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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

Timber Committee
European Forestry Commission

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

Steering Committee

Fifteenth session
(30-31 March 2001)

Review of the programme in forest management
(subject area 1)

(Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda)

Note by the secretariat

This document presents the activities in subject area 1 since the Joint Committee's twenty-third session, and draws the Committee's attention to a number of points for decision (in bold, italic type).

The Steering Committee is invited to decide on the specific points drawn to its attention.

- 1.1 Forest fire prevention and control, activities of the team of specialists, including the publication, twice yearly, of *International Forest Fire News* (IFFN). Preparations for a seminar.

A. BALTEX FIRE 2000

The Baltic Exercise for Fire Information and Resources Exchange was held in Kuopio, Finland, 5- 9 June 2000. BALTEX FIRE 2000 is part of an initiative devoted to strengthen cooperation in forest fire management and transboundary cooperation in large fire disasters between all countries bordering the Baltic Sea. The conference and exercise was held under the auspices of the Joint Committee and organised and hosted by the Finnish Ministry of Interior and the Emergency Services College in Kuopio. BALTEX FIRE 2000 was arranged and co-sponsored by the several national institutions (the Finnish Forest Research Institute; the Forest and Park Service; the University of Helsinki; the Meteorological Institute and the Technical Research Center [VTT] of Finland). The full report is set out in annex I of this document.

Points for decision: for information only

B. Meeting of the team of specialists

The team met on the occasion of BALTEX FIRE 2000. The main item discussed was the preparation of a seminar in the Mediterranean region, as requested by the Joint Committee's twenty-third session. Information about preparations for the seminar is given below. The list of team members is reproduced in annex II.

Points for decision: for information only

C. Seminar in Turkey in 2002

Thanks to the team and its leader Mr. J. Goldammer who had approached the Turkish authorities, Turkey officially agreed to host the seminar in April or October 2002. The theme is "*Forest Fire in the Eastern Mediterranean, Balkans and adjoining Regions of the Near East and Central Asia*". Mr. Dursun Cetin, Head of Board of the Ministry of Forests is the official contact person. The outline of the seminar is set out in annex III.

Point for decision: The Committee is invited to discuss and comment the seminar programme, and propose changes, if any, before it is finalised and circulated.

D. *Forest Fire News* (IFFN)

Forest Fire News has continued to be published twice a year. However, due to an overload of work of the editor, the second issue of 2000 had been delayed, but is on the press at the moment. The two issues of 2001 will appear as planned. IFFN is distributed to some 1200 experts and libraries around the world. It is also available on the internet at the FIRE GLOBE, Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC). The number of agencies co-sponsoring has increased, and the Bureau of Land Management of the US Ministry of the Interior has agreed to continue to support financially in 2001 the preparation of the manuscript.

Points for decision: for information only

- 1.2. New roles and modes of operation of forest services, proposal for a seminar on the changed functions of more independent forest services to be held in the Netherlands, in 2003 or 2004.

The secretariat has been in touch with Mr. P. Winterman, who replaced Mr. H. Schipper as Joint Committee delegate from the Netherlands. Mr. Winterman officially agreed to host the seminar in 2004 and will appoint a contact person in charge of drawing up the draft agenda and other organisation details with the subject group coordinator and the secretariat.

Points for decision: for information only

- 1.3. Afforestation, preparations for the seminar in Ireland in September 2002.

Mr. D. McAree, vice-chairman will inform orally the Steering Committee on the preparations for this seminar.

- 1.4. Disaster preparedness in forestry, establishment of a team of specialists.

The joint session of the ECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission held in October 2000 in Rome, welcomed the initiative of the Joint Committee to set-up a team of specialists on this subject. Subsequently, the secretariat has received 10 nominations from 8 countries. The secretariat has contacted one of the countries which suffered the most from the storms in December 1999 to nominate a member, and is pursuing its efforts to set-up the team under sound grounds (including exploration of possibilities of financial assistance) in order that it be able to accomplish its work according to the mandate. The list of nominated experts is set out in annex IV.

Points for decision: the Steering Committee is invited to comment on the above

- 1.5. Information systems in forestry, proposal for a seminar to be held in 2004 or 2005.

This activity is in the pipeline, no action has been taken.

- 1.6. Close to nature forestry, proposal for a seminar in Slovakia in 2003 or 2004.

Mr. J. Ilavsky has confirmed his country's interest in hosting the seminar and has approached IUFRO and EFI to be co-sponsors. If Mr. Ilavsky is able to attend the Steering Committee session, he will provide the session with further information.

Points for decision: the Steering Committee is invited to comment on the above

- 1.7. Biodiversity: from concept to practice, proposal for a seminar in Sweden in 2003 or 2004.

