

Summary of the First Mesoamerican Meeting of Cooperation Regarding Protection against Forest Fires

Guatemala City, 8-9 July 2002

The objective of the meeting was *to identify specific activities of regional cooperation between Mexico and the Centro American countries about prevention and combat of forest fires*. The participants were delegates of:

Belice, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Nicaragua and Panamá.

The delegates of the participating countries exchanged their opinions about the following subjects:

- General information about forestry
- Forest fire statistics
- Prevention and combat
- Extension work
- Detection
- Organization and administration of each involved country

All the delegates agreed on to establish a **Technical Mesoamerican Permanent Group**, which would be integrated for specialist of each country. This group will propose and give follow up to the politics, strategies, programmes, actions and operative plan for the prevention and control of forest fires in the region. It was also agreed that Guatemala would chair the coordination of the group during the first year.

The delegations agreed upon the following points:

1. To distribute at appropriate time the information of satellites images to detect forest fires, and also to share other experiences in fires detection that each country have.
2. To strength the training of the different technical levels, elaborate a training programme that include the following aspects:
 - Research of the causes
 - Prevention and control of forest fires
 - Satellite detection
 - Assessment of damages
 - Managements of information
 - Management of emergencies
 - Use of aerial means
 - Fire behaviour
 - Fuel Models

As an immediate action will be propose to develop multinational actions of organization according the necessities of the region. The delegations offered their experiences in the different specializations for the execution of the training activities.

3. To exchange information of each country in the following areas:
 - Forest fire statistics
 - Training handbooks
 - Information about fire planning
 - Laws and regulations
 - Programmes, strategies and Operative Annual Plans of each country
 - Research
 - Material of communication and extension
4. To promote the establishment of mechanisms that allow to the countries of the region (especially those that share common borders) to move human resources and materials in cases on forest fires, in conformity to the legislation of each country
5. To ensure that the activities to develop set within the bounds of the Operative Plan, which will be implemented with contributions of each country, other countries, agencies and international organizations.
6. To ratify this agreements in a higher level in no more than 60 days.