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Report of the Meeting UNISDR Regional Southeast Europe / Caucasus Wildland Fire Network

Skopje, Republic Macedonia, 4-6 December 2008

10 January 2009

Objectives of the meeting

- 1) Regional South East Europe/Caucasus consultation meeting on "Review the fire situation in the region in 2007-2008"
- 2) Preparatory Meeting for the 2009 Regional Training Course: Fire Management on Terrain contaminated by Unexploded Ordnance (UXO), Land Mines and Radioactivity

The meeting took place at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Skopje. The Coordinator of the Meeting UNISDR Regional Southeast Europe / Caucasus Wildland Fire Network, Mr. Nikola Nikolov, welcomed the attendees of the meeting on behalf of the minister and of the network.

The Director of the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC), Mr. Johann G. Goldammer, coordinator of the Global Wildland Fire Network, explained the background and objectives of the meeting and acknowledged the sponsorship and financial support by the Council of Europe, Secretariat of the Euro-Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA), and the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC). ENVSEC is a joint initiative addressing the links between the natural environment and human security. ENVSEC partners include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC).

Country Reports

In the first part of the meeting the representatives of countries of the region presented reports on the wildland fire situation.

Albania

- Report about the reforms in the forestry sector: Forestry is now under the Ministry for Environment
- Statistics
 - 2006: 176 fires, 767 ha forest, 314 ha pastures; damage 1 Mio Euro

The GFMC is serving as Secretariat of the UN-ISDR Global Wildland Fire Network and the UN-ISDR Wildland Fire Advisory Group – an advisory body to the United Nations affiliated to the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN-ISDR) and Member of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.
The GFMC is an Associated Institute of the United Nations University (UNU).



- 2007: 1190 fires, 2700 ha state forests, 2860 ha communal forest, 310 ha private forests, 6263 ha pastures, damage 20 Mio Euro; 35.000 ha total affected; EU JRC reporting based on satellite imagery that more than 100,000 ha of vegetated land had been affected
- 2008: 348 fires, 274 in forests, 74 in pastures; 742 ha state forests, 479 ha communal, 254 ha private forests, 2716 ha pastures; damage 11 mio Euros.
- Causes: 54% unknown, 20 intentional, 26% negligence
- Risk Emergency Commission formed at inter-agency level
- Foreign support 2007: Italy (2 Canadairs), Ukraine (limited impact, old airplanes), Greece (air and terrestrial support), Germany (2 helicopters, limited value)
- National helicopters: no trained pilots, no Bambi buckets
- Conclusions: Aerial support too expensive, useless
- International help good, but no good coordination internally.
- Problems:
 - Efficiency of human and material resources
 - Logistics
 - Access to forest, topography
 - Vacuum ownership
 - Fires in private forest, people are interested to harvest; burned intentionally for salvage logging
 - Fire as management tool needs to be allowed, legislation to be improved
- Underlying causes: 65% population was in rural areas, now less than 50%
- Future needs:
 - Effective management plans
 - Strengthening initial attack
 - Rapid detection and monitoring system
 - Fire as management tool
 - Implementation of fire policy and strategy in 2002

Armenia

- Apologies of representative of Ministry for Defence not attending
- 2006: 299.5 ha burned, more detailed statistics available in presentation
- Construction of fire prevention road
- Fires on border lines 2008: March and August 2008
- HALO TRUST should have statistics on areas contaminated by mines and UXO
- Reports about land mine explosions during fires
- Recommendations: Meeting of experts and establishment of operative connection addressing fires on border minefields
- Equipment: Already 2 off-road vehicles purchased. Fire mainly put out manually.

