



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
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y la
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COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

EIGHTEENTH SESSION

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FOREST PROTECTION

1. Many countries have significantly increased their attention and activities to protect forests, notably from fire, insects, diseases, invasive species and their interrelationships. In the past, priority was placed on suppressing fires and pest outbreaks, but now the focus is increasingly on their prevention, and the restoration of habitats and livelihoods following these events. Success factors to improve forest health and vitality include improved data bases, information sharing, transfer of knowledge and, in the case of fire, community-based management approaches.
2. Despite the increased efforts, fire and forest health problems increasingly threaten forest ecosystems and economic development. In the global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2005, many countries reported increases in fire frequency and severity, possibly related to the influence of climate change. Sporadic outbreaks of insects and diseases can have adverse effects on tree growth and survival, yield and quality of wood and non-wood forest products, wildlife habitat and the recreational, scenic and cultural value of forests. Serious outbreaks can adversely impact upon international trade in forest products because of the threat of spreading pathogens and insects into new forest ecosystems.
3. A shift is needed towards more holistic, inter-sectoral and participatory approaches to forest protection - in policy, implementation and monitoring. This requires strengthening country capacity.
4. This document addresses a number of forest protection measures related to fire management and forest health management. These include monitoring, prediction (early warning), preparedness, prevention, suppression and restoration.

Strategy to Enhance International Cooperation in Fire Management

5. The Ministerial Meeting on Forests (March, 2005) and the subsequent 17th Session of COFO requested “FAO, in collaboration with countries and international partners, including the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), to develop a strategy to enhance international cooperation on wildland fires”¹. Together with key international partners, FAO has prepared a draft Strategy to Enhance International Cooperation in Fire Management that includes an assessment of fire management; a review of international cooperation; a set of guiding principles for fire management; and proposals to implement them. The documents will be available at the FAO website before the 18th Session of COFO.

Assessment of Fire Management

6. FAO worked together with the Global Wildland Fire Network of the UNISDR to prepare a global assessment of fire management published as a thematic study. (FAO 2007) It outlined the causes, incidence, impacts and responses to fire management in different regions and drew global conclusions and recommendations.

7. The thematic study recognized that under certain conditions fire management is required to improve forest and agricultural productivity and also to induce regeneration and maintain or enhance biodiversity. As people are the overwhelming cause of destructive fires, increased emphasis should be given to public awareness and community involvement in deriving more effective policies. More needs to be done to improve the understanding of fire in the rural-residential interface, especially the need to reduce fire threats through fuel management. International collaboration is needed to collect more reliable information about fires and their impacts. It is proposed that FAO monitor key fire parameters in future assessments.

Facilitating International Cooperation

8. FAO, UNISDR and the Global Fire Monitoring Center have assessed international cooperation on fire management. A multi-stakeholder process used the findings and recommendations of this assessment as well as the thematic study described above as inputs to the process of developing a set of voluntary guidelines on fire management (see below). International agreements for emergency responses, other cooperation in fire management and national legal texts are documented by FAO in collaboration with member countries. (www.fao.org/forestry/site/fire-alerts/en). To maintain the momentum and strengthen international commitment, the 4th International Wildland Fire Conference will be held in Seville, Spain, 13-17 May 2007. (www.wildfire07.es/)

Fire Management Guidelines

9. In response to member country requests², FAO has collaborated with partners to facilitate³ a multi-stakeholder⁴ process to prepare a set of voluntary guidelines on fire management. The purpose of this effort is to bridge the gap between international dialogue on sustainable forest management and fire realities on the ground by developing, through a multi-stakeholder process,

¹ 17th Session of COFO, paragraph 28.

² 17th Session of COFO, paragraph 53: “...requested that FAO work with partners to develop voluntary guidelines on the prevention, suppression and recovery from forest fire.”

³ Including discussions in six Regional Forestry Commissions (2006), Fire Management Expert Consultation (Spain, May 2006) and International Liaison Committee meetings of the 4th International Wildland Fire Conference (various 2006).

⁴ Including the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service; Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC); UNISDR Global Wildland Fire Network; The Nature Conservancy; International Liaison Committee of the 4th International Wildland Fire Conference and other experts from the private sector and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

a set of voluntary, guiding principles that can help orient policy and strategic actions toward more holistic and cross-sectoral approaches to fire management. Draft guidelines will be available at the FAO website in January 2007.

