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NEAR EAST FORESTRY COMMISSION

NINETEENTH SESSION

NEAR EAST FORESTRY WEEK

HAMMAMET, TUNISIA
5 – 9 APRIL 2010

**Forests and range: adapting to global changes for sustainable
development**

**HEADS OF FORESTRY DIALOGUE
NEAR EAST FORESTRY INSTITUTIONS: CAPACITY
DEVELOPMENT TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF A CHANGING
WORLD**

Background

1. Institutional adaptation is a major issue confronting the forest sector in all countries, especially in the context of the rapid changes taking place in the larger social, economic, and political environments. A number of issues in this regard were outlined during the Heads of Forestry (HOF) Dialogue held during the World Forest Week/19th Session of the Committee on Forestry in March 2009, which acknowledged that public forest institutions are facing many challenges in a changing world.

2. In the Near East context, these issues include the need for institutional coordination between agencies to adapt effectively to climate change, as well as the need for governance structures that better integrate forest management with soil and water conservation. A further requirement is the importance of increasing the profile of the forest and rangeland sectors, *vis a vis* other sectors of the economy and addressing the policy, institutional and capacity needs for effective governance of forest and rangeland resources. Such capacity strengthening is seen as an essential factor for enhancing the contribution of the forest and rangeland sectors to the region's development. While changes are inevitable and unavoidable, there are no standard approaches for institutional adaptation, considering that every change has to be adapted to the specific situation

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in each country. Yet a lot can be learned through sharing of experiences on how institutions have attempted to change themselves, the outcomes of such efforts, and regional identification of actions and items for further discussion.

Objectives

3. The Heads of Forestry Dialogue within the 19th NEFC is designed specifically to share experiences in bringing about changes in public forestry institutions in their attempts to integrate rangelands in their mandates and activities and adapt to evolving/ regional challenges. The dialogue will center around the common theme of climate change adaptation with the specific objective of :
 - i. sharing information on the major challenges posed by climate change adaptation in the countries and how public forestry institutions are interpreting and responding to them, including through new policies;
 - ii. outlining how the functions and structures of public forestry institutions have changed to better integrate forests and rangelands, and in what way this has contributed to improving the performance of the sector;
 - iii. sharing and discussing country solutions to increase the profile of the forest and rangeland sectors; and
 - iv. discussing what could be done to move the agenda forward.

Key issues and questions that the Heads of Forestry of the Near East Forestry Commission member countries may wish to address during the dialogue include:

- i. Relevance of public forestry agencies:
 - How are public forestry agencies responding to the challenge of climate change adaptation so as to remain relevant?
- ii. General changes in public sector institutions
 - How are public forestry departments integrating with institutions responsible for soil and water conservation?
 - Where attempted, how is this integration affecting the visibility and performance of the sector?
- iii. Functional changes
 - In defining the tasks, are there any systematic efforts to identify the customers and what their needs are? Are there effective tools and approaches to clearly understand what the customers of forestry expect from the public sector forestry agencies?
- iv. Structural changes
 - If structural changes are taking place, are they primarily based on changes in functions or is it the case that functions remain more or less intact?
- v. Moving forward
 - From your perspective, what is the top priority in your country in order for it to effectively adapt to climate change?
 - From your perspective, what is the ideal framework for your institution in order for it to act effectively on this priority?
 - What are the constraints/ opportunities you as Head of the Forestry Service may face in accomplishing your vision?