – except the Algeria correspondent - and participated actively in the discussions. Even the Kuwait delegate who was not expected showed up on Tuesday afternoon and had enough time to inform about the FRA report and to exchange with other FRA correspondents. All FRA correspondents

provided their draft report before the start of the workshop except the Saudi Arabia correspondent who justified and Jordan and Kuwait who were not enough informed.

The 17 tables were reviewed systematically and all questions were answered. Answers were debated and formulated often by the FRA correspondents themselves based on their own experiences and the FRA documentation. The FRA correspondents went back home with a copy of the FRA documentation and workshop presentations in Arabic.

This workshop – well organized and very pleasant - has certainly facilitated the establishment of a regional network of Near East FRA correspondents. The national correspondents are by now more confident in filling their national FRA report.

Evaluation of the workshop

No formal questionnaire was given to the participants to evaluate the workshop. However, it was obvious that the organization of the workshop – in terms of welcoming, accommodating, feeding, transporting the participants - was very well done by the University of Alexandria and very well appreciated.

The technical support to the workshop – in terms of meeting rooms, stationary, audio, banderoles, meeting with officials – was also good and professionally provided. Generally the services provided went beyond the contractual agreement. The field trip could have been more informative on the forestry issues in Egypt. The grouping of the country correspondents by geographic affinities certainly facilitated the discussions. The distribution of country presentations all along the workshop was very useful and avoided to concentrate all presentations the same day at the beginning of the workshop.

The collaboration with Academia in organizing such workshop is adding value to FRA implementation. The consultant Professor Omran Talat provided an excellent assistance in commenting the tables in Arabic and in interpreting part of the discussions into English when needed.

Annex 1 – Workshop agenda

Near East Workshop on the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010

13 to 16 October 2008, Alexandria, Egypt

Provisional program

<p><u>Monday 13 October 2008</u></p> <p>Morning: 9h00 to 12h30</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical information • Introduction of Participants • Organization of workshop • Opening ceremony • Presentation of FRA 2010 • Status of country issues to collect information and prepare the FRA report.
<p>Afternoon: 14h00 to 17h00</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of country issues (Continued) • Review of methodology • Detailed review of reporting tables 1-3
<p><u>Tuesday 14 October 2008</u></p> <p>Morning: 8h30 to 12h30</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field visit to man-made forest.
<p>Afternoon: 15h00</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed review of reporting tables 3-9
<p>Evening: 20h30</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception dinner offered by FAO
<p><u>Wednesday 15 October 2008</u></p> <p>Morning: 8h30 to 12h30</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed review of reporting tables 9-14
<p>Afternoon: 14h00 to 18h00</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued - tables 14 to 17 • Other matters (special studies and remote sensing) and wrap up of the workshop • Closing of workshop
<p>Thursday 16 October 2008</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departure

Annex 2 – List of Participants

**The Near East Workshop on the Global Forest Resources Assessment
2010
13 - 16 October 2008
Alexandria - Egypt**

Country	Name of the participants
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Annex 3 – Presentations

The presentations are available on CD (containing also pictures of the workshop) and stored on the FO/ T drive

1. The Global Forest Resources Assessment - FRA 2010 – an overview
2. Methodology of the country reporting to FRA 2010
3. FRA 2010 – Powerpoint presentation of all tables in Arabic
4. Various presentations in Arabic made by the countries : Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen
5. The FRA 2010 – remote sensing survey – work by FAO and partners

All presentations have been given to the participants on an electronic form (CD or USB). Powerpoint presentations are available on request sending a message to the FRA Secretariat.

