

# ***REPORT***

Beirut,  
Republic of Lebanon,  
24-27 May 2004

# **NEAR EAST FORESTRY COMMISSION**

Sixteenth 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
Fifteenth session	Khartoum, Republic of the Sudan	28-31 January 2002

**REPORT**

**of the**

**SIXTEENTH SESSION**

**of the**

**NEAR EAST FORESTRY COMMISSION**

Beirut, Republic of Lebanon  
24-27 May 2004

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## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **PERSPECTIVES OF FORESTRY IN THE REGION: NATIONAL PROGRESS REPORTS**

1. The Commission stressed the importance of conducting national forest assessments and recommended that countries conduct such assessments and seek technical support from FAO and from regional and global funding agencies (para. 9).
2. The Commission stressed the importance of information exchange on the successful implementation of reforestation and sustainable forest management activities and recommended that FAO continue to support field level activities and facilitate information exchange, and that countries and FAO record and document success stories to be exchanged for presentation to the 2005 session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) (para. 10).
3. The Commission recommended that countries formulate, update and revise their forest policies and prepare and implement national forest programmes (nfps) as workable frameworks for forestry development and seek support for that purpose from FAO and the nfp Facility (para. 11).
4. The Commission took note of the continued threats to forests and trees outside forests from overgrazing, forest fires and exotic invasive species. It stressed the importance of collaborative action in facing these threats and recommended that thematic studies be conducted on problems common to countries (para. 12).

### **FAO FORESTRY ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION: REVIEW OF FAO REGULAR AND FIELD PROGRAMMES, INCLUDING FOLLOW-UP TO THE REQUESTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 15<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION**

5. The Commission emphasized the importance of support to mangrove forests and recommended that a sub-regional TCP be prepared for the rehabilitation and sustainable development of mangroves in some countries of the Region (para. 13).
6. The Commission took note of the importance of economic and monetary valuations of forest goods and services to help better reflect the contribution of forestry to national economies and to facilitate the sector's attempts to obtain greater attention and higher national budget allocations. It recommended that better valuation methods be established by FAO to identify these values (para. 14).

### **FORESTS AND WATER: THE ROLE OF FORESTS IN FOOD AND WATER SECURITY IN THE NEAR EAST**

7. Water is a cross-sectoral and comprehensive issue, which should be integrated in national development strategies. The Commission recommended that FAO incorporate such strategies into its cross-sectoral projects and development programmes in the Near East Region and invited countries to do the same (para. 15).
8. The Commission expressed its interest and concern regarding management practices, including integrated watershed management. It recommended that FAO conduct thematic studies on the roles of forests and trees in regulating water flow and quality in watershed areas and along water courses, and submit to the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of COFO a proposal on the socio-economic linkages between highland and lowland dwellers and the impact of mountain tourism on water resources and that the results and recommendations of studies be presented to the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission (para. 17).

9. The availability of information on the protective role of forests, trees outside forests and forest plantations, and their role in poverty reduction, as well as on the evaluation of non-wood services of forests was essential for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and the management of water resources. The Commission urged FAO to make information available to countries and to facilitate the exchange of such information among countries (para. 18).

#### **FOREST FIRES AGREEMENTS**

10. The Commission recognized the validity of developing fire agreements and recommended that COFO 2005 discuss the principle of establishing bilateral and regional agreements for combating wild fires (para. 21).

#### **IN-SESSION SEMINAR: IMPLEMENTING IPF/IFF PROPOSALS FOR ACTION, INCLUDING THROUGH NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMMES (nfps)**

11. The Commission called upon FAO, in collaboration with other partners, to continue to support implementation at the national level, and to assist countries in sharing experiences, in building national capacities in intergovernmental fora and to follow the progress of the Proposals (para. 23).

12. The participants recommended that the Commission provide a forum for strong regional forestry policy dialogue, including preparations for future global meetings and for national, and possibly regional, positions at UNFF-5 in 2005 (para. 24).

#### **STRENGTHENING THE NEAR EAST FORESTRY COMMISSION TO HELP ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN THE REGION (Item 8)**

13. The Commission recommended that the existing arrangement for inter-sessional activities be continued and broadened to include some regional organizations and non-governmental organizations, as needed. The Commission considered that FAO Member countries should be apprised at the highest level, through COFO, that forestry should receive greater prominence in national and regional development planning (para. 26).

