



giz

**Regional workshop On Forest Policy and Integrating
Climate Change in NFPs in the Near East region**

Cairo, Egypt, 23 – 25 May 2011

WORKSHOP REPORT

**H. Hadri, GIZ- Consultant
June 2011**

1. Background

Forests in the Near East have an important role to play in addressing the effects of climate change. They provide great opportunities for adaptation by increasing both resilience and providing favorable options for people and ecosystems. They also have significant mitigation potential, particularly as carbon sinks.

Many countries of the Near East have developed/revised their national forest policy, forest legislation and the National Forest Program (NFP) in line with the principles set out by relevant tools and mechanisms of NFP. However, current policy and legislation in forestry were not developed with climate change considerations in mind. It is now important for the Forest Administrations to integrate climate change into existing forestry policies as well as to develop a climate change mitigation/adaptation strategy.

Members countries of the Near East Forestry and Range Commission (NEFRC), noted with concern the vulnerability and impact of global warming and climate change in the last sessions (18th and 19th) of the Commission. They all requested FAO to provide support to its members in the region who needed information, help them build their capacity and raise their awareness at the technical and decision-makers levels about the critical role of forests and trees in adaptation to/and mitigation of climate change.

Within the framework of FAO's support to capacity building for member countries in forest policy development and implementation, the FAO Forestry Department and the Regional Office for the Near East (RNE) in partnership with Gesellshat fuer International Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) convened a regional workshop for the country members of NEFRC. The focus of the workshop is the identification of needs to adjust existing policies, legislation, institutional frameworks and governance arrangements, using national forest program processes, and to address the emerging challenges and opportunities posed by climate change.

2. Objectives

The workshop aims to assist member countries of the Near East Forestry and Range Commission in their efforts to develop and implement effective forest policies, strengthen National Forest Programs (NFPs), and to address the issue of integrating climate change into NFPs. The objectives of the workshop were:

- ✓ Take stock of national experiences with national forest programs, the ways how forest policies are developed, and the integration of climate change into NFPs;
- ✓ Identify and discuss key challenges and opportunities for strengthening NFPs, forest policies, and the integration of climate change into NFPs;
- ✓ Identify and discuss possible approaches and ways to do so;
- ✓ Identify, discuss and develop recommendations to respective bodies on actions needed.

Expected outcomes

- ✓ Higher awareness of contemporary approaches to forest policy and national forest programs as well as global and regional experiences with national forest programs, developing effective forest policy, and integrating climate change into NFPs;
- ✓ Higher awareness of current strengths and weaknesses of the national situation with regard to NFPs and national forest policies, related challenges and opportunities as well as possible approaches to strengthen NFPs and forest policies, in particular also the integration of climate change into NFPs;
- ✓ List recommended actions for the further development of effective national forest programs and policies, in particular also on the integration of climate change into NFPs.

3. Workshop agenda and participants

The workshop agenda is provided in Annex 1.

The workshop was held in Cairo-Egypt from 23 – 25th May 2011, at Flaminco Hotel. Forty-one participants attended the workshop. These included representatives from 17 countries of the Near East and Central Asian as well as representatives from FAO and GIZ (Annex 2).

4. Workshop proceedings and results

4.1 Presentations

4.1.1 National Forest Programs in practice

E. Rametsteiner, Senior Forestry officer, FAO Headquarters presented “National Forest Programmes in Practice: overview of experience made by countries”. Several questions were introduced to help understand the presentation: What is an NFP? What are the basic elements of the NFP? What have we learned from the NFP process?

He explained that the “National Forest Programmes (NFPs) are comprehensive forest policy frameworks for the achievement of sustainable forest management”. The approach of NFP builds on four components of the forest policy frameworks: a) Forest Policy/strategy which encompasses climate change, b) Forest legislation, c) Institutional Framework, d) Operational action plans.

The presenter noted that NFP is not a static process and that it includes several phases: collecting evidences and analysis, revising forest legislation, adapting organizations and adjusting governance mechanisms accordingly, while ensuring coherence, consistency and coordination with national climate change policy and strategy development.

An overview of the NFP key elements noted that the NFP is based on the key principles of: i) national sovereignty / leadership, ii) partnership and participation, iii) holistic and inter-sectoral.

The NFP process should preferably involve large group of stakeholders from the public, forest dwellers, private sector, NGOs using the mechanisms of NFP Forum - multi-stakeholder dialogue, NFP Steering Committee, and sub-national and national workshops.

An overview of the status, progress and implementation of the NFP stated that many countries have developed an appropriate NFP. The greatest challenges in developing a NFP is the existence of many parallel frameworks and processes, the absence of high political leadership/commitment, and the inadequate involvement of key decision makers of the forest sector. There is also limited capacity and funding, unclear responsibilities and information and duplication of efforts for different planning processes.

The NFP approach strengthened participation. Most countries have established participation mechanisms and have made progress in dialogue with stakeholders such as NGOs, local communities and the private sector. Here, the main challenges are lack of experience and capacity (funding, information, organizing interest groups) and difficulties in changing and sharing responsibilities during implementation.

The presenter provided an overview of the main challenges in implementing NFP principles:

- ✓ In regard to national ownership and country leadership, Forest Administrations are hindered by limited political power, lack of capacity, insufficient funds, the existence of many powerful bodies (Min Planning, Finance, Agriculture, donors etc.) and the appearance of “new” stakeholders (private sector, communities..).
- ✓ In regard to the principle of consistency with other national policies (agriculture, water, energy, environment), the challenge is that political will, vision and resources of the forestry sector are limited. Links to society and experience in communicating and negotiating with others are inadequate.

The presenter noted that the new emphasis on climate change increased the importance forest policy debate, that NFPs are part of the Cancun agreement, FLEGT and REDD+ and that NFPs emphasized forest governance.

4.1.2 NFPs and the NFP approach in the Near East region

The following overview on NFPs status in the countries of the region is based on the countries' reports to the workshop, FRA assessment and the experience of consultants.

a) NFP Approach

The presenter, H. Hadri (GIZ consultant) explained the approach in developing the NFP by countries. He noted that most countries had in the recent past developed strategies, action plans and programs for the development of the forest sector.

In the Near East countries, policies, principles and strategies for the forestry sector are included in forest laws, forestry sector master plans and development plans prepared by the Forest Administrations. Presently, most of the Near East countries are looking for better strategy and sustainable forest management approaches. For this reason, they did not embark in the development of a new NFP process or radically change existing policies, strategies and legislation. Their approach is to adapt, coordinate and integrate existing policy/strategy development within a single program.

The Maghreb countries have developed, in recent years, a series of strategic studies in support of forest planning (National Forest Inventory, National Reforestation Plan; National Plan for Watershed management, studies on biodiversity, forest and rangeland, plans for forest fire management, the National Action Plan to combat Desertification etc.). These studies were summarized, complemented and harmonized in order to develop NFPs, which are now regarded as the strategic tool of forest policy to ensure the conservation and sustainable development of forest ecosystems.

b) Status and progress of NFP

Given the wide diversity of the countries' situations, the importance of forests and related vegetation for meeting basic needs and environmental services, it is evident that the progress made in developing the NFP varies to a great extent from one country to another.

