

REPORT

Khartoum,
Republic of the Sudan,
28-31 January
2002

**NEAR EAST
FORESTRY
COMMISSION**

Fifteenth session



PREVIOUS SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| First session | Teheran, Iran | 24-29 September 1955 |
| Second session | Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt | 27 October – 1 November 1958 |
| Third session | Adana, Turkey | 30 April – 5 May 1962 |
| Fourth session | Beirut, Lebanon | 15-22 June 1964 |
| Fifth session | Amman, Jordan | 25-30 September 1967 |
| Sixth session | Teheran, Iran | 25-30 April 1970 |
| Seventh session | Baghdad, Iraq | 30 November – 5 December 1974 |
| Eighth session | Khartoum, Sudan | 23-28 February 1978 |
| Ninth session | Nicosia, Cyprus | 6-10 June 1983 |
| Tenth session | Tunis, Tunisia | 29 June – 3 July 1987 |
| Eleventh session | Ankara, Turkey | 15-19 October 1990 |
| Twelfth session | Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt | 21-24 October 1996 |
| Thirteenth session | Damascus, Syria | 6-9 December 1998 |
| Fourteenth session | Teheran, Islamic Republic of Iran | 1-4 July 2000 |

FO:NEFC/2002/REP

REPORT

of the

FIFTEENTH SESSION

of the

NEAR EAST FORESTRY COMMISSION

Khartoum, Republic of the Sudan
28-31 January 2002

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome, 2002

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

PERSPECTIVES ON FORESTRY IN THE REGION: PROGRESS REPORTS (Item 4)

1. The Commission recommended that countries step up their efforts to strengthen the field-level capacity to implement the application of C&I. The Commission also recommended that the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and the concerned countries work together to bring the countries of the region to the same level as other countries as regards C&I. (para. 13)
2. The Commission recommended that FAO and the member countries strengthen the capacity of the LFCC Secretariat and member countries of the Commission. (para. 14)
3. The Commission took note of the recent efforts to address the issues of sustainable management and utilization of non-wood forest products and recommended that countries and FAO strengthen their efforts in addressing the issues in this area. (para. 15)
4. The Commission recommended that countries improve their institutional capacity to respond to the changes and to take proactive steps to face emerging situations. (para. 17)

UNCED FOLLOW-UP AS RELATED TO SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN THE NEAR EAST: REGIONAL INPUTS TO THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS (UNFF) (Item 5)

5. The Commission took note of these developments and stressed the need for the countries to participate in the deliberations of the UNFF. It recommended that FAO facilitate the participation of the Commission's member countries in the activities of the UNFF. (para. 20)

THE USE OF TREATED WASTEWATER (TWW) IN FOREST PLANTATIONS IN THE NEAR EAST (Item 6)

6. The Commission recommended closer collaboration between FAO and member countries of the Commission. (para. 22)
7. The Commission recommended that member countries design an integrated, intersectoral treated wastewater strategy with supporting legal, policy, regulatory and planning frameworks. The Commission also recommended that FAO assist with capacity building in member countries for the use of treated wastewater in irrigating tree plantations. (para. 24)

REGIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN GLOBAL FOREST RESOURCES ASSESSMENTS (Item 7)

8. The Commission recommended that FAO pursue support to strengthen country capacity in resource assessment. (para. 27)
9. The Commission highlighted the need for closer collaboration between FAO and countries. It welcomed the idea of establishing a regional team of experts as an advisory group on FRA issues and recommended that FAO take active steps in that respect. (para. 28)
10. The Commission recommended that FAO produce a new manual on FRA. (para. 29)

FAO FORESTRY ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION: REVIEW OF FAO REGULAR AND FIELD PROGRAMMES INCLUDING FOLLOW-UP TO THE REQUESTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 14TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION (Item 8a)