#### **REPORT OF THE FAO WORKSHOP ON FOREST RESOURCES ASSESSMENT 2005 (FRA 2005): REVIEW OF NATIONAL REPORTS**

14. The participants requested FAO to translate basic FRA 2005 documents into Arabic, and recommended that FAO should give special consideration to Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs) in FRA 2005 (para. 28).

#### **REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON FORESTRY OUTLOOK STUDY FOR WEST AND CENTRAL ASIA (FOWECA)**

15. The participants requested FAO to increase technical support for the preparation of the country outlook papers (para. 32).

#### **REGIONAL ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMISSION FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY (COFO) (Item 10)**

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

- Recognizing the appreciable increase in forest and tree plantations as a result of the rising awareness of the importance of forests, increased political will and the availability of

- treated waste water, the FAO Forestry Department should continue its technical support to field activities and in particular to national forest assessments, and facilitate information exchange and capacity building by working with countries to exchange document and success stories.
- Recognizing the importance of collaborative action on forest fires and exotic invasive species, recommended that relevant thematic studies be conducted and regional information networks established to counter these threats.
- Recognizing the importance of the rehabilitation and sustainable development of mangroves in some countries of the region, recommended that a sub-regional TCP be prepared to support such action.
- Recognizing the interdependence between strategies for forest management, water resource management and poverty alleviation, particularly in rural areas, the FAO Forestry Department should incorporate these strategies into its projects and development programmes in the Near East Region.
- Considering the importance of the need for technical assistance in capacity building on water management and use, particularly water harvesting, use of treated waste water and the selection of tree species with low water requirements, the FAO Forestry Department should conduct a study on the role of trees and forests located in watershed areas and along water courses in regulating water flow and quality, submit a proposal on upstream-downstream social and economic linkages and report to the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission.
- Recognizing the importance of developing an institutional framework for implementing any proposed bilateral, regional or international fire agreements, COFO should discuss the principles of establishing such agreements for combating forest fires.
- Recognizing the need for international processes to provide the means for the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action and for the dissemination of information on the outcomes, the FAO Forestry Department, in collaboration with other partners, should continue to support implementation at the national level, assist countries in building national capacities in intergovernmental fora and to follow the progress of the Proposals.
- In view of the insufficient attention assigned to forestry in most countries, the FAO Forestry Department should encourage countries to increase support to their forestry sectors, enhance their activities, improve national capacity building, contribute more effectively to global intergovernmental fora and follow the progress of debate in such fora.
- Given the importance of the preparation of country papers for the FOWECA process and national forestry development, and the lack of appropriate expertise in several countries, the FAO Forestry Department should increase its technical support towards the preparation of such papers.

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Sixteenth Session of the FAO Near East Forestry Commission was held in Beirut from 24 to 27 May 2004 at the kind invitation of the Government of the Republic of Lebanon. The session was attended by 48 representatives from 19 member countries, and nine observers from non-member countries, UN agencies, international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. A list of participants is provided in *Annex B*.

2. The Session was opened by Mr. Abdel Azim Mirghani Ibrahim (Sudan), Chairman of the Commission, who welcomed the participants and called the meeting to order. The Chairman then invited Mr. Abdel Salam Ould Ahmed, FAO Representative in Lebanon, to take the floor. In his address, Mr. Ould Ahmed thanked the Government of the Republic of Lebanon for hosting the session and referred to the strong and longstanding cooperation between the Government and FAO in all agricultural sectors. Forests were a central component within the Government's priority areas of development and the Commission was an important vehicle for supporting sustainable forest management activities throughout the region.

3. On behalf of the Director-General of FAO, Dr. M. Hosny El-Lakany, Assistant Director-General, FAO Forestry Department, thanked the Ministry of Agriculture of Lebanon for its hospitality and for the excellent arrangements made in organizing the 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the Near East Forestry Commission. He referred to the importance of the Commission as a forum for discussing and identifying problems and emerging issues common to the region and as a link between international dialogue and its translation into practical action on the ground, as emphasized by the Committee on Forestry (COFO). Dr. El-Lakany acknowledged the interdependence of forests, water and agriculture, and emphasized the need to ensure that this dynamic relationship was adequately reflected in policy development and practical programmes. He highlighted the importance of forests in alleviating poverty and as a major source of rural livelihoods, and the need to achieve equilibrium between environmental and human needs. The 2003 restructuring of the FAO Forestry Department had been undertaken to better respond to member countries' broad needs. Dr. El-Lakany concluded by inviting member countries to ensure active participation in the March 2005 session of COFO and ministerial-level presence at the preceding high-level meeting on forests convened by the FAO Director-General.

