



REPORT
on the
Foundation Meeting of the UNISDR Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network
by
Sundar P. Sharma

Date: 2-3 April 2007
Place: Kathmandu, Nepal

Objective: To bring together international and regional wildland fire scientists, professionals and managers to discuss global, regional as well as national level issues and concerns of wildland fire paradigms and build a common consensus for sustainable wildland fire management in the South Asia region by providing a regional platform within the UNISDR-Global Wildland Fire Network, called Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network.



General Background and Programme of the Meeting

1. Background Information

1.1 Setting up Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network (RSAWFN)

An increasing frequency and destructive force of unwanted wildfires worldwide -- including the excessive use of fire in the conversion of forests into other land uses in the tropical countries -- is affecting human lives, health and well-being, economic assets, property, biodiversity, water resources, soil, atmosphere and climate.

Fire management strategies, which include preparedness and early warning, cannot be generalized due to the multidirectional and -dimensional effects of fire in the different vegetation types and the large variety of cultural, social, and economic factors influencing them. However, unlike the majority of the geological and hydro-meteorological hazards, wildfires represent a natural but predominantly human-influenced hazard, which can be predicted, controlled and, in many cases, prevented.

The current state of wildland fire science and atmospheric sciences research of the last two decades potentially provide sufficient knowledge for fire management decision support and development of policies affecting the occurrence and consequences of human-caused fires. However, in many countries

or localities, the requisite knowledge is either lacking or is not readily accessible for developing adequate measures in fire policies and management.

In response to the strategic goals of the UN Convention on Combat of Desertification (CCD), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF), the Millennium Declaration of the UN General Assembly, and the objectives of the work of the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the UN-ISDR Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction in 2001 established a Working Group on Wildland Fire (WG-4). This Working Group was coordinated by the GFMC.

One of the priority fields addressed by the Working Group on Wildland Fire was the establishment of, and operational procedures for, a global network of regional- to national-level focal points and network structures for early warning of wildland fire, fire monitoring and impact assessment, aimed at enhancing existing global fire monitoring capabilities and facilitation of a global fire management working programme or network.

The UNISDR Global Wildland Fire Network was created in 2002 and is recognized as an activity of UNISDR since 2003. GFMC is serving as secretariat of the Global Wildland Fire Network and the Wildland Fire Advisory Group of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR).

At the 2nd meeting of UNISDR Working Group on Wildland Fire (WG-4) (3-4 December 2001) it was decided to give priority to the establishment of the "Global Network of Regional Wildland Fire Networks".

The strategy agreed by the International Wildland Fire Summit (Sydney, 3-6 and 8 October 2003) ("Strategy for Future Development of International Cooperation in Wildland Fire Management") includes the following agreement:

"The Regional Wildland Fire Networks will be consolidated, developed and promoted through active networking in information sharing, capacity building, preparation of bilateral and multilateral agreements, etc. This process will be facilitated through regional Wildland Fire Conferences and Summits in cooperation with the International Liaison Committee and the UN-ISDR Working Group on Wildland Fire".

At the first meeting of UN-ISDR Wildland Fire Advisory Group / Global Wildland Fire Network (3-4 December 2004) it was recommended to endorse the ISDR Global Wildland Fire Network and official recognition of Regional Wildland Fire Networks under the auspices of the United Nations ISDR, FAO, and GFMC, among others; to instrumentalize the networks as effective platforms for dialogue and communication to achieve a level of mutual cooperation and synergy within regions, between regions, as well as between the Rio conventions UNCCD, UNCBD, and UNFCCC; and to support the Regional Wildland Fire Networks.

This foundation of the Regional South Asia (SA) Wildland Fire Network is in line with several declarations made in international conferences and summits, *inter alia* the Declaration of the Tenth South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit Colombo 1998 on Environment and the decision made in the meetings of UN-ISDR Working Group on Wildland Fire, UNISDR Wildland Fire Advisory Group / Global Wildland Fire Network during the last five years and is intended to bring together both the technical members of the fire community and the authorities concerned with policy and national practices in wildland fire management to realize their common interests of fire risk management and disaster reduction at global scale.

