



FAO FORESTRY

Second Mediterranean Forest Week addresses sustainable development and climate change

The Second (II) Mediterranean Forest Week, organized by the Mediterranean Regional Office of the European Forest Institute (EFIMED) and *Silva Mediterranea* (FAO), with several other key partners, was held 5–8 April 2011 in Avignon, France, with the support of the Ministry for Agriculture, Food, Fisheries, Rural Policy and Local Development of France, the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region and the Ministry of Science and Innovation of Spain.

The event was included in the agenda of the International Year of Forests 2011, and participants comprised actors involved in the management of woodland ecosystems in the Mediterranean.

Plenary and several parallel sessions addressed the role of forests for the sustainable development of Mediterranean territories and the impact of climate change on wildfire prevention strategies and key resources such as water. During these sessions, a Position Paper on Wildfire Prevention in the Mediterranean was adopted by the main stakeholders involved in management of forest fires. This position paper was presented at the Fifth International Conference on Wildfires, held in South Africa in May 2011 (see page 60). Partners also approved a precise timetable for the extension of the European System of Information on Forest Fires (EFFIS) to Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia.

Highlights among the sessions and meetings convened included: Forest governance in the Mediterranean region; Water and forests interactions; EFIMED annual meeting; ArcMED General Assembly; and a scientific seminar entitled Biodiversity of Mediterranean forest ecosystems: changing the paradigm of conservation.

The Secretariat of the Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions, *Silva Mediterranea*, organized several statutory meetings and thematic sessions. The annual meeting of the Enlarged Executive Committee of *Silva Mediterranea* was co-chaired by the Assistant Director-General of the FAO Forestry Department, Eduardo Rojas-Briales, and the President of *Silva Mediterranea*, Spas Todorov, from Bulgaria.

Three sessions on Forests, societies and territories promoted the exchange of cross-sectoral experiences of forest governance and provided the following key recommendations:

- Improving the knowledge base on the territorial context, the forest resources, the services provided by woodland ecosystems, and the risks and opportunities, by including the “climate change” factor (impact, mitigation potential, adaptation options);
- Promoting intersectoral approaches and the inclusion of forest management within local projects for the long term;
- Bringing relevant local stakeholders into projects from the outset, particularly local decision-makers (political backing)



Second Mediterranean Forest Week, Avignon, France

and administration (consistency with existing activities and budgets, financial support);

- Defining the project area in compliance with the social, politico-administrative, geographical and ecological contexts;
- Devoting the necessary time and human and financial resources to the learning processes offered by territorial development operations, particularly in terms of running activities and communicating;
- Assessing the benefits rendered by woodland ecosystems and associated management costs. Identifying beneficiaries. Developing sustainable funding mechanisms;
- Developing, improving and adapting tools for collective approaches (including the use of prospective approaches) in order to facilitate the emergence of joint visions, strategies and programmes of action;
- Testing, assessing and developing instruments and measures (legal and economic) for the implementation of collectively adopted programmes of action;
- Developing and running networks for the effective sharing of experience between Mediterranean areas; and
- Clarifying and enhancing the links between consultation and decision-making processes.

Mediterranean Forest Week, which was held for the first time in Antalya, Turkey, in 2010, is a unique platform to improve dialogue among the Mediterranean forest research community, policy-makers and relevant stakeholders and to communicate to the international community and society at large the relevance and challenges related to Mediterranean forests.

The Third Mediterranean Forest Week will be hosted in 2013 in Algeria.

For further information on this event, see the newsletters of *Silva Mediterranea* at www.fao.org/forestry/silvamed/en/, or www.efimed.efi.int/portal/events/mfw2011.



Wildfire 2011 builds on global cooperation

The 5th International Wildland Fire Conference, "Wildfire 2011", was held in Sun City/Pilanesberg National Park, South Africa, 9–13 May 2011. Convened by the regional sub-Saharan Wildland Fire Network, AfriFireNet, and funded by the Government of South Africa, the conference was held under the auspices of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and FAO, in conjunction with the Third Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, conveyed an opening statement to the 500 delegates from 61 countries. He welcomed the efforts of fire specialists from around the world to develop a spirit of global cooperation in addressing the role of fire in the global environment and its impacts on society.

The conference provided a holistic panorama of fire management through technical sessions including Community-based fire management and Fire and poverty alleviation. Participants expressed strong concern at the escalation of wildfires across the globe, many unprecedented in the modern era for the severe impact on communities, the environment and the world economy.

A highlight of the conference was an exhibition held during a field day at the Pilanesberg Game Reserve. South African wildland firefighters, men and women, from eight "Hotshot" crews from the Working on Fire programme (WoF), supported by water bomber aircraft and helicopters, demonstrated their skills in a live wildland firefighting display. WoF is funded by the Government of South Africa and is one of South Africa's most successful initiatives for the alleviation of poverty, creation of jobs and uplifting of communities.

FAO supported the development of several conference papers, among which were two plenary ones. One paper highlights the potential, and need, for REDD+ programmes

Wildfire 2011, Sun City/Pilanesberg National Park, South Africa



WILDFIRE 2011.11.22/B. SUTHERLAND



WILDFIRE 2011.11.22/B. SUTHERLAND

Wildfire 2011, Sun City/Pilanesberg National Park, South Africa

to include fire management components. Another paper explored megafires, indicating the probability of an increase in the number of megafires with climate change and expressing the need to prepare for this eventuality through forest and landscape management.