4. Mr. Louis Lahoud, Director-General of the Ministry of Agriculture, and representative of His Excellency the Minister for Agriculture, welcomed participants on behalf of his Government. In his inaugural speech, he stressed the concerns of the Lebanese leadership about the country's forest resources and the degradation incurred over the past decades. This concern was reflected in a number of remedial measures, which included *inter alia* the quest for:

- regulations to coordinate land use for residential, industrial agricultural, health, educational and communication purposes, with a view to conserving remaining forests and tree cover; and
- new mechanisms to regulate land use and the development of public goods, such as sea shores, air, natural scenery, plants, historical sites and public parks.

5. Mr. Lahoud also pointed out that the Government of Lebanon had ratified the United Nations Convention on Desertification Control and commenced with its five-year plan for reforestation and the expansion of green spaces. This had been consolidated through the promulgation of a 1996 act for forest protection followed by a number of decrees to declare some forests as natural protectorates. Following the country's ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity, new legislation was before the legislature for the conservation of natural protected areas. Cooperation was also under way with neighboring Syria to reafforest the eastern mountains.



**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA** (Item 2)

6. The Provisional Agenda, as set out in document FO:NEFC/2004/1 (*Annex A*), was adopted. The list of documents presented to the session is provided in *Annex C*.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS** (Item 3)

7. In accordance with its Rules of Procedure, the Commission elected a Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen and one Rapporteur. The composition of the Bureau was as follows:

Chairman:	Mr. Louis Lahoud Lahoud (Lebanon)
Vice-Chairmen:	Mr. Abdu Gassim Al Assiri (Saudi Arabia) Mr. Tamer Otrakcier (Turkey)
Rapporteur:	Mr. Alexandros Christodoulou (Cyprus)

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

**PERSPECTIVES OF FORESTRY IN THE REGION: NATIONAL PROGRESS REPORTS**  
(Item 4)

9. The Secretariat note (document FO:NEFC/2004/2) and country reports presented during the session provided an overview of the situation in the region with respect to forest areas (as estimated by the Forest Resource Assessment (FRA 2000) as well as indicated in individual country reports), plantation forests, wood fuel production, roundwood production and imports of wood and wood-based products. The region's total import bill for wood and wood products exceeded US\$5.0 billion. For countries where recent inventories had shown area estimates different from those provided by FRA 2000, the Commission suggested that the new figures be included in the country contribution towards FRA 2005. To enhance this contribution and to meet other management purposes, the Commission stressed the importance of conducting national forest assessments and recommended that countries conduct such assessments and seek technical support from FAO and from regional and global funding agencies.

10. The Commission noted an appreciable increase in forest and tree plantation in several member countries as a result of the rising awareness of the importance of forests, increased political will and the availability of treated waste water. It was noted that there had been a marked rise in urban and peri-urban planting in particular. The Commission stressed the importance of information exchange on the successful implementation of reforestation and sustainable forest management activities and recommended that FAO continue to support field level activities and facilitate information exchange, and that countries and FAO record and document success stories to be exchanged for presentation to the 2005 session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO).

11. Pressures and threats facing forestry in the region were discussed and the need to effectively meet imminent challenges were cited as reasons for more empowered forestry institutions manned by capable personnel with broadened training. The need for holistic planning was also stressed. The Commission recommended that countries formulate, update and revise their forest policies and prepare and implement national forest programmes (nfps) as workable frameworks for forestry development and seek support for that purpose from FAO and the nfp Facility.

12. The Commission took note of the continued threats to forests and trees outside forests from overgrazing, forest fires and exotic invasive species. The Commission stressed the importance of collaborative action in facing these threats and recommended that thematic studies be conducted on problems common to countries. Areas to be covered could include use interactions between forest and

range resources, and the regulation of such use to achieve integration and sustainability of both resources; and the impact of invasive species on the environment in general and on forests in particular with the establishment of regional information networks on measures to counter such threats.

**FAO FORESTRY ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION: REVIEW OF FAO REGULAR AND FIELD PROGRAMMES, INCLUDING FOLLOW-UP TO THE REQUESTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 15<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION (Item 5)**

13. The Commission considered document FO: NEFC/2004/3. It was informed of the various activities in forest resource development in countries of the region and of the satisfactory implementation of on-going projects. The Commission noted the successful completion of technical cooperation projects, including the first mangrove project in the region. The Commission emphasized the importance of support to mangrove forests and recommended that a sub-regional TCP be prepared for the rehabilitation and sustainable development of mangroves in some countries of the Region.