Mr. G. Nordanstig informed the secretariat that Finland is organising in May this year a seminar on a related subject: Ecosystem management in boreal forest landscapes (<http://www.joensuu.fi/forestconference/>). Copies of the outline of this seminar will be available to participants at the session. Mr. Nordanstig suggested waiting for the outcome of the Finnish seminar before continuing with further preparations in order to avoid possible duplication.

Points for decision: the Steering Committee is invited to comment on the above

ANNEX I

BALTEX FIRE 2000 (Baltic Exercise for Fire Information and Resources Exchange)

Conference Report

Johann G. Goldammer
Leader, UN-ECE/FAO/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire
and Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC)
Fire Ecology Research Group, c/o Freiburg University
PO Box, D-79085 Freiburg, GERMANY

1. Preface

Between 5 and 9 June 2000 the Baltic Exercise for Fire Information and Resources Exchange (BALTEX FIRE 2000) was held in Kuopio, Finland. BALTEX FIRE 2000 is part of an initiative devoted to strengthen cooperation in forest fire management and transboundary cooperation in large fire disasters between all countries bordering the Baltic Sea. The conference and exercise was organised and hosted by the Finnish Ministry of Interior and the Emergency Services College in Kuopio. BALTEX FIRE 2000 was arranged and co-sponsored by the several national institutions (the Finnish Forest Research Institute; the Forest and Park Service; the University of Helsinki; the Meteorological Institute and the Technical Research Center [VTT] of Finland).

The common Baltic forest fire initiative has been initiated in the mid 1990s by the *UN-ECE/FAO/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire* which operates on behalf of the *Joint UN-ECE/FAO/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training* and coordinates its work through the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC).

2. Rationale

2.1 Fire in the Central-Northern European Environment

Forest fires in the region of the Baltic Basin are closely linked to modern human activities, e.g. industrialization, socio-economics (land-use change), military installations and activities (currently becoming less significant), problems arising at the forest/residential interface, and tourism. The wildfires severely threaten the valuable forest resources of the region. Some fire events cause secondary problems, such as fires in industrially polluted forests or in radioactively contaminated vegetation.

On the other hand, recognizing the role of historic natural and human-caused fires and other land-use tools in the formation of the cultural landscapes of the Baltic Basin, new concepts are arising to include fire as management tool in those landscapes, including nature conservation areas, which require periodic disturbances in order to maintain or restore biodiversity (e.g., heathlands, sub-climax forest formations).

The Baltic initiative includes all countries bordering the Baltic Sea and several observer countries. The Russian Federation is part of the Baltic Fire Initiative because it shares a long borderline with other Baltic States and owns a hinterland which represents the largest and most fire-prone forest of the world that is ecologically and socio-economically connected to the Baltic Sea region. The majority of problems concerning the expected increase of the regional fire problem due to climate change is primarily in the Russian Federation.

The nations bordering the Baltic Basin are now showing increasing interest to promote fire management systems in forests and open landscapes which need to be based on advanced fire science and technology development. The need has been recognized to create a forum in the Central-Northern European region in which the fire problems are entirely different from Southern Europe.

2.2 The International Nexus

The UN-ECE/FAO/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire is promoting a cooperative approach of the nations bordering the Baltic Basin to share fire management expertise and resources. At the *ECE/FAO/ILO Conference on Forest, Fire*

and *Global Change* (Russia 1996) and the *First International Baltic Conference on Forest Fire* (Poland 1998) the Team has proposed to set up pan-Baltic programs and exchange mechanisms encompassing fire research, fire management training, the use of prescribed fire (in forestry, nature conservation, and landscape management), and mutual fire emergency assistance.

As a consequence, the UN Fire Team established a Baltic Forest Fire Task Force which is chaired by Finland. Finland therefore was host of BALTEX FIRE 2000.

BALTEX FIRE 2000 is considered as a contribution to the *Baltic 21 Action Programme* which is an initiative for the application of the Agenda 21 in the Baltic Sea Region and includes the Baltic 21 Action Programme on Forests. This programme is in line with:

- The UN Conference on Environment and Development UNCED (Rio 1992): Forest Principles and the Agenda 21, Chapter 11 on "Combating Deforestation and other";
- The Intergovernmental Panel on Forest (IPF, 1995-1997); and
- The Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Strasbourg 1990, Helsinki 1993, Lisbon 1998).

BALTEX FIRE 2000 was organized in line with the objectives of the UN *International Strategy for Disaster Reduction* (ISDR) which constitutes the follow-up arrangement of the UN *International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction* (IDNDR). The meeting and exercise included the participation of an international group of wildland fire and industrial fire specialists which prepares the formation of an advisory group under the *UN International Search and Rescue Advisory Group* (INSARAG) scheme. This group will support the United Nations in coordinating and implementing international response to forest and other wildland fire emergencies worldwide.

