

6th Mediterranean Forest Week, Brummana, Lebanon

Welcome address by the Forestry Department of FAO

Monday 1 April, 10:50-10:55, Grand Hills hotel, Theater room

Your Excellency, Dr Hassan Lakkis, Minister of Agriculture of the Government of Lebanon

Mr Manuel Jaquotot Sanchez, Chair of FAO Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions –
Silvamediterranea

[Brummana municipality]

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of FAO Forestry Department, I would like to welcome you all to the 6th Mediterranean Forestry Week and the members of the Silvamediterranea Committee to its 23rd session.

May I also extend FAO's gratitude to the Government of Lebanon for graciously hosting this meeting and for the preparations and facilities for this event in this beautiful city of Brummana.

Climate change is a major threat to sustainable development. Climate change threatens our ability to ensure global food security and eradicate poverty. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is supporting countries to both mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change through a wide range programmes and projects, as an integral part of the 2030 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Negotiations on climate under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change show that all sectors, including Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry, can contribute, and will have to contribute, to climate change adaptation and mitigation. The Paris Agreement clearly highlights the role that forests can play to tackle climate change, as carbon sinks, as a key component of the adaptation to climate change, as well as to conserve biodiversity. The LULUCF sector is accordingly reflected in the Nationally Determined Contributions of most countries around the world.

Forests matter for the climate agenda and, the other way around, climate objectives are clearly integrated into forest strategies and policy orientations. Sustainable Development Goal 15, Target 15.2 *"By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally "* -- By 2020 -- we have less than 9 months to the start of 2020!

FAO is working with countries to mitigate and adapt to climate change through sustainable forest management. FAO supports countries to raise awareness, strengthen technical capacity and create enabling policy environments. Recognizing that climate change affects us all, FAO also promotes collaboration among the forestry, agriculture, fisheries and energy sectors and between climate change and food security policy-makers.

The Forestry Department of FAO is working with countries on forest monitoring and assessment, to gain better information on the extent and nature of forest resources, which will allow countries to better design and implement climate change adaptation and mitigation policies, improve overall land-use planning and estimate rates of carbon sequestration.

The Forestry Department of FAO is also helping countries to develop forest management planning and practices for climate change mitigation and adaptation, and is assisting countries and stakeholders to increase the role of forests in reducing the risk of disasters. As a forest-based solution to answer to challenges related to climate change, deforestation, ecosystem degradation, desertification, the loss of biodiversity, food insecurity and poverty, FAO is proposing an integrated response at the landscape level as Forest and Landscape Restoration.

This integrated approach to forest restoration will undoubtedly play a major role to address climate change. On 1 March 2019, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2021-2030 the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, stressing that restoration could remove up to 26 gigatons of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, and calling to massively scale up the restoration of degraded and destroyed ecosystems as a proven measure to fight the climate crisis and enhance food security, water supply and biodiversity.

The sixth Mediterranean Forest Week will be important to discuss how these global challenges and objectives can be addressed at the Mediterranean regional level.