

27th Session of the Committee on Forestry

Written Correspondence Procedure – inputs from Members – Original language

Item 8.4 FAO’s work on integrated wildfire management (COFO/2024/6.4)

Member Name	Comments
<p><b>European Union and its 27 Member States</b> Friday, 28 June 2024 09:03 (CET)</p>	<p>In response to the written correspondence procedure, we are honoured to share with you a statement on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the three suggested actions by the Committee presented in the Secretariat document.</li> <li>• We recognize the interlinkages among climate change, land-use change, land abandonment, and human activities in landscape fires, which is driving to biodiversity loss and environmental degradation.</li> <li>• Landscape fire management is not a forestry issue only: it requires a multi-sectoral approach and coordinated actions agreed upon by several public and private actors.</li> <li>• Joint efforts on landscape fires should avoid duplications and overlaps while promoting collaboration, synergies and coordination at all levels. In this regard and referring to para 12 of the Document, we highlight the importance of the Landscape Fire Governance Framework (Porto, 2023) and support it being used together with the Fire Hub when implementing IFM.</li> <li>• Support the continued development of the Fire Hub and its five interconnected pillars, offering a one-stop shop to scale up action on Integrated Fire Management and further the use of the FAO fire management voluntary guidelines.</li> <li>• In reference to para 10 of the document, request FAO to also take the lead in implementing the regional and cross-border dimension, building on existing fire information systems and networks in Europe and globally, and already existing regional structures.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Japan</b> Friday, 28 June 2024 11:11 (CET)</p>	<p>In recent years, extreme wildfires have become more frequent around the world, and the frequency and area burnt by fires are projected to continue to increase in the future. We would like to express our gratitude for FAO's leadership in this field in collaboration with other UN agencies and countries.</p> <p>Regarding forest fire management, Japan would like to share a range of activities, including technical assistance and capacity building, that are being implemented around the world in close collaboration with ITTO as well as through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).</p>

<p><b>United States of America</b> Friday, 28 June 2024 17:03 (CET)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The United States appreciates the efforts of the FAO on integrated wildfire management and welcome the development of the Global Wildfire Management Hub.</li> <li>• We encourage the Secretariat to include reference to the Landscape Fire Governance Framework in the executive summary and in suggested action “a.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Canada</b> Friday, 28 June 2024 20:36 (CET)</p>	<p>Canada is pleased to see that the committee has included wildfire management as a topic at this year’s session and that three key actions have been proposed within the discussion paper to strengthen global capacity for wildfire management. As countries around the world face increasingly challenging wildfire seasons largely driven by our changing climate, international cooperation on wildfire management is becoming increasingly important.</p> <p>A key tool for increasing international cooperation is the Global Fire Management Hub (“Fire Hub”). Since the Fire Hub’s launch in May 2023, Canada has actively supported its development. The efforts of the Fire Hub will strengthen an integrated approach to wildfire management and parallels Canada’s work on this subject, including Indigenous Fire Stewardship, promoting whole-of-society involvement, and the importance of prevention and mitigation. Canada looks forward to engaging with others through the Fire Hub on Indigenous Fire Stewardship and various science and technology topics.</p> <p>As such, Canada supports the suggested actions by the Committee.</p> <p>We would also like to take this opportunity to share that we in the process of establishing a Canadian Centre of Excellence for Wildland Fire Innovation and Resilience (CoE), which will be focused on knowledge exchange and mobilization; accelerating innovation and technology uptake; and supporting Indigenous Fire Stewardship and cultural use of fire. This platform will be a tool to facilitate sharing Canadian knowledge and expertise to the international fire community.</p> <p>We have one correction to request regarding the exact area burned by wildland fires in Canada in 2023. The COFO/2024/6.4 document, page 3, notes 18 million square hectares burned. The final number, as calculated by the Canadian Forest Service, is 14.6 million ha. This is based on the National Burned Area Composite (<a href="https://cwfis.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/datamart/metadata/nbac">https://cwfis.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/datamart/metadata/nbac</a>). This final number is in the <i>nbac_summarystats_1972_2023_20240530.xlsx</i> file located under “Dataset” at the bottom. The 2023 update was just released last week, so no official publications available yet. The long-term average annual area burned is just under 2 million ha (Mha) (1.96Mha for 1959-2015) <a href="https://cdnsiencepub.com/doi/full/10.1139/cjfr-2018-0293">https://cdnsiencepub.com/doi/full/10.1139/cjfr-2018-0293</a>. This average annual area burned is now at 2.0 Mha (1959-2023).</p>