10. The International Tropical Timber Organization's (ITTO) Guidelines on Fire Management in Tropical and Sub-Tropical Forests and FAO Guidelines on Fire Management in Temperate and Boreal Forests already exist for field practitioners. Experts in the field of fire management determined that a new set of guiding principles was needed, tailored to land-use policy makers, planners and senior managers in fire management both in the public and private sectors.

11. FAO facilitated the process in deriving these new guidelines and is prepared to provide support in capacity building for strengthening the policy frameworks, management and monitoring. FAO is also prepared to facilitate a programme of action to implement them and will propose an implementation partnership at the Seville conference.

Community-Based Fire Management

12. In recognition of the critical role of communities, FAO, The Nature Conservancy, the Global Fire Monitoring Center and local partners are supporting training of community-based fire management trainers. Regional training was conducted for the Sub-Saharan African region (South Africa, 2004) and in Central and Southern American regions (Belize, 2005) and is proposed for the Asia region (Indonesia, 2007). These workshops increase awareness and local level capacity for better management of fire.

13. Case studies from different countries are used as training material which is adaptable for specific situations. Also, FAO is providing technical support to the *Wildland Fire Management Handbook for Trainers*, being updated by Finnish fire specialists with support from Finland.

Forest Health

Combating Pest Outbreaks

14. The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) aims to secure action to prevent the transboundary spread and introduction of pests of plants and plant products. The International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) (FAO, 1995–2006), developed within the framework of the IPPC, includes a basic framework for risk analysis and the development of phytosanitary measures to minimize such transboundary movement. The standards particularly relevant to forestry, include ISPM No.15 aimed at regulating wood packaging material in international trade and the ISPMs relating to risk analysis, pest reporting and status, surveillance and export certification. (www.ippc.int) There is a need to strengthen both national and international efforts to strengthen country capacity to have the ability to implement the standards.

15. Regional and National Plant Protection Organisations (RPPOs and NPPOs) work to prevent the introduction and spread of pests of plants and plant products and to promote their control. There is a need to increase communication between NPPOs and the national forest administrations in many countries.

16. Analyzing and evaluating pest risk requires reliable information, and thus FAO has been assisting countries to produce and highlight information on pest distribution that could indicate potential invasiveness between neighbouring countries. As data are indexed, information on host preference of individual causative agents can be extracted as well as the breakdown of pests at the country level. Definitions, geographic coverage and methodologies to measure and analyze the incidence, scope and impacts of pest outbreaks remain insufficient. (www.fao.org/forestry/site/pests/)

Field Programme

17. A critical component of technical support in forest health is to strengthen country capacity through field projects to address specific problems. FAO projects offer assistance to countries not only in response to pest outbreaks and emergencies but also in establishing medium- and long-term prevention and forest protection strategies.

Invasive Species Networks

18. At the request of member countries, information exchange networks and working groups on forest invasive species have been established in the Asia Pacific, North America and Africa regions. These networks help to raise awareness of invasive species, develop databases, facilitate exchange of information and build capacity within member countries. Further, forest invasive species networks are proposed for South Cone countries and the Near East regions. FAO, in collaboration with the USDA Forest Service and other partners provide technical support to the regional networks. (www.fao.org/forestry/site/aliens/)

Guidance requested from the Committee on Forestry

19. Guidance and support is sought to strengthen the implementation and expansion of tools for fire management and forest health and FAO's role in this regard. Delegates are invited to consider ways in which:

- to move towards holistic, inter-sectoral, people-centred approaches to fire and forest health management that addresses the vulnerability of land-uses and livelihoods;
- to enhance investment in prediction, preparedness and prevention to minimize the incidence and negative impacts of extreme events; and increase efforts to restore habitats and livelihoods after these events;
- to advise FAO on its role in the Strategy to Enhance International Cooperation in Fire Management, including how to support the implementation of the voluntary guidelines on fire management, monitoring and assessment of fire management, the UNISDR Wildland Fire Networks, and how to increase field support;
- FAO can assist, through partnerships, the implementation of the voluntary guidelines for fire management;
- to strengthen country level capacity to conform with the IPPC, also with a view to increasing awareness in the forestry sector of IPPC standards;
- to further extend the information exchange networks for invasive species and forest health, as well as field support; and
- to improve coordination and linkages between the numerous international and regional instruments (binding and nonbinding), and programmes dealing with alien invasive species.