Azerbaijan

- Country size: 86,000 km², 12% forested
- 2007: 626 ha forest burned, 3606 ha straw burning
- 2008: 46.8 ha forest fires, 3338 ha straw burning
- Animals rescued - 2007: 182 - 2008: 630; animals killed by fires - 2007: 35- 2008: 94
- Fire suppression: 2007. 86 MAN fire trucks received from Germany, 90 Iveco from France
- One Be 200 scooping water bomber and 2 Helicopters Mi-17 available
- Special group created with firefighters and medical, engineers (construction) team. They have international passport. Group can be dispatched internationally for mutual fire disaster assistance

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- 2008: 355 forest fires in state forests; 5400 ha affected; 2 million Euro damage
- Minefields: 220,000 ha in forests and forest lands
- Radioactive contamination: Some spots from the last war (consequences of NATO use of ammunition with depleted uranium)
- 3 phases of activities:
 - Phase 1: Prevention, mine clearing, people casualties in mine clearing
 - Phase 1: Rescue of people and property at risk
 - Phase 3: Removal of adverse effects

Bulgaria

- Fires last 7 years 100,000 ha affected; 2000: 57,000 ha, 1710 fires
- 2007: 1479 fires, 43,000 ha; 3 people killed, 1 injured, thereof 6 firefighters
- 19-30 July 2007 peak; disaster declaration in 11 municipalities; 51 houses burned, 21 families evacuated
- 2008: 577 fires, area burned 5272 ha
- Causes 2007: Negligence 62%, Arson:3.8, Natural: 1.4%, Technical faults: 4%, Unknown: 15.6%
- Multilateral Assistance 2007: Call to MIC request aerial means. MIC no means available. 2nd part of August: Assistance by Russia IL-76. One week. Not the best aircraft for use in mountains, they dropped from high altitude.
- Fires in 2008: Rila National Park, MIC request. 2 Canadairs from France. More successful than IL-76.
- European fleet: We have to think more about prevention.

Croatia

- 2007: 1694 fires, 67,682 ha affected, 118 million Euros damage
- Subsequently: Increase from 5000 to 6200 firefighters
- Country host of the international conference "Fire Fighting in Open Spaces – New Methods and Approaches", Makarska, Republic of Croatia, 9-11 December 2008 (see Annex)

Georgia

- Report on general forest fire issues in the country
- 2008: 1269.5 ha burned, 32 fires during the summer
- GFMC also giving a brief report on the OSCE-led assessment mission of the fires occurring during the war in August 2008

Ukraine

- Increasing of forest in regions that were without forests before: Afforestations
- 2007 fires: Dune forests. Kherson fires. 7800 ha burned. President intervening during the fires and also showing interest in reforestation activities in fall 2007
- Call of aerial assistance only in mountains, often too late. AN-32 water bomber sometimes efficient, however, slow reloading water.
- Incident 2007: Chief forester and wife dies in fires due to smoke exposure
- East Ukraine radioactivity contamination: Consequence of nuclear weapons tests in the 1960s. Consequence of rain over the nuclear clouds. Low contamination.
- High contamination in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone. Well mapped.
- Description of 2007-2008 activities: Two national round tables on the problem of forest fires in the exclusion zone (supported by GFMC, Yale University, and Chopivsky Family Foundation)

Turkey

- Country with 21 million ha forests, 17 000 villages in or near forested areas with population of 8.8 million.
- Increase of fire incidents in the past years
- Fire causes: 5% lightning, negligence 45%, arson 13%, unknown 37%
- Gas has replaced fuelwood use
- 2008: 20,000 ha forest fire near Antalya
- Unprecedented and unique: 10 km spotting!
- 01 Aug 2008: destroyed by fire 77 households, 88 barnyards, 50 animals, 106 beehives, 2 people (resisting evacuation)
- Suppression by 9 helicopters, two fixed wing aircraft, five other a/c, 1300 firemen
- Discussion: Any role of terrorism activities

Serbia Country Report

- Report presented by Nikola Nikolov, on behalf of Ms. Vidosava Jovanović, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management-Directorate of Forests, Serbia. Country report prepared for IFFN.