Following discussions with representatives from Nepal and India in 2006 and earlier offers by the Department of Forests, Nepal is recognized as the convener of the network by the UNISDR Wildland Fire Advisory Group / Global Wildland Fire Network.

1.2 Vision, Mission and Goals of a Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network

The vision of this regional network is to enhance and strengthen bilateral / multilateral and international cooperation in wildland fire management for creating synergies and sharing knowledge, technical and human resources between countries in the region by accepting and promoting principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures within a guiding framework agreed upon by individual countries.

Mechanisms of cooperation in wildland fire management in the region will include:

- Bilateral / multilateral cooperation between two or more countries at national level within the region: This type of cooperation generally includes mechanisms for assistance in major emergencies to respond to disaster-scale wildfires, and technical assistance in specific cases. Cooperation should be extended to other areas of wildland fire management, such as wildland fire prevention, establishment of common databases, joint regional training programmes, etc.
- International (including inter-regional) between international donors and countries in the region: This type of cooperation will require financial and technical assistance mechanisms. Other elements of international cooperation may include the development of strategies, guidelines, norms and rules that would require least additional finances.

The Regional Strategy on Cooperation in Wildland Fire Management will give priority to:

- Develop bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms.
- Reach consensus by participating countries on agreed principles, norms, rules and decision making procedures in wildland fire management.
- Create an enabling atmosphere for international cooperation in wildland fire research and management, including international donors.

The mission of the Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network is to facilitate the enhancement of local, national and regional fire management capabilities by creating synergies of participating scientists, managers and policy makers in accordance with the mandate and scope of the Global Wildland Fire Network and in collaboration with managers, policy makers, technical experts, and scientists throughout the region and worldwide.

Particular emphasis will be given to reduce the devastating effects of wildfires on property, resources, health, and the environment. The Regional Network will initiate processes and systems of information management and dissemination and facilitate technology transfer with the aim to help prevent and mitigate these effects. The working group will contribute to strengthen institutional fire management capabilities and to bring the world's knowledge and technical expertise to communities suffering the devastating unnatural and unwanted impacts of wildfires.

Long-term goals include:

- Support the development of national policies
- Support sustainable cooperation between countries of the region
- Strengthen the Regional South Asian Wildland Fire Network
- Support the development and implementation of a global strategy and / or the development of an international agreement on cooperation in wildland fire management

The mid-term goals include:

- Provide a forum for a dialogue between governments, national focal points, NGO's, civil society, and regional and international stakeholders
- Serve as catalytic and mutually supporting link between national wildland fire strategies
- Enable sharing of resources between neighbouring countries in the region
- Reinforce national and regional technical capacities in wildland fire management

The specific objectives include:

- To contribute to the development and implementation of a national and regional organizational framework with principles, alignments, procedures and technical-operational formats agreed upon between the countries
- To favour the development and strengthening of national fire management policies and strategies and in keeping with the same, improved legal frameworks regarding the issue
- To establish a fire information system available, standardized and agreed between the countries of the region to support decision making
- To develop early fire detection systems to enable prompt fire detection and to improve response time in an effective, organized, and safe manner leading to the minimization of effects on countries in the region
- To develop national emergency control cooperation between countries of the region
- To support sustainable cooperation between the countries of the region based on a concerted strategy and bilateral or multilateral programmes agreed to in terms of fire prevention, training, extension and research
- To create an early wildland fire warning systems at local, national, and regional levels
- To establish and maintain a regional network information system on the internet
- To support an establishment or improvement of Integrated Fire Management Systems with emphasis on community participation
- To facilitate transnational synergies in wildland fire research and technology development with regard to fire science and to streamline technology transfer
- To increase / improve access – and the use of – remote sensing and related technology for use in fire monitoring, fuel and fire management planning and wildfire impact assessment
- To assist in wildfire disaster management and mitigation
- To facilitate capacity building at all levels of fire management
- To promote communication between wildland fire disciplines of Asia and from other continents, under the umbrella of the GFMC
- To establish and maintain linkage with GOFC/ GOLD.