3. Conference Programme

3.1 Participants

A total of 85 participants of BALTEX FIRE 2000 consisted of five invited groups:

- Nations bordering the Baltic Sea (Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden)
- Observer countries (Belarus, United Kingdom)
- Country members of the ECE/FAO/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire (in addition to the representatives of the Baltic countries: Canada, Portugal, U.S.A.)
- UN International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) Europe-Africa Region (Austria, Germany)
- Country associated with a bilateral technical development programme of a Baltic country: Namibia

3.2 Papers Presented

Following papers were presented in thematic sessions:

- Host country Finland: Opening remarks and technical reports on programmes and projects in the country (Forest fire risk assessment; fire detection by satellite; aerial fire suppression; fire behaviour)
- ECE/FAO/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire: Introduction, retrospective on the 1st Baltic Conference on Forest Fires
- Baltic and observer countries: Official national reports (Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden)
- Prescribed burning focus: Finland, Germany, Norway
- Other:
 - Peat fire problems (Finland)
 - North America (country report U.S.A.)
 - Fire research (Canada: The International Crownfire Modelling Experiment (ICFME); forest fires and global climate change)
 - Developing countries (Namibia: Integrated Forest Fire Management [IFFM])

3.3 Working Groups

Two working group sessions were organized on 8 and 9 June 2000. The aim of the working groups was to address priority areas of action concerning forest and other wildland fire issues in the Baltic region and internationally. Three groups were formed:

- Forest fire risk assessment, detection and monitoring of forest fires
- Forest fires and environment
- Transboundary operational cooperation in fire management, training and technical development

The results of the Working Groups are presented under (4).

3.4 Demonstration Exercises

Two demonstration exercises were conducted during the conference. On 7 June a prescribed burning and forest fire suppression exercise was jointly conducted in Hyövynniemi, Heinävesi. The site consisted of an area (size: 12 ha) which was prepared for a prescribed nature conservation fire by the local Finnish Forest and Park Service. Despite the cold weather and lasting precipitation during the week preceding the exercise, favourable weather conditions on 7 June allowed a partial execution of the burn.

The second part of the field demonstration consisted of a demonstration of aerial and ground-based forest fire suppression capabilities. Aerial fire fighting was conducted by fixed-wing airplanes from Poland and Finnish helicopters using helibuckets. Fire brigades of Heinävesi and nearby municipalities as well as Russian fire brigades, supported by the Heinävesi District Police demonstrated their organizational and technical fire suppression skills at a highly professional level.

On 8 June a peat fire exercise was held in Kurkisuo, Suonenjoki, and demonstrated the fire hazards of peat production and related risk assessment, fire-fighting equipment and fire suppression. Due to heavy rains during the demonstration day the state-owned peat production company Vapo Oy, the Suonenjoki Fire Department and the Emergency Services College used smoke flares to demonstrate active fires and simulated their suppression.

4. Conference Results Recommendations of BALTEX FIRE 2000

In the following the recommendations of the three Working Groups are provided.

4.1 Group I: Forest Fire Risk Assessment; Detection and Monitoring of Forest Fires

Group I prepared a list of recommendations in the form of keywords in the field of regional Baltic forest fire risk assessment, detection and monitoring of fire. The recommendations include:

- a) There is a need for common understanding and sharing of fire management information in the Baltic region. All Baltic countries should therefore summarize and circulate information on their national fire danger, prevention, detection and suppression systems. This could also be achieved through development of standardized country report forms (templates).
- b) In order to develop a general understanding of variation in fire danger/risk that exists across the Region, which would facilitate better transboundary (border-crossing) cooperation in terms of both operational fire management and fire research the fire danger/risk throughout Baltic Region should be evaluated using a common fire danger system (likely the Canadian FFDRS), and post daily fire danger maps of the GFMC website. Current country systems could still be used, but a common, over-arching system should be developed, perhaps with the European Forestry Institute taking the lead, with the help of meteorological institutions and country representatives.
- c) The development of a Baltic Region-wide land cover, vegetation, fuel classification system (or approach) would assist in converting fire danger calculations into prediction of fire behaviour for specific fuel types.
- d) While current satellites provide valuable research information (e.g. land cover), there is a strong need to develop fire-specific satellite technology (e.g., BIRD and FOCUS of the German Center of Aeronautical and Space Research - DLR) in support of aerial and tower-based detection systems.

4.2 Forest Fires and Environment

The group prepared a list of recommendations in the form of keywords to be further explored and developed. A few

explanatory remarks have been added to the list that was finally presented at the meeting.

