

**COMMENTS AND REMARKS PRODUCED DURING THE I INTERNATIONAL
NORTHEAST ASIA FOREST FIRE CONFERENCE AND III INTERNATIONAL
MEETING OF THE REGIONAL NORTHEAST ASIA WILDLAND FIRE
NETWORK**

(28-30 September 2006, Khabarovsk, Russia)

Prof. Johann Goldammer (GFMC) and Dr. Leonid Kondrashov presented the Fire Management Code and Strategy of International cooperation. All of participants discussing the Code acknowledged that the Code preparation work was very huge. However, **Dr. V.G. Kryukov** (Regional Wildlife Foundation) said that the structure, system and approach could be different.

The draft of the Fire Management Code is a multi-functional endeavour of unification of approaches to forest fire management to use standards by the international community. Such a document is needed under conditions of forest fire problem increase and thus it is important for the whole world community.

Compiling of such a complex project requires detailed analysis and absolute taking into account of customs, traditions, existing legislation and rules of concrete states. Otherwise, from the document uniting the efforts and experience of concrete states, it could be an informal, non-binding report. Thus, it is possible to review critically the Code from this aspect. At the same time the most critical for comments and proposals are three sections of questions: principles, strategy and management.

1. The draft of the Code considers 11 principles, united into 5 groups: social and cultural, economic, ecological, institutional, organizational-technical. There are two notes: First, it is seen from the list that a part of principles, particularly, institutional, organizational-technical must be attributed to the mechanisms of realization. Second, only two principles in ecological group are attributed to fire themes: consequences of fires and fire impact of ecosystems. The remainder principles are applicable to any other elemental forces and common vital functions of society. It is proposed to consider the following variant of principles:

- nature of forest fires;
- provision of complete information on forest fires and management;
- prevention of forest fires;

- determination of priority in suppression of forest fires (differentiation of forest fires according to priority for suppression);
- suppression of forest fires;
- forest fire consequences;
- overcome of forest fire consequences;
- International collaboration on forest fire management and mutual aid.

Further it is recommended to use the following scheme for consideration: principle – directions – actions (aspects). The principle includes the directions, e.g. the principle of forest fire prevention consists of such directions as: preparation to forest fires, ecological and education of population, professional training. Directions, in their turn, foresee the concrete aspects or actions, e.g. preparation to forest fires comprises actions on locality (construction of towers, creation of mineralized stripes, planting of fire stand tree species, infrastructure formation, etc.), work with population, firemen, etc.

As mechanism of realization it is possible to select administrative, communicational, technical, legislative, financial, scientific, informational and other types forest fire management tracking.

2. Trying to maintain the common approach to principles, it is necessary to define more exactly the correlation between aspects and principles. For example, principle 8. “Legislation and Governance” contains such aspect as “minimizing the incidence of unwanted human caused fires” which both formally and actually is far from the state management functions and moreover – from the legislation. These discrepancies are seen practically in all principles.

3. The role of the state is of great importance in forest fire management. The Code now underlines ‘wide spectrum of meaning’ of the term “management”. First of all, these are economic methods of fire use and anti-fire measures. At the same time, the role of the state in forest fire management is described very schematically, declaratory.

At the same time, management is a system of ways (methods) and forms of organization of actions of special structures, various voluntary combinations of citizens and so on, directed on fire prevention, their suppression and consequences elimination. In Russia, for example, these

questions are in charge of state organs of executive power. Legislative provision of fire management is concentrated in state organs of legislative power. Strictly the same situation is with the organs control and supervisory bodies.

It is proposed|: to collect information, make a diagnostic analysis of forest fire management schemes (forestry) of various countries, estimate their achievements and gaps, and propose the most effective variant of forest fire management suitable for the world community (or at least for the majority of participants of this project).

4. Basic question of such a document is institutionalization of forest fire management and, first of all, the use of institutions on the stage of this project introduction. Authors' position of this project in use of this term is seen in two sections. In section B.10 it is said "The institutional framework includes all of the processes and procedures an agency or landowner has developed and implemented for carrying out the programme" In section C.4 as institutional principles are named "Legislation and Governance" as well as "Multi-stakeholder Approach"

T. Weblen, D. North and others think that institutions are structures connecting society and the state on the basis of past (customs, traditions, behavior codes) with present and future (laws and rules). From this point of view, even UN, various institutes, Funds, Movements, etc. belong to the institutes. Their role is very great and responsible in all spheres of society vital activities.

In a given case the task of the institutions is to complete the Code draft and introduce it into practice. But this Code draft does not speak about.

It is proposed: to consider institutionalization as a process of forest fire management tracking, select in the draft the hierarchy of the institutions and their actions on various stages of advancing the Code and further fire management.

