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JOINT FAO/ECE/ILO COMMITTEE ON FOREST TECHNOLOGY, MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING

**CONFERENCE ON FOREST FIRE MANAGEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION IN FIRE EMERGENCIES IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN,
BALKANS AND ADJOINING REGIONS OF THE NEAR EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA**

Antalya, Turkey
30 March - 3 April 2004

REPORT

Introduction

1. The Conference On Forest Fire Management and International Cooperation in Fire Emergencies in the Eastern Mediterranean, Balkans and Adjoining Regions of the Near East and Central Asia was held from 30 March to 3 April 2004 in Antalya, Turkey, under the auspices of the Joint Committee and at the invitation of the Turkish Government. Participants from the following countries attended: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Poland, the Russian Federation, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

Opening of the conference

2. The Conference was opened by Mr O. Kahveci, (Turkey) Director General of Forestry, who welcomed participants. The Conference was addressed by Mr J. Goldammer (Germany) leader of the UNECE/FAO/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire, Mr M. Jurvelius (FAO) and Mr J. Najera (UNECE).

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3. Welcome addresses were made by Mr A. Yüksel, Governor of the Province of Antalya on behalf of the local authorities and by Mr. O. Pepe, Minister of Environment and Forestry of Turkey.

Election of officers (item 1 of the agenda)

4. Mr H. Hacıoglu (Turkey), Deputy Director General of Forestry and Mr J. Goldammer (Germany) were elected co-chairmen of the conference.

Adoption of the agenda (item 2)

5. The provisional agenda was adopted.

Session I

Keynote session

6. Mr Goldammer delivered a keynote address on behalf of the UNECE/FAO/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire, the Wildland Fire Advisory Group and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN-ISDR). Among the objectives of the conference were: the establishment of regional databases on fire management resources, proposals for cooperation between countries and recommendations for the FAO Ministerial Conference in 2005.

7. 27 papers were presented under following six sessions (list of papers is in the annex):

Session II Forest fire management, general overviews by the host country: Turkey

Session III Forest fire management, general overviews by host country; Forest fire prevention and control

Session IV Environmental and social impacts of forest fires, reports of countries in the region

Session V Public Policies affecting forest fires: National and international (Global Wildland Fire Network)

Session VI Forest fire statistics and related database establishment

Session VII Regional Wildland Fire Networks

Session VIII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Conference: Towards strengthening the Regional Wildland Fire Networks of the Mediterranean, Balkans and Central Asia

8. Discussions were held on modalities and responsibilities to strengthen the wildland fire networks in the region by means of a questionnaire. These constituted the conclusions and recommendations of the Conference which lead to a Plan of Action.

9. The Conference adopted the following Plan of Action for the region between the Balkans, Eastern Mediterranean, Near East, Western and Central Asia setting the basis to establish and strengthen a regional dialogue on cooperation in wildland fire research and management, which was entitled “The Antalya Declaration”:

Antalya Declaration
On Cooperation in Wildland Fire Management in the Balkans, Eastern Mediterranean,
Near East and Central Asia
Antalya, 1 April 2004

The Conference:

- Recalling the rationale and recommendations of the World Summit for Sustainable Development (Johannesburg – 2002) concerning the international endeavours to secure sustainable development of the global vegetation resources,
- Expressing concerns about the increasing occurrence and destructiveness of forest fires in the regions between the Balkans, Eastern Mediterranean, Near East and Central Asia,
- Recognizing that the reasons for this development are due to increasing population pressure in many countries, increasing socio-economic problems of rural populations, increasing vulnerability of humans and the occurrence of extreme fire seasons that can possibly be explained by climate change,
- Recognizing the endeavours of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN-ECE) to address the fire problems in the Northern Hemisphere, notably through the work of the UN-ECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire since 1993,
- Endorsing the endeavours of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and its Wildland Fire Advisory Group in supporting to harmonize and strengthen efforts by the United Nations agencies and programmes, as well as other international organizations including non-government organizations, to reduce the negative impacts of wildland fires on the environment,
- Endorsing the goal of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations to promote and strengthen bilateral and multilateral agreements for cooperation in fire management,
- Recognizing and supporting the goals and joint endeavours of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations

Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the UN Forum of Forests (UNFF) and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, to protect the global vegetation resources and the global atmosphere from negative influences by vegetation fires, as well as the promotion of knowledge and techniques to utilize the beneficial role of fire in ecosystem management,

- Endorsing the recommendations of the International Wildland Fire Summit (Sydney – 2003) concerning common international standards for fire management and the strategy for strengthening international cooperation in wildland fire management,
- Supporting the objectives of the ISDR Global Wildland Fire Network and its Secretariat, the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC), to systematically enhance the intra- and inter-regional cooperation in wildland fire management throughout the world,
- Welcoming the availability of the government of Turkey – the host country of this conference -- and the delegates of participating nations to actively cooperate to share experience and resources in wildland fire management
- Concluding from the national case studies and analyses on the wildland fire situation in the participating countries, as well as from the discussions held at the conference, that the majority of countries in the region are available to establish and strengthen a regional dialogue on cooperation in wildland fire research and management
- Expressing the intent to jointly overcome the currently existing gaps and deficits in
 - Early warning systems of wildland fire
 - Spaceborne fire monitoring systems
 - Decision-support systems for fire management
 - Wildland fire research
 - Training / capacity building in wildland fire management
 - Transnational agreements and operations for bilateral and multilateral assistance in wildland fire emergency situations

Recommends the following Antalya Plan of Action for the region between the Balkans, Eastern Mediterranean, Near East, Western and Central Asia:

(1) The countries participating at the conference encourage governments to develop or strengthen, and international organizations to support

- Bilateral and multilateral agreements on cooperation in wildland fire management, based on international standards as proposed by the FAO and the International Wildland fire Summit

- Introduce the Incident Command System (ICS) as the international standard for all wildland incident management participating in international or interagency agreements and exchanges.
- Regional systems for early warning and satellite monitoring of wildland fires
- Cooperative regional wildland fire research projects and programmes
- Decision-support systems
- Training / capacity building in wildland fire management

(2) To regularly conduct follow-up activities aimed at further promoting collaborative efforts and procedures

- Multilateral wildland fire emergency exercises, starting with the multinational exercise EASTEX FIRE 2004 in Bulgaria and the tri-national exercise in Croatia in 2004
- Regional workshops aimed at further defining priority issues to be jointly addressed, especially considering the needs of collaboration with countries of the region that were not represented at the conference

(3) To develop arrangements to support collection and dissemination of wildland fire information, facilitation of regular regional dialogue and joint projects between the countries, and to technically support countries in need of aerial assets for wildland fire suppression by the creation of

- A Regional Fire Monitoring Center, hosted by the Government of Bulgaria
- A Regional Advisory Board of Senior Fire Officers, hosted and facilitated by the Government of Turkey in Antalya
- Special regional mobile airborne fire response units, based on Public-Private Partnership arrangements, e.g., those companies participating at the conference (Russian Irkut Corporation [fixed-wing aircraft – BE-200] and UT Air [helicopter assets])

(4) To inform national governments about the need to prepare statements in favour of enhancing international cooperation in wildland fire management at the following forums:

- The forthcoming Meeting of the three Rio Conventions (UN CBD, UN CCD, UN FCCC) (Viterbo, Italy, April 2004)
- The forthcoming 16th Session of the FAO Near East Forestry Commission, with regard to establishing networking structures in Western Asia (May 2004)
- The World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) (Kobe-Hyogo, Japan, January 2005)
- The FAO Ministerial-Level Meeting, devoted to wildland fire management and international cooperation (Rome, Italy, March 2005)

Other business (item 10)

10. A field excursion was organised by General Directorate of Forestry of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Turkey. Participants visited plantations of fire enduring species typical of the Mediterranean region, fire protection in a national park, a forest fire training centre and assisted to a fire fighting exercise from a lookout tower.

11. The Chairman and participants warmly thanked the host country authorities on behalf of the Committee for the generous hospitality and the excellent organization of the Conference.