14. The Commission took note of the importance of economic and monetary valuations of forest goods and services to help better reflect the contribution of forestry to national economies and to facilitate the sector's attempts to obtain greater attention and higher national budget allocations. The Commission recommended that better valuation methods be established by FAO to identify these values and invited countries to do the same.

**FORESTS AND WATER: THE ROLE OF FORESTS IN FOOD AND WATER SECURITY IN THE NEAR EAST (Item 6)**

15. The Secretariat introduced document FO: NEFC/2004/4. The Commission reaffirmed the importance of forests and water to the region. Water scarcity, poverty, food insecurity, natural disasters and forest degradation were all inter-linked, particularly in rural areas. Water is a cross-sectoral and comprehensive issue, which should be integrated in national development strategies and the Commission recommended that FAO incorporate these strategies into its cross-sectoral projects and development programmes in the Near East Region.

16. Many countries pointed out the need for capacity building in technical aspects of water management and use, e.g. water harvesting, use of treated sewage water and selection of tree species with low water requirements, etc. The issue of the conflict between tree planting and water consumption, specifically by individual farmers, was also raised.

17. The Commission took note of the continued support by FAO to sustainable mountain development through its leading role in the International Year of Mountains. In view of the water shortages experienced by many countries in the region, the Commission expressed its interest and concern regarding management practices, including integrated watershed management. It recommended that FAO conduct thematic studies on the roles of forests and trees located in watershed areas and along water courses in regulating water flow and quality, and submit to the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of COFO a proposal on the socio-economic linkages between highland and lowland dwellers and the impact of mountain tourism on water resources. The results and recommendations of these studies should also be presented to the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission.

18. The availability of information on the protective role of forests, trees outside forests and forest plantations, and their role in poverty reduction, as well as on the evaluation of non-wood services of forests was essential for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and the management of water resources. The Commission urged FAO to make information available to countries and to facilitate the exchange of such information among countries.

**FOREST FIRES AGREEMENTS (Item 7)**

19. The Secretariat introduced document FO: NEFC/2004/5 which highlighted the role of fire in the land-use system and natural ecosystem processes, the FAO Forestry Department's work on forest fires, and the importance of networks and efficient collaboration at all levels to control fires or reduce their damaging impact. The document provided information on a global agreement on wildfires, as promoted by the International Wildland Fire Summit held in Australia in 2003. The importance of community participation in combating fires and, in particular, in fire prevention was stressed by participants. It was recalled that donors were already supporting participatory forest fire management in the region.

20. The Commission emphasized the significance of bilateral arrangements to address problems occurring across borderlines during fire-fighting operations. Regional agreements were, however, needed for promoting information networks and experience exchange, particularly on post-fire operations. The obligations and constraints of any agreement or convention were recalled.

21. The importance of selecting an institutional framework for implementing any proposed regional or international arrangement was stressed. The Commission recognized the validity of developing fire agreements and recommended that COFO 2005 discuss the principle of establishing bilateral and regional agreements for combating wild fires.

**IN-SESSION SEMINAR: IMPLEMENTING IPF/IFF PROPOSALS FOR ACTION, INCLUDING THROUGH NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMMES (nfps)**

22. An in-session Seminar on Implementing IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, including through National Forest Programmes (nfps), was held during the session, based on document FO: NEFC/2004/6. The participants were informed of the ongoing international forestry debate, in particular the discussion at the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and activities by the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF).

23. The participants stressed the need for international processes to provide the proper means for the implementation of the Proposals for Action and for the dissemination of information on the outcomes. The Commission called upon FAO, in collaboration with other partners, to continue to support implementation at the national level, and to assist countries in sharing experiences, in building national capacities in intergovernmental fora and to follow the progress of the Proposals.

24. The participants recommended that the Commission provide a forum for strong regional forestry policy dialogue, including preparations for future global meetings and for national, and possibly regional, positions at UNFF-5 in 2005.

**STRENGTHENING THE NEAR EAST FORESTRY COMMISSION TO HELP ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN THE REGION (Item 8)**

25. Secretariat Note FO: NEFC/2004/7 reviewed the role of the Commission since its establishment in 1953 as a policy and technical forum to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis; to advise on the formulation of forest policy and as a mechanism for information sharing. FAO was encouraged to coordinate and cooperate with regional bodies to assist in capacity-building in SFM.