1.3 Proposal for Structured Activities of the Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network

The themes listed below are candidates for the formation of sub-groups or clusters of activities:

- Network Coordination
- Country Focal Points and network members
 - *Regularly updated list on the web, members receive circular mails regularly*
- Wildland Fire Early Warning
- Wildland Fire Monitoring
 - *Linkage with the GOFC/GOLD Regional Fire Implementation Team*
- Wildland Fire Management
- Wildland Fire Science
- Wildland Fire Capacity Building
 - *Regional Training Center (joint venture with GFMC)*
- Wildland Fire Policy and Legislation

1.4 The Political Dimension of Regional Cooperation

It is essential to attain political commitment and support at the national, regional and international level to accomplish the goals of the network and to provide the basis for creating permanent bilateral / multilateral and international cooperation in wildland fire management in the region.

At the national level it is important that the individual countries of the region will adopt the regional strategy as well as the role and mandate of the Regional Wildland Fire Network. Some of the activities addressed by the strategy might require bilateral or multilateral cooperation agreements. Others might require informal agreements between countries (agencies, institutions, individual scientists). Preferably the informal agreements should receive official support and adoption by national government agencies. Strengthening or establishment of national structures / capabilities in fire management are prerequisite for efficient cooperation between countries and organizations.

At the regional level it is necessary that the mandated regional institutions or cooperation mechanisms will incorporate the regional strategies (for example SAARC), as well as the Regional Wildland Fire Networks, within their structure and the implementation of their overall work programmes.

At the international level institutions and organizations (for example UNISDR, UNEP, FAO, GFMC, GTZ, World Bank, etc.) must be encouraged to provide financial and technical assistance.

2. Aim of the Foundation Meeting of the Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network

The main aim of the foundation meeting is to bring together international and regional wildland fire scientists, professionals and managers to discuss on global, regional as well as national level issues and concerns of wildland fire paradigms and build a common consensus for sustainable wildland fire management in the region.

3. Auspices

Following the continuous discussions among national focal points in the region with the secretariat of UNISDR Working Group on Wildland Fire / UN-ISDR Wildland Fire Advisory Group / Global Wildland Fire Network, the meeting was held under the auspices of the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC).

4. Venue and Date

The foundation meeting was held in the premises of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Kathmandu, Nepal, 2-3 April 2007. A timetable is provided in Annex A.

5. Target Audience / Participants

Representatives from the region, notably those who are already actively involved in the regional network building processes and having a long experience in wildland fire management and/or forest protection, were invited to contribute to the meeting. A list of participants (registered) is provided in Annex B.



6. Reporting of the Meeting

Nepal has shown interest in the wildland fire management in the region for a decade. There has been a continuous correspondence between Prof. Dr. Johann G. Goldammer from Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) and Mr. Sundar P Sharma from Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Nepal during the period.

The Foundation meeting was previously planned for 2005 and finally materialized in April 2007. The meeting was funded by the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC), cosponsored by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and assisted by the Nepal GIS Society (NEGISS), Agro-Farm Foresters' Association Nepal (AFFAN) and the Center for Biological Conservation Nepal.

A National Organizing Committee was formed for planning and organizing the meeting. The list of the members is given in Annex C.

The programme started with the self-introduction among the participants. The meeting was chaired by the Chairman of the National Organizing Committee, Mr. Gopal Sherchan, and opened by the chief guest Prof. Dr. Johann G. Goldammer. The meeting was facilitated by Mr. Sundar P Sharma, Coordinator of the Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network.

Mr. Sharma highlighted the need of the network to enhance and to strengthen international cooperation and collaborative action to address the issues of wildland fire in the South Asian region. He also gave emphasis on outreach programmes and capacity development of the professionals and the communities at the local and regional level. He briefed the aim, agenda and programme of the meeting. The text of the speech is available in the proceedings of the meeting.

Mr. Sherchan delivered the welcome speech on behalf of the National Organizing Committee (cf. proceedings of the meeting).

Prof. Dr. Goldammer formally opened the meeting by dropping the swathe and highlighted the status of the Global Wildland Fire Network. He emphasized the need for development of strategies for bilateral / multilateral cooperation and collaboration between two or more countries within the region and at the global level to address the disaster issues. He also highlighted the status of the Global Wildland Fire Network with comprehensive elaboration of existing regional wildland fire networks (cf. proceedings of the meeting).

