



VIth Mediterranean Forest Week, Broummana, Lebanon
Address Note by His Excellency Minister of Agriculture Dr. Hassan Al-Lakis, Lebanon
Grand Hills Hotel, Theater Hall Monday, April 1st, 10:30 am

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Apart from politics and its problems, the sixth Mediterranean Forest Week, which we are opening with you today, is a bright spot that fills our hearts with hope, for meeting to find a solution to the challenges facing the forestry sector is inevitably a progress in itself.

It is true that problems may differ from one country to another around the Mediterranean. In fact, Lebanon is struggling with a high population density, a large displacement wave caused by the war in Syria, fires, diseases and other problems that may be offset by other problems in a neighbouring country. But it is certain that climate change affects us all, and impacts us all .

Scientific studies and research on the extent of this impact on the planet and its ecosystems are well under way, and this is good, but needless to wait for the outcomes for we only have one goal or rather one solution: strengthening and empowering our forests to help them resist climate change, or at least increase their resilience.

Multiple methods can be used to achieve this goal: risk reduction mitigation, infringement settlement, disease control, fire prevention, awareness raising, and protection of the most sensitive sites, afforestation, and reforestation...

But the best we can do is to protect these forests by highlighting their significance and uniqueness, the importance of their products, and the potential economic returns generated by their sustainable management thus ensuring their sustainability and development.

In this context, the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture has set the following clear objectives for combating land degradation due to climate change :

1. Increase land productivity and organic carbon stock in agricultural land, forests and pastures.
2. Improve landscape mosaics such as forests, woodlands, agricultural land and pastures and reduce their conversion to other covers.
3. Activate the role of forests and trees in urban and rural areas in order to provide sustainable services and products.

Hence, Lebanon has adopted badly needed operational measures in order to achieve these objectives, the most important of which are:

1. Rehabilitation of forest landscape through afforestation or reforestation of at least 10,000 hectares
2. Implementation of sustainable forest management practices on all public forests, and strengthening of management in private forests, thereby reducing forest fires and their conversion to other uses
3. Management and conservation of rangeland in high mountainous areas and on an area of not less than 1,000 hectares
4. Promotion of sustainable cities and towns through the development of urban and peri-urban forests and the implementation of pastoral agroforestry practices
5. Development of financial incentives to implement sustainable land management practices, in line with the climate change adaptation strategy and the biodiversity conservation strategy
6. Establishment of partnerships with local, national and international organizations to promote sustainable forest management practices

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that holding the Mediterranean Forest Week every two years is an opportunity to be seized in the best way possible and embraced through the exchange of experiences among our countries in order to speed up the process of finding solutions to the problems of climate change which are becoming an imminent threat to the region.

We welcome you in Lebanon, in the green town of Broummana, announce the opening of the 6th Mediterranean Forest Week and the 23rd Session of the SILVAMED Group, and wish us all every success in this conference to reach practical and feasible recommendations in order to show the importance of our forests in mitigating climate change .
Thank you.