

# **Wildland Fires in Central Asia Region: The UNISDR Regional Central Asia Wildland Fire Network Activities 2011-2015 – Progress and Prospects**

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## **Abstract**

In recent years, the Central Asian countries have experienced a growing number of average size wildfires in forest and non-forest ecosystems (steppe ecosystems), predominantly caused by people, but also by lightning in sparsely populated areas. In conjunction with unsustainable land-use practices, climatic extremes such as extended droughts (as a consequence of regional climate change) and exploitation of natural resources, these fires have caused considerable environmental and economic damages and some have had transboundary impacts, for example, through smoke pollution, loss of biodiversity or forest degradation at the landscape level.

Since the International Wildland Fire Conference in 2011, notable achievements have been made in regional cooperation on enhancement of fire management in Central Asia: Representatives of the Central Asian states attended the First and Second “*International Fire Management Week*”, in Krasnoyarsk Krai (2012, 2013,) and also in the “*International Congress and Trade Fair on Forest Fire and Climate Change: Challenges for Fire Management in Natural and Cultural Landscapes of Eurasia*” in Novosibirsk, Russian Federation (November 2013). A new and detailed glossary “*English-Mongolian-Russian Fire Management Terminology*” (March 2014) was produced by the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) together with fire specialists of Mongolia and Russia.

In September 2014, the Governments of Mongolia and Russia signed an “*Agreement on Transboundary Fire Management Cooperation*”. In order to enhance the neighboring cooperation in fire management, the Regional Central Asia Fire Management Resource Center (RCAFMRC) has been established in Mongolia (2015). Among its multiple functions, the RCAFMRC will be addressing the increasing demand on collection and distribution of data and information relevant to fire management within the regional network, the facilitation in capacity building in fire management at regional level and the exchange of human and technical resources where needed. The Regional Central Asia Fire Management training was organized in Mongolia by the GFMC and RCAFMRC through the OSCE with the financial support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (September 2015). In this training, fire managers and policy makers participated from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

In this presentation, we will report on recent progress and future activities for wildland fire management in central Asian countries.

**Key words:** *Wildfires, Regional Central Asia Wildland Fire Network, Pan-Asia Wildland Fire Network Cluster, Global Wildland Fire Network, Transboundary Fire Management Cooperation, Central Asia*