11. The Commission took note of the various activities and recommended that FAO continue to strengthen field-level activities, and especially to strengthen country capacity for the implementation of sustainable forest management. (para. 34)
12. The Commission recommended that FAO assist member countries in their efforts to develop and update the forestry curricula of institutions of higher education in order to accommodate contemporary global, regional and national environmental and socio-economic variables. (para. 35)
13. The Commission recommended that member countries, especially at the subregional level, seek and institutionalize cooperation in firefighting. (para. 36)
14. The Commission recommended that, in view of the decrease in forest cover in the region and consequently the possible loss of genetic resources – especially for endangered species – activities directed at conservation and collaboration in the region should be intensified with the technical assistance of FAO. (para. 37)

FAO FORESTRY ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION: 18TH SESSION OF *SILVA MEDITERRANEA* (Item 8b)

15. The Commission acknowledged the importance of *Silva Mediterranea* as a valuable forum for the region and recommended that FAO convene its eighteenth session in conjunction with other functions in early 2002, at FAO headquarters, to ensure wide participation of member countries. (para. 40)

FORESTRY OUTLOOK STUDY FOR AFRICA: PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP ACTION (Item 9)

16. The Commission noted the implications and recommendations from FOSA and noted the relevance of the findings in strengthening national forest programmes, and recommended that:
 - member countries that are involved in the FOSA process undertake a detailed review of the draft regional and subregional reports and provide comments and suggestions to FAO within one month; and
 - FAO proceed with the finalization of the report taking into account the comments and suggestions received as well as the review process planned during the thirteenth session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (25-29 March 2002). (para. 44)
17. The Commission recommended that FAO should continue to facilitate regional outlook studies, including covering the Near East countries not included in the ongoing FOSA, and help capacity building in strategic planning at the national level. (para. 45)

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS AND INITIATIVES (Item 10)

International Year of Mountains – 2002

18. The Secretariat stressed the need for member countries that had not formed national committees for the IYM to do so as early as possible in order to ensure active participation in the observance of the IYM. (para. 47)

Arrangements For The XII World Forestry Congress, Canada, 2003

19. The Commission acknowledged the importance of the World Forestry Congress and recommended that FAO facilitate and ensure a high participation from the developing countries. (para. 49)

National Forest Programme Facility

20. The Commission recommended that FAO, in collaboration with member countries, pursue the implementation of the Facility as a highly flexible and adaptable mechanism to provide timely support to member countries. In this regard the Commission emphasized the need to widen the involvement of donors and to ensure that complementarities of ongoing efforts were fully considered. (para. 52)

REPORT OF THE REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN FOREST MANAGEMENT/FOREST POLICY IN THE NEAR EAST REGION (27 January 2002, Khartoum, Sudan) (Item 11)

21. The Commission noted the recommendations of the workshop, which emphasized the need to strengthen the participation of the private sector and civil society in forestry in the region. It recommended that the countries institutionalize the process by establishing appropriate bodies at the national and local levels and develop frameworks that will encourage the active participation of all the stakeholders. (para. 54)

22. In order to strengthen the national-level initiatives, the Commission recommended that FAO strengthen the forestry capacity at the Regional Office for the Near East in order to provide timely technical support to the member countries, especially as related to national forest programmes. (para. 55)

REGIONAL ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMISSION FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY (Item 12)

23. The Commission recommended that the following items be brought to the attention of the Committee on Forestry at its next session:

- Recognizing the importance of improving the information base on forest resources, especially in the context of the increasing emphasis on the global environmental functions of forests, the FAO Forestry Department should facilitate the strengthening of national capacity in resource assessment.

- Considering the need to provide support to countries in the formulation and implementation of national forest programmes, the FAO Forestry Department should strengthen its technical capacity at the Regional Office for the Near East.
- Recognizing that the Near East Region primarily consists of low forest cover countries, and recognizing the critical nature of these countries' limited forests for protecting the environment and for other economic and social values, the FAO Forestry Department, in collaboration with other partners, supports the LFCC process, including strengthening of the LFCC Secretariat as an effective network.
- Considering the importance of regional and global outlook studies in providing a long-term framework for preparation of national forest programmes, and especially in giving an indication of the emerging opportunities and constraints in an increasingly integrated world, it is recommended that FAO should continue to facilitate regional outlook studies, including studies covering the Near East countries not included in the ongoing FOSA, and should help build capacity in strategic planning at the national level. (para. 56)

