



Thursday, 14 May 2015

High Level Segment (Item 8) 3:00 – 5:00PM

High Level Dialogue with the Heads of CPF Member Organizations,

Heads of the Regional Organizations and Senior Representatives of Major Groups

Mr. İbrahim Çiftçi

Deputu Undersecretary

Head of Turkish Delegation to UNFF11

Dear Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

I have the pleasure to speak on behalf of “The Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions – *Silva Mediterranea*” which is a statutory body of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) that facilitates dialog and cooperation on Mediterranean forests.

It has 27 state members plus the European Union, spanning three of FAO’s Regional Forestry Commissions: the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission, European Forestry Commission and Near East Forestry and Range Commission.

Formal sessions of the *Silva Mediterranea* are currently held every four years. During the 21st session of *Silva Mediterranea*, held in Turkey in February 2012, Turkey was designated as its chair. Mr. İsmail Belen, a Senior Forest Engineer from Ministry of Forest and Water Affairs of Turkey, has been serving as the President of this Committee on behalf of Turkey.

I am pleased to report the UNFF on several recent initiatives supported by *Silva Mediterranea* to promote a regional dynamic on Mediterranean forests.

Since 2010, *Silva Mediterranea* has organized, along with several partners, four Mediterranean Forest Weeks. These have served as open fora for different sectors and stakeholders to exchange views, experiences, innovations and emerging issues related to

Mediterranean forests. The 1st Mediterranean Forest Week held in Turkey, the 2nd held in France, 2010 and 2011 respectively.

The 3rd Mediterranean Forest Week, held from 17-21 March 2013 in Tlemcen, Algeria focused on the sustainable development of rural areas with special attention to strategies of mitigation and adaptation to global change. The 4th Mediterranean Week held from 17-20 March 2015 in Barcelona, Spain dealt with improved livelihoods and the role of Mediterranean forest value chains in a green economy.

The first edition of the State of Mediterranean Forests was published. The preparation of this important reference book was coordinated by *Silva Mediterranea* and Plan Bleu. This launched an effort to periodically assess the status and changes in Mediterranean forest ecosystems, and to communicate objective and reliable data to the different stakeholders involved in their management.

A Strategic Framework on Mediterranean Forests was prepared in 2012-2013, based on the key findings of the State of Mediterranean Forests and with the support of a wide range of forest partners and stakeholders. This strategic framework presents a series of recommendations, structured along strategic lines, to achieve three main objectives: (1) developing and promoting forest goods and services, (2) promoting resilience to global changes and (3) enhancing capacities and mobilizing financial resources. The Strategic Framework on Mediterranean Forests was adopted during the 3rd Mediterranean Forest Week in Tlemcen in March 2013.

The Tlemcen Declaration affirms the political commitment of *Silva Mediterranea* member states to continue implementing actions and measures in order to achieve the proposed objectives outlined in the Strategic Framework on Mediterranean Forests. Several countries, including France, Lebanon, Morocco, Portugal and Tunisia, reported at the 4th Mediterranean Forest Week that the Strategic Framework on Mediterranean Forests was beginning to be incorporated into national forest programmes or strategies.

The Barcelona Declaration, adopted by the high-level segment at the 4th Mediterranean Forest Week, reinforced the commitment of countries in the region to collaborate on Mediterranean forest issues.

Mr/Madam Chair

Distinguished Delegates,

Using this opportunity I would like to inform you that, as the President of this Committee, Turkey will insist on doing his best for regional cooperation. As you may recall, the 10th session of the UNFF was held in Turkey in 2013. Like this, we are happy to host the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Turkey, this year, from 12-23 October, 2015.

As we agreed, there is strong link between forests and soil, land degradation. I believe this COP will be a perfect platform to discuss regional cooperation. So I am inviting you, on behalf of Turkey, to join this Conference and to share all regional dynamics.

Thank you.