26. The Commission was informed about and discussed the inter-sessional activities, including the meeting of a regional task force on forestry whose recommendations had contributed appreciably to the content and agenda of the current session of the Commission. The Commission recommended that such an arrangement for inter-sessional activities be continued and broadened to include some regional

organizations and non-governmental organizations, as needed. The Commission considered that FAO Member countries should be apprised at the highest level, through COFO, that forestry should receive greater prominence in national and regional development planning.

**REPORT OF THE FAO WORKSHOP ON FOREST RESOURCES ASSESSMENT 2005 (FRA 2005): REVIEW OF NATIONAL REPORTS** (Item 9)

27. A workshop on Forest Resources Assessment (FRA 2005) (document FO:NEFC/2004/INF.6) was held prior to the 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission. Twenty-four National Correspondents (NCs) from 16 countries attended (see *Annex D*).

28. The participants requested FAO to translate basic FRA 2005 documents into Arabic, and recommended that FAO should give special consideration to Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs) in FRA 2005.

29. National forest resources assessment was accorded high priority, and FAO's assistance was strongly requested by NCs, particularly by those countries which had recently experienced conflicts.

**REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON FORESTRY OUTLOOK STUDY FOR WEST AND CENTRAL ASIA (FOWECA)** (Item 9)

30. The FOWECA planning workshop was held on 23 May 2004 in Beirut, in conjunction with the 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission (document FO:NEFC/2004/INF.7). Twenty-five participants, including 13 FOWECA focal points, took part in the workshop (*Annex E*). The main objectives were to introduce to the focal points the process and activities of the FOWECA study, to discuss the structure and preparation of the country outlook paper, and to identify the thematic outlook study topics and issues. Three presentations were made on: an introduction to the study process; forces having an impact on the forestry sector in the region; and trends and scenarios of the forestry sector to the 2020 horizon. The structure of the country outlook paper was discussed and agreed upon, and topics were identified for thematic outlook studies.

31. The Forestry Outlook Study for West and Central Asia (FOWECA) is part of the series of outlook studies being implemented by FAO. Following a recommendation by the Near East Forestry Commission at its 15<sup>th</sup> Session, FAO, in collaboration with the member countries, conducted a forestry outlook study for the countries of West and Central Asia. At the invitation of the FAO Director-General, the Ministers responsible for forestry of the 23 countries of the region had nominated a focal point for the outlook study.

32. The participants requested FAO to increase technical support for the preparation of the country outlook papers. Focal points would establish an in-country working group and a work plan that would be communicated to FAO as soon as possible. Nominal financial support would be available to support national efforts.

**REGIONAL ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMISSION FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY (COFO)** (Item 10)

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

- Recognizing the appreciable increase in forest and tree plantations as a result of the rising awareness of the importance of forests, increased political will and the availability of treated waste water, the FAO Forestry Department should continue its technical support to

field activities and in particular to national forest assessments, and facilitate information exchange and capacity building by working with countries to exchange document and success stories.

- Recognizing the importance of collaborative action on forest fires and exotic invasive species, recommended that relevant thematic studies be conducted and regional information networks established to counter these threats.
- Recognizing the importance of the rehabilitation and sustainable development of mangroves in some countries of the region, recommended that a sub-regional TCP be prepared to support such action.
- Recognizing the interdependence between strategies for forest management, water resource management and poverty alleviation, particularly in rural areas, the FAO Forestry Department should incorporate these strategies into its projects and development programmes in the Near East Region.
- Considering the importance of the need for technical assistance in capacity building on water management and use, particularly water harvesting, use of treated waste water and the selection of tree species with low water requirements, the FAO Forestry Department should conduct a study on the role of trees and forests located in watershed areas and along water courses in regulating water flow and quality, submit a proposal on upstream-downstream social and economic linkages and report to the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission.
- Recognizing the importance of developing an institutional framework for implementing any proposed bilateral, regional or international fire agreements, COFO should discuss the principles of establishing such agreements for combating forest fires.
- Recognizing the need for international processes to provide the means for the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action and for the dissemination of information on the outcomes, the FAO Forestry Department, in collaboration with other partners, should continue to support implementation at the national level, assist countries in building national capacities in intergovernmental fora and to follow the progress of the Proposals.
- In view of the insufficient attention assigned to forestry in most countries, the FAO Forestry Department should encourage countries to increase support to their forestry sectors, enhance their activities, improve national capacity building, contribute more effectively to global intergovernmental fora and follow the progress of debate in such fora.
- Given the importance of the preparation of country papers for the FOWECA process and national forestry development, and the lack of appropriate expertise in several countries, the FAO Forestry Department should increase its technical support towards the preparation of such papers.