Many countries of the region have established partnership with the NFP facility program hosted by FAO to develop the NFP,s including Afghanistan, Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey and Uzbekistan. Considerable progress had been made, mostly by countries with good forest cover, towards broader, more participative and better integrated policy frameworks and processes.

Despite the support provided, the progress made in the NFP development and implementation is below the expectation in many other countries. This is probably due to the weak institutional capacities, low perception of the forest sector by the government or lack of financial resources.

Unfortunately, countries with low forest cover have made no efforts or progress in developing NFPs or forest policies. Forest sectors in these countries are still lacking integration into national development programs as a result of the poor visibility and perception of forests for national development (e.g. the Gulf countries).

c) Forest policy

In the Near East, there are considerable differences in the evolution of the forest policies among different countries, depending on institutional capacity of the forestry institutions, awareness about the importance of the forest resources and general development policies and strategies. Many countries of the Region have gained a wide range of experience in the process of forest policy development in the framework of the NFP and seem to have a forest policy statement,

expressing the country's vision, strategy for implementation and commitment to forest management.

Quiet recently, some countries, supported by FAO and other international organizations, have taken action to review, adapt or formulate their policies anew (e.g. Afghanistan, Algeria, Jordan, Syria, Tajikistan and Turkey).

Saudi Arabia has already prepared its draft forest strategy and action plan. Qatar's agricultural policy aims to protect trees and shrubs through administrative measures. The country also attributes importance to mangroves, declaring them nature reserves and encouraging their expansion.

In regards to endorsement and implementation of the forest policy, it can be assumed that many countries have made little progress due to a weak forest administration, lack of financial resources or lack of interest by decision makers in the forestry sector (e.g. Algeria, Jordan, and Syria).

c) Forest legislation

The present forestry legislations in the region are in most cases outdated, repressive and emphasize the strict conservation of the forests (e.g. Jordan, Syria, Algeria). The regulations focus mainly on prohibitions, limitations and sanctions and they practically ignore rules providing guidance to determine the role and responsibilities of the administration, the private sector, communities and NGOs in forest management and development.

FAO has recently supported some countries of the region (e.g. , Algeria, Jordan, Syria) to revise and update the forestry laws and regulations. Recent amendments give new emphasis to environmental protection, socio-economic development, community involvement and support to private sector investment. However, some countries lack the necessary measures, institutional setting and political will to implement such laws and legislation. Moreover, after the forest legislation is passed, the regulatory framework (administrative decrees, regulations, ordinances) is often not created on time and law enforcement is inadequate.

e) Institutional capacities

In most countries in the Region, the most forest land is state property. Usually the forestry department of the ministry of agriculture is responsible for forestry activities. Kuwait and Bahrain are the only two countries in the region with no designated authority responsible for forestry.

Much progress has been made to development capacities through projects supported by donors and international organizations. These initiatives have provided information sharing and training to most of the countries through national and international workshops, seminars, in-country and overseas training. Technical skills improved in forest survey and inventory, GIS, remote sensing, forest management, forest fire management, watershed management, biodiversity conservation policy formulation and participatory approaches.

Many universities, forestry schools¹, forest research institutions and extension services offer education, advisory services, training and awareness campaigns. However curricula in several universities and forestry schools need adaptation to new developments in desertification, biodiversity degradation, and climate change.

Box 1 : Major concerns of countries regarding institutional development

Institutionally, the forest sector is confronted by many challenges, especially institutional fragmentation, weak coordination among institutions, insufficient institutional reform, inadequate policies and forestry legislation, and limited integration into the national development programs. Group discussion also underlined the weakness of most forest administrations in the region, characterized by insufficient financial and human resources. Therefore, capacity development and improvement of forest specialists and local community issues need more attention. National forest inventory, mapping, forest fire management, technology for arid land afforestation, the integration of the NFPs in national development strategies remain as significant challenge facing the forest sector.

Group discussion results

f) Financial resources

Because forests in the Near East countries are predominately in public ownership, forestry activities are financed mainly by public investment. In view of the economic difficulties and the low importance given to forests and rangelands in the national economies in some countries, resources required to fund long-term strategic planning and management are seriously lacking. Moreover, forestry activities depend strongly on financial support from development partners, donors and NGOs. Whatever governments provide is used for implementing short-term measures such as reforestation, fire suppression and repressive law enforcement.

In oil-producing countries, provide ample financing for large scale afforestation programs, granting subsidies and incentives to farmers for planting trees and encouraging municipalities to green urban areas.

g) Coordination with and within other sectors

Coordination within the forest sector (forest administrations, research, forest education and training institutions) is considered as satisfactory. Whereas, coordination with other sectors such as agriculture, water, land use, environment and biodiversity are difficult in the Near East countries. Occasionally coordination committees, working groups, task forces were established by projects or donor's support. Their lifespan most of the time is short and they disappear as soon as the project ended.

Bringing together different institutions and disciplines under one umbrella in several countries of the Near East that are characterized by a tradition of vertical decision making is always a problem. Moreover, poor communication between sectors, inappropriate perception of the forest

¹ Sale Forestry School in Morocco, University of Alger, University of Istanbul in (Turkey), University of Mosul (Iraq), Forestry and Range school in Latakia (Syria).

sector and conflict in objectives of land use cause more difficulties of coordination and cooperation between institutions.

h) Integration of the NFPs beyond the forest sector

The forest sector in several countries of the Near East is involved in rural development, agriculture, livestock, and collection and processing of Non Wood Forest Product (NWFP). Pastoralists often actively manage trees and forests as a source of browse and fodder for domestic animals. Employment in forest industries, management, conservation, afforestation, soil conservation and watershed management provides incomes to many people.

The demand for protection, conservation and recreational services has increased and this trend is likely to continue. Laws, management plans and well trained managers and rangers have caused significant progress in the management of national parks, protected areas, natural forest reserves, wetland, steppes and desert ecosystems.

i) Partnership and stakeholder's participation

Partnership and stakeholders' participation made significant progress in many Near East countries. This is reflected in the involvement of communities, private sector and women's organizations in forestry activities, such as raising of public awareness, conservation and management of forest and protected areas, tree planting and training. The municipalities, national armies, schools and civil societies contribute and participate increasingly in afforestation campaigns and tree planting in urban areas.

The development of NGOs and their involvement in forest-related issues vary among the countries, generally reflecting the overall political and socio-cultural environment. While NGOs are very active in forestry and nature conservation in the Maghreb countries, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, other countries are still reluctant to involve NGOs and non-state stakeholders (e.g. Syria).