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

Afghanistan
Cyprus
Egypt
Ethiopia
Iran (Islamic Rep. of)
Iraq
Jordan
Kuwait
Lebanon
Libya

Pakistan
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Somalia
Sudan
Syria
Tunisia
Turkey
United Arab Emirates
Yemen

INTRODUCTION

1. The fifteenth session of the FAO Near East Forestry Commission was held in Khartoum, Sudan, at the kind invitation of the Government of the Sudan. The session was attended by 25 representatives from 18 member countries and one UN agency. There were also 12 observers from international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and member countries. A full list of participants is given in *Annex B*.
2. The opening session was chaired by Mr Shamsallah Shariat Nejad (Islamic Republic of Iran), Chairman of the Commission, who welcomed the participants. Dr M. Hosny El-Lakany, Assistant Director-General of the FAO Forestry Department, addressed the session on behalf of Dr Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO. In his opening address, Dr El-Lakany thanked the Government of the Sudan for hosting the session.
3. Dr Majzoub al-Khalifa Ahmad, Minister for Agriculture and Forestry and representative of H.E. the President of the Republic of the Sudan, welcomed participants on behalf of his Government. In his inaugural address, he stressed the concern of the Sudanese leadership about the forest resources of the country. This concern was reflected in a package of legislative measures favouring the sector. These measures included *inter alia*:
 - fiscal measures to encourage a rapid and wide-scale shift from the use of fuelwood to alternative sources of energy, such as Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG), especially after the recent development of the use of oil resources in the country;
 - political, administrative, legislative and financial support to reforestation programmes; and
 - a ministerial decree to effect two years of “rest” in the sector by banning all forest clearance, except in forests under sustainable forest management plans.
4. The Minister also pointed out the concessions granted in the forestry sector by the recent Investment Act.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Item 1)

5. The Provisional Agenda, as set out in document FO:NEFC/02/1 (*Annex A*), was adopted. The list of documents presented to the session is given in *Annex C*.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS (Item 2)

6. In accordance with its Rules of Procedure, the Commission elected a Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen and two Rapporteurs. Following is the composition of the Bureau:

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Chairman: | Abdel Azim Mirghani Ibrahim (Sudan) |
| Vice-Chairmen: | Mohammed Omar Al-Saghan (Saudi Arabia) Mohamed Mezali (Algeria) |
| Rapporteurs: | Alexandros Christodoulou (Cyprus) Mohamed Hassan Moqbel (Yemen) |

7. Mr Hassan Abdel Nour, FAO Senior Forestry Officer in the FAO Regional Office for the Near East, served as Secretary of the Commission.

PERSPECTIVES ON FORESTRY IN THE REGION: PROGRESS REPORTS (Item 4)

