



Regional South America Wildland Fire Network
Foundation Meeting, Curitiba, Brazil, 17 June 2004

**Minutes of the Foundation Meeting of the
Regional South America Wildland Fire Network
Curitiba, Brazil, 17 June 2004**

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1. Summary: Rationale and Overall Objective of the Network Foundation Meeting

During the last decade socio-economic developments, land-use change and climate variability in the South American continent have resulted in widespread change of fire regimes and an increasing occurrence of destructive wildfires affecting highly vulnerable human populations and ecosystems. Limited resources for efficient wildland fire management in most South American countries have prompted governments, non-government organizations and international organizations to seek common procedures and agreements for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in sharing expertise, capacity building and resources in fire management. The strategic goals of the Global Wildland Fire Network (GWFN) and the recommendations of the International Wildland Fire Summit (Sydney, Australia, 8 October 2003) are in line with the visions of the South American countries and the community of wildland fire scientists. The 3rd South American Symposium on Wildland Fire Control and the 7th Joint Technical Meeting FUPEF/SIF/IPEF on Wildland Fire Control, 14 to 17 June 2004, Curitiba, Brazil, provided an opportunity and a springboard for the foundation of the "Regional South America Wildland Fire Network".

The Network Foundation Meeting was prepared jointly by the UN-ISDR Wildland Fire Advisory Group and the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC). Host of the Network Foundation Meeting was the Federal University of Paraná, Curitiba, which organized the 3rd South American Symposium on Wildland Fire Control and the 7th Joint Technical Meeting FUPEF/SIF/IPEF on Wildland Fire Control. This series of conferences was initiated in 1993 and since then has become one of the most important forums on debates about the problem of wildland fires in Brazil and the other countries of South America. Participants from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela attended the conference and the foundation meeting.

During the two days preceding the foundation meeting a number of papers from throughout South America were given. Together with extensive discussions these papers provided the



The initiative of the South American wildland fire community to create a regional network aims at enhancing international cooperation in wildland fire management in the frame of the Global Wildland Fire Network (GWFN). The initiative is supported by government agencies, non-government organizations, and the United Nations.

GWFN Website: <http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/GlobalNetworks/globalNet.html>

GWFN Status (regularly updated):

<http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/GlobalNetworks/Regional%20Wildland%20Fire%20Networks-Status-4-May-2004-1.pdf>

Int. Wildland Fire Summit: <http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/summit-2003/introduction.htm>

Curitiba Meeting: http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/course/meeting/meet2003_14.htm

background for discussion at the network foundation meeting. Reports given by the representatives from North America, Central America and the Caribbean revealed the pan-American wildland fire problems, their particularities, similarities and differences, and the overall intent to encourage cooperation throughout Latin America, North America and the Caribbean.

The network foundation meeting was sponsored by a number of national and international organizations (those contributing with finances to allow participation of delegates from the region are underlined):

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (due to the delay in launching a regional TCP, FAO's financial contribution will be committed to the follow-up process)
- Global Wildland Fire Network / Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC)
- Global Observations of Forest and Land Cover Dynamics (GOFC/GOLD)
- International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS)

2. Preparation of the Network Foundation Meeting

The preparation of the network foundation meeting was initiated in late 2003. A first outline and agenda of the foundation meeting was drafted by the GFMC and circulated on 18 December 2003 to the host and the cosponsors. In May 2004 a questionnaire was drafted and consolidated by the GFMC in consultation with the FAO. The questionnaire was circulated to the participants of the conference and the foundation meeting. It aimed at collecting information on available resources in wildland fire management, training and research, as well as defining deficits and gaps to be addressed by international cooperation. The meeting participants were also asked on their expectations towards a regional wildland fire network, as well as to develop visions and propose concrete actions.

The questionnaires were distributed in three languages (English, Portuguese, Spanish) and were (and still are) available on the GFMC website at:

http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/course/meeting/meet2003_14.htm

In the days before the network foundation meeting the returned questionnaires were compiled in a single database document in which the suggestions of the contributing countries were summarized by topics. This summary was compiled in Spanish (Annex II). Countries not yet having filled out the questionnaire are encouraged to do so for further strengthening the regional network and cooperation efforts in the South American Region.

In the afternoon of 16 June 2004 an informal consultation was held with representatives from the South American countries participating on the following day.