More and more private companies and private forestry firms are involved in forest and tree planting activities and the collection, harvesting and processing of NWFP such as medicinal and aromatic plants, pine nuts, gums etc. The number of private nurseries has shown a significant increase during recent years.

j) Main challenges

Progress in the implementation of NFPs and forest development in many countries of the Near East are hampered by:

- ✓ Inadequate institutional capacities, slow progress in institutional reforms, limited resources and poor forest sector governance.
- ✓ Inadequate cross-sector collaboration as well as poor coordination within the sector;

- ✓ Inadequate inventory of forest resources and data/information management;

All these obstacles are the sources of forest degradation, absence/unsustainable forest management and loss of forest resources in the Near East region.

4.1.2 Ten things to know about forest policy development: summarizing country experiences

The presentation titled “Developing effective forest policy: Ten things to know” was provided by E. Rametsteiner. He pointed out that significant efforts have been made by FAO to develop countries’ forest policy statements by providing technical and financial assistance to 25 countries and by publishing a guide for developing effective forest policy. The key aspects of developing a forest policy statement are:

- ✓ National forest policy is a **negotiated agreement** among stakeholders on a vision and goals for a country’s forests and trees, adopted by government. In many cases in the past Forest policy was developed by the head of the forest administration, forestry officers or consultants, which is not the appropriate. However, since then many changes have taken place and forest policy now is a negotiated agreement -- a challenging issue and a hard task for policy developer.
- ✓ Forest policy goals need to **address societal issues** in line with countries development goals e.g. on water, environmental protection, climate change, food and agriculture. This requires good negotiation and agreement among stakeholders on implementation, including amendment of legal frameworks and institutional reform to be in line with the new policy.
- ✓ When initiating a Forest Policy it is important to **understand the national context**, liaise with high political authority, look for support, choose good timing, and investigate what people are thinking.

- ✓ **Good Preparation** is important including planning, communication strategy, training people on the process, identifying what can be discussed and looking for leadership support. It is essential to collect adequate information and new forest data and trends (change in population, migration etc...)
- ✓ The **participation of stakeholders** including the private sector, forest dwellers, and related ministries is a key issue. It is important to discuss with the stakeholders and to inform them at the earliest time and listen to them.
- ✓ Drafting a forest policy requires **good negotiation** and facilitation skills. It is important to involve not only forestry people and to ensure heterogeneity of participants. The process often faces different people with different interests, some accuse others and some dominate the debate.
- ✓ Implementation requires **agreement on the approach**, revision of laws, funding and an adequate institutional framework.
- ✓ To ensure successful implementation of the forest policy, capacity building and training are essential.
- ✓ Government **endorsement** of the policy statement at high levels is a pre-requisite to its successful implementation. Authorities that need to endorse the statement are at the level of forest administration, ministry, ministerial council and parliament.
- ✓ An ongoing **institutional arrangement** which promotes and facilitates continuous dialogue is essential for the effective implementation of a national forest policy.

Box 2 : Advantages of a sound forest policy

The availability of sound forest policy prepared through participatory and partnership approach, comprising clear objectives and implementation strategy would:

- ✓ ensure proper implementation and the participation of stakeholders in protection, conservation and development of forests;
- ✓ facilitate the incorporation of the forest program in the national strategic development programs;
- ✓ encourage donors' contribution in the implementation of the forest policy and the plan of action of the forestry sector.

The accumulated experiences and success stories of the countries, improved awareness, partnerships, communication with local communities, and stimulated support for efficient forest conservation and development. The countries of the region implemented successful projects funded by donors and international organization in reforestation, watershed management, forest fire management and capacity development.

Group discussion results

4.1.3 An Approach for Integrating Climate Change into NFPs

The presentation of Mr. Jesper Tranberg, Forestry Officer in FAO/Headquarter titled "An Approach for Integrating Climate Change into NFPs" outlined briefly the role of forests and rangelands in mitigating and adapting to climate change. He outlined why is it important to focus

on integrating climate change issues into NFPs and what the challenges are. The suggested approach for integrating Climate Change into NFP is as followed.

Increasing greenhouse gas concentrations are causing climate change. These increased concentrations have - or will have - impacts on ecosystems and societies. Two solutions are being discussed:

- ✓ Mitigation measures address causes of the problem of increased greenhouse gas concentrations. For example, measures to reduce energy consumption and promote clean technologies.
- ✓ Adaptation measures address risks and impacts of climate change. The objective is to reduce the vulnerability of society and ecosystems. For example, adaptation could involve planting trees, forest management, or developing alert systems for extreme events.

Adaptation interventions can be clustered in two categories, namely i) strengthening the adaptive capacity of forest themselves and, ii) strengthening the capacity of the people depending on forests.

Adaptive capacity of trees and forests can include, for example, the management of forest, improving forest health and vitality, intensifying forest fire management systems. A wide range of management practices can be applied that help to improve forest resilience and promote healthier forests (e.g., appropriate thinning regimes, reduced impact logging, fire and pest management, etc.)

Adaptive capacity of forest dependent communities focuses on how communities now deal and cope with extreme events and develop strategies, promote diversification of rural income opportunities and practice adaptive land use planning and management.

Forests role in mitigation includes three different approaches: i) reduce carbon loss through reducing deforestation and forest degradation, ii) increase carbon stock through afforestation, reforestation and forest restoration, iii) find substitution e.g. wood energy for fossil fuel. The situation for regions and countries are different and the mitigation options depend on forest cover and recent development.

Climate change poses a number of challenges for forest policy makers and other stakeholders involved in the NFP process: i) need to identify and understand climate change impacts, challenges and opportunities, ii) consistency between NFP and other strategies that deal with climate change (REDD, CC strategies, NAMA, NAPA) iii) need for coordination to include forestry in other sector strategies, iv) synergies between adaptation and mitigation, and iv) stimulating multi-stakeholder input into policy changes for forests and climate change. How to “translate” or handle this in the NFP context?

He then turned to the introduction of a possible approach to facilitate integration of climate change in nfps. The approach is developed by FAO and the NFP-Facility in corporation with

countries and experts. The objectives of the approach is to assist forest policy decision makers to identify and prioritize needed changes in policy or practice and clarify forestry-related issues in climate change policies/strategies. It will help policy decision makers integrate climate change into existing forest policy frameworks.

The presenter noted also that the approach of integrating climate change into NFP builds on NFP principles that are policy and strategy, legislation, organizational framework, governance mechanisms, information and research, capacity, and financial arrangements. The presentation provided guidance at strategic level and outlined major outcomes in respect of the NFP.

FAO has prepared the draft document “Climate change for policy makers: An approach for integrating climate change into National Forest Programs.” The document presented can be used in different ways depending on the country’s particular needs and the stage of development of its climate change strategies and NFPs.

