

REPORT

Larnaka,
Republic of Cyprus,
5-8 June
2006

**NEAR EAST
FORESTRY
COMMISSION**

Seventeenth session



PREVIOUS SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION

First session	Tehran, 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	Tehran, 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	Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran	1-4 July 2000
Fifteenth session	Khartoum, Republic of the Sudan	28-31 January 2002
Sixteenth session	Beirut, Republic of Lebanon	24-27 May 2004

REPORT

of the

SEVENTEENTH SESSION

of the

NEAR EAST FORESTRY COMMISSION

Larnaka, Republic of Cyprus
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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome, 2006

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

**FOR THE ATTENTION OF
MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE COMMISSION**

1. The Commission emphasized the importance of support to forestry education and recommended that countries continue to exchange experience in profiling forestry in national education, and in developing modalities for curriculum revision, and the ways to support such efforts both nationally and through international cooperation. (para 9)
2. The Commission recommended that member countries and FAO strengthen efforts to bring up regional specific issues in the international dialogue, building upon the Tehran Process on Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs) and the earlier initiatives under this. It particularly emphasized the need for strengthening the current mechanism of the NEFC's task force/bureau to articulate clearly issues pertaining to the region and to bring them to the attention of the Committee on Forestry and the United Nations Forum on Forests.(para 14)
3. It recommended that member countries make efforts to improve the information base on forest and range resources and that FAO support such activities upon request. The Commission recognized the deficiencies in data on forest resources in many countries of the region and stressed the need for countries to mobilize national resources for national forest inventories and to seek complementary support from FAO and donor institutions. (para 15)
4. The Commission therefore recommended that :
 - countries endeavour to undertake a proper evaluation of goods and services in order to enhance the awareness of decision-makers on the socio, economic and environmental roles of forest and trees, and to seek assistance from FAO to improve valuation methodology;
 - countries in the region take appropriate measures to integrate forests and rangelands in national policies and development programmes.
 - countries of the region ensure that nfps take due account of water resources concerns. (para 30)
5. Stressing the importance of empowerment as a basis of poverty alleviation, the Commission recommended that community involvement in forest resource management be strengthened through appropriate adaptation of legislation and policies. (para 33)

**FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

6. The Commission further recommended that FAO and other relevant partners provide support to national and regional academic institutions to review forestry *curricula* and increase training capacities. (para 9)
7. The Commission recommended that FAO consider elaborating a special code of practice for arid and semi-arid zone forestry. (para 10)
8. The National Forest Programme (nfp) Facility was considered an important tool, among others, to help address this issue. The Commission urged the nfp Facility to cover more countries in the Near East Region. (para 11)
9. Recognizing the value and benefit of regional cooperation on forestry, especially with regard to forestry policy, forest protection and global information on forests, the Commission stressed the importance of strengthening the Regional Forestry Commissions and recommended that FAO pursue and strengthen support to the Commission Task Force or similar arrangements as well as the establishment of *ad hoc* technical working groups. (para 12)
10. The Commission recommended that FAO pursue and strengthen its support to projects and studies on non wood forest products (NWFPs) in the region and promote their sustainable development. (para 13)
11. The Commission recommended that member countries and FAO strengthen efforts to bring up regional specific issues in the international dialogue, building upon the Tehran Process on Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs) and the earlier initiatives under this. It particularly emphasized the need for strengthening the current mechanism of the NEFC's task force/bureau to articulate clearly issues pertaining to the region and to bring them to the attention of the Committee on Forestry and the United Nations Forum on Forests. (para 14)
12. The Commission noted the weak technical capacities in the region and underscored the need for better sub-regional and national level forest and range resources assessment. It recommended that member countries make efforts to improve the information base on forest and range resources and that FAO support such activities upon request. (para 15)
13. The Commission noted that there was inadequate appreciation of the contribution of forestry to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and stressed the need to highlight the role of forests, woodlands and trees outside forests in environmental protection, watershed management and poverty alleviation, through the appropriate valuation of goods and services. It urged FAO to help countries in undertaking such studies. (para 17)
14. Noting the pros and cons of developing self- financing mechanisms to support forestry, it underscored the importance of institutional changes appropriate to the specific conditions in each country, to enhance the participation of other stakeholders in forestry and recommended that FAO continue to support member countries in these efforts. (para 20)
15. The Commission further noted the weak implementation of national, sub-regional and regional plans of action to combat desertification and urged FAO to assist in resource mobilization for effective implementation of programmes of action in the region. (para 21)

