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AFWC/EFC/NEFRC COMMITTEE ON MEDITERRANEAN FORESTRY QUESTIONS – *SILVA MEDITERRANEA*

TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION

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SECRETARIAT NOTE ITEM 7 THE STATE OF MEDITERRANEAN FORESTS 2023

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The State of Mediterranean Forests (SoMF) is a publication that aims to improve the knowledge on Mediterranean forests. The first and second SoMF editions, published respectively in 2013 and 2018, were co-published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Plan Bleu. At its Twenty-Third Session in April 2019, *Silva Mediterranea* confirmed its interest in this publication and requested that FAO prepare the new edition, which is expected to be published in 2023. For this purpose, a preliminary online survey was launched by the *Silva Mediterranea* Secretariat in 2020 to get feedback on the 2018 edition and identify the main topics to be addressed in the next edition.

2. Outcomes of the 2020 survey were elaborated and discussed particularly to provide answers and strategic visions for future Mediterranean forest questions. This ensured that the expectations of *Silva Mediterranea* actors would be reported regarding the themes that the document should address, and proper discussions of related topics. However, few answers have been received (i.e., twelve responses), thus rendering the survey insufficiently representative. In the meantime, due to the COVID-19 pandemic spreading worldwide, this has potentially caused both re-modelling and re-thinking of the current needs and expectations from SoMF, which may need to be incorporated in the

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next edition. Therefore, additional efforts should be spent identifying which forest topics and forestry questions fit best with the current and future environmental, political and pandemic situations across the Mediterranean basin.

II. NEXT EDITION OF THE STATE OF MEDITERRANEAN FORESTS 2023

3. Noting that some relevant Mediterranean forest questions have been unexplored or weakly investigated at present, the ideas listed below are proposed not as a candidacy to the next State of the Mediterranean Forests edition, but as a basis for adding viewpoints and starting the discussions with *Silva Mediterranea* focal points and the Mediterranean forest community:

i) The role of Mediterranean forest soils, their diversity in the region, mapping Mediterranean forest soils and highlighting the importance to manage Mediterranean forest ecosystems with sustainable forest practices, thus preserving forest soils. Enhancing the role of forest soils in climate change mitigation, as one of the largest carbon pools in forest ecosystems, particularly for long-term periods. Preserving forest biodiversity, raising forest vitality, maintaining healthy forest soils as the first frontier to fight desertification, hydrological threats, and natural hazards in Mediterranean areas.

ii) The relationship between healthy Mediterranean forests and pandemic, pest and disease spreading. Some recent studies have shown not only a connection between the loss of biodiversity and the diffusion of the pandemic, but also pathogens, fungi and insect outbreaks. These studies have also highlighted how a healthy forest could function as a buffer for the circulation of new viruses and pathogens. It should also be noted that the last FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) event raised some of these questions, as well as recent academic activities.

iii) The relationship between food and forests. Shortage of food and its uneven distribution across the Mediterranean region will be among the more significant issues in the following decades, especially in the poorest areas or those affected by natural resource limitations (water, soil fertility, forests etc.). Also, food quality and its sustainability could be an obstacle to ensuring a good life quality for Mediterranean populations due to the intensive use of chemicals (herbicides and pesticides) in agro-ecosystems and the utilization of intensive agricultural systems. Agroforestry systems can be a sustainable option to ensure the coexistence between animals and forests, as a good sustainable example comes from familiar/farm agriculture. This should have positive repercussions on food quality, that is, healthier and more sustainable food productions actively involving farming and rural populations.

iv) Connected to the above-mentioned issue, youth entrepreneurship and green recovery are also timely forest topics which deserve to be proposed. They address rural employment (specifically for young people) and green entrepreneurship by developing forest-based solutions based on Non-Wood Forest Products (NWFPs), which rather than wood products, can represent most of the economic value of Mediterranean forests.

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE COMMITTEE

- The Committee recommends that the Secretariat prepare a scoping note for the new edition of the SoMF to be presented at the next extraordinary session of *Silva Mediterranea* to be held in Rome on the occasion of the 26th session of the Committee on Forestry (3 – 7 October 2022).
- The Committee gives its mandate to the Secretariat to coordinate the preparation of the new edition of the SoMF by end of 2023 and to mobilize members and partners for the preparation of

the various chapters that it will contain. The objective is to be able to launch it during the next edition of the MFW to be held tentatively in March 2024.

- The Committee wishes that all members get involved in this publication and share all relevant information on the latest development of their respective forestry sector.