8. The Secretariat Note (Document: FO:NEFC/02/2) and the country reports presented during the session provided an overview of the forestry situation in the region, including the developments during the past two years. However, the Commission noted the need for more focused reporting, particularly indicating recent critical changes, so that countries would be able to learn from each other's experience and assess the direction of change over time. The Commission therefore stressed the importance of more focused reporting.
9. Almost all countries in the region have low forest cover. The extreme climatic conditions, including the acute shortage of water, has resulted in low productivity. For most countries in the region wood production has not been a primary objective of forestry. Although there has been considerable experience in establishing irrigated plantations, the growing water scarcity has significantly limited the scope for expanding the plantation programmes on a large scale. The implication of this is evident with increasing dependence on wood and wood-product imports, which is expected to grow considerably during the coming years.
10. Protection of the limited forest areas from illicit cutting, grazing, encroachment and fire has continued to be the primary concern of forest administration in most countries. Several countries reported the occurrence of severe forest fires during the past two years and ongoing preventive and control measures. Notwithstanding the increased awareness of the significance of forests, pressure on the forests has remained high, resulting in degradation and forest cover reduction. Afforestation efforts were far from adequate to compensate for the loss of forests and to meet the productive, protective, social and cultural functions of forests.
11. The extreme ecological fragility has made environmental protection the primary function of forests in most countries in the region. Although the region's forests are less rich in species than humid forests, protecting their limited biological diversity was seen as particularly important in the context of future programmes for reforestation and rehabilitation of degraded lands. Desertification and land degradation were identified as the most widespread problems affecting almost all the countries in the region. Efforts to arrest desertification were reported to fall far short of the actual needs and most countries continued to face institutional and financial problems.
12. Almost all countries have identified watershed protection and the need to adopt integrated land use as an important priority. Some of the problems such as the high silt load in the Nile River require close collaboration among the Nile-basin countries.
13. The Commission took note of the ongoing discussion on criteria and indicators (C&I) for sustainable forest management (SFM) and efforts to tailor them to the needs of the countries in the region. It was, however, noted that the field application of SFM was far from satisfactory on account of institutional, financial and technical constraints in the region. It was also noted that half of the Near East member countries had never participated in a C&I process or are far behind the other member countries of the region. The Commission recommended that countries step up their efforts to strengthen the field-level capacity to implement the application of C&I. The Commission also recommended that the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and the concerned countries work together to bring the countries of the region to the same level as other countries as regards C&I.
14. In this regard the Commission took note of the efforts by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in pursuing the Teheran Process and emphasized the need to strengthen the Secretariat for the low forest cover countries (LFCCs). Of particular significance was the need

to strengthen collaboration and networking among LFCCs; to learn from the experience of each; and to facilitate sharing of information and technologies. The Commission recommended that FAO and the member countries strengthen the capacity of the LFCC Secretariat and member countries of the Commission.

15. Although non-wood forest products continue to play an important role in the rural economies of many countries, it was recognized that efforts to manage them sustainably needed significant improvements. The Commission took note of the recent efforts to address the issues of sustainable management and utilization of non-wood forest products and recommended that countries and FAO strengthen their efforts in addressing the issues in this area.
16. Institutional changes initiated in recent years were being pursued by countries at varying paces. There have been increasing efforts to involve the private sector in afforestation and reforestation. Forest administration was adapting to broader institutional changes. Considerable efforts were also under way to enhance the participation of local communities in conservation and management of forest resources. Some countries were giving particular attention to the involvement of women in forestry. Although these efforts required significant strengthening of human resources in the forestry sector, including necessary reorientation of approaches and skills, efforts in this direction should be strengthened.
17. The Commission took note of the changing environment of forestry, especially the overall economic and social changes that alter the opportunities and constraints for forestry. Fluctuating economic performance has affected the resource availability to the sector. In some countries, this was encouraging a reorientation of the forestry sector, especially as regards priorities and institutional arrangements. Some of the countries have been able to take advantage of the growing demand for ecotourism, and this has facilitated active local community involvement. The Commission recommended that countries improve their institutional capacity to respond to the changes and to take proactive steps to face emerging situations.

UNCED FOLLOW-UP AS RELATED TO SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN THE NEAR EAST: REGIONAL INPUTS TO THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS (UNFF) (Item 5)

18. The Secretariat introduced document FO:NEFC/02/3, "UNCED follow-up related to sustainable forest management in the Near East: regional inputs to the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)", and outlined the formation of the UNFF as a follow-up support to the implementation of the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). The Commission was briefed about the present status of the UNFF including the planned UNFF 2, scheduled for March 2002, in Costa Rica. The Commission emphasized a need for active participation of the countries in the deliberations of the UNFF in order to have an impact on the decisions taken and to benefit from them. The Commission was made aware of the potential role of the Regional Forestry Commissions in the UNFF process, specifically with regard to:

- identifying emerging and major regional forestry issues;
- bringing these matters to global attention, where appropriate;
- networking within and among regions;
- enhancing the coordination of technical activities; and
- promoting regional integration.

19. The Commission was also informed about the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), chaired by FAO, and the establishment of the CPF Network in support of UNFF activities.
20. The Commission took note of these developments and stressed the need for the countries to participate in the deliberations of the UNFF. It recommended that FAO facilitate the participation of the Commission's member countries in the activities of the UNFF.