Macedonia Country Report

- Presentation of the findings of the 2007 mission of GFMC on behalf of UNDP and UNEP
- More details in next regional report

Regional Network Report 2007-2008

The coordinator UNISDR Regional Southeast Europe / Caucasus Wildland Fire Network, Mr. Nikola Nikolov, reported about the activities and the sponsorship of the GFMC, the Council of Europe, Secretariat of the Euro-Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA), and the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC):

- Meeting Serbia, Croatia and Macedonia, May 2007 “Five minutes to Twelve”
- Work visit Turkey, June 2007
- Serbia mission August 2007 with GFMC / RSEE / Caucasus network
- Macedonia Mission 2007 UNDP (GFMC)
- Bosnia, December 2007, Forest Fire Symposium
- Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) project “Forest Fire Protection and Private Forest Owners” in Macedonia, April 2008
- “Crisis Response” Journal publication (<http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/GlobalNetworks/Crisis-Response-2007-Vol-4-1-p54-56-Wildland-Fire-SEE.pdf>)
- Freiburg Symposium on Fire Management in Eurasia, January 2008
- SEE ERA NET Cooperation Project between FYR Macedonia, Germany (GFMC) and Hungary on Prescribed Burning
- Workshop on Forest Fires in the Mediterranean, Sabaudia, Italy, May 2008
- Round Table Seminar on Fire Management, Albania, SNV / GFMC, Tirana, May 2008
- UNISDR Wildland Fire Advisory Group meeting at GFMC, July 2008
- Work visit GFMC Macedonia, August 2008
- Aerial Firefighting Conference, October 2008, Athens: “Regional Networking – The Ground Perspective”, with proposal to create and train ground forces and to harmonize procedures and rules; joint training for aerial and ground forces

Discussion

1. Country reports updated for publication

At the end of the 2007 fire season most of the countries of the region submitted a country report on the fire situation, with emphasis on the year 2007. At the time of writing the reports the final data from that year were often still missing. In some countries there were also some decision made after the 2007 fire season. So, the focal points of the network are requested to submit or update their national fire reports. The following list reflects the action required:

Update of country report needed:

- Armenia
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Macedonia
- Romania
- Serbia
- Turkey
- Ukraine

A full report is not yet available and should be submitted:

- Albania missing
- Azerbaijan missing
- Romania
- Slovenia

- Georgia
- Montenegro (Albania to liaise)
- Moldova (to be identified)

Report complete:

- Greece

2. Preparation of the 2009 Seminar

It was suggested to call the event “Regional Seminar Fire Management on Terrain contaminated by Unexploded Ordnance (UXO), Land Mines and Radioactivity” instead of “training course”.

In preparation a map / maps should be developed with lands contaminated by UXO, land mines, radioactivity. The following volunteering activities were noted:

- Germany: Statistics and map for Germany
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: same
- Armenia: Land mines / UXO
- Ukraine radioactivity
- Belarus radioactivity: New report of the International Atomic Energy Agency to be identified by Ukraine
- Macedonia: WW-I ammunition at 1917 front line
- Albania (Kosovo border, WW-II ammunition)

GFMC activities:

- Preparation of UNISDR Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (Geneva, June 2009)

Preparation of the 2009 Regional Seminar “Fire Management on Terrain contaminated by Unexploded Objects (UXO), Land Mines and Radioactivity”

- Location: Ukraine, Kiev and excursion to Chernobyl
- Date: around middle of October 2009
- Finances to be identified by Council of Europe and ENVSEC
- Invitation: Through Council of Europe and ENVSEC
- Resource persons from countries, advice by HALO TRUST ?
- Radioactivity: Ukraine (Valeri Kasparov) and Belarus

3. Conclusions / recommendations of this meeting

- Improve regional capacity building / training of ground and aerial forces
- Give emphasis on fire management on contaminated territories
- Strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation in fire management within the region
- Develop harmonized approaches / standards for cooperation in fire incidents
- In other words: Further develop and promote the “regional strategy”....
- Report findings and strategic visions to be sent to the UN, donor countries / organizations to create awareness for implementation, technical assistance for implementation
- Liaise / harmonize with approaches of international organizations, e.g. Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe, FAO, EU, World Bank, Regional Banks CoE / UNISDR / ENVSEC / UNDP

4. Regional strategy

- A report on regional cooperation, including a revised regional strategy on international cooperation in fire management is currently being developed by GFMC
- A Regional Summit has been proposed by Goldammer and Nikolov in 2007. Bosnia and Herzegovina is offering to host the Summit
- Date: tentatively 2010