16. In this respect, the Commission also recommended that FAO assist member countries making use of innovative funding mechanisms including payments for environmental services and debt swaps for environmental and rural development projects. (para 22)
17. The Commission stressed the need to involve local communities, the private sector and civil society organizations in forest management and recommended that FAO document and disseminate the success stories and experiences regarding the involvement of local communities in forest management. (para 23)
18. Delegations made observations and suggestions about the scenarios and figures provided in the FOWECA report. The Commission recommended that FAO make the necessary changes as discussed in the session when finalizing the report (the need to include other parameters such as rangelands in the factors used to determine scenarios etc.). The Commission recommended that, for the finalization of the FOWECA report, member countries provide further comments and suggestions before 10 July 2006 and that FAO finalize and publish the report as soon as possible thereafter. (para 26)
19. The Commission further recommended that appropriate support be provided to countries for follow-up activities, including the dissemination of experiences and success stories. (para 27)
20. The Commission therefore recommended that:
 - FAO strengthen its support to these activities, including addressing issues of implementation of the plan of action to combat desertification, in collaboration with other partners. (para 30)
21. The Commission also underscored the importance of integrating forestry in rural development initiatives and recommended that FAO provide the necessary technical guidance to countries, drawing upon its initiatives in combating hunger and poverty. (para 34)

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

22. The Commission was informed of progress in developing voluntary codes, in particular the planted forests code and the fire management code. The Commission recommended that FAO consider elaborating a special code of practice for arid and semi-arid zone forestry.
23. The Commission recommended that member countries and FAO strengthen efforts to bring up regional specific issues in the international dialogue, building upon the Tehran Process on Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs) and the earlier initiatives under this. It particularly emphasized the need for strengthening the current mechanism of the NEFC's task force/bureau to articulate clearly issues pertaining to the region and to bring them to the attention of the Committee on Forestry and the United Nations Forum on Forests.
24. The Commission recognized the deficiencies in data on forest resources in many countries of the region and stressed the need for countries to mobilize national resources for national forest inventories and to seek complementary support from FAO and donor institutions. It further noted the weak technical capacities in the region and underscored the need for better sub-regional and national level forest and range resources assessment. It recommended that member countries make efforts to improve the information base on forest and range resources and that FAO support such activities upon request.
25. The Commission stressed the need to rationalize the allocation of scarce resources and to enhance efficiency. Noting the crucial need for also developing self-financing mechanisms to support forestry, it underscored the importance of institutional changes appropriate to the specific conditions in each country, to enhance the participation of other stakeholders in forestry and recommended that FAO continue to support member countries in these efforts.
26. The Commission stressed the need to involve local communities, the private sector and civil society organizations in forest management and recommended that FAO document and disseminate the success stories and experiences of the involvement of local communities in forest management.
27. Stressing the importance of empowerment as a basis of poverty alleviation, the Commission recommended that community involvement in forest resource management be strengthened through appropriate adaptation of legislation and policies.
28. The Commission also underscored the importance of integrating forestry in rural development initiatives and recommended that FAO provide the necessary technical guidance to countries, drawing upon its initiatives in combating hunger and poverty.
29. The Commission also recommended that FAO assist member countries making use of innovative funding mechanisms including payments for environmental services and debt swaps for environmental and rural development projects.
30. The Commission further noted the weak implementation of national and sub-regional plans of action to combat desertification and urged FAO to assist in resource mobilization for effective implementation of programmes of action in the region.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Near East Forestry Commission (NEFC) held its Seventeenth Session in Larnaka, Cyprus, from 5 to 8 June 2006 at the cordial invitation of the Government of Cyprus. The session was attended by 38 representatives from 12 member countries, one observer country, two representatives of the United Nations system, and observers from four international, regional and national non-governmental organizations. The list of participants is provided in *Appendix B*.
2. Mr. Ghattas Akl, Chair of the Commission's 16th Session, opened the session and invited Mr. Aristos Ioannou, Director, Forests Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, to welcome the participants to the meeting. Mr. Ioannou was followed by Mr. José Antonio Prado, Director, Forest Resources Division, FAO, who addressed the session on behalf of the Director-General of FAO. Mr. Alexis Michaelides, Vice-Mayor of Larnaka, also welcomed the participants. The opening statement from the host country and on behalf of the Minister for Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, was delivered by Mr. Charis Zanettis, Senior Officer, Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, Republic of Cyprus.
3. Mr. José Antonio Prado, Director Forest Resources Division, Forestry Department, represented FAO. Mr. Hassan Abdel Nour, Forestry Consultant and Mr. Djiby Pape Kone, Senior Forestry Officer, FAO Regional Office for the Near East, acted as co-secretaries of the 17th Session of the Commission.
4. In his address, Mr. Prado highlighted the role played by the Commission over more than half a century, providing a unique framework for regional dialogue on issues of common concern. He indicated that the region continues to experience problems of desertification and forest degradation. According to the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA 2005), the region witnessed a gross reduction of 2.6 million hectares of forest cover during the period 2000-2005. He also indicated some positive aspects in the region where 14 countries had registered an increase in area of forest cover, largely through forest plantations.
5. Mr. Prado also informed the Commission of the work being undertaken by FAO in developing voluntary codes on planted forests and fire management as well as a strategy to enhance international cooperation on forest fires. Support to low forest cover countries and developing alternatives to combat desertification through forest activities were other priorities of the Organization. He invited countries to participate in the 18th Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO).
6. Mr. Zanettis conveyed his thanks to FAO for organizing the session in Cyprus. He expressed his concern at the dramatic reduction in forest resources in the region and urged governments and international organizations to take necessary measures to address the issue. He commended FAO for its support to Cyprus in the preparation of its national forest programme and in the formulation of national forest policy. He pledged Cyprus' readiness to cooperate and share experiences with countries of the region in all forestry activities.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (item 2)