ANNEX 1

STATE OF MEDITERRANEAN FORESTS - EDITION 2023 THE SURVEY TO BE RE-LAUNCHED

1. Have you read the State of Mediterranean Forests (part of it or entirely)?

[Avez-vous lu l'État des forêts méditerranéennes (en partie ou entièrement)?]

- yes/no
- 2013 edition – [Édition de 2013]
- 2018 edition – [Édition de 2013]

2. If yes, which chapters related to which topics have you read?

[Si oui, vous avez lu les chapitres traitant de quels sujets?]

- yes/no
- Extent of forest resources – [Étendue des ressources forestières]
- Biotic and abiotic disturbances – [Les perturbations biotiques et abiotiques]
- Goods and services provided by Mediterranean forests – [Biens et services fournis par les forêts méditerranéennes]
- Policy and legal framework – [Cadre politique et legal]
- Contribution of Mediterranean forests to the global agenda – [Contribution des forêts méditerranéennes à l'agenda global]
- Trees outside forests in the Mediterranean region – [Les arbres hors forêt en région méditerranéenne]
- Forest and landscape restoration – [La restauration des forêts et des paysages]
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation – [L'adaptation et l'atténuation du changement climatique]
- Conservation and biodiversity – [Conservation et biodiversité]
- Participatory approaches – [Approches participatives]
- Economic valuation of ecosystem services – [L'évaluation économique des services écosystémiques]
- Financial incentives and tools – [Les incitations et outils financiers]

3. Have you used the State of Mediterranean Forests for policy documents or other purposes? [Avez-vous utilisé l'État des forêts méditerranéennes pour des documents de politique publique ou d'autres buts?]

- Yes, for policy documents – [Oui, pour des documents de politique publique]
- Yes, for other purposes – [Oui, pour d'autres buts]
- No, not used – [Non, pas d'utilisation]

4. Would a next edition be useful? Would you find a next edition useful? [Une nouvelle édition serait-elle utile?]

- Yes – [Oui]
- No – [Non]
- No opinion – [Sans opinion]

5. What would you expect in a next edition? [Qu'attendriez-vous d'une nouvelle édition?]

- Monitoring of the main forest statistics based on provided FRA data (and other data sources) – [Fournir un suivi des principales statistiques forestières sur la base des données du FRA (et d'autres sources de données)]
- Provide state of the art case studies on topics of regional interest – [Fournir un état de l'art ou des cas d'études sur des sujets d'intérêt regional]
- Provide standpoints on new and emerging topics – [Fournir des points de vue sur des nouveaux sujets émergents]
- Other:

6. Would you find the following topics important to develop in a future edition? [Les sujets suivants sont-ils importants pour une édition future?]

- Forest health (including pests and diseases, forest dieback and invasive species) – [Santé des forêts (y compris les ravageurs et les maladies, les dépérissements et les espèces invasives)]
- Forest fires – [Feux de forêts]
- Non-wood forest products and sustainable food systems – [Produits forestiers non ligneux]
- Forest recreation – [Forêt recreative]
- Forest degradation and fragmentation – [Dégradation et fragmentation forestière]
- Land degradation neutrality – [Neutralité en termes de dégradation des terres]
- Forest as a source and protection of biodiversity – [La forêt comme source et protection de la biodiversité]
- Forest genetic resources – [Ressources génétique forestières]
- Urban and periurban forestry - bio cities – [Foresterie urbaine et périurbaine]
- Economic valuation of forests products and services – [Évaluation économique des produits et services forestiers]
- Land use conflicts (forest vs. settlements vs. agriculture) – [Conflits d'usage des terres (la forêt ou la ville ou l'agriculture)]
- Forest monitoring systems – [Systèmes de suivi forestier]

- Social engineering based on forests – [Ingénierie sociale fondée sur la forêt]
- Forest and pastoralism – [Forêts et pastoralisme]
- Forests and water – [Forêts et eaux]
- Forest soil and forest use changes
- Forests and watershed management (water scarcity, soil erosion...) – [Forêts et gestion des bassins versants (rareté de l'eau, érosion des sols...)]
- The role of youth in implementing forest-based solutions – [Le rôle des jeunes pour la mise en oeuvre des solutions fondées sur les forêts]
- Social representations of forests – [Les représentations sociales de la forêt]
- Other:

7. Please use the space below to comment on what you expect from a future edition – [Commentaire libre sur les attendus d'une édition future]