I) INTRODUCTION

The Challenge of creating Green Cities

Climate change is a common denominator at global level and the growing number of alliances of cities and governments is indispensable in facing up to the challenge. However, at local level, a common denominator of too many cities in the world is the lack of or the degradation of forest and tree cover in and around towns. On the one hand, it is acknowledged that there is a general lack of awareness of the benefits of good practices in implementing urban forestry; urban forestry is overlooked in statistics, reports, programmes and strategic decisions. On the other hand, we have to recognize than when people wage a daily struggle against hunger and malnutrition, and also have to contend with natural disasters such as floods and landslides, forestry related concerns often rank low on the agenda. However, coherent investment by governments and communities in the protection and restoration of suitable forest and tree cover in and around cities, coupled with good governance policies, can make a real contribution to reducing poverty and malnutrition in an environment that is healthy for all.

Institutional Framework

UN-Habitat is the lead UN Agency on urban issues, organizing World Urban Forum on a biennial basis. Other key international institutions for major associations include, inter alia, United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) (Barcelona), ICLEI on Resilient Cities (Bonn) and Metropolis (Barcelona).
The FAO multidisciplinary initiative “Food for the Cities” is facilitating synergy on urban issues for poverty alleviation as well as food and nutrition security. The FAO programme on Urban and Peri-Urban Forestry, in the Forestry Department, led the issues related to the optimization of trees and forests for healthy cities. FAO has been leading the actions merging urban and forestry issues for food security at global level including through various activities (regional and international workshops; website http://km.fao.org/urbanforestry; supporting the development of national strategies and action plans; promoting North-South collaboration).

The European Forum on Urban Forestry (EFUF) led by IUFRO Working Group on Urban Forestry is the only regional forum specialized in this topic. It is a unique forum where researchers and practitioners can exchange views on best practices. However, although the forum has been meeting annually for 15 years, only a few Mediterranean countries participate on a regular basis (Israel, Italy and Slovenia) plus another few on irregular basis.

Towards the Development of UPF Guidelines for Policy and Decision Makers

FAO initiated in 2011 the development of “Guidelines for Policy and Decision Making promoting Urban and Peri-Urban Forestry” at global level. The Concept Note (February 2011) presents the international and regional background, the provisional programme and the tentative resources estimate. An international workshop “Developing guidelines for decision and policy makers: Trees and forests for healthy cities” (30th – 31st May 2011) and the regional mobilization meeting (2nd June 2011) held in Glasgow, UK agreed on the provisional table of contents for the guidelines and a programme to develop them based in large part on voluntary collaboration with institutions and experts. The guidelines are expected to be published in time for the Committee of Forestry (COFO) in September 2012.

In order to promote a participatory process, a transitional document “Towards UPF Guidelines” is being developed aimed at informing the international community on the process engaged, raising awareness of 15 priority themes (see Annex 1), and issuing an invitation to participate in the development of the process. In parallel, using the same framework, two regional versions of the global document mentioned above are being developed. They are intended to support information gathering for the global version of the Guidelines and mobilize local institutions to validate them and eventually develop regional guidelines.

- The draft version for Maghreb and French-speaking countries of Africa will be available in French at the 2nd African Forestry and Wildlife Week (Cotonou, Benin, 16 - 20 January 2012), the 2nd Near East Forestry Week (29 January to 2nd February 2012) and the 21st Session of Silva Mediterranea Committee (Antalya, Turkey, 29th January to 2nd February 2012).

- The draft version for Asia and Pacific will be submitted for review at a regional workshop to be held (tentatively) on 9th and 10th March 2012, back-to-back with the 1st Biennial Congress on Urban Green Space (New Delhi, 5-7 March 2012).
II) CONTEXT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Challenges

In general terms, cities of the Mediterranean region face the same issues but to different degrees as a consequence of the heterogeneity of the local situations. It is acknowledged that there is no regional state-of-the-art of the expertise acquired, there are no national strategies and action plans to face the long term challenges of cities based on the contribution of trees and forests, and there is no specialized network focusing on the region.

In response to this situation, in the framework of the International Year of Forests 2011, FAO, University of Bari and Florence and IUFRO have organized jointly two events in Florence for the Mediterranean basin: “MED-ways Guidelines and common routes for the future challenges on UPF in Mediterranean Countries” and the “FAO meeting on the development of the UPF Guidelines for the Mediterranean region” respectively on 16 and 17 December 2011. The objectives were to build a network, propose research and development initiatives, and propose the way to participate in the Guidelines development at global and regional level.