Box 3 : Added value of forests including carbon stock

Group discussion noted that forests in the region provide a wide range of goods and services, such as the production of NWFP, grazing value, soil conservation, protection of hydraulic infrastructures, protection of biodiversity and its habitat. However the carbon value is low in most forests of the region, which affects opportunities to be supported by the international communities. It is also not clear how to quantify economical, social and environmental values of forest. Predicted climate change will likely result in species range shifts, as well as changes in tree productivity, adding further stress on forest ecosystems.

Group discussion results

4.1.4 National Forest Policies and REDD+, Opportunities and potential sources of funding

The presentation provided by H. El Lakany, GIZ consultant, first looked at the role of forests in the global carbon cycle and pointed out that the carbon stock in the forests worldwide is estimated at 650 billion tons of carbon, out of which 44% in biomass, 11 % in dead wood and litter, and 45% in soil. However, the deforestation and forest degradation represent 17-20 % of the global Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. Therefore, many forests areas in the Near East are sources of carbon rather than sinks due to the deforestation and forest degradation.

Deforestation and forest degradation were highlighted. According to FAO’s GRFA 20101, around 13 million hectares of forest have been converted to other land uses each year. (e.g. agriculture), or lost due to natural causes (e.g. fire, insects and diseases). The net loss in forest area is estimated at 5.2 million ha/year between 2000 and 2010; down from 8.3 million ha/yr 1990–2000.

The role of forestry in climate mitigation was highlighted from the perspective of sustainable forest management (SFM), forest conservation and afforestation, reforestation and restoration of degraded land (ARRDL). These mitigation measures could be implemented by the Near East countries but financial and technical support would be needed.

An overview of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (**REDD**) realities was presented noting the UNFCCC CoP 2007, the Bali Roadmap, which contains provisions regarding forest-related activities followed by Copenhagen 2009 then Cancun, 2010.

It was mentioned that the role of forests is overlooked in the region. In addition to the provision of forest goods and services, restoration of degraded forests and rehabilitation of degraded lands, it offers the best environmentally compatible, economically feasible and socially beneficial approaches to enhancing forest biomass, hence enhanced carbon stock.

Key information on the costs of REDD+ is provided noting that the costs of halving emissions from forestry sector by 2030 estimated at U\$17-30 billion annually that should come from the Public and Private sectors. The private sector will play important role in the future as source of funds.

The presenter provided a good example of opportunity cost of deforestation or degradation namely, if the forest owner intends to deforest 1 hectare and produce palm oil on this area that would give the forest owner a net return of US\$ 600 per ha/yr, then US\$600/ha/yr is the owner's opportunity cost.

Selective opportunities for Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Central Asia are the following; Adaptation, Reduced Deforestation, Controlling Forest and other land degradation, SFM, Forest Conservation, ARRDL (Afforestation, Reforestation and Restoration of Degraded Land.)

Several sources of funding are available including the national funding sources and the international sources such as the Official Development Assistance (ODA), Global Environmental Facility (GEF), Adaptation Funds, Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), UN-REDD and Private sector (Carbon Markets). It was said that the carbon market is estimated at US 130 billion from which 30 % in the forestry sector.

The presentation helped to inform delegates on the status of forests and carbon stock, the general role of forests in climate change mitigation, and on funding opportunities. The questions raised and intervention of delegates focused mainly on the funding mechanisms that are limited and complicated (GEF, CDM).

Box 4: Climate change offers new opportunities to forestry

The challenges posed by climate change require addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. Forests have significant potential for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Mitigation options in the forest sector can include the establishment and implementation of land use plans, raising awareness, improving forest management and governance, range management, implementing afforestation by using treated waste water, and increasing the efficiency in the use of wood products as a source of energy.

Climate change mitigation/adaptation also require: research to select forest species adapted to climate change and expected impact such as drought, the extension of protected areas, strategies for forest fire suppression, increased awareness among the public and projects benefiting local communities. Countries will have to revise their policy in order to integrate climate change into existing forest policy frameworks.

Climate change issues offer new opportunities to strengthen the international cooperation on forestry development and to fund projects from the public sector as well as from the international community (e.g. REDD, Adaptation Fund, GEF etc.)

Group discussion results

5. Group Discussion

Three sessions of Group Discussion were organized as following:

First day: National experiences with NFPs: an NFP approach in the Near East.

Second day: Forest policy development process and experiences of countries

Third day: Integrating climate change into NFPs: views and experiences of countries

The objectives of the group work were to

- exchange countries' experiences
- assess the status of NFPs and describe approaches used
- identify challenges and opportunities and
- make recommendations.

There were four breakaway groups, as indicated below:

North Africa	Oriental Near East Region	Gulf Region + Sudan	Central Asia + Iran & Pakistan
Algeria Mauritania Morocco Tunisia	Egypt Jordan Lebanon Syria	KSA Oman Sudan Yemen	Iran Kyrgyzstan Pakistan Tajikistan Turkey Uzbekistan

The questions and outcomes of the discussions of the four Group sessions are summarized in Annexes 3.

6. Findings and recommendations

The presentations and subsequent discussions, as well as the reports of the outcomes of the Group discussions, produced useful findings and recommendations, useful for integrating Climate Change into National Forest Policy. The key findings and recommendations were:

Main findings

A. National Forest Program

- ✓ All countries have forest strategies, plans of action and legislation, but not necessarily comprehensive and consistent or in line with NFP principles.
- ✓ Different countries have different levels of implementation of NFP; some countries have prepared their national forest program in line with NFP principles and approaches. However, in several countries of the Region the effort made for developing NFP is below the expectations.;
- ✓ The forest sector in the Near East countries still lacks financial support, has low political will and lacks recognition of the role of forests in the national economy, in environmental protection and in climate change mitigation/adaptation.
- ✓ Integration of forestry into broader national development strategies and coordination with other sectors are weak and need particular attention in view of the challenges the region will face in adapting to climate change.

B. Forest Policy

- ✓ In the Near East, there are considerable differences in the evolution of forest policies among different countries, depending on the capacity of the forestry institutions, the awareness of the importance of forest resources and the general development policies and strategies.
- ✓ Few countries have formulated an up to date forest policy and related operational plans needed for implementation. Other countries have formulated a new forest policy but not yet endorsed it and hence it is not implemented. Some countries have made no effort to develop a forest policy framework and still rely on command and control instruments (forest law);
- ✓ Forest policy is useless unless followed with concrete actions and supported by effective institutional arrangements and legislations.