5. Surely, strategic tasks are a very important part of the Code. Strategic tasks and coming from them requirements (actions, measures) are considered structurally. There are 14 tasks (D.1-D.14). Narrated here can be understood by Russians and Russian terminology as tactic actions. It was not worth to single out this question but beside it there is a term tactics. So, in section "D.9. First attack/ actions on initial stage of fire" there the following "Strategy and

tactics of actions on initial stage of fire must be developed in accord with the situation on locality”.

In practice of national fire management the strategic questions, as a rule, are developed in advance and determine the activity, connected with forest fires, for future. Concrete actions on direct fire management are considered to be tactics. Marked divergences and correspondingly notes, possibly connected with inadequacy of terms meanings used in Russia and English speaking countries.

Proposals: to include working of specialized dictionary of notions and terms in section “Strategy” on initial stages. Specialists must talk on the same language.

One more important direction is scientific analysis of national fire management systems, their correlation with state forestry management and creation of rational optimal variant of approach to forest fire management. This is a deeply scientific investigation, which must be based on broad practice and analysis of accumulated data. The first steps are made with creation of guidelines of fire management in temporal and boreal forests, etc.

The advancing of the Code can be considered as a short-term task. It is necessary to plan actions on effort integration of states for a long-term period to prevent transborder fires (in conditions of increasing forest fire danger they can become a routine event), their suppression and territories restoration (creation of informational centers, International Centers of fire management, teams of urgent reaction and so on). It necessary to elaborate a legal status of such structures.

6. Proposal: clarify the participation of local population in forest fire management reasoning from the principle of keeping their health and life. The most effective can be their activity in ecological propaganda and other preventive actions.

7. Cross-sectoral aspect section has too much general character.

It is proposed on its base to make a section “Nature of forest Fires” in which the greater attention must be devoted to the causes of forest fires, their development perspectives, peculiarities of their geographical distribution and international integration in forest fire management. At the same time it is rational the analysis of three things: situation – causes – ways (mechanisms) of their elimination.

8. It is necessary to edit the text. In particular, some notes and proposals are the following:

-section A.1, first paragraph: to change term “all elements of civil society” for “institutions of civil society”;

-section A.3.: goal as a rule is single in this case: transition to optimal forest fire management on the basis of state integration and society with the help of international institutions. All others are – tasks;

-section A3.: what is “sub-national mechanism of policy formation...”;

-section A4: expand the list of documents with UN Convention on transborder pollution of water objects, Helsinki, 1992;

-section B.1.: it is difficult to agree with the statement “Creation of comprehensive fire management system could foster reaching two concrete goals...”

-section B.9.: “Local programme of population education must help citizens to acquire ... and understand the essence of fire management technology...” But has the population any interest in this?

-section B.10.: title “Policy, Legal, Institutional and Financial Frameworks” – these different systems frequently having no common foundations must not be considered together;

-section B.10, first paragraph: after the words land owners to add also land users;

-section B.10: “policy is necessary to interpret laws and establishing of the range of action”. In Russia population vital activity is based on Roman law, the policy forms the laws in accord with itself;

-section B10: in relation to institutions – ref. above;

-section B.11, paragraph 3: the coordinating role of the government is not reflected, thus the institutions themselves could find consensus and will not find agreements;

-section C.1, title: “Social and Cultural” – the term cultural is not revealed neither in principles nor in aspects;

-section C.1, principle 1: first three aspects do not have anything in common to raise the stability of population life support, and the last in Russia’s conditions is forced due to insufficient financing;

-section C.1, principle 1: “planned use of fire on the whole territory of vast landscapes...” leads to sharp decrease of biodiversity, single-species forest development which ecologically cannot be compensated by no means;

On the whole relating to other principles there are repetitions; in correspondence to themes, disputable results and so on.

-section D: “Strategic Actions for Implementation”. Strategic actions in their essence could not have a quality of a checklist;

-section D.1: the status of anti-fire organization plan and nature management plan on the same territory can come out from the following: nature management plan must take into account all anti-fire limitations;

-section D.1.1: “All plans and actions... must correspond to institutional structure” - but not in Russia;

-section D.1.2: “regeneration of ecosystems after fires” – financially this is very costly, and technically – unlikely. It is more right to talk of territory rehabilitation;

-section D.1.4: all that is written here must be in special plans of anti-fire organization of the territory.

Some requirements to restoration of ecosystems can be considered only theoretically. Practically to restore ecosystem in its original condition never realized.

9. Lack of section “Final conclusions” raise the feeling of incompleteness of the document.

10. Organizationally, the more productive in introduction the document, is the following scheme:

-elaboration on the basis of the Code the document draft “Basics of fire management in forests”;

-conclusion on its base intergovernmental Agreements on forest fire management;

-completion and realization of Fire Management Code.