7. The Agenda (*Appendix A*) was adopted. The documents considered by the Commission are listed in *Appendix C*.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS (Item 3)

8. In accordance with the provisions of its Rules of Procedure, the Commission elected a Chair, two Vice-Chairs and one Rapporteur. The composition of the Bureau is as follows:

Chair:	Mr. Alexandros Christodolou	(Cyprus)
Vice-Chairpersons:	Mr. Abdalla Rashid Al Mualla	(United Arab Emirates)
	Mr. Jameed A.Al Emad	(Yemen)
Rapporteur:	Mr. Abdo Gasim Al-Assisri	(Saudi Arabia)

FORESTRY ACTIVITIES OF IMPORTANCE TO THE REGION (Item 4)

4.1 Review of the Near East Forestry Commission (NEFC) and other FAO forestry activities, including follow-up to the requests and recommendations of the 16th Session of the Commission

9. In considering document FO:NEFC/2006/4.1, the Commission was informed of the various activities in forest resource management in countries of the region and the satisfactory implementation of on-going unilateral trust funds, general and technical cooperation projects, including the regional project on technical forestry education. The Commission emphasized the importance of support to forestry education and recommended that countries continue to exchange experience in profiling forestry in national education, and in developing modalities for curriculum revision, and the ways to support such efforts both nationally and through international cooperation. The Commission further recommended that FAO and other relevant partners provide support to national and regional academic institutions to review forestry *curricula* and increase training capacities.

10. The Commission was informed of progress in developing voluntary codes, in particular the planted forests code and the fire management code. The Commission recommended that FAO consider elaborating a special code of practice for arid and semi-arid zone forestry.

11. The Commission also noted the weak institutional and technical capacities that hamper forestry development in most countries of the region. The National Forest Programme (nfp) Facility was considered an important tool, among others, to help address this issue. The Commission urged the nfp Facility to cover more countries in the Near East Region.

12. Recognizing the value and benefit of regional cooperation on forestry, especially with regard to forestry policy, forest protection and global information on forests, the Commission stressed the importance of strengthening the Regional Forestry Commissions and recommended that FAO pursue and strengthen support to the Commission Task Force or similar arrangements as well as the establishment of *ad hoc* technical working groups.

13. The importance of non wood forest products (NWFPs) such as gum Arabic and other natural resins and products in poverty alleviation, food security and improvement of livelihoods in rural areas was stressed by delegates. The Commission recommended that FAO pursue and strengthen its support to projects and studies on NWFPs in the region and promote their sustainable development.

4.2 Global issues and activities: outcome of major international forest dialogues and agreements

14. The Commission considered document FO:NEFC/2006/4.2. It was informed of recent developments in the major forest-related international processes, including the decision to develop a non-legally binding agreement on forests and the preparation of the multi-year programme of work by the United Nations Forum on Forests. The Commission recommended that member countries and FAO strengthen efforts to bring up regional specific issues in the international dialogue, building upon the Tehran Process on Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs) and the earlier initiatives under this. It particularly emphasized the need

for strengthening the current mechanism of the NEFC's task force/bureau to articulate clearly issues pertaining to the region and to bring them to the attention of the Committee on Forestry and the United Nations Forum on Forests. The need for improved synergy and coherence among the various initiatives/conventions was also stressed.