I. The concept of "Forest and Forest Fire"

The use of the concept "forest" in the topic for the work was debated. (Forest) fire and environmental management will certainly involve important vegetation characteristics and fuel regimes that due to their successional stages cannot be precisely defined as forests, for instance different types of heathlands and other sub-climax communities. The use of different broad concepts such as "ecosystem" and "landscape type" might be evaluated in cases where more precise definitions of "forest" is difficult.

The following list of recommended fields and keywords must be further developed:

a. Scales

Any dataset, plan and management action on forest fires and the environment must be specific regarding definition of scale. Scale therefore need to be specified throughout most of the list of key words also given below. Examples:

- Time
- Space
- Boreal
- Local / regional / national
- Habitat network
- Population viability data.

b. Agreement on common standards

- Fire regime
- Fuel characteristics
- Fire monitoring (incl. prescribed burning or wildfire)
- Pre-planning
- Fire weather
- Fire effects, post-fire monitoring
- Habitat types
- Skills/techniques

c. Country fire history/regime

- Habitat maps (EU-standards)
- Fire weather/climate maps
- Identification of affected and non-affected species and habitats
- Current resource use
- Fire frequency.

d. Identification of information gaps

It is essential to explore the process at any stage to identify where information might be lacking.

e. Country vision statement

Each country is recommended to write down their visions for the theme of forest fire and environment to create overall objectives for the planning and implementation process.

f. Country fire management strategy

To create detailed objectives to support the development of country fire policies, and action plans, including:

- Biodiversity plans

- Smoke management
- Regulation and laws

g. Education/Information

Several basic questions need to be addressed, e.g., the clarification of

- Responsibilities
- Methodologies and procedures
- Format of a supportive network.
- Methods of conflict resolution, e.g., National, regional, and local Round Tables on Fire Management in which all stakeholders will be involved

h. Training

Training is a key aspect of any future regional fire programme. Training will encompass formal training of researchers in

- Fire ecology
- Wildfire management
- Application of prescribed fire
- Multidiscipline activity
- Fire research

i. Evaluation

The many research data set, plans and management actions needed will require a competent group that can evaluate efficiency and outputs from the process.

II. Country "Action Plans"

Due to the broad range of issues and multi-faceted nature of (forest) fire and the environment each country is recommended first to develop a specific *Action Plan* which contain a list of elements or objectives. For each of the objectives an action plan (descriptive) and an implementation time scale must be given. The elements of the action plan should be priority ranked.

4.3 Transboundary Operational Cooperation in Fire Management, Training and Technical Development

This group discussion was driven by the previous activities of the UN-ECE/FAO/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire and the initiative to establish a Wildland Fire Subgroup within the UN International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) Europe-Africa Region. The aim of the discussion was to further develop the efficiency and mechanisms of international cooperation in fire management, training and technical development.

Until recently the mandate of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) of the United Nations had been restricted to the "classical" SAR cases such as saving lives after earthquakes. However, experience has shown that secondary effects of natural and technogenic disasters require additional specialist advice in conjunction with SAR response and other humanitarian aid missions. The INSARAG family offers an appropriate structure.

At the regional INSARAG Europe-Africa meeting in December 1999 (Germany) a first proposal was elaborated to establish an INSARAG Fire Group consisting of three elements:

- Wildland Fire
- Hazardous Materials (Hazmat)
- Industrial Fire

At a meeting at the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) in January 2000 it was agreed that the original mandate of INSARAG which in addition to search and rescue would also cover wider aspects of

disaster/emergency response. This could include a variety of natural and human-made disasters, including wildland fires. INSARAG would assist in strengthening UN-OCHA's role by:

- governmental experts advisory support in case of a major emergency
- advisory experts to be provided out of the INSARAG family covering many fields of disaster relief

At the foundation meeting of INSARAG Fire it was recommended:

- INSARAG-Fire is a global network of specialists in dealing with industrial fire, wildland fire and HAZMAT incidents affecting populations and the environment
- INSARAG-Fire is organized in regional nodes
- INSARAG-Fire has been initiated by a Starting Core Group of INSARAG Europe-Africa and will seek the establishment of Fire groups in the INSARAG Americas and Asia-Pacific regions.
- Activation of involvement of existing international structures by calling on wildland fire expertise of international organizations and individuals already in place will be coordinated through the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) network
- Encourage a continuous exchange of information through the Internet, initially utilizing the GFMC network

At BALTEX FIRE 2000 the meeting of the FAO/ECE/ILO Fire Team further elaborated on the formation of the INSARAG Fire Group and particularly on the Subgroup **Wildland Fire**. The final format of INSARAG Wildland Fire will be submitted to the next INSARAG Europe Africa Regional Meeting (Tunisia, November 2000).