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Item 11)**

34. No other matters were discussed.

#### **DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Item 12)**

35. The Commission noted with appreciation the offers made by the delegations of Cyprus, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Sudan to host the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the Near East Forestry Commission.

#### **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT (Item 13)**

36. The Commission reviewed the draft report, which was subsequently adopted.

**CLOSING OF THE SESSION** (Item 14)

37. In their closing statements, the Commission Chairman, the Commission Secretary, the FAO Representative in the Republic of Lebanon and Dr. M.Hosny EL-Lakany, who addressed the audience on behalf of the Director-General of FAO, all thanked the Government of the Republic of Lebanon for having hosted the Commission and for the excellent arrangements that had contributed to the meeting's success. The speakers also commended the interpreters and translators for their work. The Secretary of the Commission made a special mention of the Lebanese NGO that had provided valuable assistance in the organization of the session and emphasized that FAO greatly encouraged this type of collaboration. The Commission welcomed to the meeting His Excellency Ali Hassan Khalil, Minister for Agriculture of the Republic of Lebanon, who closed the session with a statement emphasizing the importance of forests to the region. His Excellency commended the good standard of debate and work of the Commission and the high level of participation by countries which reflected the growing awareness of the importance of the Commission and of forests and their roles in countries of the region. His Excellency concluded by thanking FAO for the various aspects of technical support it had extended to Lebanon, including to the forestry sector.

**ANNEX A****AGENDA**

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Election of officers
4. Perspectives of forestry in the Region: national progress reports
5. FAO forestry activities in the Region: Review of FAO Regular and Field Programmes, including follow-up to the requests and recommendations of the 15<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission
  - NEFC Inter-sessional activities
6. Forests and Water: The role of forests in food and water security in the Near East Region
7. Forest Fire Agreements
8. Strengthening the Near East Forestry Commission
9. - Report of the FAO Workshop on Forest Resources Assessment 2005 (FRA 2005): Review of national reports (*for information*)
  - Report of the FAO Workshop on Forestry Outlook Study for Western & Central Asia (FOWECA) (*for information*)
10. Regional issues identified by the Commission for the attention of the Committee on Forestry (COFO)
11. Any other business
12. Date and place of next session
13. Adoption of the report
14. Closing of the session

**ANNEX B****LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

Chairperson:	Louis Lahoud Lahoud (Republic of Lebanon)
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Rapporteur:	Alexandros Christodoulou (Cyprus)
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*ANNEX C***LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Title</b>
2	FO:NEFC/2004/1	Provisional Agenda
4	FO:NEFC/2004/2	Perspectives on forestry in the Region: national progress reports
5	FO:NEFC/2004/3	Review of FAO Regular and Field Programmes, including follow-up to the requests and recommendations of the Fifteenth Session of the Commission
6	FO:NEFC/2004/4	Forests and Water: The Role of Forests in Food and Water Security in the Near East Region
7	FO:NEFC/2004/5	Forest Fire Agreements
	FO:NEFC/2004/6	In-session Seminar: Implementing IPF/IFF proposals for action, including through National Forest Programmes
8	FO:NEFC/2004/7	Strengthening the Near East Forestry Commission

**Information documents:**

	FO:NEFC/2004/INF.1	Information Note
	FO:NEFC/2004/INF.2	Provisional Timetable
	FO:NEFC/2004/INF.3	List of documents
	FO:NEFC/2004/INF.4	Report on the XII World Forestry Congress
5	FO:NEFC/2004/INF.5	NEFC Inter-sessional Activities
9	FO:NEFC/2004/INF.6	Report of the FAO Regional Workshop on Forest Resources Assessment (FRA 2005): Review of national reports
9	FO:NEFC/2004/INF.7	Report of the FAO Workshop on Forestry Outlook Study for West and Central Asia (FOWECA)

## REPORT OF THE FAO REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON GLOBAL FOREST RESOURCES ASSESSMENT – FRA 2005

Beirut, Republic of Lebanon, 21-22 May 2004

### Preamble

The Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA 2005) is conducting a series of regional workshops as part of the preparatory work for the country reporting process. These regional workshops respond to requests made by many member countries during the global training session held at FAO Headquarters in Rome in November 2003.

