



Mediterranean forests are active participants of the XIVth World Forestry Congress

Press release – September 7th, 2015

Mediterranean forests, a long history between mankind and ecosystem

Forested areas submitted to a Mediterranean climate – warm and dry summers, wet winters – cover about 75 million hectares in 25 countries around the Mediterranean Basin (State of Mediterranean forests 2013: 25 million hectares of forests and 50 millions hectares of Other Wooded Lands – OWL). Similar Mediterranean-type forests exist elsewhere in the world, in South Africa, Australia, Chile, United States and Mexico. Mediterranean forests have outstanding ecological particularities: great specific richness, endemic species pool and remarkable habitats. Forests around the Mediterranean basin are particularly known as one of the world's biodiversity hotspots.

Mediterranean forests have been deeply interwoven with the lives of the people of the region for several millennia. They provide wood, cork and other products, as well as being a source of income for many. They contribute to the conservation of biodiversity, capture and store carbon, protect soil and water, and they offer areas for recreation. Yet they are under increasing pressure. This includes pressures from humans, whose needs are growing and shifting, and stresses due to climatic changes including temperature increases, reduced rainfall and prolonged periods of drought, as well as increased fire risks. The active participation of society and all its components (land owners, managers, economic actors, policy makers, civil society) through participative governance is becoming crucial to develop sustainable and multifunctional management systems in this context of global changes.

A number of initiatives, particularly within the Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests (CPMF) and the FAO Committee *Silva Mediterranea*, are coming together to ensure that both research and policy are tying in with a regional approach and translating political will into action.

The current situation of forests in the Mediterranean region, drawing upon FAO's ground-breaking 2013 publication, the "State of Mediterranean Forests"¹, highlight climate change as the major challenge affecting the region, and emphasize the importance of establishing regional strategies. The "Strategic Framework on Mediterranean Forests"² aims to provide a common policy direction across the region and serve as a tool to improve coordination. Several case studies described in the FAO publication "Unasyvla"³ and the special issues of the "Forêt Méditerranéenne"⁴ journal show what different Mediterranean countries are doing today to meet the challenges they face.

These initiatives together with those of other Mediterranean partners should be promoted during the World Forestry Congress (WFC) to highlight the importance of Mediterranean forests and give them visibility.

¹ SoMF, FAO, 2013 www.fao.org/3/a-i3226e.pdf

² SFMF, FAO, 2013 www.aifm.org/en/publications/strategic-framework-mediterranean-forests

³ Unasyvla 242 "A new dynamic for Mediterranean forests", Vol. 65, 2014/1, FAO, 2014 www.fao.org/3/a-i3837e.pdf

⁴ I, II, III & IV Mediterranean forest week special issues www.foret-mediterrannee.org/fr/catalogue

The Mediterranean forests stand was made possible thanks to:



Promoting Mediterranean forests during the XIVth WFC in Durban

Objective: give more visibility to Mediterranean forests and to the new dynamic created in the Mediterranean area highlighting latest achievements of organizations, partners and countries of the region.

The Mediterranean forests stand in the WFC exhibition

The 27m² stand inside the exhibition area of the Congress is open to all the representatives of the countries and organization operating in the Mediterranean area, allowing them to present their products and documents.

The International Association for Mediterranean Forests (AIFM), helped by the French association Forêt Méditerranéenne (FM), with the support of the FAO Committee of Mediterranean Forestry Question *Silva Mediterranea* and other partners, was tasked with the preparation and coordination of the booth.

The stand acts as both the meeting point for all the Mediterranean participants of the Congress, and the place to get information on the latest achievements and initiatives conducted in the Mediterranean Basin.

As such, a roster of the different partners present allows other participants to meet and exchange with them.

Other activities

Other activities conducted during the WFC in order to meet the objective to give more visibility to Mediterranean forests, in conjunction between FAO – *Silva Mediterranea* Committee and other partners from the Mediterranean region, include the redaction of two policy briefs and the presentation of articles, posters and videos related to Mediterranean forests and actions implemented.

Some of these documents will be available in the stand itself.

Partners involved

Several partners participate in this initiative:

- FAO – *Silva Mediterranea* Committee
- French Global Environment Facility (FFEM)
- German cooperation (GIZ)
- International Association for Mediterranean Forests (AIFM)
- Plan Bleu
- French association Forêt Méditerranéenne
- Representatives of the 5 forested MENA countries: Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey

Financial resources

The stand was funded with the help of:

- FAO – *Silva Mediterranea* Committee
- French Global Environment Facility (FFEM) and MAAF
- GIZ
- Provence – Alpes – Côte d’Azur region
- MAVA Foundation for Nature

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