Adoption of the report

12. The seminar adopted the Antalya Declaration discussed at the session.

ANNEX

List of papers presented at the conference

Session II

Forest fire management, general overviews by the host country: Turkey

Paper 1

The impact of forest damage on total economic value of forest resources in Turkey, by Messrs. M. F. Turker, M. Pak and A. Öztürk.

Paper 2

Recent Fire history of Turkish forests and lessons learned, by Messrs. E. Bilgili, H. Hacıoğlu, M. Kurtulmuşlu, Y. Erdoğan, and M. Kol.

Paper 3

Determination of the basic principles of a fire fighting plan, by Messrs. H. Saribasak, M. A. Basaran and Y. Cengiz.

Session III

Forest fire management, general overviews by host country; Forest fire prevention and control

Paper 4

Applicability of prescribed burning as a forest management tool, potentials and constraints, by Mr T. Neyisci.

Paper 5

Public policies affecting forest fires in Turkey, by Messrs. E. Bilgili, S. Baskaya and O. Küçük.

Paper 6

The vital role of fire information systems to fight forest fires, by Mr Y. Yılmaz.

Paper 7

Determining fire danger based on weather measurements using GIS: a case study, by Messrs E. Bilgili, B. Sağlam, B. Durmaz, and Ms I. Baysal.

Paper 8

Some suggestions for international cooperation and management of forest fires, by Messrs C. Acar and C. Bucak.

Paper 9

Prescribed burning as a fuel management tool in *Pinus brutia* in forest ecosystems around Antalya, by Messrs H. Saribasak, T. Neyisci and G. Sirin.

Paper 10

A critical approach to the calculation method of economic value of forest fire damages in Turkish forestry, by Messrs. M. F. Turker, A. Öztürk, M. Pak, I. Durosoy and F. Nur.

Session IV

Environmental and social impacts of forest fires, reports of countries in the region

Paper 11

Assessment of forest fires in the Republic of Bulgaria at the end of the XX and beginning of the XXI centuries, by Mr V. Konstantinov (Bulgaria).

Paper 12

Fire situation in Croatia, by Mr M. Vinkovic (Croatia).

Paper 13

National forest fire report of the Republic of Macedonia, by Mr N. Nikolov (TfYR of Macedonia).

Paper 14

Forest fires in Hungary: current situation and prospects for the future, by Mr D. Nagy (Global Fire Monitoring Center, Germany and Forest Protection Institute, Hungary).

Paper 15

Forest, Fire Status in Israel, by Mr J. Woodcock (Israel).

Session V

Public Policies affecting forest fires: National and international (Global Wildland Fire Network)

Paper 16

Forest fire management in Cyprus, by Messrs M. Constantinidis and A. Mavroyiakoumos (Cyprus).

Paper 17

Developing a national fire danger rating system: the Israeli experience, by Mr J. Woodcock (Israel).

Paper 18

A prototype of an innovative decision-support system for forest fire emergencies in Germany, by Mr J. G. Goldammer (Germany).

Paper 19

The 2003 forest fire season in the Russian Federation, by E. P. Davidenko and N. A. Kovaljev (Russian Federation).

Session VI

Forest fire statistics and related database establishment

Paper 20

Forest Fire Situation in Kazakhstan, by Mr N. Yezhov (Kazakhstan).

Paper 21

Fire monitoring in Ukraine by Ms O. Kharechko (Ukraine).

Paper 22

Modern technologies and perspectives used in forest fire control by Mr I. R. Khasanov (Russian Federation).

Paper 23

Messrs F. Mirzayanov and V. Karakis (Russian Federation) presented a paper on Multiple amphibious aircrafts and Utair helicopters in forest fire control.

Paper 24

The National fire emergency and safety services of Bulgaria by Mr K. Voynov (Bulgaria).

Session VII

Regional Wildland Fire Networks

Paper 25

The global wildland fire network: building regional wildland fire networks in the Mediterranean, Balkans and central Asia regions by Mr J. G. Goldammer (Germany).

Paper 26

FAO's actions in improving preparedness in global fire management by Mr M. Jurvelius (FAO).

Paper 27

Mutual assistance in forest fire fighting in the border area between Spain and Portugal paper prepared by Mr R. Velez (Spain).