THE USE OF TREATED WASTEWATER (TWW) IN FOREST PLANTATIONS IN THE NEAR EAST (Item 6)

21. The Secretariat introduced document FO:NEFC/02/4, which outlined the experience in the use of treated wastewater in forest plantations in the Near East Region. The paper also outlined the acute situation with regard to water availability for establishing wood lots and plantations. Although the Near East Region occupies about 14 percent of the world's area and accounts for 10 percent of the world's population, it only receives 3.5 percent of the precipitation and has only 2.2 percent of the renewable water resources. Some countries in the region were classified as water deficient, which makes necessary the use of treated wastewater.
22. Considerable experience has been gained in the use of treated wastewater, and the Secretariat note outlined the experience in countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait and Yemen. During the discussions, the Commission noted that Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Cyprus and Tunisia also had experience in this area. The Commission recommended closer collaboration between FAO and member countries of the Commission.
23. The Commission noted the various issues, especially those related to health and economic viability, of using treated wastewater in the establishment of wood lots and green belts. It was also noted that this would require close collaboration between different ministries and departments such as the Ministries of Agriculture, Public Works, Health, Environment and Urban Planning.
24. The Commission recommended that member countries design an integrated, intersectoral treated wastewater strategy with supporting legal, policy, regulatory and planning frameworks. There was also a need to identify responsibilities to optimize the net benefits from the implementation of treated wastewater use, including its use in forest plantation development. The Commission also recommended that FAO assist with capacity building in member countries for the use of treated wastewater in irrigating tree plantations.

REGIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN GLOBAL FOREST RESOURCES ASSESSMENTS (Item 7)

25. The Commission noted the outcome of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2000 (FRA 2000), as outlined in Secretariat note FO:NEFC/02/5 on the regional involvement in global forest resources assessments. FRA 2000 was undertaken as a collaborative effort involving FAO, the member countries and other lead organizations.
26. The assessment relied largely on the collection and analysis of forest inventories from individual countries. It concluded that, worldwide, the conversion of forests to other land uses continued at a high rate, particularly in the tropics. At the same time, natural expansion of forests, largely on land previously used for agriculture, was high, particularly in the temperate zone. In addition, forest plantations continued to be established at a rate of about 3 million hectares annually. Taken together, the annual net change in forest area was -9.4 million hectares during the 1990s.

27. The Commission stressed the need for strengthening country capacity in FRA, including inventory on a regular basis in order to produce reliable data to assess the changes over time. The Commission especially noted the data requirements in the context of issues relating to climate change, including desertification, and biological diversity. It also noted the need to develop appropriate techniques to meet diverging data requirements. The Commission recommended that FAO pursue support to strengthen country capacity in resource assessment.
28. The Commission highlighted the need for closer collaboration between FAO and countries. It welcomed the idea of establishing a regional team of experts as an advisory group on FRA issues and recommended that FAO take active steps in that respect.
29. The Commission noted that the earlier manual relating to FRA became outdated in view of the increasing demand for a range of data and technological changes. The Commission recommended that FAO produce a new manual on FRA.

FAO FORESTRY ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION: REVIEW OF FAO REGULAR AND FIELD PROGRAMMES INCLUDING FOLLOW-UP TO THE REQUESTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 14TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION (Item 8a)