This meeting was instrumental in discussing the possible modalities for the formal and informal set up and functioning of the Regional South American Network. The GFMC explained the different regional network arrangements participating or joining the Global Wildland Fire Network. Some networks have a rather formal structure, some are coordinated and supported by government agencies. Other networking arrangements are less formal and / or are facilitated by civil society. Some networks are operating directly under the auspices or within the frame of programmes of the United Nations. The GFMC is providing regular updates on the status of the Global Wildland Fire Network on this website:

<http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/GlobalNetworks/RationaleandIntroduction.html>

The participants of this preparatory meeting discussed the advantages and disadvantages of involvement of government and non-government organizations. The GFMC underscored the need to distinguish between the facilitation of networking activities at non-government and often rather informal level (e.g., facilitation through an independent university institution, building of databases, regional exchange of information on wildland fire early warning, monitoring, maintaining a regional dialogue through exchange of information, newsletters, conferences, etc.) and intergovernmental (legally binding) agreements on cooperation in wildland fire management. Such formal agreements are likely to be developed in an enabling atmosphere of regional cooperation initiated by the preceding and more informal dialogue.

Following this preparatory consultation the representatives of the countries prepared inputs for the meeting on the following day.

Another side meeting was held on 15 June 2004 with representatives of institutions from Central America and the Caribbean. The aim of this meeting was to agree on a strategy and calendar of events to liaise the networking / cooperation processes in these regions with the South American initiative.

It is envisaged that a future Regional South America Wildland Fire Network will closely interact with the Regional Central America Wildland Fire Network, a Regional Caribbean Wildland Fire Network (to be formed), the North American Forestry Commission, Fire Management Working Group, and the Global Wildland Fire Network. A starting point will be the Western Hemispheric Wildland Fire Conference, scheduled for 23 October 2004 in Costa Rica.

3. Presentations at the Network Foundation Meeting

On 17 June 2004 the Regional South America Wildland Fire Network Foundation took place (Annex I). The following presentations provided an overview of existing and desired cooperation in wildland fire research and management:

- The UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) through the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) is facilitating communication and information flow between regional wildland fire networks under the umbrella of the Global Wildland Fire Network (GWFN). Some regional networks are actively supported by the GFMC. The GWFN is an ISDR outreach programme. The ISDR Wildland Fire Advisory Group has been established in November 2003 as an advisory body to the ISDR Secretariat and the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR)¹. Speaker: Johann G. Goldammer (GFMC).
- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), through the Forest Fire Management Officer (FORM) and the FAO Forestry Commissions of North America and Latin America / Caribbean, is actively working in Latin America and preparing a regional Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP). The TCP will involve three subregional studies (Central America & México, Caribbean, South America) and one regional synthesis study on the wildland fire situation in the three subregions. These studies will be presented at the Western Hemispheric Wildland Fire Conference of the FAO Forestry Commissions of North America and Latin America / Caribbean (23 October 2004, Costa Rica). The overall goal of the TCP is to

¹ The mandated functions of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR) are (a) to serve as the main forum within the United Nations system for devising strategies and policies for the reduction of natural hazards; (b) to identify gaps in disaster reduction policies and programmes and recommend remedial action; and (c) to provide policy guidance to the ISDR secretariat; and to convene ad hoc meetings of experts on issues related to disaster reduction.

enhance Sub-regional and regional networking and cooperation in wildland fire management. The expected result of the Western Hemispheric Wildland Fire Conference is to have a Regional Strategy to be presented at the high level meeting on 14 March 2005 in Rome. Speaker: Carlos M. Carneiro (FAO).