The BALTEX FIRE 2000 recommendations for INSARAG Europe-Africa include:

a. Establishment of a Database

For the Europe-Africa Region a database should be developed on the base of circulated questionnaires which include information on:

- Human resources for
- Assessment of fire situations
- Technical assistance
- Fire fighting

It was stressed that fire specialists to be selected for deployment to international wildland fire emergency situations should be experienced or at least trained to work in national to local conditions of the recipient country (see recommendation [b]).

- Equipment
- Hardware and software for use in international emergency assistance operations (including national to regional fire equipment warehouses)
- Availability and mobility of equipment (time, space)

The need was underscored to observe and improve technical compatibility of equipment.

- Information sources
- Provider of data (real-time, near-real time) for fire situations, e.g. fire reconnaissance (from air and space), fire-weather or -danger forecasts, environmental and socio-economic conditions, etc.

b. International Fire Management Training Courses

The need is recognized to train fire management specialists to be used in international response groups. Training programmes still need to be defined but should certainly include elements which would prepare these specialists to foreign situations such as the specific conditions of a target nation or region, e.g.

- natural fire environment (fuels, fire characteristics, fire behaviour);
- geographic conditions (topography, water sources);

- climate and weather (typical fire weather, local particularities such as wind patterns);
- socio-cultural conditions (land-use systems, fire use, involvement of land users or the public in fire management activities, public response to foreign intervention, limitations of use of advanced technologies);
- infrastructures and technical facilities (fire fighting resources);
- policies and administrative settings and policies in place (legal framework, law enforcement, responsibilities of agencies, role and capabilities of NGOs);
- information sources (provider of national to local real-time or near-real time data needed for fire situations assessments, e.g. fire aerial and spaceborne fire reconnaissance, fire-weather or -danger forecasts).

The training programme should include a link to the UN-OCHA / UNDAC system through which wildland fire specialists would be prepared to become candidate members for UNDAC missions in wildland fire emergencies.

International certificates should be issued in order to guarantee the competence and quality of fire management specialists deployed to international tasks.

c. Utilization of the Existing GFMC Network for Building the Coordination Process

The existing forest fire network organized under the ECE/FAO/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire and the Global Fire Monitoring Center should be used for further strengthening the regional Baltic to global collaborative process and coordinative efforts.

The establishment of a link to UN-OCHA and the INSARAG Secretariat must be secured. The role of the GFMC as facilitating and supporting instrument for UN-OCHA and the INSARAG Secretariat in wildland fire questions must be clarified.

5. Immediate Actions to be Taken in the Baltic Region

The final discussion of the BALTEX FIRE 2000 plenary and the subsequent meeting of the ECE/FAO/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire and the INSARAG Fire Group fully supported the recommendations of the three Working Groups.

The following short- to medium-term steps will be taken:

- i. Establishment of a special Website on the Baltic Region on the Homepage of the GFMC;
- ii. Design of a comprehensive and standardized format of a country profile in which the Baltic Region countries fully describe the basics on the fire situation in the country and the available fire-fighting resources for national, transboundary and international forest fire fighting, including contact numbers;
- iii. Distribution of the country profile questionnaire to the governments; subsequent placement of country profiles on the website;
- iv. Establishment of links and extraction of existing open internet and intranet websites which are currently constructed, e.g. in Finland (fire danger rating system, automatic regional fire detection system), Russia (fire information system), and Germany (GIS-based Fire Information System for the State of Brandenburg: integration of data and information from an automatic ground-based fire detection system, fire danger rating, and fire behaviour modeling);
- v. Publication of the national reports presented at BALTEX FIRE 2000 in the pages of UN-ECE/FAO International Forest Fire News (IFFN);
- vi. Exploration of host countries and conveners for working group activities and the next BALTEX FIRE (possibly 2002);
- vii. Conduct a first INSARAG Wildland Fire short introductory course in 2001; Finland has offered to investigate the possibility to host such a seminar.

6. Related Activities

The FAO/ECE/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire recommended to follow up its activities in other countries of the ECE region. A meeting in the Southeast of the ECE region would be a logic continuation of a series of activities that had been initiated by topic- or region-focussed seminars, such as the meetings:

- Fire Suppression Technologies (Poland 1981);
- Fire Prevention (Spain 1986);

- The Socio-Economic Environment of Fire (Greece 1991);
- Forest, Fire, and Global Change (Russian Federation 1996);
- The First Baltic Conference on Forest Fires (Poland 1998);
- The Baltic Exercise on Fire Information and Resources Exchange - BALTEX FIRE 2000 (Finland 2000)

At BALTEX FIRE 2000 it was discussed to direct the attention of the next seminar on the Eastern part of the Mediterranean Basin and its adjoining regions which have not yet been addressed by the FAO/ECE/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire. The target region will include countries East of the Balkans, Turkey, the Near East and the central Asian ECE member states and those countries not being member of the ECE but bordering them in Central Asia, e.g. Mongolia and China.

