



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

**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)

Participating Countries:

Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Poland, Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine.

International Organizations: ECE, FAO, ISDR Global Wildland Fire Network

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