C. Integrating climate change into NFP

- ✓ Most countries are highly aware of the need and importance of integrating climate change into NFPs including forest policy;
- ✓ While the forest policy development process has already started, the integration of climate change into NFPs, including into forest policy, is weak.
- ✓ The main challenge of integrating climate change is lack of awareness and information on the role of forest in mitigation of/and adaptation to climate change;
- ✓ Adequate institutional and human capacity and financial resources needed to address the role of forests in climate change are still lacking at all levels.
- ✓ Neither the national nor the international authorities dealing with climate change issue are fully taking into account the potential of forests and rangelands in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Recommendations

- ✓ Design/revise NFP as comprehensive policy frameworks in order to: i) reduce non-climatic threats to forests, ii) include climate change threats in conservation policies, iii) promote monitoring and information sharing; iv) promote partnerships in the forestry sector.
- ✓ Increase efforts to involve all stakeholders in developing the forest policy framework so as to ensure better implementation. This will require greater efforts for coordination with other sectors and institutions, strengthened local capacities and financial support for policy and NFP implementation.
- ✓ Update forestry related legislation and reform institutions to be in line with the new forest policy, including measures for stakeholders participation in forest management and climate change interventions;
- ✓ Endorse the forest policy statement at the highest level of government and take action for its implementation;
- ✓ Strengthen local institutions relevant to climate change by capacity building, provision of funds and information, in collaboration with FAO, GIZ, UNDP and other international organizations.
- ✓ Strengthen collaborative mechanisms between sectors and departments in order to facilitate exchange of information, coordinate action and reinforce synergies;

- ✓ Strengthen the awareness of relevant actors, ensure the rights of the local communities and increase the participation of NGO's and civil society in the forest policy development process and in mitigation and adaptation actions.
- ✓ Enhance cooperation and networking between countries of the region to exchange expertise on climate change;
- ✓ Provide policy-makers with scientific information about vulnerabilities, response options and adaptation strategies;
- ✓ Through FAO, GIZ, international organizations and donors provide technical and financial support to countries of the region in: strengthening capacity for the NFP process, climate change mitigation/adaptation, forest and rangelands inventories, facilitating exchange of experiences and communication particularly at local level.

Annex 1: Agenda of the workshop

23 May 2011	
08:30 – 09:00	Workshop registration
09:00 – 09:30	Opening and introduction Workshop topic, objectives, approach, expected outcomes
09:30 – 10:00	Presentation of participants and their expectations
10:00 – 10:30	National Forest Programmes in practice - overview of experiences made by countries - new developments and perspectives
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee break
	National Forest Programmes: experiences and perspectives
11:00 – 12:00	Discussion: validating global experiences from the Near East region perspective: situation and experiences made in countries participating in the workshop
12:00 – 13:00	NFPs and the NFP approach in the Near East region: Introduction (status, challenges, opportunities)
13:00 – 14:30	Coffee
14:30 – 16:15	Group Discussion: National experiences with NFPs and the NFP approach (3 groups); 2-3 country presentations per group; Results: status of NFPs and NFP approach, challenges, opportunities, recommendations
16:15 – 17:00	Plenary discussion: Presentation of group discussions results (ppt - common template, 10 min each)
17:00	Taking stock of day 1

24 May 2011	
	Developing effective forest policies
09:00 – 10:00	Ten things to know about forest policy development: summarizing experiences made by countries globally
10:00 – 10:30	Discussion
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee
11:00 – 13:00	Group Discussion: Forest policy development process and experiences of countries, (3 groups); 2-3 country presentations per group; Results: status of forest policy, challenges, opportunities, recommendations
13:00 – 14:30	Coffee
14:30 – 16:00	Plenary discussion: Presentation of group discussions results (ppt - common template, 10 min each) [smaller meeting rooms required]
16:00 – 17:00	Taking stock: similarities and differences in country situations, challenges, opportunities, and ways to address them, incl. recommendation to NEFC

17:00	Summing up and outlook for the next day
-------	---

25 May 2011	
	Integrating climate change into NFPs
09:00 – 10:00	An approach for “Integrating climate change into NFPs”: A comprehensive approach for discussion
10:00 – 10:30	Discussion
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee
11:00 – 13:00	Group Discussion: Integrating climate change into NFPs views and experiences of countries (3 groups); 2-3 country presentations per group; Results: status of integration of climate change, challenges, opportunities, recommendations;
13:00 – 14:30	Coffee
14:30 – 16:00	Plenary discussion: Presentation of group discussions results (ppt - common template, 10 min each)
16:00 – 17:00	Taking stock: similarities and differences in country situations, challenges, opportunities, and ways to address them, incl. recommendation to NEFC
17:00	Summing up workshop results including defining way forward and closure

Annex 2
List of participants

**Regional workshop On Forest Policy and Integrating Climate Change
in NFPs in the Near East region Cairo, Egypt, 23 – 25 May 2011**

Participant	Country	Ministry	E-Mail	Tel / Fax
Djamal Abd Nasser Mammeri	Algeria	Ministry of Agriculture and the rural développement Général Direction of Forests	djamalmammeri@yahoo.fr	Phone : 0213. 91.53.12 M: 0213.772.906.452
Amr Rabie	Egypt	Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation	ar.6666@hotmail.com	0122623806 33373790
Mosaad Kotb Hassanein	Egypt	Ministry of Agriculture	Dr_mosaadkotb2003@yahoo.com	202 -0127726863 202 - 37605793
Mazyar Movassaghi	Iran	Jihad –e-agriculture/Forests, Range & watershed management Organization	International@frw.org.ir MZ5083@yahoo.com	+98-21-22194039 +98-21-22446556
Ghojdy Tashakori	Iran	Jihad –e-agriculture/Forests, Range & watershed management Organization	International@frw.org.ir Tashakori@gmail.com	+98-21-22194039 +98-21-22446556
Mohammad Al Shorman	Jordan	Ministry of Agriculture	Alshurman_m@yahoo.com	+962-777416220 +962-79909951 +962-5342751
Abdallah Al Wreikat	Jordan	Ministry of Agriculture		+962-799059146 +962-5342751
Mrs. Venera Surappaeva	Kyrgyzstan	Department of the State Agency on Environment Protection and Forestry of the Kyrgyz Republic	surappaeva@hotmail.ru	
Ghazi El Kassar	Lebanon	Ministry of Agriculture	ghkassar@hotmail.com	+9613347216 +9616433754
Ali Harajle	Lebanon	Ministry of Agriculture	new_alio@hotmail.com	03-045911 07-325320
Moulaye Ahmed	Mauritania	Ministry of Environment	Moulaye.ahmed@yahoo.fr	+222-22423164
Mahmoud Benmessaoud	Morocco	Haut Commissariat aux Eaux et Forêts et a la Lutte contre la Désertification	Benmessaoud_md@hotmail.com	00212-537670097 00212-661068228 00212- 537670097