The Near East Regional Workshop was the first in the series and was held in conjunction with the Near East Forestry Commission. It was hosted by the Lebanese Government and jointly organized by the FAO Forestry Department in Rome and the Regional Office for the Near East in Cairo, together with the local NGO, *The Association for Forestry Development and Conservation (AFDC)*.

Invitations to the workshop were extended to all the nominated National Correspondents (NCs) for countries that belong to the Near East Region. In total 24 participants from 16 countries, one regional organization and one private sector company attended the meeting (*Appendix I*).

### Objectives and content

The main objectives of the workshop were to:

- present and discuss the fifteen National Reporting Tables which the countries are being requested to compile for FRA 2005 (especially for those NCs who did not attend the November 2003 Training Session in Rome);
- present the new tools that have been developed for facilitating the work of the National Correspondents, such as the documents “*Guidelines for country reporting*” and the “*Country Reporting template*”;
- review the work done so far by the Near East countries in compiling the national reporting tables for FRA 2005, to share country experiences on the reporting process and to describe how FAO may provide support to linked activities such as National Forest Assessments;
- establish the time schedule and define deadlines for the country reporting to FRA 2005; and
- provide technical assistance and further guidance in order to ensure consistent high-quality reporting that meets the specifications established for FRA 2005.

The first day of the workshop was dedicated to a presentation of the FRA Process, the National Reporting Tables and the common methodological framework established for FRA 2005. Each presentation was followed by a time assigned for questions, answers and discussion.

The second day of the workshop started with the presentation of country experiences in reporting to FRA 2005. The following countries presented their experiences of completing the National Reporting Tables:

- Cyprus
- Uzbekistan
- Sudan
- Turkey



The country presentations were followed by a discussion where common problems in the country reporting were identified, as well as proposals on how to address these problems. Common problems included the lack of or weak and incomplete data, difficulties in adapting national definitions to the FRA definitions, etc.

Another item covered on the second day was National Forest Assessments (NFA). A presentation was made of the support provided by FAO to National Forest Assessment and the basic methodology suggested by FAO. This was followed by a presentation by Lebanon on the country's NFA experience, which is one output of the soon to be concluded TCP/LEB/2903 project, and by a presentation by the Islamic Republic of Iran on its work in preparing a NFA.

There was great general interest in undertaking NFAs and the participating countries found that the experiences from Lebanon were important for designing good NFAs for the low forest cover countries (LFCCs) in the region. Iran has already begun the design of a NFA and it was suggested that it contact FAO to obtain support for its initiative. General country statements were also made by Egypt and Iraq.

The second day was concluded by presenting the means of technical support provided to the NCs by the FRA Secretariat in Rome in order to help them solve technical questions and to elaborate the country reports. The timetable for the work to be undertaken by the countries was also presented and discussed.

#### **Issues raised, recommendations and requests**

During the workshop, several issues were raised and recommendations made on how to handle specific reporting problems. In particular, the meeting requested FAO support with the following:

- translation of the basic FRA 2005 documents into Arabic;
- compilation of a CD-ROM with all the presentations and documentations to be sent to the NCs;
- consolidation of communication between the NCs and the FRA Secretariat in Rome;
- future FRAs should take more into consideration some particular characteristics of the LFCCs, such as: land with multiple land use, and importance of trees outside forest.
- many countries lack data on their forest resources and thus support to National Forest Assessments is needed;
- some of the countries in the region are in need of particular support due to recent and on-going political unrest.

## Appendix 1

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## ANNEX E

**REPORT OF THE FAO WORKSHOP ON FORESTRY OUTLOOK STUDY FOR  
WESTERN AND CENTRAL ASIA (FOWECA)**

Beirut, Republic of Lebanon, 23 May 2004

**Preamble**

The Forestry Outlook Study for West and Central Asia (FOWECA) is one of a series of outlook studies being implemented by the FAO Forestry Department, following a recommendation by the Near East Forestry Commission at its 15<sup>th</sup> session in Karthoum, Sudan, that FAO, in collaboration with the member countries of the region, undertake an outlook study for the West and Central Asian countries. At the invitation of the FAO Director-General, the Ministers responsible for Forestry of the 23 countries of the region nominated a focal point for the outlook study, who would, through a series of joint meetings, discuss and agree upon the method, programme and the outputs of the study.