Prof. Ostroshenko (Primorski State Academy of Agriculture) underscored the necessity to pay more attention to informational and enlightening activities relating population taking into account interests, age, culture, indigenous experience. She thinks it is possible to introduce in

education a speciality “chief of fire suppression” , simultaneously with providing safety of fire men much resources must be devoted to their equipment in accord with climatic peculiarities, and possibility to exit into secure zones, take care for legal status of fire liquidators. There must be a special section on specificity of the regions and fire behavior deviations in them. **Dr. Ryabkova V.A.** (Medical and Biological Center) proposed a wide, even worldwide, investigation of forest fire impact on the population health, securing the **compensation** to population to cover caused harm by forest fires to health and property; it is important to undertake the investigation of remote consequences of fires on liquidators’ health and foresee the compensation of caused harm as a result in participation in fire suppression. **Dr. Davidenko E.P.** (Avialesookhrana) called upon to make accent on fire peculiarities in the regions, search for new ideas in technical and managerial solution of the problems. In many cases specialists (human factor), time, machines, communication, distance, weather, type of vegetation and landscape are the most decisive factors. To use this Code as a base and for guiding, many questions must be solved. But they are not solved and still we do not know how to solve them. However, it is a step forward to understand what is needed, how to rely upon possible measures and ways out. **Prof. Sheshukov M.A.** (Far East Forestry Research Institute) produced some comments on the title and terminology of the Code. It is of great importance to find a common understanding and approach with the assistance of commonly understand terminology. There is a need to work hard on terminology with establishing a group of experts including Russian specialists. FAO could fully support this proposal from the organizational and financial point of view. **Prof. Sapozhnikov A.P.** said that Russia today takes 25 percent of world forest resources including pristine forests. It is a hope of mankind relating the atmosphere, wood, water, soil and many other resources. More than 3 million people directly work in the forest sector. It is significant to attract such a power in introducing and implementation of the Code as well as rely upon the opinion of these people. The Code must consider the specificity of Russia, its system of forestry management and positive examples of the work on forest fire suppression. **Mr. Grechko A.G.** (Far East Air Base of Forest Protection) informed that Russia has a great number of normative acts, manuals, books and other materials regulating and considering forest fire questions but authors of the Code did not use this material and never mentioned anyone from Russian specialist. That means only one thing – that the accumulated experience and the problems of Russia have not been taken into account while elaborating the Code. It is a mistake. And thus not all universal proposals given in the Code are suitable for Russia. **Prof. Vyvodtsev N.V.** (Pacific State University) assumed that main ideas of the Code, its

directions, tasks, recommendations on fire management must be clarified with the help of a series of seminars and workshops (courses) which can bring a useful effect (beginning from October 2007 after the end of fire season in Russia). This system of courses must be planned in advance and conducted first of all in fire danger and plentiful forest regions of Russia, like Khabarovsk Territory, Yakutia, Irkutsk Region, Krasnoyarsk Territory, Arkhangelsk Region. Please, imagine that the territory of only Russian Far East is 6.2 million km² with billions m³ of wood to be managed. It is useful to single out the fire management on steep slopes. Conclusions on changes of land use are extremely narrow. It is crucial problem in Russia. **Dr. Pankratova N.N.** (Far East Forestry Research Institute) proposed to choose catastrophic fires and consider them from the economic point of view. Frankly speaking, the economic part of the Code is not very strong. There are so many questions. Frequently money can advance or stop the introduction of very perspective. The economic foundation or mechanism of introducing the Code all over the world must be thought in details. **Dr. Sokolova** (Institute of Water and Ecological Problems Academy of Sciences) said that in principle this Code can be used everywhere and it is intended to be used in this manner. Thus, many details and evident and clear questions must be omitted since they are narrowing the Code implication. **Ms. Doroshenko A.M.** (Institute of Complex Regional Analysis Academy of Sciences) make accent of transborder fire cases and their consequences. They are an item of attention of several states from the aspect of suppression resources use and consequences, losses, etc. As well, there must be a feedback system the Code implementation monitoring. Plus, there is a need a working group investigating and comparing the results of this Code introduction. When FAO will get the response from all over the world what will it do with all these materials? They must be analyzed, comparing and fully represented to the world community.

In the final discussion the participants of the network meeting recommended that in Section A.5 "Implementation" there should be a clear statement of the explicit role of the UNISDR Global Wildland Fire Network and the Regional Wildland Fire Networks in the process of implementation. The Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) shall play a role in the monitoring process of implementation.

The participants of the Conference and the Meeting expressed the gratitude to organizers (GFMC, Global Wildland Fire Network, Pacific Forest Forum) and FAO for the opportunity to consider in details such an important document as Fire Management Code. It is very significant for Russian specialists to be the part of international community and to share the ideas of international cooperation. The participants acknowledged the necessity of further work on the document and the mechanism of its implementation as well as organization of a

series of workshops to train both specialists and public. The participants expressed their readiness to further take part in public discussions and new documents elaboration.