30. The Secretariat introduced document FO:NEFC/02/6 on the Regular and Field Programmes, including follow-up to the requests and recommendations of the fourteenth session of the Commission.
31. The Commission was informed of the collaborative effort of FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in developing the draft guidelines on measurement and assessment of criteria and indicators. The guidelines were further reviewed by the concerned countries in a meeting of national coordinators for C&I held in Teheran, Islamic Republic of Iran, in June 2000. To facilitate field application, the guidelines were published in Arabic, English and French.
32. The Commission was also informed of the current status of the development of the Worldwide Information System on Forest Genetic Resources and the ongoing efforts in watershed management. In particular, Field Programme activities focusing on development of participatory approaches in watershed management and upland conservation have continued in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen.
33. Of particular relevance to the region was the workshop on the “Use of treated sewage water in raising forest plantations and desertification control in Near East countries” held in Egypt in May 2001. Support to the process of implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification has continued through assistance for the formulation of National Action Programmes. The Commission was also informed of the FAO-supported ongoing efforts in the formulation and implementation of a National Forestry Strategy and a national forest programme in Saudi Arabia.
34. The Commission took note of the various activities and recommended that FAO continue to strengthen field-level activities, and especially to strengthen country capacity for the implementation of sustainable forest management.
35. The Commission recommended that FAO assist member countries in their efforts to develop and update the forestry curricula of institutions of higher education in order to accommodate contemporary global, regional and national environmental and socio-economic variables.

36. The Commission recommended that member countries, especially at the subregional level, seek and institutionalize cooperation in firefighting.
37. The Commission recommended that, in view of the decrease in forest cover in the region and consequently the possible loss of genetic resources – especially for endangered species – activities directed at conservation and collaboration in the region should be intensified with the technical assistance of FAO.

FAO FORESTRY ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION: 18TH SESSION OF *SILVA MEDITERRANEA* (Item 8b)

38. The Secretariat introduced document FO:NEFC/02/7 relating to *Silva Mediterranea* as a Statutory Body enabling the Mediterranean countries, members of the the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission, the European Forestry Commission and the Near East Forestry Commission to meet and share experiences and set cooperative programmes.
39. The Secretariat informed the Commission of the findings of the external review of *Silva Mediterranea*, of its research networks and also of the technical reasons for the delays in the holding of its eighteenth session in 2001, as had been recommended.
40. The Commission expressed concern about the delay in reviewing the structure and functions of *Silva Mediterranea*. However, the Commission stressed the importance of this committee in view of its vital and unique role in the development of the forestry sector in the region. The Commission acknowledged the importance of *Silva Mediterranea* as a valuable forum for the region and recommended that FAO convene its eighteenth session in conjunction with other functions in early 2002, at FAO headquarters, to ensure wide participation of member countries.

FORESTRY OUTLOOK STUDY FOR AFRICA: PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP ACTION (Item 9)

41. The Secretariat introduced document FO:NEFC/02/8 outlining the progress of implementation of the Forestry Outlook Study for Africa (FOSA) and the important conclusions of the draft regional report, as well as the North Africa subregional report. The Commission noted the elaborate process that was adopted, especially in facilitating the involvement of all countries and stakeholders, including development banks and regional and subregional organizations.
42. The Commission noted some of the preliminary conclusions from FOSA and their implications on forestry development at the regional, subregional and national levels. In particular, it was noted that demographic, economic, environmental and technological changes will impact forestry in many countries. These issues need to be fully factored into the development of national forest programmes. The draft report outlined the likely implications of these changes on key aspects such as forest cover, demand for wood and wood products and scope for development of non-wood forest products.
43. Considering the implications of changes, the draft report emphasized the need to focus on protection of the environment and poverty alleviation. The report also gave a broad indication of what may be done. The report particularly emphasized the need for regional collaboration and strengthened access to information.
44. The Commission noted the implications and recommendations from FOSA and noted the relevance of the findings in strengthening national forest programmes, and recommended that:

- member countries that are involved in the FOSA process undertake a detailed review of the draft regional and subregional reports and provide comments and suggestions to FAO within one month; and
 - FAO proceed with the finalization of the report taking into account the comments and suggestions received as well as the review process planned during the thirteenth session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (25-29 March 2002).
45. The Commission recommended that FAO should continue to facilitate regional outlook studies, including covering the Near East countries not included in the ongoing FOSA, and help capacity building in strategic planning at the national level. The importance of regional and global outlook studies for the preparation of national forest programmes is instrumental, especially in indicating the extent of the emerging opportunities and constraints in a globally integrated framework.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS AND INITIATIVES (Item 10)

International Year of Mountains – 2002

46. The Secretariat introduced document FO:NEFC/02/9 on the International Year of Mountains – 2002 (IYM), outlining the coordination of the preparations for the IYM, communication support, mobilizing country action, resources needed and coordination among major IYM global events.
47. The Secretariat stressed the need for member countries that had not formed national committees for the IYM to do so as early as possible in order to ensure active participation in the observance of the IYM.