The FOWECA workshop was held on 23 May 2004 in Beirut, in conjunction with the 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the Near East Forestry Commission in Beirut. The list of participants in the meeting is appended to this report. Twenty-five persons from 16 countries, including 13 FOWECA member countries, participated in the workshop (*Appendix 1*).

**Workshop Objectives:**

The workshop's main objectives were to introduce the process and activities of the FOWECA study, to discuss the structure and the preparation of the country outlook paper, and to identify the thematic outlook study topics and issues.

Mr. Hassan Abdel Nour, Senior Forestry Officer in the FAO Near East Regional Office, opened the workshop by introducing the objectives and the agenda. Mr. J-L Blanchez, Forestry Officer, FAO Headquarters, Rome, presented the process, outputs and activities of the study. The forces having an impact on the forestry sector were presented by Ms. Qiang Ma, Forestry Officer, FAO Headquarters. Trends and prospects in forestry with some guidance on scenarios formulation were presented by Mr. Blanchez.

The presentations elicited valuable comments and suggestions from the participants, who stressed the importance of considering stability and security, human development, inter regional and global impacts as well as the demographic, economic and social, science and technological, environmental and policy and institutional driving forces. A suggested methodology for national scenario planning should be proposed, with sub-regional institutions being invited to collaborate in the implementation of the study. Some countries emphasized their limited access to and availability of information. Countries suggested that a further regional or sub-regional meeting be convened to discuss draft country outlook papers.

In the afternoon session, the participants split into two working groups, guided by a presentation by Ms. Ma to discuss:

- the structure of the suggested outline of the country outlook paper; and
- the topics and the breakdown issues for the thematic studies.

Group I comprised Afghanistan, Cyprus, Lebanon, Iran, Turkey, and Uzbekistan;

Group II comprised Jordan, Syria, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Results of the group discussion:

The structure of the country paper outline was generally accepted. Some minor comments were suggested related to the introduction and the conclusion and should be considered in the final version.

The main topics for thematic outlook studies as identified by the groups are listed as follows:

Group I:

- 1. Socio-economic (all countries – first priority):**
  - Rural poverty
  - Urbanization and resulting increasing demand for forest services
  - Employment
  - Socio-economic aspects specific to forestry
  - Globalization and its effects on forestry
  - Population migration and demographic changes
- 2. Ecology and economics (all countries – first priority)**
  - Desertification
  - Deforestation
  - Erosion
  - Rehabilitation
  - Degradation of biological diversity
  - Wildlife
  - Natural disasters
- 3. Legal and institutional (all countries – second priority)**
  - Management and planning system
  - Forest education (first priority)
  - Financing Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)
  - Ownership conflicts and land tenure (Turkey, Afghanistan, Iran)
  - Protected areas management
- 4. Other topics**
  - Fuel wood (except Turkey, Cyprus)
  - Harvesting and management
  - Non-wood forest products
  - Forest fires
  - Pest and diseases
  - Agro forestry (Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan)

Group II

- 1. Integrated sustainable management of forests and range lands**
  - Resource assessments of forest and range and carrying capacity, ecosystem management
  - Land tenure and use rights, capacity building, rural extension, (forest and range), degree of dependence of wildlife and livestock on forest and range
  - Traditional laws
- 2. Socio-economic development of forest and range lands inhabitants**
  - Wood collection, animal rearing, income generation

**3. Human activities which impact on forests and range**

- Agriculture expansion,
- Urbanization, mines and quarries,
- Overgrazing, wood collection

**4. Natural and other disasters**

- Droughts, fires, diseases and pest, conflicts

**5. Biological diversity of forest and range lands**

- Loss of habitat
- Loss of species
- Opportunity of eco-tourism
- Forest and range protectorates

During the wrap-up session, the participants agreed with the overall programme of the study as presented during the working sessions. A contract or an agreement would be prepared to provide the focal point with the necessary financial FAO support. In the meantime, the focal point would establish an in-country working group and a work plan that would be communicated to FAO as soon as possible.

Some specific recommendations were made on the following:

- The country outlook paper can be prepared in either Arabic or English.
- The request for more technical support from FAO to prepare the country outlook paper had been raised by some countries. Visits of countries by FAO staff can be organised at the specific demand of the country focal point.
- Most of the countries agreed to deliver a draft country report by December 2004. However considering specific constraints and conditions in some countries, a longer period of preparation would be needed. In that case, the focal point should propose a work plan to FAO.

## Appendix 1

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