15. The Commission noted the weak technical capacities in the region and underscored the need for better sub-regional and national level forest and range resources assessment. It recommended that member countries make efforts to improve the information base on forest and range resources and that FAO support such activities upon request. The Commission recognized the deficiencies in data on forest resources in many countries of the region and stressed the need for countries to mobilize national resources for national forest inventories and to seek complementary support from FAO and donor institutions.

IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN THE NEAR EAST

Special Session (Item 5)

5.1 Progress towards sustainable forest management: trends, challenges, opportunities

16. In introducing document FO:NEFC/2006/5.1, the Secretariat informed the Commission of FAO's efforts in systematically collecting information from Near East countries to support a preliminary report on progress towards sustainable forest management (SFM). Information was collected in consultation with national correspondents using the seven thematic elements agreed by intergovernmental processes as a framework for monitoring, assessing and reporting on progress towards SFM.

17. The Commission noted that there was inadequate appreciation of the contribution of forestry to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and stressed the need to highlight the role of forests, woodlands and trees outside forests in environmental protection, watershed management and poverty alleviation, through the appropriate valuation of goods and services. It urged FAO to help countries in undertaking such studies.

5.2 Major obstacles for sustainable forest management: i) financing; and ii) capacity building

18. The Commission took note of document FO:NEFC/2006/5.2, relating to financing and capacity building in the forest sector in the region. Whereas many countries have substantial resources, including financial, very little was being channelled to forestry. In many countries forestry is experiencing reduced political status resulting in downsizing. While the expectations of different stakeholders are very high, availability of resources and institutional capacity seldom match this. The Commission agreed that aspects of capacity building, including in education, research, training and extension, will need to be addressed urgently, so as to increase the ability of the sector to meet emerging societal needs.

19. The Commission shared the experience in different countries in the region and discussed ways to:

- bring forests and forestry to the mainstream of public attention and decision-makers;
- encourage more efficient use of available resources, especially to optimize outcomes;
- implement necessary structural changes within forestry institutions to enable them to adapt to changing situations in a pro-active way; and
- identify measures to enhance investment in forestry from sources other than governments, in particular through public-private sector partnerships.

20. The Commission stressed the need to rationalize the allocation of scarce resources and to enhance efficiency. Noting the pros and cons of developing self-financing mechanisms to support forestry, it underscored the importance of institutional changes appropriate to the specific conditions in each country, to enhance the participation of other stakeholders in forestry and recommended that FAO continue to support member countries in these efforts. The Commission also emphasized the need to tailor

approaches to sustainable forest management to the specific situation in each country, and thus help to reduce the high overhead costs of implementing SFM.

21. The Commission further noted the weak implementation of national, sub-regional and regional plans of action to combat desertification and urged FAO to assist in resource mobilization for effective implementation of programmes of action in the region.

22. In this respect, the Commission also recommended that FAO assist member countries, making use of innovative funding mechanisms including payments for environmental services and debt swaps for environmental and rural development projects.

23. The Commission stressed the need to involve local communities, the private sector and civil society organizations in forest management and recommended that FAO document and disseminate the success stories and experiences regarding the involvement of local communities in forest management.

IN-SESSION SEMINAR: OUTCOME OF FORESTRY OUTLOOK STUDY FOR WEST AND CENTRAL ASIA (FOWECA): FUTURE OF THE FOREST SECTOR IN THE REGION (Item 6)

24. An in-session seminar on the Outcome of the Forestry Outlook Study for West & Central Asia (FOWECA) was held during the session, based on document FO:NEFC/2006/6 and the draft final report distributed during the session. The Commission welcomed the process that was adopted, especially in facilitating the involvement of the countries and stakeholders concerned, including regional and sub-regional organizations. The process adopted was deemed to have enabled the participating countries and other institutions to own the report.

25. The Commission noted the conclusions from FOWECA and the current state of forests and forestry, driving forces, the future scenarios of development, their implications for the forest sector, the priorities and strategies and the nature of follow-up action required. In particular the Commission took note of the severity of desertification, worsening of water scarcity and the growing dependence on imports of wood and wood products. It particularly highlighted the institutional problems arising from instability. Considering the strong linkages between forests, rangelands and agriculture the Commission underscored the importance of integrated approaches to resource management.