Dr Madhav Karki, Deputy Director General of the ICIMOD delivered the key note speech on the occasion. He accentuated the issues on forest fires in the Hindu Kush-Himalaya region. He critically analysed and delivered the current forest fire situation in the region and highlighted the issues on forest fires in the Hindu Kush-Himalaya region. He also highlighted the need for empowering communities and professionals and holistic approach to address the fire problem. He appreciated to launching the regional wildland fire network and gave emphasis on information sharing. The speech is given in the proceedings of the meeting.



Mr. Kabir Udin, GIS Specialist, ICIMOD (invited guest from **Bangladesh**), highlighted the general fire situation in the country.



Mr. Sundar P Sharma from the Department Water Induced Disaster Prevention, Ministry of Water Resources of **Nepal**, presented the country report (cf. proceedings of the meeting).



At the end of the opening session, Mr. Pradeep Mani Dixit, Secretary of the National Organizing Committee, gave the vote of thanks.



In the second day of the meeting, line-by-line discussion of the draft Kathmandu Declaration was held. Comments and suggestions from the participants were incorporated into the declaration.



Dr. Keshav R. Kanel, Director General from the Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, read the agreed 'Kathmandu Declaration'. The Declaration is given in Annex D.

Mr. Gopal Sherchan gave the closing remarks of the foundation meeting.



Field trip to Godavari Community Forest, Lalitpur

The field trip provided an opportunity for interaction with executive and general members of the "Users Group" with the delegates of the meeting. The "Users Group" requested assistance for training and other support, e.g. fire fighting tools. Mr. Lok Raj Nepal, Forest Officer and Mr. Jhamak B. Karki, Ranger from the Range Office, accompanied the discussion and the field trip.

The participants also visited to the experimental plots of the ICIMOD in Godavari.

A photo album of the meeting and the field trip is provided in the proceedings of the meeting.

The event was well covered by the national TV channels and printed media.

http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/media/2007/04/news_20070405_ne.htm



For detail visit the website of the Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network:

http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/GlobalNetworks/South_Asia/Front_RSAWFN.html

ANNEX A: Time table

Day 1: Monday 2 April 2007

- 10:00 – 10:15 Registration
10:15 – 10:30 Introduction
- 10:30 – 10:35 The agenda and programme for the meeting (Mr. Sundar Sharma, Regional Coordinator)
10:35 – 10:40 Welcome speech (Mr. Gopal Sherchan, Chairman, National Organizing Committee)
10:40 – 11:30 Opening and Status of the Global Wildland Fire Network (Prof. Dr. Johann G. Goldammer)
- 11:30 – 11:35 Key note remarks (Dr. Madhav Karki, DDG, ICIMOD)
11:35 – 11:40 Key note remarks (Mr. Jamuna Tamrakar, Chief Foreign Aid Division, MoFSC)
- 11:40 – 12:00 Coffee
- 12:00 – 12:20 Country report India
12:20 – 12:40 Country report Sri Lanka
- 12:40 – 13:40 Lunch at ICIMOD Canteen
- 13:40 – 14:00 Country report Bhutan
14:00 – 14:10 General fire situation in Bangladesh
14:10 – 14:30 Country report Nepal
14:30 – 14:40 Vote of Thanks
14:40 - Coffee
End of the day

Day 2: Tuesday 3 April 2007

Technical Session

- 09:00 -- 11:00 General discussion for future strategies and draft preparation of "Kathmandu Declaration"
11:10 – 11:15 Announcement of the Kathmandu Declaration (JG/ GS/ SK/ PD/ SS)
11:15 – 11:20 Closing Remarks (Chair)
11:15 – Field trip to nearby forests (Godavari)
18:30 – 20:30 Closing Dinner at Hotal Himalaya, Kupondol, Lalitpur

ANNEX B: List of Registered Participants

Resource Persons

GFMC, GERMANY

Prof. Dr. Johann G. Goldammer
The Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC)
Georges-Koehler-Allee 75
D - 79110 Freiburg
Germany
Tel: +49-761-808011
Fax: +49-761-808012
E-mail: johann.goldammer@fire.uni-freiburg.de

