



Government of Nepal
Department of Forests



International Strategy
ISDR
for Disaster Reduction



The Global Fire Monitoring Center
(GFMC)

Round Table for the Development of a National Strategy for Wildland Fire Management in Nepal

Kathmandu, Nepal, 16 December 2007

Resolutions Agreed by the Participants

The National Round Table Meeting was held in Kathmandu, Nepal, 16 December 2007. The meeting was held under the support of the German Foreign Office, Task Force for Humanitarian Assistance and hosted jointly by the Department of Forests, Government of Nepal and the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC). The meeting brought together 52 participants including national fire scientists, professionals, policy makers and expatriate experts, representing government organizations, international / regional non-government organizations, local non-government organizations and civil society from all over the country, and the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany and other international organizations.

The participants of the meeting presented the state of the fire situation and fire management capabilities and discussed for international cooperation in fire science, fire management and fire management training in the country. Two thematic papers were presented by the fire scientists and recommended enhancing international cooperation; creating enabling environment and stressing proactive actions for wildland fire management.

The participants of the Round Table Meeting:

Assessed the national fire situation and fire management capabilities following points:

In Nepal, fire is used by the rural population as a traditional tool for clearing and managing agricultural and pasture lands. It is also used to facilitate the gathering of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) and in hunting and herding. Uncontrolled fires are common in the country, with a long and intense dry season. Many of these fires have the potential to cause major damages:



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- Nepal has diverse ecosystems, socio-economic and cultural settings and vegetation types resulting from a wide range of land-use systems and climatic conditions, consequently having diverse fire regimes and vulnerabilities;
- Consequences of uncontrolled fires in country, *inter alia*, lead to serious degradation of forests, ecological changes, as well as deterioration of social and economical conditions in some land-use systems and natural vegetation types;
- Not all fires are destructive; fire management can be an essential part in ecosystem management;
- There is a lack of national capability in fire research and management, including monitoring, early warning and ecological and socio-economic impact assessment;
- International cooperation in fire management needs to be enhanced;
- There is increasing interest in Community-Based Fire Management (CBFiM) and the need for institutional and technological capability development at all levels;
- There are high expectations from sustainable management of vegetation cover, which provides goods and services including non-timber forest products and recreation, maintain biological diversity, mitigates the consequences of climate change, conserves watersheds, improves air quality and helps to reduce poverty through livelihood support to rural populations;
- After a successful foundation of the *Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network*, hosted by Nepal, under the auspice and mandate of the UNISDR-Global Wildland Fire Network, in Kathmandu in April 2007, models for a community and a district level plan have been developed in Makawanpur district. The pilot projects were financially supported by the Foreign Office, Federal Republic of Germany, Office for Humanitarian Assistance, implemented by the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC). Implementation of these plans is crucial to test for a replication in other parts of the country under similar fire regimes.

Identified and Discussed global issues impacting on local and regional levels, or - vice-versa -, which include:

- Demographic changes resulting in alterations of fire regimes due to increase human cause fire, including the preventive of widespread poverty;
- Land-use change involving increasing fire use for conversion of vegetation and land management including slash-and-burn practices in the hills;
- Consequences of, and the contribution to, climate change (a general trend of increasing area burned, fire intensity, and fire severity, and longer fire seasons);
- Air quality and human health, causing release of a greater amount of pollutants;

and agreed on the need to develop synergies through coordinated and collective action to deal with the most important problems related to fire management at local and national levels. The participants recommended the following road map:

- To conduct national fire assessment and research on wildland fire outbreaks, suppression, ecology and management;
- To formulate and improve legal, institutional and policy frameworks, build sustainable fire management capabilities;
- To develop fire management plans and human resources at all levels;
- To give emphasis to community-based fire management (CBFiM) approaches and institutional and technological capabilities at all levels;



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- To Conduct campaigns to raise awareness about wildland fires in all sections of the society;
- To incorporate wildland fire management courses in disaster management curricula at school and college level education specially in natural resource management courses;
- To develop guidelines in fire management at all levels;
- To enhance cooperation among countries within the region and at inter-regional levels, aimed at sharing technology, expertise and data in fire management;
- To encourage the endorsement and use of the UN Fire Management Voluntary Guidelines and to participate in the Fire Management Actions. Alliance in support of their adoption of the Guidelines;
- To endorse the objectives of work of the UNISDR Wildland Fire Advisory Group / Global Wildland Fire Network and Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) and to support implementation of building fire management capability at both local and national levels, as well as through bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements;
- To support the UNISDR Global Wildland Fire Network, the Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network and the Secretariat of the global network, the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) by national agencies and international donors aimed at fostering international cooperation in fire management, including collecting and disseminating fire information, arranging and enhancing international policy dialogue, and support of projects;
- To support the application of the non-legally binding instrument under the auspices of the United Nations Forum on Forest (UNFF) of 28 April 2007, and its implementation through the Multi-Year Programme of Work; as well as the International Strategy to Enhance International Cooperation in Fire Management, including the Fire Management Voluntary Guidelines in accordance with the recommendations by FAO-COFO / Ministerial Meeting 2005 and FAO-COFO 2007;
- To create an enabling environment from all possible donors including national, international, bi-lateral, multi-lateral and private foundations for financial, technical and other resource support for sustainable fire management in the country;
- To support and convene a series of National Seminars / Workshops / conferences – addressing “Global Change and Wildland Fire: Local Solutions to Global Problems” within the next 1 to 3 years;
- To conduct first Regional Advance Wildland Fire Management Training Course for Mitigation and Adaptation – be held in Nepal within the 2008 under the auspices of the UNISDR Wildland Fire Advisory Group / GFMC and led by the Department of Forest;
- To seek support from all possible donors including national, international, bi-lateral, multi-lateral and private foundations for financial, technical and other resource support to accomplish the above tasks;
- To ensure the outcomes of the meeting from thematic group discussions as a part of an agreement among the participants.

The participants thanked the funding agencies and hosts of the meeting for bringing together the national and international fire community responsible for wildland fire management.



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