26. Delegations made observations and suggestions about the scenarios and figures provided in the FOWECA report. The Commission recommended that FAO make the necessary changes as discussed in the session when finalizing the report (the need to include other parameters such as rangelands in the factors used to determine scenarios etc.). The Commission recommended that, for the finalization of the FOWECA report, member countries provide further comments and suggestions before 10 July 2006 and that FAO finalize and publish the report as soon as possible thereafter.

27. The Commission further recommended that appropriate support be provided to countries for follow-up activities, including the dissemination of experiences and success stories.

FORESTS DESERTIFICATION AND ENERGY CRISES (Item 7)

28. In discussing the item on the basis of document FO:NEFC/2006/7, the Commission was informed of and recognized the role of forests and trees and the main challenges and opportunities to combat forest and land degradation and desertification in the region. It underscored the lack of valuation of forests and tree products and services and the low prioritization of forestry in national policies.

29. The Commission discussed and reiterated its role in providing a framework for multi-country actions on such areas as:

- protection and development of naturally regenerated and planted forests and tree resources;

- studies on wood-fuel supply and demand in order to articulate wood energy situations, including areas deserving urgent intervention;
- assessment and valuation of the products and services of forests and trees;
- dialogue and partnership between multilateral and bilateral agencies and national institutions in order to avoid duplication and dispersal of resources;
- identification of actions within the Commission's work programme (refer to item 4.2) to address the pressing problems of forest degradation and desertification; and
- the role of forests and trees in the regulation of the water cycle and the close inter-dependence between forests, trees and resources.

30. The Commission therefore recommended that:

- countries endeavour to undertake a proper evaluation of goods and services as tools to enhance the awareness of decision-makers on the socio, economic and environmental roles of forest and trees, and to seek assistance from FAO to improve valuation methodology;
- countries in the region take appropriate measures to integrate forests and rangelands in national policies and development programmes;
- FAO strengthen its support to these activities, including addressing issues of implementation of the plan of action to combat desertification, in collaboration with other partners; and
- countries of the region ensure that nfps take due account of water resources concerns.

FORESTS AND POVERTY: LINKAGES BETWEEN NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMMES (nfps) AND POVERTY REDUCTION AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT PLANS (Item 8)

31. The Secretariat introduced document FO:NEFC/2006/8. While reiterating the role of forestry in poverty alleviation, the document highlighted the need for more focused efforts to enhance the linkages between national forest programmes and the overall efforts relating to poverty alleviation, in particular the poverty reduction strategies. Members shared their experience on the subject and noted the specific situation prevailing in the region as well as the fact that the potential of forestry to alleviate poverty remains unrecognized and under-utilized. Improvement of the situation would require better coherence of the national forest programmes with other social and economic development initiatives, taking advantage of the various cross-sectoral linkages.

32. The Commission further underscored:

- the need to develop approaches to enhance the awareness of all stakeholders at national and local levels of the potential of forests and forestry to alleviate poverty and possible practical steps to improve linkages and communications among government departments and other partners; and
- the importance of more field-focused studies in the region to bring out the linkage between the condition of the forests, the social and economic issues underlying poverty and the practical aspects of mainstreaming poverty alleviation in national forest programmes.

33. stressing the importance of empowerment as a basis of poverty alleviation, the Commission recommended that community involvement in forest resource management be strengthened through appropriate adaptation of legislation and policies.

34. The Commission also underscored the importance of integrating forestry in rural development initiatives and recommended that FAO provide the necessary technical guidance to countries, drawing upon its initiatives in combating hunger and poverty.

REGIONAL ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMISSION FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY (COFO) (Item 9)

