

26th Session of the Committee on Forestry

Item 7.2 Forest Fires and the Global Fire Platform

Wildfires are burning longer and more intensely and occurring in forests, peatlands and permafrost during fire seasons that are now extended in many parts of the world. Climate change and land-use change are projected to make wildfires more frequent and intense. There is a need to shift the focus of attention and investment on wildfires from reaction and response to prevention and preparedness.

The Document COFO/2022/5.2 describes FAO's systematic approach to integrated fire management, which places emphasis on underlying causes and seeks long-term, sustainable solutions using five elements (as also known as Rs):

1. Review: analysis of the fire issue and identification of options for positive change
2. Risk reduction: prevention - focusing resources on the underlying causes of fires
3. Readiness: preparing to fight fires
4. Response: ensuring appropriate responses to unwanted damaging fires
5. Recovery: community welfare, repairing infrastructure and restoration of fire damaged landscapes

The document also highlights important advances at global, national and local scales, but acknowledges that integrated fire management needs to be pushed to a new level of acceptance and implementation.

To achieve this goal, FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) announced at the XV World Forestry Congress that they will work together to develop a Global Fire Management Platform. The aim of the platform is to help strengthen countries' capacities to implement integrated fire management, create linkages between regional groups focused on fire management, assist Members in enhancing climate ambition in support of the Paris Agreement and respond to priority actions of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

The platform will build on existing initiatives to make the global technical competence and integrated capacity of all partners available to FAO Members in a coherent, comprehensive and consistent way over time. It will serve as a system-of-systems where existing high quality data, information and tools can be accessed upon the request of countries to address the negative impacts of damaging wildfires.

The Committee is invited to:

- note that forest fire management, particularly fire risk reduction, is of crucial importance as climate change influences increased and more intense fire occurrence; and
- consider strengthening the focus on Integrated Fire Management through country-level and regional strategies, normative studies and collaboration among countries; and
- recommend FAO to:
 - continue to apply a systematic approach to the review and analysis of fires (in terms of drivers, occurrence, impacts and management) to support Members – upon their request – to identify relevant and effective risk reduction measures and strategies;
 - support the development of fire management networks and continue strengthening of or engagement in existing fire management related networks; and
 - implement the Global Fire Management Platform with UNEP and in partnership with countries and relevant stakeholders to promote integrated fire management more broadly.

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