- The mission of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) was presented. TNC sponsors a Global Fire Initiative, an organization-wide effort aimed at working with diverse partners to take practical action in ecosystems where altered fire regimes (too much, too little or the wrong kind of fire) pose major threats to people and ecosystems. TNC is a member of the Global Fire Partnership (with WWF-International and IUCN). The Conservancy sponsors the Latin American-Caribbean Fire Management Learning Network that is linking scientists and decision-makers with on-the-ground managers and communities in pursuit of solutions to common fire-related challenges. Speaker: Ron Myers (TNC).
- The networking activities of the Mesoamerica agreement (agreement of the *Primera Reunión Mesoamericana de Cooperación en Materia de Protección contra Incendios Forestales*", Guatemala, 8-9 July 2002) and the Honduras Strategy (*Taller para el Desarrollo de un Plan Estratégico Regional para el Manejo del Gorgojo del Pino y los Incendios Forestales en Centroamérica*, Honduras, 26-30 August 2002), as well as the work of the *Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo* (CCAD) were presented in a joint paper. These cooperative activities are currently in the preparation stage of implementation, supported by US-AID sponsorship. Speaker: Miguel Antonio López Quiñónez (Coordinador Nacional Protección Forestal del Instituto Nacional de Bosques [INAB], Guatemala), contributors: Josué Iván Morales Dardón (Coordinador del Consejo Técnico del Sistema Nacional de Prevención y Control de Incendios Forestales [SIPECIF], Guatemala) and Alberto Vásquez Rodríguez (Coordinador Nacional para el Manejo del Fuego del Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación [SINAC] / Ministerio del Ambiente y Energía [MINAE], Costa Rica).
- The wildland fire situation in the Caribbean region was summarized and a proposal was made to create a Regional Caribbean Wildland Fire Network. The representative from Cuba offered a platform for a foundation network meeting in September 2004. Speaker: Marcos P. Ramos (Universidad de Pinar del Río, Cuba).
- The United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS), reported on the cooperation mechanisms in North America, notably on the work of the Wildland Fire Working Group which has been established under the FAO North American Forestry Commission and in which Canada, Mexico and the United States are represented since 1962. This group is operating rather independently and efficiently since then. Speaker: Denny Truesdale (USDA-FS).
- The host of the network meeting, Federal University of Paraná underscored the need for better cooperation in wildland fire management in South America. For the initiation of a network he proposed to set up a working group and a website. He suggested that the 4th South American Symposium on Wildland Fire Control (Viçosa, Minas Gerais, 2006), should be held under the auspices of the Regional South American Wildland Fire Network. Speaker: Antonio C. Batista (Federal University of Paraná, UFPR).
- The representative of the Brazilian Institute for Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis [IBAMA]), reported about the involvement of IBAMA at international level and the agreements between Paraguay and Peru concerning the support by satellite fire monitoring. He strongly supported the networking concept. Speaker: Heloiso B. Figueiredo (Director of Prevefogo, IBAMA).

4. Presentation of the Results of the Enquiry

Before a break the GFMC presented and distributed the evaluation of the questionnaire. The returned comments and inputs had been compiled in a single database document in which the suggestions of the contributing countries were summarized by topics (Annex II).

Recommendations on future activities and priority elements for a network had been extracted from the returned questionnaires and included in a draft “Curitiba Declaration on Cooperation in Wildland Fire Management in South America” (Declaración de Curitiba sobre la Cooperación en el Manejo de Incendios en América del Sur). A Spanish version of the draft declaration was also distributed before the break.

5. Discussion of the Draft Curitiba Declaration and Modalities of a Future Regional South America Wildland Fire Network

The second part of the network foundation meeting was governed by the discussion about the final version of the declaration (Annex III) and the modalities.

The major items discussed included:

- Proposal to establish an initial working group, preferably small in size
- Advantages and disadvantages of government vs. non-government institutions hosting a future network secretariat
- The need to include the private sector and other sectors of society
- Other South American countries not represented at the foundation meeting should be consulted
- That participants should inform their ministers about the Regional Network Initiative
- The preparation of a Proposal for a Regional South American Work Plan, to be carried out by the initial working group
- Opportunities to organize the network under the auspices of the UN (FAO, ISDR), regardless of the modalities of network coordination (network secretariat)

At the end of the meeting a consensus was reached that a follow-up electronic discussion and possibly a follow-up meeting should be organized as soon as possible.

FAO and GFMC offered support in establishing the network within the work of the Technical Cooperation Project “*Apoyo al desarrollo de una estrategia regional de cooperación para la prevención, control y combate de incendios forestales*” and the Global Wildland Fire Network.

6. Initial Working Group of the Regional South America Wildland Fire Network

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7. Follow-Up: The Roadmap towards the Hemispheric Wildland Fire Conference and the Ministerial Meeting on Wildland Fire (FAO, March 2005)

The follow-up process of the network foundation meeting and the side meetings with representatives from Central America and the Caribbean will be harmonized with the timetable of the “Framework for the Development of the International Wildland Fire Accord” (as agreed by the Global Fire Monitoring Center GFMC, FAO, ISDR and GOFC/GOLD, May 2004) (Annex IV).

The Western Hemispheric Wildland Fire Conference will provide an opportunity and a forum at which the network initiatives will meet. The conference, scheduled for 23 October 2004 in Costa Rica, will be co-sponsored by the FAO Forestry Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the North American Forest Commission. The Global Wildland Fire Network through the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) will be a cosponsor of the conference. The conference aims at (a) reviewing options and means to improve fire management in the Western hemisphere, (b) reviewing the efficiency of institutional arrangements involved in fire management, and (c) defining actions needed to improve international cooperation in wildland fire management.