Several reasons support this idea. First, the post-war situation in the Balkan countries as well as the South Eastern European countries which are still in transition, have not participated in recent activities of the Team and other international projects and programmes. This also refers to the neighbours of Turkey, such as the Caucasus states, Iran, and furthermore Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan.

From the point of view of the Fire Team and the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) which coordinates the work of the team, these countries deserve full attention and support to bring them into the family of international community of forest fire scientists, managers and policy makers.

Turkey is situated in a strategically important place in the region. It was recommended that Turkey could be an excellent place in the Eastern Mediterranean region where the ecological and cultural influences of the countries mentioned above are meeting anyway. This makes Turkey ideal for convening a meeting of the mentioned forest fire community.

Thus, a possible conference to be organized in 2002 could be entitled tentatively:

"Forest Fire in the Eastern Mediterranean, Balkans and adjoining Regions of the Near East and Central Asia".

It was recommended to approach the Forest Service of Turkey and suggest Turkey to host this conference.

7. Acknowledgements

On behalf of the participants of BALTEX FIRE 2000, the Joint UN-ECE/FAO/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training, and the new INSARAG initiative the leader of the UN-ECE/FAO/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire congratulated and thanked the government of Finland for hosting and generously financing the conference and exercise. Particular thanks were given to the staff of the Ministry of Interior and the Emergency Services College in Kuopio which proved high organizational skills, excellent conference facilities and well prepared field demonstrations. The engaged coordination with several municipal fire departments, the police, the National Border Guard, the Finnish Forest Research Institute and the Forest and Park Service in the field exercise activities were well visible. The neighbour countries Poland and Russia showed their high spirit of cooperation by sending ground and aerial fire fighting forces.

In his final statements he elaborated on the good spirit of the regional Baltic discussion and the willingness to come to a consensus concerning future collaboration in forest fire research, development and transboundary support in emergencies.

He also underscored the importance of the first joint meeting of the ECE/FAO/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire and the INSARAG Fire Group and envisaged a strong common future action programme.

ANNEX II

Members of the
UN-FAO/ECE/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire

Status: 22 January 2001

BELARUS

Mr. Ivan G. Mysleiko
Ministry of Forestry
Chkalova St., 6
220089 Minsk
BELARUS

Fax: + 7-017-224-1935
Tel: + 7-017-224 -4710

CANADA

Mr. Brian J.Stocks
Forest Fire Research
Canadian Forest Service
Natural Resources Canada
1219 Queen Street East
CDN - Sault Sainte Marie, Ontario P6A 5M7
CANADA

Fax: + 1-705-759-5700
Tel: + 1-705-759-5470 ext. 2181
e-Mail: bstocks@nrca.gc.ca

ESTONIA

Mr. Mati Raidma
Deputy Director General
Estonian Rescue Board
Raua Str., 2
EE-0001 Tallinn
ESTONIA

Fax: + 372-6-282-099
Tel: + 372-6-282-002

FINLAND

Mr. Mike Jurvélius
Ngweze, P.O. Box
1863 Katima Mulilo
NAMIBIA

Fax: + 264-677-3322
Tel: + 264-677-3143

BELARUS

Mr. Aleksey Pshonko
Direktor, Bellesavia Aerial Fire Service
Ministry of Forestry
Prymaja Str., 24
220089 Minsk
BELARUS

Fax: + 7-017-213-1082
Tel: + 7-017-213-2976

ESTONIA

Mr. Veljo Kütt
Assistant Director
National Forestry Board
Toompüestee 24
EE-0100 Tallinn
ESTONIA

Fax: + 372-6-262-901
Tel: + 372-6-262-904
e-mail: veljo@ekm.envir.ee

FINLAND

Mr. Harry Frelander
Chief Inspector, Rescue Department
Ministry of the Interior
Kirkkokatu 12
FIN - 00170 Helsinki
FINLAND

Fax: + 358-9-160-2969
Tel: + 358-9-160-2966
e-mail: harry.frelander@sm.intermin.fi

GERMANY

Mr. J. G. Goldammer (Team Leader)
Fire Ecology and Biomass Research Group,
Max Planck Institute for Chemistry
c/o University of Freiburg
79085 Freiburg
GERMANY

Fax: + 49-761-808012
Tel: + 49-761-808011
e-mail: jgold@uni-freiburg.de

LATVIA

Mr. Arnis Gertners
Director, Forest Protection
State Forest Service
Janvara Str., 15
LV - 1932 Riga
LATVIA