Mustapha Naggar	Morocco	HCEFLCD	munaggar@yahoo.fr	00212-664426436 00212-537764446
Said Bin Hamed Al Alawi	Oman	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries	omanpasture@yahoo.com	+968 -95330335 24694465
Ghulam Ali Baloch	Pakistan	Government of Balochistan, Pakistan	balochga@yahoo.com	009281-9202540 009281-9202275
Abdelazim Mirghani	Sudan	Forests national corporation , Ministry of Environment, Forestry & Physical Development	Abdelazim_fnc@hotmail.com	+249-912302110 +249-183472659
Hana Mohamed Hamadalla	Sudan	Higher Council for Environment; Ministry of Environment , Forestry & Physical development	Hanahamadalla2@yahoo.com	+249-911484876
Samir Al Madi	Syria	Ministry of Agriculture	Almadi.2006@yahoo.com	006788521 2240826
Yaser Ezaldeen	Syria	Ministry of Agriculture	Yaser.ez@hotmail.com	0944002128 2240826
Mukhiddin Babaev	Tajikistan	Committee on Environmental protection under the Government of Tajikistan	Safarov_holmumin@mail.ru	+992-372255996 +992-927362180 +992-372255995 +992-372361353
Youssef Saadani	Tunisia	Ministry of Agricultural and Environement	ysaadani04@yahoo.fr	M(00216) 98 238 227 (00216) 71 283 727 (00216) 71 210 242
Rafik Aini	Tunisia	Ministry of agriculture and environment/Forest departement	ainirafik@yahoo.fr Rafik.aini@iresa.agrinet.tn	+216 71287487 +216 98356255 +216 71287487
Ismail Belen	Turkey	Ministry of Environment and Forest General Directorate of Forestry	ismailbelen@ogm.gov.tr	+90 312 296 43 52 +90 312 296 41 83
Mahir KUÇUK	Turkey	MINISTRY OF Forestry & Environment	mahirkucuk@ogm.gov.tr	M05056491592
Seren Akbaş	Turkey	MINISTRY OF Forestry &	serenakbas@ogm.gov.tr	M05057711697

		Environment		
Mehmet Siraç Batuk	Turkey	MINISTRY OF Forestry & Environment	mehmetsiracbatuk@ogm.gov.tr mehmetsirac_batuk@hotmail.com	M05053682652
Abbos Akhadov	Uzbekistan	Ministry of Agriculture	abbosedu@gmail.com	
Mohammed Al- Qadasi	Yemen	Ministry of Irrigation general Director of Forest , Range & Des Control	gdfdc@yemen.net.ye	967-1-250-977 967-1-250-976
Fouad Mohd Al Nahari	Yemen	Ministry of Irrigation general Director of Forest , Range & Des Control	gdfdc@yemen.net.ye	967-1-250-977 967-1-250-976
Rametsteiner, Ewald (FOEP)	Rome	Senior Forestry Officer FAO / HQ	Ewald.Rameststeiner@fao.org	
Jesper Tranberg	Rome	APO FAO/HQ	Jesper.tranberg@fao.org	+39 3488733477
Alexander Reinhard	GIZ	GIZ (Regional Project Silva Mediterranean – CPMF)	Reinhard.kastl@giz.de	+212-0- T 537666301 M662129289 F537666801
Ludwig Liagre	GIZ	GIZ (Regional Project Silva Mediterranean – CPMF)	Ludwig.liagre@giz.de	+212-0- T 537666301 M662129289 F537666801
Hosny El-Lakany	GIZ	Faculty of Forestry , University of British Columbia	Hosny.ellakany@ubc.ca	+ 604 377 4658
Mohamed Saket (RNEO)	RNE	Senior Forestry Officer FAO / RNE	Mohamed.saket@fao.org	+202 333 72229 +202 333 16000 Ext 2701 M+2010 6022171
Hedi Hadri	RNE	Forestry Consultant FAO / RNE	Hedi.hadri@fao.org	+202 33316000 Ext 2816
Myriam Aziz	RNE	Assistant FAO / RNE	Myriam.aziz@fao.org	+202 33316000 Ext 2808

Annex 3
Outcomes of the Workshop Group Discussions

Day1: National Forest Programs (NFPs): experiences and perspectives

Status: NFP development process varies from country to country in the region. Few countries in the region have developed NFP with the support of internal and external assistance such as FAO (NFP facility). They are: Tunisia, Morocco, Sudan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey. Eight countries declared that an NFP exist in their country which is less than 29 % of the total members' countries of the Near East Forest and Range Commission². Following table indicates the status of NFP development process in the region:

Country	Formulation process	Endorsement/im- plementation
Algeria	NFP not developed yet. Strategies, programs, action plans and work plans for the implementation of the forest "policy" are in place,	
Egypt	NFP not developed yet	
Morocco	NFP development process started in 2000 with the support of NFP facility program	
Tunisia	NFP development process started 2004 with the support of NFP facility program.	
Mauritania	NFP not developed yet	
Oman	No NFP developed yet	
Lebanon	NFP not developed yet	
Jordan	NFP not developed yet	
Pakistan	Pakistan developed its NFP with the support of the FAO/UNDP	
Sudan	NFP was developed and seems to have followed the NFP principles	
Syria	NFP not developed yet	
Iran	NFP not developed yet. But forestry program is included in the National development program	
Uzbekistan	NFP was developed in 2009 with the support of an FAO/TCP project.	
Kyrgyzstan	NFP developed beginning 1990	Endorsed by the government
Tajikistan	The country developed already the NFP without external assistance or support	
Turkey	NFP of Turkey is a continuation of the	

² Estimation from the reporter based on the declaration of the delegates of the workshop during the Group discussion. It is assumed that the Golf countries have not yet developed an NFP.

	Forestry Master Plan prepared for the period from 1973 to 1993 and revised for the period from 1990-2009	
Yemen	NFP not developed yet	

Challenges: Group discussion noted the necessity of maintaining forest multi-functionality, managing a balance between different aspects of forest multi-functionality. The forest sector is also facing the challenge of providing environmental services, stabilizing or decreasing the rate of forest degradation. It is also noted that there is imbalance between the increasingly high and accelerated degradation of the resources due to the impact of increased population pressure and anthropological system regarding the natural ecosystem. Delegates noted also the value of forest to local livelihoods is not fully captured in national development plans in many countries.

The low profile of the forestry in the countries and low perception of forest sector by decision makers is common challenge in most countries of the region, except few countries like Turkey. It is therefore needed to reinforce the position of forests in the national development priorities, to reduce the resilience of local populations.

Institutionally, the forest sector faces many challenges summarized in the institutional fragmentation, coordination weakness amongst relevant institutions, absence/weakness of a basic institutional reform, policies & forestry legislation, and limited mainstreaming into the National development programs. Group discussion also underlined the capacity weakness of most forest administration in most countries characterized by lack/insufficient of financial and human resources to fully cover forestry issues. Therefore, capacity development and improvement of forest specialists and local community needs more attention. National forest inventory, mapping, forest fire, new methodologies and technology for arid land afforestation, the way on how to integrate the NFPs in the national development strategies and its priorities remain as significant challenge facing the forest sector.

Forest goods & services

Group discussion noted that forests in the region have a wide range of goods and services , such as the NWFP, grazing value, soil conservation, protection of hydraulic infrastructures, protection of biodiversity and its habitat. However the carbon value is low in most forests of the region which affects opportunities to be supported by the international communities. It is also not clear how to quantify economical, social and environmental values of forest? Predicted climate change will likely result in species range shifts, as well as changes in tree productivity, adding further stress on forest ecosystems.

