

State of Mediterranean Forests – 2nd edition

Chapter Coordinator: Carolina GalloGranizo

Chapter 6; Restoration

Working Group 8 “Desertification and Restoration of Mediterranean Drylands”

The effects of desertification and drought are affecting and threatening people's lives. Against this effect measures are taken, many organizations are established and contracts are signed all over the world.

UNCCD was accepted in the parliament on 17 June 1994 to fight against this effect. So far, 195 countries and the European Union are parties to the Convention. The aim of the Convention is working together to improve the living conditions for people in drylands, to maintain and restore land and soil productivity, and to mitigate the effects of drought.

A significant part of the Mediterranean region is considered as drylands and a large part of the Mediterranean area is affected by desertification. Under this affects it is necessary to determine the measures to be taken against drought and to cooperate with the countries in order to combat the effects of drought. In this context, General Directorate of Combating Desertification and Erosion (ÇEM) has been established in Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs in 2011 with the aim of “protection of soil, improvement of natural resources, combating with desertification and erosion, setting politics and strategies related with activities of avalanche and flood control, providing cooperation and coordination among related agents and agencies”. It is the first General Directorate on Desertification in the World.

Turkey has been a member of FAO since 6 April 1948 and its relations with FAO have developed stronger in recent years due to close cooperation works. In parallel with in

February 2012 in Antalya, *Silva Mediterranea* adopted a decision to create a new working group on ‘Desertification and Restoration in Mediterranean Drylands’ (WG8) to be lead by Turkey (to begin with) with the technical support expressed by FAO (Forestry Officers in charge of Arid Zones) and Italy.

On October 16, 2015, on the occasion of the 12th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 12) to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) held in Ankara, Turkey, it was held the Workshop on “Desertification and Restoration in Mediterranean Drylands” to launch the new working group of *Silva Mediterranea* aiming to address issues of desertification and restoration in the Mediterranean region. Twenty five experts from seven different Mediterranean countries (Portugal, Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia, Spain, France and Lebanon) attended this workshop. The event was supported and organised by several technical organizations such as: FAO/Forestry Department /the FLRM team, the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD and TUBITAK.

The working group “Desertification and Restoration of Mediterranean Drylands” focused on how to build support for the development of the measures against desertification and drought and set the goals to be taken. In addition to this support the implementation of Strategic Line 6 “Restore degraded Mediterranean forests landscapes” of the SFMF in Mediterranean countries. Also promote and share best practices and lessons learned at the regional level through projects, programs and other initiatives on restoration of forest and landscapes in drylands. Because combating desertification and dry lands forestry is an important aspect of Turkish Forestry.

In this context two international workshops organized in Konya/ Turkey and Dakar/Senegal. As a result of the workshops the working group has provided support to the preparation of the **Global Guidelines for the Restoration of Degraded Forests and Landscapes in Drylands**, in particular with the contributions of TIKA to the international workshops in Konya, Turkey, in May 2012, and in Dakar, Senegal, in February 2013. As a result of these workshops the development of these guidelines was highly collaborative

process led by FAO and the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, Turkey and the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency.

FAO and Turkey have a **Forestry Programme** which is a partnership agreement between the FAO and the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs covering the five-year period between 2015-2019. The agreement covers the following areas of activity; Sustainable land management, Forestry policies and institutional development, Forest management and protection, Forest products and services, Forest and environment, Human and environment, Evaluation and follow-up, Common issues such as mountains and water basins, forests outside the forest, forestry around the city and the city, and agricultural forestry and Reduction of drought effects and evaluation of land degradation.

With the participation of the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, FAO and all other parties, a workshop on **Sustainable Land Management and Climate-Friendly Agricultural Practices** was organized in Konya on 25-26 August 2015. The purposes of the project for sustainable land management are capacity building and monitoring, rehabilitation of degraded forest and pasture lands, climate-friendly agricultural practices.

With the cooperation of FAO, the Project of **Supporting Land Use Assessment and Monitoring of Good Practices for Sustainable Land Management (LADA)** has been established in order to increase the capacity of evaluating and reporting the situation of land resources and to disseminate the concept of sustainable land management and good practices for combating land degradation.

The twelfth session of the Conference of Parties (COP) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), endorsed Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) target 15.3 and the concept of land degradation neutrality (LDN) as a strong vehicle for driving the implementation of the Convention. In response to the decisions taken by the UNCCD COP.12, the Global Mechanism (GM) of the UNCCD established a LDN Target

Setting Programme (TSP), which aims to support countries to define national LDN targets and associated measures. Turkey has some initiatives in capacity building by investing in the training and skills development of civil society and local authorities, particularly in Africa. Therefore, **Land Degradation Neutrality Workshop** was held in Konya/TURKEY between 28-30 May 2016 for African Countries.

After UNCCD COP12 held in Turkey, two relevant issues released;

- The **Ankara Initiative** is launched to strengthen implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in the period 2016 to 2019. It will support the global sustainable development agenda and leverage the lessons learned from Turkey's past experience and approaches to land management.
- The aim of the Ankara Initiative is to help to achieve **Land Degradation Neutrality** using UNCCD tools and practical resources.

Within the scope of framework of the Ankara Initiatives, "**International Training on Combating Desertification**" was held in Konya-Mersin-Adana/TURKEY for African countries between 30 May-5 June 2016 cooperation with the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs and TIKA.

Initiative is also great opportunity improving collaboration between Silva Mediterranean countries.

The **Parliamentarians Forum**, which was convened in 1998 within the UNCCD in conjunction with the Conference of the Parties, aims at raising the awareness of parliaments and the effectiveness of land policies mainly on issues of desertification / land degradation. At the UNCCD COP 12 meeting held in Turkey on 12-23 October 2015, the Parliamentary Forum presidency passed to Turkey. During the presidency of Turkey; Turkey's experience in combating land degradation, Ankara Initiative and Turkey-Africa

Relations and Experience of Turkey's land rights (cadastre and ownership) issues will be taken into consideration.

The **Great Green Wall** project, which main objective is combating desertification, land degradation, climate change and sustainable management of natural resources, was approved by the heads of states and governments in southern Saharan in 2005 and by the African Union in 2007. Between May 30 and June 5, 2016, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between our Ministry and the Panafrika Great Green Wall Agency on the fight against desertification in order to share the experience of Turkey with the desire to combat desertification.

Desertification and struggle with drought are global threat to arid and semi-arid lands which is located underdeveloped and developing countries. In this context, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification is expected to further promote regional and global cooperation from the contracting parties, especially to combat desertification in underdeveloped countries. In line with these developments, Turkey has come to an important point in arid area forestry, especially with projects and works done by TIKA for Africa and neighboring countries.

In particular, given the tragic consequences of Africa, It has been pointed out that problems of desertification and drought have a global quality and are affected by a lot of regions. It has been agreed that the international community should conduct joint studies to combat these factors. Within this scope, it was decided to establish a friendship forest in Senegal as part of the "March 21st World Forestry Day" celebrations. Mr. President Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN will make a videophone system with Senegal and participate in planting ceremony.

Turkey is among the northern mediterranean countries. The United Nations Secretariat to Combat Desertification emphasized that the opening of the Regional Office of the Northern Mediterranean Region in our country is of great importance for the

development of cooperation with UNCCD and the countries of the Region. In this way, the United Nations Secretariat for Combating Desertification has stated that it will make significant progress in arid area forestry, especially with studies on least developed countries in Africa.