35. The Commission was informed of progress in developing voluntary codes, in particular the planted forests code and the fire management code. The Commission recommended that FAO consider elaborating a special code of practice for arid and semi-arid zone forestry.
36. The Commission recommended that member countries and FAO strengthen efforts to bring up regional specific issues in the international dialogue, building upon the Tehran Process on Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs) and the earlier initiatives under this. It particularly emphasized the need for strengthening the current mechanism of the NEFC's task force/bureau to articulate clearly issues pertaining to the region and to bring them to the attention of the Committee on Forestry and the United Nations Forum on Forests.
37. The Commission recognized the deficiencies in data on forest resources in many countries of the region and stressed the need for countries to mobilize national resources for national forest inventories and to seek complementary support from FAO and donor institutions. It further noted the weak technical capacities in the region and underscored the need for better sub-regional and national level forest and range resources assessment. It recommended that member countries make efforts to improve the information base on forest and range resources and that FAO support such activities upon request.
38. The Commission stressed the need to rationalize the allocation of scarce resources and to enhance efficiency. Noting the crucial need for also developing self- financing mechanisms to support forestry, it underscored the importance of institutional changes appropriate to the specific conditions in each country, to enhance the participation of other stakeholders in forestry and recommended that FAO continue to support member countries in these efforts.
39. The Commission stressed the need to involve local communities, the private sector and civil society organizations in forest management and recommended that FAO document and disseminate the success stories and experiences of the involvement of local communities in forest management.
40. Stressing the importance of empowerment as a basis of poverty alleviation, the Commission recommended that community involvement in forest resource management be strengthened through appropriate adaptation of legislation and policies.
41. The Commission also underscored the importance of integrating forestry in rural development initiatives and recommended that FAO provide the necessary technical guidance to countries, drawing upon its initiatives in combating hunger and poverty.
42. The Commission also recommended that FAO assist member countries making use of innovative funding mechanisms including payments for environmental services and debt swaps for environmental and rural development projects.
43. The Commission further noted the weak implementation of national and sub-regional plans of action to combat desertification and urged FAO to assist in resource mobilization for effective implementation of programmes of action in the region.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Item 10)

44. No other matters were discussed.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Item 11)

45. The Commission noted with appreciation the offers made by the delegations of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Sudan, Tajikistan and Yemen to host the 18th Session of the Near East Forestry Commission in 2008. The exact date will be further determined in consultation with the host country.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT (Item 12)

46. The report was adopted by the Commission Session.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION (Item 13)

47. The closing ceremony was presided over by M. Jose Antonio Prado on behalf of FAO and Mr. Alexandros Christodoulou for the Government of the Republic of Cyprus. This was an occasion for both speakers to recall that Dr. Hassan O. Abdel Nour, had retired from FAO after several years service as Senior Forestry Officer for the Near East and Secretary of the NEFC. The Commission unanimously praised Dr. Abdel Nour's excellent work for forestry in the region and extended to him its best wishes for an excellent retirement.

APPENDIX A**AGENDA**

1. Opening of the session
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Election of officers
4. Forestry activities of importance to the region:
 - 4.1 Review of Near East Forestry Commission (NEFC) and other FAO forestry activities, including follow-up to the requests and recommendations of the 16th Session of the Commission.
 - 4.2 Global issues and activities
5. *Special Session: Implementing sustainable forest management in the Near East:*
 - 5.1 Progress towards sustainable forest management: trends, challenges and opportunities
 - 5.2 Major obstacles for sustainable forest management:
 - (i) financing
 - (ii) capacity building
6. *In-session Seminar: Outcome of Forestry Outlook Study for West and Central Asia (FOWECA): future of the forest sector in the region*
7. Forests, desertification and energy crises
8. Forests and poverty: linkages between national forest programmes (nfps) and poverty reduction and other development plans
9. Regional issues identified by the Commission for the attention of the Committee on Forestry (COFO)
10. Any other business
11. Date and place of next session
12. Adoption of the report
13. Closing of the session

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APPENDIX C

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Agenda Item	Code	Agenda Item
2	FO:NEFC/2006/2	Provisional Agenda
4		Forestry activities of importance to the region:
4.1	FO:NEFC/2006/4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Near East Forestry Commission (NEFC) and other FAO forestry activities, including follow-up to NEFC 16
4.2	FO:NEFC/2006/4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global issues and activities
5		<i>Special Session:</i> Implementing sustainable forest management in the Near East
5.1	FO:NEFC/2006/5.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress towards sustainable forest management: trends, challenges, opportunities
5.2	FO:NEFC/2006/5.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major obstacles for sustainable forest management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. financing ii. capacity building
6	FO:NEFC/2006/6	<i>In-session Seminar:</i> Outcome of Forestry Outlook Study for West and Central Asia (FOWECA): future of the forest sector in the region
7	FO:NEFC/2006/7	Forests degradation and desertification: a call for action
8	FO:NEFC/2006/8	Forests and poverty: linkages between national forest programmes (nfps) and poverty reduction and other development plans
Information Documents		
	FO:NEFC/2006/Inf.1	Information Note
	FO:NEFC/2006/Inf.2	Provisional Timetable
	FO:NEFC/2006/Inf.3	List of Documents

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