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	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	联合国 粮食及 农业组织	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture	Продовольственная и сельскохозяйственная организация Объединенных Наций	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura
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LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Georgetown, Guyana, 9 to 13 September, 2013

SHAPING THE FAO FIRE MANAGEMENT UMBRELLA PROGRAMME, MANAGING WILDFIRE-RELATED RISKS AT THE LANDSCAPE LEVEL, AND IMPROVING INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION

Secretariat Note

Summary

1. The FAO fire management programme reflects an integrated approach which deals with vegetation fires throughout all land uses. This note gives an overview of relevant developments and actions taken by FAO and its partners in implementing previous governing body decisions.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE 27th SESSION OF THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION (LACFC) RELATED TO THE FAO FIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

2. At its last session, the Commission expressed appreciation for FAO support on the issue of wildfires and requested that his support continues. Although budget and human resources for fire management have decreased since the last session this paper describes how FAO still is implementing a considerable programme in this field.

3. During the last session, the Commission also requested FAO to update regional statistics on wildfires. The next Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015 will include trends of fire incidence and areas burned over the last 12 years as measured from satellite data. This analysis will provide information on the total area burned and on forest area burned. Data will be made available to countries for revision as part of the FRA 2015 reporting process.

4. The secretariat pointed out that the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) had described forest fires as a major source of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and called upon countries to include forest fire management in their programmes for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD). The “Smart Fire” Umbrella Programme: Managing Landscapes and Fires in a Changing Climate has one pillar related to emerging issues like climate change. In implementing this pillar, FAO has started a project in Kalimantan, Indonesia, funded through REDD funds from Norway to reduce GHG emission by substituting fire with other methods in agriculture and nearby peatlands and by preventing wildfires in the community owned rubber plantations. More focus on alternatives for using fire was a recommendation also of the last International Wildland Fire Conference.

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5. The Commission emphasized that it was important to incorporate fire management into policies and programmes for sustainable land-use and sustainable forest and landscape management, as well as to develop fire management models involving local communities, tailored to suit conditions in each country. The new FAO “Smart Fire” Umbrella Programme and several ongoing watershed management, forestry and REDD projects or proposals reflect both landscape as well as community based approaches.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 21st SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

6. The Committee requested FAO to strengthen the FAO fire management programme by actively seeking financial support for the Multi-Donor Trust Fund proposal. The proposal has now been endorsed by FAO as the “Smart Fire” Umbrella Programme: Managing Landscapes and Fires in a Changing Climate. This Programme will be included under the new FAO Strategic objective 5 (SO5): Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises. As such, it will be part of the efforts of both the Forestry Department and of the Strategic Objective core team to search for funding.

7. Since the last COFO session, fire-related projects were concluded in Syria and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Project activities in Tanzania on fire management have finished and final reports are being prepared. Projects on integrated fire management projects or with a component on fire management have started or are ongoing in Chile, Indonesia, Morocco, Kageera Watershed (Tanzania, Zambia) and Swaziland.

8. Community Based Fire Management (CBFiM) is an important component of the project in Indonesia, and it will be part of the watershed management regional project in the Futa Djallon (West Africa) as well as a Community Based Forest Management project for The Gambia (both to be funded by GEF-5) and a Forest management project for Zimbabwe, in the process of obtaining funding by the European Union.

9. The new GEF-6 cycle which will start in June 2014 has included Disaster Risk Reduction and Fire Management as areas of work. Preparatory work has started to come up with good proposals by then and FAO is planning to initiate discussions with potentially interested countries and regions. In order to strengthen the programme more intensive contacts with donor countries are foreseen as well during this year.

10. The Committee also requested FAO to propose a coordination mechanism between the different UN agencies and programmes working on topics related to fire management, by making full use of its comparative advantages and avoiding duplication with the work of other agencies such as the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) and the Global Fire Monitoring Centre (GFMC). In implementing this decision, discussions have started with UNISDR on this issue and more progress and tangible results are expected in the next year.

11. Finally, the Committee requested FAO to develop, in partnership with other relevant institutions and based on the Fire Management Voluntary Guidelines, a set of international guidance tools for managing wildfire-related risks at the landscape level, including transboundary fire issues. Taking into account other ongoing activities, two initial themes were selected to implement this decision. One is the development of Community Based Fire Management Guidelines for District Officers and NGOs. An initial meeting took place with global experts in late 2012 to define the outline and focus of such a tool. The guidelines are planned to be ready and launched at the International Wildland Fire Conference in 2015 in the Republic of Korea. The guidelines will be based on successful field experiences and be prepared with support from experts from all regions of the world who will also contribute to its review process.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

12. The last fire seasons in Latin America have seen some major fire outbreaks where neighbouring countries had to help each other in suppression activities by sending equipment and human resources.

(Chile 2012, Ecuador 2012). Climate change most likely will increase the dimension and occurrence of fire events in the future.

13. At the FAO-headquarters level, human resources related to fire management are now assigned in a considerable extent to the development of the new FAO Strategic Objective 5: Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises. Although on the short run it limits efforts to the ongoing Fire Management programme, it will help, at the long and medium term, both the programme (at global, regional, sub-regional and national levels) and the Forestry Department in general to be involved also in this strategic objective. However, as the contribution to the SO5 core team will be a long term task, additional human resources will be needed in the fire management field to maintain the support to the (sub)regional and national officers and projects.

14. During the second meeting of the regional fire management networks for South America, Central America and the Caribbean (Brasilia, 27-29 September 2012) it was decided by the participants that the networks for the Caribbean and the one for South America would no longer function as ad-hoc working groups of LACFC, but would adhere to the Global Fire Management Network.

15. Members of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty have developed a proposal for a regulatory framework for fire management cooperation, which all countries agreed upon and which is now waiting for signature from each of them.

16. FAO is strongly involved in the preparation of the next International Wildland Fire Conference in 2015 in the Republic of Korea. Like during the last Conference in 2011 in South Africa, the Forestry Department will again promote a strong participation from South America and advocate for a programme which reflects Integrated Fire Management including a Community Based Fire Management approach.

POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

17. Forest and other vegetation fires continue to be a severe concern for the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. It can be anticipated that the expected climate change will increase the intensity and frequency of wildfires. Increasing forest fires will contribute to more greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere. The Commission may wish to:

- discuss what measures could be suggested to counter the increasing risk of uncontrolled wildfires in the region, for example through increasing intraregional cooperation, closer linkage of forest fire management in climate change related initiatives, implementation of existing guidelines or need for new guidelines;
- propose that investments in REDD+ and other climate change related initiatives include a component on wildfire management;
- facilitate south-south collaboration, both within Latin America and the Caribbean as with other regions of the world, to support and implement projects on fire management and wildfire control;
- mandate FAO with identifying more and additional financial and human resources.

18. Member countries of the Commission may wish also to discuss how to intensify the regional cooperation within Latin America and the Caribbean to better use regionally available resources to wildfire management. This discussion may include approving the decision on terminating the Regional Fire Management Networks for the Caribbean and for South America as ad-hoc working groups of LACFC, and adhering to the Global Fire Management Network instead; and discuss the future collaboration between LACFC, the Regional Networks and FAO.

19. Commission members may further wish to propose themes for the programme of the next International Wildland Fire Conference.