Participants, mostly from research centres and universities, came from eight Mediterranean countries (Croatia, France, Israel, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain) and three non-Mediterranean countries (Denmark, Sweden and UK). The meetings confirmed: (i) the lack of information available merging research and policy; (ii) the need for Mediterranean countries to improve their North-South networking in general, and their policy networking in particular; (iii) the lack of and need for a state-of-the-art of UPF in the region; and, (iv) the interest in participating in the development of the guidelines for policy and decision making. It was recommended to: (i) participate at the 2nd Near East Forestry Week and the Silva Mediterranea Week, with the participation of University of Florence, Italy at the side-event on urban forestry; and (ii) interview policy and decision makers in Mediterranean countries in order to get advice on their needs from a multisectoral point of view, the content and style of the guidelines, and advice on strategic ways to promote urban forestry in their cities and countries (the report of the meetings will be available by 22 January 2012).

III) RECOMMENDATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE OPTIMIZATION OF TREES AND FORESTS FOR HEALTHY MEDITERRANEAN CITIES

Item 16 of the agenda of the 21st session of the Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions-Silva Mediterranea 2012 is entitled “Optimization of trees and forests contribution to the Mediterranean cities: Towards the state of urban forestry, policy guidelines, a common vision and national strategies (an opportunity for a new Silva Mediterranea working group for the period 2012-2016).
It is proposed that the 21st session of the Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions - *Silva Mediterranea*, Item 16 on urban forestry, consider the following:

Put in place a Working Group on urban forestry, taking into account the following specifications.

a. **Mandate:** To coordinate gathering and exchange of information and make it available to policy and decision makers of the member countries of *Silva Mediterranea*.

b. **Tasks for 2012-2013**
   
i. Prepare the mandate of the Working Group, propose composition and modalities of collaborative work.

ii. Prepare a chapter on Urban Forestry for the proposed “State of the Mediterranean Forests (SoMF)”

iii. Provide regional information, that may or may not lead to a transitional publication “Towards UPF Guidelines”, in support to the global version of the Guidelines.

iv. Support regional networking for researchers, practitioners, decision and policy makers.

v. Attend events in order to “Green the Urban Agendas”, “Urbanize Forestry Agendas” and “Merge Policy to Research on respective agendas” *(Find in Annex 2 a list of international events in 2012)*.

vi. Participate in the preparation of the Glossary “One Hundred Words on Urban Forestry” initiated by the University of Bari and University of Florence.

vii. Prepare a Programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013.

viii. Assist in mobilizing institutional and financial resources for the implementation of the biennial workplan.


**References**

✔ Concept note on the process development of the UPF Guidelines (in English and French)

✔ Summary Results of the Glasgow Workshop (in English and French)

✔ Table of contents of “Towards UPF Guidelines” (version 2011-11-01) (in English and French)

✔ Main outcomes of the two events in Florence, 16 and 17 December 2011 (forthcoming)

✔ “Towards Urban and Periurban Forestry Guidelines for Policy and Decision Making” (Draft Version)

✔ “Towards UPF Guidelines – a regional version for Maghreb and French-speaking countries of Africa” (Draft)
ANNEX 1

Guidelines for Policy and Decision Making Promoting Urban and Peri-urban Forestry

15 Priority Themes - Provisional Table of Contents (June 2011)

“Governance, Planning and Accountability”

1. Participation and Stakeholder Framework
2. Forest and Tree Resources Assessment
3. Urban Design and Planning
4. Policy and Legal Framework (including land tenure)
5. Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

“Good practices in resources management for economic, ecological & health benefits of UPF”

6. Disaster Risk Management and Watershed Management
7. Water and Waste Water Reuse
8. Food and Nutrition Security
9. Human Health & Wellbeing
10. Landscape, Forest and Tree Resources Management
11. Product and Services Valuation, Incomes and Jobs

“Delivery support mechanisms”

12. Research & Development, Education and Awareness Raising
13. Resources Mobilization, Investment and Partnership
14. Communication
15. Monitoring and Evaluation
ANNEX 2

Selected international events related to urban and forestry issues

✓ 2-3 February 2012: 21st Session Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions – Silva Mediterranea, FAO, Antalya, Turkey.
✓ 5-7 March 2012: 1st Biennial Congress on Urban Green Spaces (CUGS), Aravali Foundation for Education and Dehli Government, New Delhi, India.
✓ 8-9 May 2012: 26th Session North American Forest Commission, FAO, Québec, Canada.
✓ 22 - 24 May 2012: Conference “Forest for People”, IUFRO, Alpbach, Tyrol/Austria.
✓ 30 May-2 June 2012: World Congress 2012, ICLEI, Belo Horizonte, Brazil.
✓ 4-6 June 2012: Rio+20 Global Town Hall, ICLEI, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
✓ 1-7 September 2012: World Urban Forum 7 – The Urban Future, UN-HABITAT, Naples, Italy.
✓ 24-28 September 2012: 21st Session of Committee on Forestry (COFO), FAO, Rome, Italy.