<p><b>New Zealand</b> Wednesday, 03 July 2024 12:32 (CET)</p>	<p>New Zealand welcomes FAO’s updates on work on integrated fire management, especially progress on the Global Fire Management Hub (“Fire Hub”) and the update of the Fire Management Voluntary Guidelines. We also note with appreciation FAO’s efforts to support Members in carrying out fire management initiatives.</p> <p>New Zealand looks forward to seeing the updated Fire Management Voluntary Guidelines and would encourage FAO to publicly launch and promote widely this publication when it becomes available, to increase uptake and awareness.</p> <p>We recommend FAO to continue working with partners to lead the paradigm shift from a focus on fire suppression to a holistic approach.</p> <p>We also invite FAO to continue to support members on integrated fire management activities, including through the Fire Hub and in collaboration with its key partners, with the aim of strengthening the capacities of countries to implement integrated fire management.</p> <p>As a member of the International Liaison Committee, we have supported the development of the FAO Fire Hub and the Landscape Fire Governance Framework which was endorsed at the 8th International Wildland Fire Conference held in Portugal in May 2023. We would like to offer our continued support to FAO for any future activities such as regional capacity building and technical exchange.</p>
<p><b>Mexico</b> Thursday, 04 July 2024 12:36 (CET)</p>	<p>Mexico recognizes the importance of adopting a holistic approach to fire management, based on integrated and sustainable fire management actions and procedures.</p> <p>Mexico welcomes the launch of the Global Fire Management Hub in May 2023, a solid initiative that we believe will strengthen the capacities of countries to implement integrated fire management strategies. We acknowledge FAO's efforts in leading this paradigm shift towards more integrated and sustainable fire management.</p> <p>In this context, we support the paper's recommendations, highlighting the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Mexico, we recognize the historical and ecological role of fire as a tool for the sustainable management of forest ecosystems. We encourage proper fire management to keep atmospheric emissions as low as possible and contribute to healthy ecosystems.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We support the adoption of an integrated approach to fire management, centred on: review and analysis; risk reduction; readiness; response; and recovery. This holistic approach is fundamental to mitigating the negative impacts of wildfires and improving the resilience of our communities and ecosystems.</li> <li>• Mexico values the importance of knowledge-sharing and international cooperation in fire management. We support FAO's initiatives to improve the technical and operational capacities of Member Nations through training programmes, e-learning courses and mentoring programmes.</li> <li>• We support the promotion of gender equity, diversity and inclusion in all activities related to fire management. We believe that inclusive participation is fundamental to the success of integrated management strategies.</li> <li>• In Mexico, we recognize and value the traditional knowledge and practices of forest communities in fire management. We believe that mainstreaming this knowledge is essential to develop more effective and culturally relevant fire management strategies. <b>We therefore encourage FAO to organize regional exchanges between Indigenous Peoples and local communities on this issue.</b></li> </ul> <p>We are confident that, through international collaboration and capacity-building, we can more effectively address wildfire-related challenges and contribute to the wellbeing of our communities and ecosystems.</p>
<p><b>Australia</b> Friday, 05 July 2024 14:12 (CET)</p>	<p>Australia welcomes FAO's work on integrated wildfire management and the updates provided in document 6.4, particularly the launch of the Global Fire Management Hub in April 2023.</p> <p>Much of Australia's vegetation is adapted to regular fire intervals and has been shaped by Indigenous land management practices over tens of thousands of years. Controlled fire is a necessary component of large portions of Australia's vegetation to maintain ecological health, reduce fuel loads and help mitigate risk of unplanned, catastrophic fires. As such, we strongly support FAO's work with partners to shift the paradigm from a focus on fire suppression to integrated fire management's holistic approach. We support each of the suggested actions for the Committee, in particular recommendation (b). In addition, we encourage FAO to share information on integrating Indigenous Peoples' fire management practices into holistic approaches.</p> <p>We thank FAO and partners for their holding of the side event 'Integrated Fire Management for the Asia-Pacific region' during our hosting of the FAO Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission in Sydney in October 2023, bringing a regional focus to this issue. We were also pleased to feature Dr Michael-Shawn Fletcher as the session's key-note speaker, who shared perspectives on the dangers of removing Indigenous fire management</p>

	<p>from fire-adapted ecosystems drawing on global examples and highlighting the need for a paradigm shift on this issue.</p>
<p><b>Brazil</b> Wednesday, 17 July 2024 14:06 (CET)</p>	<p>On suggested action "a", we would add a reference to national and regional circumstances and priorities, as many countries have already developed relevant guidelines, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. encourage countries to consider implementation of the principles and strategic actions for IFM as outlined in the updated FAO Fire Management Voluntary Guidelines, taking into account different regional and national priorities.</li> </ul> <p>Brazil would support previous comments on the importance of protecting and respecting traditional knowledge associated with the integrated fire management. In that vein, we would suggest adding the following sentence at the end of suggested action "b":</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. recommend FAO to continue working with partners to lead the paradigm shift from a focus on fire suppression to IFM's holistic approach, recognizing the need to protect and respect the traditional knowledge and customary sustainable use practices related to integrated fire management.</li> </ul>