5. List of participants

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Appendix: Immediate follow up

PROGRAM OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE "Fire Fighting in Open Spaces – New Methods and Approaches" Makarska, Republic of Croatia, 9-11 December 2008

9th December, Tuesday

08.00am Registration of the Participants

09.00am Formal opening; welcome speech (Mayor of Makarska, Prefect of Split-Dalmatian District, Director RCADR, UN FAO Representative, Minister of Regional Development, Forestry and Water Resources Management), Opening of the Conference

Presentations of Protection and Rescue Systems; Presentations of Fire Protection Systems

10.00am Republic of Croatia

10.15am Republic of Slovenia

10.30am Republic Bosnia & Herzegovina (Federation B&H, Republic Srpska, Brcko District)

11.15am Coffee Break

11.45am Republic of Serbia

12.00noon Republic of Montenegro

12.15pm Republic of Kosovo

12.30pm Republic of Macedonia

Role of Fire fighting Associations in Open Space Fire Protection System

12.45pm Croatian Fire Fighting Association

13.05pm Slovenian fire fighting organization

13.20pm Other fire fighting associations (optional)

Discussion and experience exchange; proposals and statements

13.50pm Lunch

Role of Ministry of Regional Development, Forestry and Water Resources Management, State Forestry Directorates in Open Space Fire fighting

15.00pm Ministry of Regional Development, Forestry and Water Resources Management

15.20pm Croatian Forests

15.30pm Slovenian Forests

15.40pm B&H Forests (B&H Federation, Republic Srpska and Brčko District)

16.00pm Coffee Break

16.20pm Serbian Forests

16.30pm Montenegrin Forests

16.40pm Kosovo Forests

16.50pm Macedonian Forests

17.00pm Protection of National Parks and Parks of Nature against fire

17.20pm Roman Rosavec, Faculty of Forestry in Zagreb: "Forest Fires"

Discussion and experience exchange; suggestions and statements

10th December, Wednesday

Role of International Cooperation in Open Space Fire Fighting

- 09.00am** Nikola Nikolov, High Representative and Coordinator UNISDR for South Eastern Europe: "Forest Fires in the Region of East South East Europe and Caucasus", and "Problems With Fire Management on Terrain Contaminated by Unexploded Objects"
- 09.30am** Johann G. Goldammer, Director, Global Fire Monitoring Center and Coordinator, UNISDR Global Wildland Fire Network: "Activities of UNISDR Global Wildland Fire Network in East / Southeast Europe/Caucasus Region"
- 10.00am** Tomislav Vuko, SDPR, Assistant Chief Fire Commander for Coastal Area: "Analysis of open area Fire in Republic of Croatia in 2008"
- 10.15am** Tomislav Vuko „Fire Without Borders – Role of International Protocols and Agreements in Deployment of Human, Land and Air Forces“
- 11.00am** Coffee break

New Technologies, Methods and Approaches in Open Spaces Fire Fighting; Specifics and Phenomenon

- 11.30am** Darko Stipaničev, University of Split: "Holistic Model of Integral Protection Against Forest Fires in Split-Dalmatian District"
- 12.00noon** Domingos Xavier Viegas, Coimbra University, Portugal: "Fire Behaviour and Personal Safety"
- 12.30pm** Željko Ban, DVD Mladost, Kastel Sućurac: "Role of Modern Telecommunication Systems"
- 12.50pm** Branko Dobrota, HRT: "Role of Education, Sensitizing and Informing of Public and Citizens"
- 13.10pm** Discussion and experience exchange; suggestions, statements and conclusions

11th December, Thursday

- 09.00am** Formation of Convoy and departure to Split
- 10.15am** Arrival to Split Public Fire fighting Brigade
- 10.30am** Tour of Split Public Fire fighting Brigade
- 11.00am** Fire fighting Demonstration Exercise in five different scenarios
- 11.30am** "When I grow up, I'll be a Fireman" (Children visiting firefighting brigade)
- 12.00noon** Presentation of Certificates
- 14.00pm** Closing of the conference