Arrangements for the XII World Forestry Congress, Canada, 2003

48. The Secretariat introduced document FO:NEFC/02/10 on the arrangements for the XII World Forestry Congress to be held in Canada in 2003. Between 3 000 and 5 000 scientists, researchers, foresters and politicians are expected to attend. The Secretariat informed the Commission of the theme of the XII World Forestry Congress and the various arrangements for its organization.
49. The Commission acknowledged the importance of the World Forestry Congress and recommended that FAO facilitate and ensure a high participation from the developing countries.

National Forest Programme Facility

50. The Secretariat introduced document FO:NEFC/02/11 outlining the rationale, objectives and *modus operandi* of the National Forest Programme Facility. It was noted that the formulation and implementation of national forest programmes have been constrained by a number of factors including the lack of knowledge to resolve some of the key cross-sectoral and economy-wide constraints to sustainable forest management; inadequate knowledge and information on how to design and put in place effective forest policies and instruments for policy implementation; poor mobilization of existing knowledge and information; weak national capacities; and larger issues such as accountability and transparency. The Commission noted the relevance of the Facility in providing timely, catalytic support in strengthening the ongoing country-level efforts in formulation and implementation of national forest programmes.
51. The Commission noted the critical importance of support as envisaged in the National Forest Programme Facility, especially in facilitating country capacity development and strengthening

information exchange. The Commission particularly welcomed the approach of mobilizing knowledge at various levels, especially from within countries, and providing a common knowledge platform to overcome existing barriers for accessing information.

52. The Commission recommended that FAO, in collaboration with member countries, pursue the implementation of the Facility as a highly flexible and adaptable mechanism to provide timely support to member countries. In this regard the Commission emphasized the need to widen the involvement of donors and to ensure that complementarities of ongoing efforts were fully considered.

REPORT OF THE REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN FOREST MANAGEMENT/FOREST POLICY IN THE NEAR EAST REGION

(27 January 2002, Khartoum, Sudan) (Item 11)

53. The Secretariat introduced document FO:NEFC/02/Inf.4, which provided the main findings and recommendations of the regional workshop on the role of the private sector, civil society and NGOs in the formulation and implementation of national forest policies and national forest programmes. The workshop, organized immediately prior to the fifteenth session of the Commission (26-27 January 2002), was attended by representatives from 18 member countries of the Near East Region. Papers covering global, regional and national perspectives on participation by the private sector and civil society organizations, including NGOs, were presented and discussed during the workshop.
54. The Commission noted the recommendations of the workshop, which emphasized the need to strengthen the participation of the private sector and civil society in forestry in the region. It recommended that the countries institutionalize the process by establishing appropriate bodies at the national and local levels and develop frameworks that will encourage the active participation of all the stakeholders.
55. While endorsing the recommendations of the workshop, the Commission noted the need to enhance significantly both national capacity for improving institutional arrangements for forestry and access to information. It particularly noted the importance of sharing experiences among countries to facilitate learning from successes and failures. In order to strengthen the national-level initiatives, the Commission recommended that FAO strengthen the forestry capacity at the Regional Office for the Near East in order to provide timely technical support to the member countries, especially as related to national forest programmes.

REGIONAL ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMISSION FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY (Item 12)

56. The Commission recommended that the following items be brought to the attention of the Committee on Forestry at its next session:
- Recognizing the importance of improving the information base on forest resources, especially in the context of the increasing emphasis on the global environmental functions of forests, the FAO Forestry Department should facilitate the strengthening of national capacity in resource assessment.
 - Considering the need to provide support to countries in the formulation and implementation of national forest programmes, the FAO Forestry Department should strengthen its technical capacity at the Regional Office for the Near East.

