



Fifth Mediterranean Forests Week

Opening Speech

20 March 2017

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President of the Mediterranean Forestry Questions-

Silva Mediterranea

Excellency's,

Ladies and Gentlemen's,

Dear Colleagues

It is my pleasure to greet you on behalf me, on behalf of my Country-Turkey, and on behalf of Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions.

The Mediterranean Forests Week, which the first one was organized in Turkey in the year of 2010, then France 2011, then Algiers 2013, then Spain 2015, now being organized at the another point of the Mediterranean Region, at the city of Agadir.

This beautiful city has carry the spirit of Mediterranean Region, Atlantic Ocean and of course the spirit of pure Africa. It is a perfect place to share our experiences and good wishes for the future.

Now, with this new one, the Mediterranean Forests Week becomes a truly active, regular and operative regional initiative.

With this opportunity I would like to congratulate with full of my heart to the High Commissariat of Water, Forest and Fight Against Desertification, and the Administration of Agadir as well as the member of Organizing Committee.

Beside it is my pleasure to convey the greetings from my Minister, HE Prof. Dr. Veysel Eroğlu, and the Minister of Forests and Water Affairs of Turkey as well good wishes from Turkish People.

I also thank to the participants coming from different part of the Mediterranean Region which was the center and the mother of all civilizations and I also thank to all of you to be here with us especially to the ones who are dealing with this important conference.

Distinguished Guests,

Under the leadership of HE Abdeladim Lhafi, the High Commissariat of Water, Forest and Fight Against Desertification of the Kingdom of Morocco, plays a crucial role both national, regional and global level. It raises a real star in our region. It hosted UNFCCC COP22 and others recently. I really greet this Leader and his team including Mr. Houmy and my dear friends.

The Mediterranean Forestry Questions, which I have been chairing since 2012 is a real home with full of wonderful team and partners. It is one of the oldest Committee in the world with the real history goes back to 1911, and it is a real and effective regional initiative with the Members from Iran to Portugal and from Turkey to Sudan as well as Balkan, MENA and European Countries. I feel honor to be part of this Committee.

Recently, this Committee has done several international activities and produced very important political and technical documents. Mediterranean Forests Weeks, Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests, The Strategic Framework on Mediterranean Forests, The State of Mediterranean Forests 2013, and Tlemcen Declaration are some of them. It has also very rich and regularly updated web page. The Newsletters produced by the Secretariat is among the most regular and well-organized one in forestry arena.

With this opportunity I would like to congratulate the Secretariat, Working Groups, Focal Points and all partners, all colleagues for giving me the chance to work with the highest profile friends, the best feelings, and feeling of success.

Distinguished Participants,

During this we will see important meetings and we will witness important events.

Besides the MWF programs, this afternoon, we have a side event organized by the Secretariat of the Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forest. One of the items will be the next edition of the State of Mediterranean Forest. <http://www.gonder.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CPMF-20-March-2017.pdf>

I am pleased to remind that the CPMF has launched in Turkey in the year of 2010.

Tomorrow we are going to celebrate the International Day of Forest. We are going to have field trip at 22nd of March, Wednesday. That afternoon we are organizing the 22nd Session of the Silva Mediterranean. It seems it will be my last session as the Chair. We will choose our new President.

Last day, 24th of March, Friday, high level session of this week will be organized. <http://www.gonder.org.tr/?p=5683>

The most important outcome of this meeting will be negotiated and most probably approved by the High Level Participants. I am very pleased to announce that Turkey has already showed her support to the Agadir Declaration. I will be very happy to represent Turkey at this High Level Segment, hopefully together with the Turkey's Ambassador to Rabat, HE Ethem Barkan ÖZ. Turkey also supports the establishment of a Regional Mediterranean Initiative on FLR with a quantified and measurable target.

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Distinguished Participants,

My Country, Turkey, supports the UN Activities in everywhere and every area. After hosting the World Forestry Congress, Turkey hosted UNFF10 in İstanbul and UNCCD COP12 in Ankara. FAO Subregional Office for Central Asia has been established in Ankara. The UNCCD Coordinating Unit for Northern Mediterranean Countries has been opened in Istanbul.

After the UNCCD COP 12, the Ankara Initiative with the aim of the activities for combatting desertification, land degradation and rehabilitation has been launched by Turkish Government. A memorandum of understanding has been signed between the Ministry of Forest and Water Affairs of Turkey and The Pan African Agency For The Great Green Wall.

The upcoming Agadir Commitment and Ankara Initiative have mutual aims and visions. In order to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, especially the target on land degradation neutrality, in order to reach more sustained and restored landscape, all the partners including private sector, civil societies, especially the trade unions must work together.

We need national, sub regional and regional/international networks to reach our goals and aims. No one, no party can do it without cooperation and coordination. Take back the degraded land is also a very good opportunity for job creations. Thus private sector should be supported by any means.

Distinguished Guests,

Today we are here with a different team.

I am here to represent the Government of Turkey and as well as the Silva Mediterranea.

We have the representative of Oz Orman İş Trade Union. The number of members reach to 30.000 in the field of forestry. We have friends from Greener Turkey Foresters Association.

We have friends from the Foundation of the People Caring for Future- CARFU, which I am the Chair. CARFU also represents the PLANFOR (Platform of the Associations of Nature and Forestry) It has members from several countries including Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania.

Our NGOs are here in order to search cooperation possibilities with other NGOs and people. They are here with the support of a special program, under the UN Delegation to Turkey. <http://sivildusun.net/hakkimizda/>

They are also supported by the Öz Orman İş Trade Union. This Union has been very active on forestry, land management and combating desertification. During the UNCCD COP12, they organized a side event about “The Role of Trade Unions Combatting Desertification” by inviting several Unions around the world. It is also the first accredited Union for UNCCD.

Dear Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen’s

Before end of my speech I would like to thank again all of you for being here. I would like to thank to Turkey’s Ministry of Forests and Water Affairs for their full support to my presidency of Silva Mediterranea.

I also thank again for this organization and I wish a successful conference for all of us.