The conference concluded that international cooperation and a strengthening of wildland fire science and management skills are key to stemming the escalation of wildland fire. The recommendations of the conference call for, among others:

- An increase in fire management efforts in such areas of concern as: terrain contaminated by radioactivity, unexploded ordnance, land mines and chemical deposits, notably in regions affected by the nuclear fallout in Chernobyl (1986) and Fukushima (2011); securing peat bog/wetland ecosystems that are subjected to drainage and climate-driven desiccation (Russian Federation, 2010); and unnecessary burning on croplands, fallow and other lands;
- More involvement of civil society in fire management through participatory approaches (community-based fire management), applying controlled burning to improve livelihoods and health of local populations, and promoting volunteer groups to assist state authorities in rural fire management. It was additionally recommended that an international conference on community-based fire management be convened before the next International Wildland Fire Conference;
- Widespread application and adaptation of advanced principles in fire management under local conditions: application of the Voluntary Guidelines for Fire Management of FAO, ITTO and WHO/UNEP; global adoption of the Incident Command System (ICS) for the management of incidents; integration of forest fire management principles and tools in the REDD+ scheme; and acknowledgement that fire management should be part of land management;



- Systematic application of advanced technologies for wildland fire science and management, notably Satellite Earth Observation products, meteorological observations and forecasting, and climate modeling;
- Promotion of bilateral and multilateral/regional agreements on cooperation in wildland fire management and mutual assistance in wildland fire emergencies; and
- Further involvement of the six FAO Regional Forestry Commissions and the National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction in the implementation of principles as laid down in the fire management guidelines and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.

In response to global climate change and taking into account that global warming leads to an increasing occurrence and severity of wildland fires and intensifies their impact on society, the conference also recommended:

- Development of adaptive fire policies and strategies for mitigation, adaptation and protection at national to international levels;
- Integration of fire management in landscape management; and
- Support to countries to conduct fire management assessments, formulate legal frameworks and strategies, build sustainable fire management capabilities and institutions, and develop fire management plans and human resources.

The Republic of Korea will host the 6th International Wildland Fire Conference in 2015.

All conference papers supported by FAO and/or about FAO Fire Management activities are collected in:

FAO. 2011. *FAO at the Vth International Wildland Fire Conference.* FAO Fire Management Working Paper No. 27. Rome (also available at www.fao.org/docrep/014/am663e/am663e00.pdf).

For a complete version of the conference statement, visit www.wildfire2011.org/docs/10-Wildfire-2011-Conference-Statement.pdf.

The Gambia's Community Forest Policy wins award



2011 Future Policy Awards are announced in New York, United States of America: H.E. James Kimonyo, Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda to the United States of America; Olympic track legend Carl Lewis, FAO Goodwill Ambassador; H.H. Jato S. Sillah, Minister of Forestry and the Environment, the Gambia

The Republic of the Gambia, with the support of FAO and other development partners, has developed and implemented the first policy and legislation in Africa to provide local populations with secure and permanent forest ownership rights. Transferring forest tenure from state ownership to management by local communities has enabled them to reduce illegal logging and forest fires, slow desertification and benefit from using the forest products. Communities have established producer groups, generating income from forest management. Over 350 villages manage 12 percent of the country's forests, and there has been a net increase in forest cover of 8.5 percent over the past two decades. A target is for nearly half the forests in the Gambia to be under community management by 2016.

The inspiring and innovative forest policy of the Gambia was recently recognized by the World Future Council, which awarded the Gambia's Community Forest Policy the Silver Award in its 2011 Future Policy Awards.

The awards were announced in New York, United States of America, in September, followed by a presentation ceremony in Bonn, Germany, in October. Carl Lewis, FAO Goodwill Ambassador and Olympic track legend,

who attended the awards ceremony in New York, said, "The Gambia's people-centered approach has been highly successful and represents a model to replicate in other countries with similar forestry environment."

The World Future Council is a political advocacy group that is based in Hamburg, Germany. It was created specifically to focus on policy solutions to global challenges. Information on the Future Policy Award and its 2011 winners, and the World Future Council and its activities, can be found at www.worldfuturecouncil.org/future_policy_award.html.

“The success of the Gambia's Community Forest Policy proves that even in the world's poorest countries, with the right policies and legal framework in place, rural populations can benefit economically from forests and significantly improve their food security and environment. The Gambia's experience has shown that the challenge of sustainable forestry can be attained through the government's willingness to empower rural populations.”

Eduardo Rojas-Briales, Assistant Director-General, FAO Forestry Department



ACPWP addresses the role of FAO Forestry in key areas

The FAO Forestry Department and the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations (ICFPA) held the 52nd FAO Advisory Committee on Paper and Wood Products (ACPWP) meeting in Montebello, Canada, 23–25 May 2011. Forty-five participants from seventeen countries convened to discuss matters pertaining to the sustainable development of forest industries, and to climate change and greenhouse gases related to wood energy.

The Committee expressed its strong support to collaboration with FAO. It requested that FAO should elaborate further work in three main areas in 2011–2012. First, FAO should continue providing information and analysis useful to the development of sound climate change policies as they relate to the forest industry. Second, in the context of preparations for RIO+20, FAO was requested to highlight the important contribution of the forest products industry to green economy. Finally, the Committee asked FAO to assess the concept of hosting a process in which industry and the conservation community could explore modalities for supporting the industry's continued commitment to improving sustainable forest management.

The ACPWP is an FAO statutory body composed of senior executives from the private industry sector worldwide. It meets yearly with the main objective of providing guidance on activities and programme of work of the FAO Forestry Department on



ACPWP meeting, Montebello, Canada

issues relevant to the paper and forest products industry, in support of the efforts of member countries to progress towards sustainable development. The 53rd session of the ACPWP will be held in New Delhi, India, from 23–25 May 2012, in conjunction with the ICFPA Annual Meeting.

For more information on the ACPWP and its activities, visit: www.fao.org/forestry/industries/9530/en/.