Approach: NFP agenda, depending on the specific characteristics of the country. Approaches of NFPs vary within the countries. Some countries benefited from internal and external support to develop the NFP, such as NFP facility program and FAO. Financial support for NFPs which could help the development process in countries of the region is needed.

Pakistan has developed the NFP in 2009/2010 with the support of FAO and UNDP.

Tajikistan has already developed a National Forestry Program. Tajikistan started developing NFP beginning 1999.

Iran has a general National Development Program for all sectors which is endorsed by the Parliament and updated every five years. National Forestry Development Program includes also the Forestry development program.

National forest development program (NFDP) till 2012. NFP was developed in 2009 with the support of FAO/TCP project and approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and water resources. NFP Facility is supporting the implementation of the newly developed NFP.

Opportunities for NFP implementation

Countries of North Africa had developed strategies and programs, accumulated national experience, increased awareness of local population helped by the new democratic processes/political engagement in some countries.

Delegates noted that NFP will offer the opportunity to raise awareness of international organizations. In a context of desertification and Climate Change, NFP will facilitate the provision funds through Synergies between Rio-conventions and improve cooperation between the countries of the region.

Availability of human and financial resources, opportunities of international negotiation would provide more financial support and incentives, and enhance awareness on forest values in different aspects.

The Global awareness, Global warning, Disaster, Floods, REDD will offer new opportunities for the forest sectors. Most Governments provide support for NFP development.

Regional cooperation started in the region e.g. Turkey which had cooperation program with Tajikistan for mapping and laboratories for insects setting, seedling production and nurseries with the support of FAOSEC.

Recommendations

- The national forest policy has to be integrated into national development policy
- The Governments of the region should allocate adequate funds for forest management activities, enhance human capacity and strengthen local institutions by capacity building.
- Carry out a survey to identify present capacity of the forestry administrations in the region to identify the real requirements in the immediate and medium terms as well as modalities of manpower recruitment, training and capacity building.
- Carry out an assessment of the forest sector and its interrelationships with other sectors covering forest policies, legal and institutional reforms of the forest sector as well as objectives and strategies.
- Promote the utilization of the treated sewage water for the afforestation and reforestation programs in the region and learn for the experience of Egypt.

- Built Task Force for promoting and advocating MENA forest region specificities (dry forest areas)
- Develop/Strengthen experiences exchanges and partnerships between MENA and the other countries of Central Asia, and develop regional initiatives.
- Strengthen the coordination among the participating institutions relevant to the forest sector and develop synergies and win-win situations between stakeholders.
- Create a mechanism and linkages between the National level and the other governmental levels and promote partnerships in the forestry sector.
- Promote a wide based consultative/participatory process that involves all concerned stakeholders for a negotiated document on NFP/Policy
- Recognize and encourage the establishment of community, private and institutional forests.
- Provide technical support from international organizations to face climate change issues, and provide more technical documents.
- Provide technical support for climate change adaptation program, develop and implement SFM for climate change mitigation.
- Enhance the national role of range land and forest reserves for environmental protection to meet population's needs of forest products.

Day 1: Developing effective forest policies

Status of Forest policy

The process of Forest policy development in the countries of the region has different level of implementation. Following tables summarizes the status of forest policy in the region:

Country	Formulation process	Endorment/impelementation
Algeria	The Forest policy in Algeria has been formulated with the support of FAO/TCP project.	not endorsed
Egypt		
Morocco	Morocco launched several processes such as the First National Symposium on Forest in 1996, policy versus action program in Morocco	No policy statement in line with FAO guiding principles
Tunisia	The process for developing a forest strategy started in 1990, revised in 2001, and action plan 2001-2011 was prepared	No policy statement in line with FAO guiding principles
Mauritania	Mauritania needs international support to develop the Forest policy	
Oman	No action taken to develop Forest policy statement	
Pakistan	NFP was revised in 2010;	Implementation is not satisfactory
Sudan		
Syria	Forest policy formulated with the support of the FAO/TCP project	Not endorsed yet
Iran	Iran developed the Forest policy in 2005	and not endorsed yet
Uzbekistan	A document stating the forest policy has been formulated. Forest policy is in the implementation phase	Approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, but not by the Government.
Kyrgyzstan	National Forest Policy was developed since 1999	Endorsed by the government
Tajikistan		
Turkey	Turkey OGM has 10 year strategic plans	Now in the implementation phase
Yemen	Not formulated yet; need of technical and financial support for the formulation process	

Challenges

The result of the Group discussion focused specifically on the institutional aspects. The forestry sectors in the region have weak institutions and implementation capacities, inadequate decentralization, and insufficient resources allocation.

The Group discussion underlined also the absence of effective coordination and linkages among national and international entities such as NGOs, donors and international organizations as well as the weak linkages between relevant internal forestry institutions.

The delegates stated that the value and importance of forests in the region are not seen as a priority sector from policy and decision makers at higher level. Generally the forest sector is also not fully taken into account in the preparation of the development plans and strategies.

In regards to capacity development, it is noted that training and education programs needs adaptation to the new orientations e.g the climate change mitigation. Furthermore, stakeholders are not fully aware about forest degradation and its consequences on climate change, food security and biodiversity.

Delegates noted that forests in the region are confronted with increased forest fire, weak control of illegal exploitation of the NWFP, lack of information on the sector and absence of national forest inventories.

The majority of the countries in the region, although some of them has develop their Forest policy, the statements have not been endorsed nor implemented due to lack of resources and institutional weakness (see above table). Effective implementation of forest policy needs also the involvement of the stakeholders.

Opportunities

The availability of sound forest policy prepared through participatory and partnership approach, comprising clear objectives and implementation strategy would:

- ✓ ensure proper implementation and grant the participation of stakeholders in protection, conservation and development of forests;
- ✓ facilitate the incorporation of forest program in the national strategic development programs;
- ✓ encourage donors' contribution to assist in the implementation of the forest policy and the Plan of action to develop the forestry sector.

The countries of the region cumulated experiences and success stories, improved awareness, partnerships and communication with local community, and granted suport for efficient forest conservation and development. Furthermore, countries of the region implemented with success projects funded by donors and international organization and NGOs in areas of reforestation, watershed management, forest fire management, and capacity development.

In regards to partnerships, the countries of the region have endorsed most the international conventions and treaties related to the forest sector, biodiversity conservation, environmental protection and desertification control.

