



MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM



UN-REDD
PROGRAMME



Global Fire Monitoring
Center (GFMC)

ANNOUNCEMENT

Special Parallel Event on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Session on Forest Fire-Related Risks Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) 2018

Led by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism with the support of United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, UN-REDD Programme in Mongolia, and Global Fire Monitoring Center

Introduction

Asia and the Pacific is the least forested region in the world with total forest area estimated at 740 million hectares, accounting for about 26% of the total land area in the region. Globally, forests account for 30.6% of the global land area. Asia and the Pacific is home to 55% of the world population but accounts for only 18.5% of total forests. The Asia-Pacific forestry sector is undergoing unprecedented changes as economies grow rapidly and demand on forests for goods and services accelerate. Already the impacts of these changes are being felt within and outside the region and in some cases the increasing demands and the absence of concomitant investments have undermined long-term sustainability. These anthropogenic factors, ranging from development priorities (roads, infrastructure, dams, and such), changing land-use priorities, and increasing consumption of forest goods, human-animal conflict, as well as conflict and displacement have heightened the risks to the forestry sector. This is reflected in the increasing number and scale of forest fires, landslides, and pestilence apart from hazards like floods, flash floods, droughts, and cyclones as well as increased incidents of deforestation for hosting of refugees and other conflict situations. These disaster events not only have direct adverse impacts on forests but also heighten prospective risks through dead wood accumulation and depletion of green cover and thereby increasing exposure. When the anthropogenic factors interact with changing characteristics of natural hazards, due partly to climate change and climate variability, the risks get exacerbated.

One of the most common risks to forests is fire. It has wide-ranging adverse ecological, economic and social implications. Besides directly damaging the forests, vegetation and grasslands, fire also negatively affects regeneration, microclimate, soils by exposure and erosion, wild life and other landscape values. The need has been recognized to understand the traditional use by local people, grassland ecology and the potential for management considering climate change, including GHG removals from the atmosphere. Notably, fire is also present in some ecosystems that are fire adapted or fire dependent, where it plays an essential ecological role in landscape maintenance and regeneration.

The Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA 2010) reported on average one percent of all forests were affected by forest fire each year. The Global Fire Emissions Database (GFED) records the global area burnt and the number of fires from satellite data. There are limitations and



interpretations required of these data sets and the area nominated as “Asia” is very large¹. For the year 2015, the GFED recorded over 54 million hectares with over 670,000 active fire detections. Globally speaking, forest fires all over the world are under reported due to various factors including inadequate fire recording and reporting systems, with information missing from many countries.

Severe forest fires burn thousands of houses and structures as well as displace or kill many people and livestock throughout the world. Examples of human lives and significant losses due to fire include: Data on the South Asia Region is limited but indicates that in 1990 the average area in South Asia affected annually by fire was 1.43 million ha and in 2000 the annual approximate area was 4.11 million ha, of which 90% was in India. Annually, many countries in the South East Asian region experience significant areas of “routine” agricultural burning, and in droughts, the resultant smoke and haze is generally regarded as a disaster. There is almost a complete absence of reliable data from which to prepare a competent comment about the relativity between seasons or indeed what progress is being made or not made in introducing more effective fire management. For North East Asia the fire situation is complex, especially during the peak fire season or when the density of fires is very high, where fire occurrence is often inter-related to population density. A comparison of national statistics for the countries shows an average burned area of about 1 million ha of forests each year, during the period 1990-2004, with an observed increase in; scale, frequency, area². Fires in Indonesia have constrained GDP growth and cost an estimated IDR 221 trillion³, the Sumatra and Kalimantan fires of 1982–1983, 1994, 1997–1998, and 2015–2016 were internationally reported with 2.6 million hectares of forested land burned in 2015 at an estimated cost to Indonesia of more than US\$16.1 billion etc..

Fires are also a contributor to climate change by the GHG emissions that are not removed from the atmosphere by ecosystem regrowth, regeneration or landscape restoration; such as fires used for land use change or that burn in ecosystems such as peatlands. Climate change is also influencing the risk of damaging fires through weather and climate trends that increase the potential for fires to start, travel across the landscape and impact on ecosystems, communities and infrastructure.

¹ The GFED regions in “Asia” are Boreal Asia, Central Asia, Equatorial Asia and South East Asia.

² Information extracted from: FAO Global Fire Assessment 2005, FAO Forestry Paper 151, Rome.

³ World Bank, December 2015 INDONESIA ECONOMIC QUARTERLY



MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM



UN-REDD
PROGRAMME



Global Fire Monitoring
Center (GFMC)

Agenda

Date: 4 July 2018

Time: 16:30 – 18:30

Venue: Moscow Room, Shangri-La Hotel

16:30 – 16:40 Brief introduction

16:40 – 17:40 Keynote presentations

- *Managing Forest Fire Risks: Perspectives from the Region* (Mr Peter Moore, FAO)
- *Challenges and Progress made in National Capacity Building in Landscape Fire Management in the Asian Region and at Global Level: Towards the Implementation of Target E of the Sendai Framework* (Mr. Johann Georg Goldammer, Global Fire Monitoring Center – GFMC)
- *Fire Management in Mongolia and Central Asia* (Mr. Oyunsanaa Byambasuren, Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia and Fire Management Resource Center – Central Asia Region – FMRC-CAR)
- *Addressing Forest Fire Risks in the National REDD+ Program* (Mr. Khishigjargal Batjantsan and Mr. Thomas Enters, UN-REDD Programme in Mongolia)
- *Indonesian Efforts in Prevention and Management of Forest and Land Fires* (Mr. Bambang Hero Saharjo, Regional South East Asia Fire Management Resource Center – South East Asia (RFMRC-SEA) and Bogor Agricultural University, Indonesia (tbc))

Interactive panel discussion (60 mins) with 3-4 questions for all the panel to answer from their own perspectives.

Possible questions and discussion will be according:

- What steps need to be taken to understand fire in the landscapes of Asian countries?
- People are the source of ~90% of fires so what roles can the communities in Asia play in fire management?
- What can governments do to support understanding of fires, people and landscapes and then improved, analysis based fire risk reduction?