Before and immediately after the conference separate regional meetings and a meeting with representation of all regional networks of the Americas will take place to consolidate the networking process.

The following timetable has been proposed to follow up the Network Foundation Meeting in Curitiba as well as the side meetings with representatives from Central America and the Caribbean, and to prepare inputs for the Western Hemispheric Wildland Fire Conference as

well as the ministerial-level meeting at the Committee for Forestry (FAO, Rome, March 2005).

Timetable for Activities of the newly emerging Regional Wildland Fire Networks in Latin America and the Caribbean

Date / Timeframe	Regional Wildland Fire Networks		
	South America	Central America	Caribbean
July 2004	Establishment of the Initial Working Group	Meeting and consolidation of Central America Network (CCAD/CCAB, Mesoamerica process, Honduras Strategy)	Preparation of network foundation meeting
August 2004	Electronic discussion		Network foundation meeting (Cuba)
September 2004			
21 Oct 2004 San José, Costa Rica	Regional network meeting	Regional network meeting	Regional network meeting
22 Oct 2004 San José, Costa Rica	Joint meeting of Regional Wildland Fire Networks (South America, Central America, Caribbean): Mutual information on regional network activities and development of a proposal for the Western Hemispheric Wildland Fire Conference. Separate or joint meeting of the North American network (NAFC Fire Management Working Group - FMWG). Meeting of the International Liaison Committee (ILC) for the preparation of the 4 th International Wildland Fire Conference (Madrid 2007)		
23 Oct 2004 San José, Costa Rica	Western Hemispheric Wildland Fire Conference: Definition of an hemispheric action plan on cooperation in wildland fire management (with the participation of all four regional networks in the Americas)		
24 Oct 2004 San José, Costa Rica	Wrap-up meeting of all networks of the Western Hemisphere		
Nov 2004 – Feb 2005	Continuation of ILC meeting (if required)		
	Follow-up of Hemispheric Conference: Fundraising, implementation of regional strategies, preparation of FAO ministerial meeting	Follow-up of Hemispheric Conference: Fundraising, implementation of regional strategies, preparation of FAO ministerial meeting	Follow-up of Hemispheric Conference: Fundraising, implementation of regional strategies, preparation of FAO ministerial meeting
March 2005	FAO high-level meeting on International Cooperation in Wildland Fire Management (COFO)		

ANNEX I

Agenda of the Network Foundation Meeting

Date of Meeting: 17 June 2004, 08:30 – 13:00 hrs

Venue: Auditório do Centro de Ciências Florestais e da Madeira da Universidade Federal do Paraná

Topic	Speaker
Opening: The ISDR Global Wildland Fire Network	ISDR / GFMC Johann G. Goldammer
FAO's Wildland Fire Management Programme in Latin America	FAO Carlos Marx Carneiro
The Nature Conservancy Wildland Fire Programme in Latin America	TNC Ron Myers
Current wildland fire networking arrangements in Mesoamerica / Central America	INAB (Instituto Nacional de Bosques), Guatemala Coordinador Nacional Protección Forestal Miguel Antonio López
Proposal for future networking arrangements in the Caribbean	Universidad de Pinar del Río, Cuba Marcos Pedro Ramos
US Projects in Regional Wildland Fire Management	USDA-FS, Wildland Fire Working Group / FAO North American Forestry Commission Denny Truesdale
Proposal for future networking arrangements in South America	Universidade Federal do Paraná C. Batista
Statement by IBAMA	IBAMA L. Figueredo, Director, PREVEFOGO
Distribution of the compiled results of the questionnaire and draft Curitiba Declaration	GFMC Johann G. Goldammer Claudia Scholz
Coffee Break	
Presentation of the evaluation of the Network Questionnaire and the draft Curitiba Declaration	GFMC Johann G. Goldammer Claudia Scholz
Discussion	"
Drafting the Curitiba Declaration	"
Finalization of Curitiba Declaration Final draft of the declaration adopted for circulation (10 days response period)	"

To be added:

ANNEX II

Summary of responses to the questionnaire

ANNEX III

Curitiba Declaration on Cooperation in Wildland Fire Management in South America
(Declaración de Curitiba sobre la Cooperación en el Manejo de Incendios en América del Sur)

ANNEX IV

Latest version of the Status Paper of the Global Wildland Fire Network (dated 15 July 2004), including the Framework for the Development of the International Wildland Fire Accord (as agreed by the Global Fire Monitoring Center GFMC, FAO, ISDR and GOFM/GOLD, May 2004).