- Recognizing that the Near East Region primarily consists of low forest cover countries, and recognizing the critical nature of these countries' limited forests for protecting the environment and for other economic and social values, the Commission called upon FAO to support the LFCC process, including strengthening of the LFCC Secretariat as an effective network.
- Considering the importance of regional and global outlook studies in providing a long-term framework for preparation of national forest programmes, and especially in giving an indication of the emerging opportunities and constraints in an increasingly integrated world, it is recommended that FAO should continue to facilitate regional outlook studies, including studies covering the Near East countries not included in the ongoing FOSA, and should help build capacity in strategic planning at the national level.

OTHER BUSINESS (Item 13)

57. No other business.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Item 14)

58. The delegations of Algeria, Cyprus, Lebanon and Tunisia offered to host the sixteenth session of the Near East Forestry Commission. The Commission thanked the delegations for their kind invitation.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT (Item 15)

59. The Commission reviewed the draft report of the session and, after suggesting a few amendments, unanimously adopted it.

ANNEX A**AGENDA**

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Election of officers
4. Perspectives on forestry in the region: progress reports
5. UNCED follow-up as related to sustainable forest management in the Near East: Regional inputs to the United Nations Forum for Forests (UNFF)
6. The Use of Treated Waste Water (TWW) in Forest Plantations in the Near East
7. Regional involvement in global forest resources assessments
- 8(a) FAO forestry activities in the region: Review of FAO Regular and Field Programmes, including follow-up to the requests and recommendations of the 14th Session of the Commission
- 8(b) FAO forestry activities in the region: 18th Session of *Silva Mediterranea* (upcoming)
9. Forestry Outlook Study for Africa: Progress of implementation and follow-up action
10. International events and initiatives (notes for information):
 - International Year of Mountains
 - Arrangements for the XII World Forestry Congress, Canada, 2003
 - National Forest Programme Facility
11. The Role of Private Sector, Non-governmental Organizations and Civil Society in Forest Management/Forest Policy in the Near East Region (27 January 2002, Khartoum) (for information) and report of FAO workshop
12. Regional issues identified by the Commission for the attention of the Committee on Forestry
13. Other business
14. Date and place of next session
15. Adoption of the report
16. Closing of the session

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ANNEX C**LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

| Agenda Item | Code | Title |
|--------------------|---------------|--|
| 2 | FO:NEFC/02/1 | Provisional Agenda |
| 4 | FO:NEFC/02/2 | Perspectives on forestry in the Region: progress reports |
| 5 | FO:NEFC/02/3 | UNCED follow-up as related to sustainable forest management in the Near East: Regional inputs to the United Nations Forum for Forests (UNFF) |
| 6 | FO:NEFC/02/4 | The Use of Treated Waste Water (TWW) in Forest Plantations in the Near East |
| 7 | FO:NEFC/02/5 | Regional Involvement in Global Forest Resources Assessments |
| 8 (a) | FO:NEFC/02/6 | FAO forestry activities in the region: Review of FAO Regular and Field Programmes, including follow-up to the requests and recommendations of the Fourteenth session of the Commission |
| 8(b) | FO:NEFC/02/7 | FAO forestry activities in the Region (for information): 18 th Session of <i>Silva Mediterranea</i> (upcoming) |
| 9 | FO:NEFC/02/8 | Forestry Outlook Study for Africa: Progress of implementation and follow-up action |
| 10 | | International events and initiatives (Information Notes): |
| | FO:NEFC/02/9 | • International Year of Mountains |
| | FO:NEFC/02/10 | • Arrangements for the XII World Forestry Congress, Canada, 2003 |
| | FO:NEFC/02/11 | • National Forest Programme Facility |

Information documents:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| FO:NEFC/02/Inf.1 | Information note |
| FO:NEFC/02/Inf.2 | Provisional timetable |
| FO:NEFC/02/Inf.3 | List of documents |
| FO:NEFC/02/Inf.4 | The Role of Private Sector, Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society in Forest Management/Forest Policy in the Near East Region: (27 th January, 2002, Khartoum)-(for information) and report of FAO Workshop |