Recommendations

- Provision of relevant information on forest resources and their utilization and experiences exchange (success stories) in order to develop a sound forest policy;
- Provision of adequate government funding and political commitment towards the implementation of the forest policy.
- Provision of support and technical assistance from donors and international organizations (FAO, GIZ) to develop and implement the forest policy;
- Enhance awareness of different actors, ensure right of the local communities, and increase implication of NGO's and civil society in forest policy development process and implementation;
- Carry out capacity building for forest policy understanding, formulation, implementation and monitoring.
- Integrate the forest policy into national development goals as well as other cross sectoral policies.
- A wide based consultative/participatory process that involves all concerned stakeholders for negotiated Policy statements is essential to ensure better implementation and that all views of stakeholders have been respected and incorporated in the policy statement.
- Forest policy is useless unless followed with concrete actions, and supported by effective institutional arrangements and legislations, therefore development (revision) of national policy should be associated with organizational and legislation revision.
- Specific policy objectives and policy guidance should be adopted and contribute to the realization of the national goals. The specific objectives are directly derived from the issues raised by the different stakeholders.
- Provide technical assistance from experienced international organizations in forest policy development and implementation.

Day 3: Integration of climate change into National Forestry Programs

Status of integrating climate change into NFP

In many countries of the region, climate change is only beginning to be reflected in the strategic forest policy framework. A number of National Committees, focal points and working Groups have been put in place including representatives from the forest Sector. Moreover, strategies, studies and national plans on Climate change issues have been developed in several countries. Tunisia carried out an assessment of the vulnerability to the climatic changes (coastal, agriculture, ecosystems) and developed strategy of adaptation. Studies on species adapted to the adverse climate effect (Drought) are ongoing. Tunisia carried out a study on the definition of a national strategy for adaptation of the agriculture and ecosystems to climate change in collaboration between GIZ and the Ministry of Agriculture (2007).

The climate change issue in some countries in Central Asia is addressed informally in the NFP. Other countries are lacking of scientifically based information on observations about the effects of climatic changes experienced in forest stands, such as yield and vitality decline, increased mortality in the recent decades. Mitigation measures comprise actions of reforestation and afforestation that are included in National Forest Policy. In countries like Yemen, there is no forest activity targeting specifically climate change mitigation/adaptation, because of lack of adequate funds and absence of coordination between institutions (Forestry and Public Corporation of environmental Protection).

In Sudan for example, the Forest National Corporation (FNC) is working through coordination with national and regional partners to promote forest role in biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation. The FNC is building on its rich experience to develop a coordinated response strategies and action plans; and has been actively cooperating with the climate change unit at the (HCENR) in the development and implementation of the National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA). The FNC has also worked closely with the HCENR to develop the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan which aims at promoting biodiversity in forests in order to enhance their capacity to resist to and recover from stresses including adapting to climate change. FNC & HCENR play the main role in mitigation and adaptation to climate change through REDD and CDM approaches.

However, forestry in the Near East countries is often under-represented in climate change strategies or has been incorporated without sufficient consultation with forestry agencies.

Challenges

Climate change and climate variability pose serious risks to the environment and to life itself. The impacts of climate change are already apparent and are expected to become more severe, at least in the short to medium term. Delegates of the workshop noted that climate change impacted negatively the forest ecosystems, forest-dependent people and society as well as the economy of the countries in the region. The impacts are:

- ✓ Increase of pests and diseases in the forests of the region due to global warming;

- ✓ Rainfall decreased notably (e.g. in 2007 in Izmir –Turkey), which caused serious damage to the forest;
- ✓ Scarcity of water resources (e.g. estimated at 20 % in Egypt)
- ✓ Crop production decreased significantly in the region and impacted negatively the livelihoods;
- ✓ Loss of biodiversity (flora and fauna);
- ✓ Reduction of forest areas, soil degradation and desert encroachment.
- ✓ Social conflicts associated with climate variability and forest use.

The challenges identified are also related to the Capacity weakness, lack of information on climate change, insufficient financial resources, low investment in social sector to increase employment opportunities and improve livelihood.

To mitigate climate change impacts the countries of the region are planning to implement important programs of afforestation (e.g. in North Africa 40.000 to 60.000 ha/year, strengthen the programs of desertification control, integrate local communities and people into the climate change process, strengthen awareness of forests and climate change issues (impacts, Vulnerability), and improve linkages & coordination between relevant institutions (cross sectoral issues).

Opportunities

The challenges posed by climate change require addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. Forests have significant potential for climate change. Mitigation options in the forest sector can include the establishment and implementation of land use plans, raising awareness, improving forest management and governance, range management, implementing afforestation by using treated waste water, and increasing the efficiency in the use of wood products and wood as source of energy.

Climate change mitigation/adaptation require also to develop research activities to select new forest species adapted to climate and expected impact such as dryness, offer the opportunity to extend the protected areas, to develop strategy for forest fire suppression, increase awareness among the public, and to implement projects benefiting the local communities. Countries will have to revise their policy in order to ingrate climate change into existing forest policy frame work.

Climate change issues offer new opportunities to strengthen the international cooperation on forestry development, to facilitate funding projects from the public sector as well as from the international community e.g. REDD, Adaptation Fund, GEF etc.

Recommandations

- Strengthen local institutions relevant to climate change by capacity building, provision of funds and information sharing in collaboration with FAO, GIZ, UNDP etc.
- Enhance cooperation and effective networking between countries of the region to exchange expertise on climate change;

- Create/strengthen Interdepartmental /Sectoral collaborative mechanisms in order to facilitate exchange of information and coordinated action and reinforce the synergies of the adaptation plans;
- Carry out vulnerability assessment and analyze the practices that increase the vulnerability of agriculture and the natural ecosystems;
- Given the contribution of the forestry sector to the national development strategies, adaptation measures will be important for ensuring that these contributions are not affected by the climate change.
- Emphasize adaptation assessment from a livelihoods perspective, focusing adaptation actions on those that can have the greatest effect on poverty alleviation.
- Enhance the role of the forestry sector in the National Climate Change Adaptation /Mitigation Framework;
- Science should play a fundamental role in mainstreaming forests into adaptation policies by providing policy-makers with scientific information about vulnerabilities, identification of response options and designing adaptation strategies;
- Design and implement a regional project on adaptation/mitigation of climate change, and develop new methodologies and technologies of forestry actions (afforestation, reforestation, inventories, forest management);
- Design/Revise National forest policies to: i) reduce non-climatic threats to forests, ii) Consider climate change threats in conservation policies, iii) Promote information sharing and monitoring; iv) Promote partnerships in the forestry sector;
- Revise/adapt the forest strategy and NFP in order to integrate climate change into existing forest policies including institutional reform, research programs, forestry legislation, expanding;
- FAO is requested to provide technical assistance in integrating climate change into NFP to adequately address the Climate change issues in the Near East countries.
- Forest monitoring systems will need to be upgraded and expanded in order to provide for the collection of needed data for planning and evaluating adaptation and mitigation programs
- Implementing sustainable forest management and best practices in ecosystem management will increase ecosystem resilience.
- Develop Communication's and information programs to increase public awareness and understanding of the climate change.
- Review and update forestry extension services in the region in light of the new needs related to climate change.