Fax: + 371-72-11176
Tel: + 371-72-21092

PORTUGAL

Ms. Josefa Cavalho
Direcção-Geral das Florestas
Divisão de Protecção e Conservação
Forest Protection and Conservation Division
Directorate General of Forests
Av. Joao Crisóstomo 26, 5º
P - 1069-040 Lisboa
PORTUGAL

Fax: + 351-213-124-989 or 987
Tel: + 351-213-124-891
e-mail: lia.carvalho@dgf.min-agricultura.pt

SPAIN

Mr. Ricardo Vélez
Chief, National Forest Service
General Direction of Nature Conservation
Ministry of Environment
Gran Vía de San Francisco, Nº 4
E - 28005 Madrid
SPAIN

Fax: + 34-1-347-6302
Tel: + 34-1-347-6112
e-mail: sala.incendios@gvsf.mma.es

UNITED KINGDOM

Michael Bruce
Glen Tanar Estate
Brooks House
Glen Tanar
Aboyne Aberdeenshire AB34 5EU
SCOTLAND

Fax: ++44-13398-86047
Tel: ++44-13398-86451
e-mail: wildfireuk@aol.com

POLAND

Mr. Tomasz Zawila-Niedzwiecki
Associate Professor
Institute of Geodesy and Cartography
Department of Cartography
Forest Remote Sensing and GIS
2/4 Jasna St.
PL - 00 950 Warsaw
POLAND

Fax: + 48-22-827-0328
Tel: + 48-22-828-0269 ext.(tone dial) 105
e-mail: tzawila@igik.edu.pl

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr. Eduard P. Davidenko
Chief, Science and Technology Department
Aerial Forest Fire Center of Russia,
"Avialesookhrana"
Gorkogo St. 20
141200 Pushkino
Moscow Region
RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Fax: + 7-096-532-9220
Tel: + 7-096-532-2585
e-mail: aviales@space.ru

TURKEY

Mr. Ertugrul Bilgili
Department of Forest Entomology and Protection
Faculty of Forestry, Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi
TR - 61080 Trabzon
TURKEY

Fax: ++90-462-325-7499
Tel: ++90-462-325-3175
e-mail: bilgili@risc01.ktu.edu.tr

UKRAINE

Mr. A.P. Moroz
Head, Department of Forest Protection
Ministry for Forestry
Kreshchatik 5
252601 Kyiv 1
UKRAINE

Fax: + 380-44-228-7794
Tel: + 380-44-229-6736

USA
Mr. Michael A. Fosberg
20 Ames St.
Onancock VA 23417
U.S.A.

Fax: + 1-767-787-4437
Tel: + 1-757-789-3817
e-mail: mfosberg@intercom.net

USA
Mr. Larry Hamilton
Director, National Office of Fire and Aviation, BLM
Bureau of Land Management
National Interagency Fire Center
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705-5354
U.S.A.

Fax: ++1-208-387-5376
Tel: ++1-208-387-5447
e-mail: larry_hamilton@nifc.blm.gov

USA
Tom Frey
International Program Coordinator, BLM
BLM Office of Fire and Aviation
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705-5354
U.S.A.

Fax: ++1-208-387-5914
Tel: ++1-208-387-5167
e-mail: tom_frey@nifc.blm.gov

ANNEX III

Seminar in Turkey in 2002

"Forest Fire in the Eastern Mediterranean, Balkans and adjoining Regions of the Near East and Central Asia"

"Conference on Forest Fires in the Eastern Mediterranean, Balkans and adjoining Regions of the Near East and Central Asia" Turkey, 2002

Conference Outline

1. Rationale

The Eastern Mediterranean Region, including the Balkan countries, the ECE member states of the Near East and Central Asia, and other neighbouring countries of Central Asia, e.g. Mongolia and China, have recently suffered major forest and other wildland fire problems.

The causes of an increasing occurrence of wildfires in forests and other wildlands, including the underlying reasons for increasing human-caused fires, vary within the region and are due to:

- * transition from centrally planned to market economies
- * national to regional conflicts, creation of new nations, involving political tensions and war
- * increasing population growth and land-use pressure
- * regional climate change towards increase of extreme droughts

It has been recognized that no regional activity is underway to establish cooperation in wildland fire management, including wildland fire science.

At the last regional ECE fire conference, the Baltic Exercise on Fire Information and Resources Exchange 2000 (BALTEX FIRE 2000), the FAO/ECE/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire recommended to call for a fire conference covering the region delineated above.

In December 2000 the Government of Turkey through the General Directorate of Forestry expressed its interest to host the meeting in Turkey in the year 2002.

The conference would be the next in a series of seminars and conferences which have been organized between 1981 and 2000:

- * Fire Suppression Technologies (Poland 1981)
- * Fire Prevention (Spain 1986)
- * The Socio-Economic Environment of Fire (Greece 1991)
- * Forest, Fire, and Global Change (Russian Federation 1996)
- * The First Baltic Conference on Forest Fires (Poland 1998)
- * The Baltic Exercise on Fire Information and Resources Exchange - BALTEX FIRE 2000 (Finland 2000)

Several reasons support the idea for calling for a regional conference. First, the Balkan countries, some of them being in a post-war situation and under reconstruction, as well as the South Eastern European countries which are still in economic and political transition, have not participated in recent activities of the ECE/FAO Fire Team and other international wildland fire research and development projects. Second, the neighbouring countries of Turkey, such as the Caucasus states, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan, have been quite isolated from recent scientific and technological development in fire management. Third, the fire problems in Mongolia and northern China are similar and call for cooperation with the ECE region.

From the point of view of the Fire Team and the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) which coordinates the work of the team these countries deserve full attention and support to bring them into the family of international community of forest fire scientists, managers and policy makers.

Turkey is situated in a strategically important place in the region and very suitable for bringing together the fire science and management community of the region. This is why the ECE/FAO/ILO Team Specialists on Forest Fire welcomes the generous hospitality of Turkey to host the conference in 2002.

2. Objectives of the Conference

The regional conference will be entitled:

"Conference on Forest Fires in the Eastern Mediterranean, Balkans and adjoining Regions of the Near East and Central Asia"

and conducted jointly with a regional exercise on forest fire management entitled:

"Eastern European, Near East and Central Asian States Exercise on Wildland Fire Information and Resources Exchange - EASTEX FIRE 2002"

The objectives of the conference is to

1. Provide (a) a forum in the Eastern Mediterranean, Balkan and adjoining Regions of the Near East and Central Asia, (b) prepare mechanisms for information and resources exchange in forest and other wildland fire management within the region, including the establishment of partnerships for joint activities in fire research, training and policy development, and (c) prepare proposals to governments and international organizations of the region to establish mechanisms for sharing resources in large fire emergencies in accordance with existing international procedures

In addition to the regional focus on the Eastern Mediterranean, Balkan and adjoining Regions of the Near East and Central Asia the conference will

2. Compile an ECE-wide database on fire management capabilities in order to support the overall objectives of the conference and to facilitate international cooperation in management of fire emergencies
3. Conduct EASTEX FIRE 2002 - a bi-lateral or multinational fire-fighting exercise in which cooperation of ground and aerial fire fighting forces of two or more countries (to be determined) of the Eastern Mediterranean, Balkan and adjoining Regions of the Near East and Central Asia, including participation of commercial wildland fire suppression operators, will be exercised.

The conference objectives are in line with the scope of work and recommendations of various international organizations including:

- * the ECE/FAO/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire
- * the Interagency Task Force for Disaster Reduction of the United Nations Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and its Working Group Wildland Fire
- * the FAO, in accordance with the recommendations of the fire expert consultations on "Public Policies affecting Forest Fires" (1998) and "International Cooperation in Fire Management" (2001),

- * the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) and its joint UNEP Environment Unit,
- * the United Nations International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG),
- * the European Commission in the frame of the Mediterranean Disaster Information Network (MEDIN) and the overall scope of the Global Disaster Information Network (GDIN) International, and
- * the European Council in the frame of the European Open Partial Agreement (EUR-OPA).
- * the International Institute for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and the World Bank Disaster Management Facility (DMF) with its ProVention Consortium on Technological and Natural Disasters
- * The World Health Organization (WHO)

The ECE member states and invited organizations will be asked to present "Country Profiles" that will be discussed and processed during the meeting to build a database on site during the conference. The materials will be presented in written form (printed and on electronic files) following a questionnaire (draft questionnaire is presented under ANNEX I to this conference outline).

Oral contributions will be invited from each country to present in brief the Country Profiles. Dedicated papers will be invited by the Steering Committee.

ANNEX I: Questionnaire for the Establishment of a Database with ECE-wide Country Profiles of Forest Fire Management Capabilities

(will be added within the months April/May 2001 after preparation and review by the ECE/FAO/ILO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire and other international fire management specialists)

ANNEX IV

Appointed members of the
UN-FAO/ECE/ILO Team of Specialists on disaster preparedness in forestry

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Mr. Sefko Sakovic

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Mr. Cedomir Burlica

GERMANY

Mr. Mahler

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr. Valentin V. Strakhov

SWITZERLAND

Mr. Silvio Covi

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Mr. Boro Vlado

DENMARK

Mr. Tomas Nordfjell

POLAND

Mr. Tomasz Wojcik

SLOVAKIA

Mr. Bohdan Konopka

UNITED KINGDOM

Mr. Barrie Hudson