INDIA

Dr. Ravi Chellam
Director & Senior Fellow
Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology & the Environment (ATREE)
659, 5th 'A' Main Road, Hebbal,
Bangalore 560024
India

Tel: +91 80 64509854
Fax: +91 80 23530070
E-mail: ravi.chellam@atree.org

BHUTAN

Kinley Tshering
Forest Fire Management Program
Social Forestry Division
Department of Forests
Thimphu : Bhutan
E-mail: kinleytshering@gmail.com

SRI LANKA

Mr. HWK Jayatilake
Asst. Conservator of Forests
"Sampathpaya"
82, Rajamalwatta Road
Battaramulla, Sri Lanka

Tel: +94-1-866635
Fax: +94-1-866633
E-mail: wasanthkjaya@hotmail.com

NEPAL (HOST COUNTRY)

1 Achrya, Mr. M.P.
District Forest Officer
DFO, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: +977-1-4444948

- 2 Achrya, Mr. Madhav
Tribhuban University, Nepal
Tel: +977-1-4228436
- 3 Adhikari, Mr. Kiran
Communication Corner, Nepal
Tel: +977-9841307884
E-mail: kiran_sadhikari@yahoo.com
- 4 Adhikari, Mr. Madhav
Nepal GIS Society
Tel: +977-9841318833
E-mail: geomatics@enet.com.np
- 5 Baral, Mr. N.R.
COMFORTC
Nepal
Tel: +977-14475115
E-mail: navraj-baral@yahoo.com
- 6 Basnet, Ms. Sanju
Nepal GIS Society (Volunteer)
Tel: +977-9841498911
E-mail: sanju-basnet@hotmail.com
- 7 Bhatta, Mr. Divya Dev
Director General, Department of Forests, Nepal
Tel: +977-9851031322
E-mail: dd_bhatta@yahoo.com
- 8 Bhattarai, Mr. Manohar K.
HLCIT/ NEGISS, Nepal
Tel: +977-9851089259
E-mail: manohar_ks@wlink.com.np
- 9 Chaudhari, Mr. Rampukar
Communication Corner, Nepal
Tel: +977-9845037637
E-mail: affanrautahat@ntc.net.np
- 10 Dangol, Mr. Kabindra
Nepal GIS Society (Volunteer)
- 11 Dhakal, Mr. Dipendra Purus
NCWM, Nepal
Tel: +977-1-5530668
E-mail: dipendra@mail.com.np

- 12 Dixit, Mr. Pradeepmani
Executive Director
Agro-Farm Foresters' Association Nepal (AFFAN)
GPO Box 2303
Kathmandu
Nepal

Tel: +977-1-4412053
E-mail: pradeepmani@yahoo.com
- 13 Haque, Mr. M.
46/12 New Baneshor, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: +977-1-4494964
E-mail: mrhaque@wlink.com.np
- 14 Jodha, Mr. N.S.
ICIMOD, Nepal
Tel: +977-1-50002318
E-mail: njodha@icimod.org
- 15 Joshi, Mr. Govinda
ICIMOD, Nepal
Tel: +977-1-5003222
E-mail: gjoshi@icimod.org.np
- 16 K.C. Ms. Kokila
The Himalayan Times, Nepal (Media)
Tel: +977-1-4770504
E-mail: kokkhadka@hotmail.com
- 17 Kandel, Ms. Ambika
Bishalnagar, Nepal
Tel: +977-4432447
E-mail: ambica2006@hotmail.com
- 18 Kanel, Dr. Keshav R.
Director General
Dept. of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management, Nepal
Tel: +977-1-4432447
E-mail: keshavkanel@yahoo.com
- 19 Karkee, Dr. Madhav
Deputy Director General
ICIMOD, Nepal
Tel: +977-1-5003727
E-mail: mkarki@icimod.org.np
- 20 Karkee, Ms. Krishna
AFFAN, Nepal
E-mail: kkarkee@hotmail.com
- 22 Karki, Ms. Alina
Nepal GIS Society (Volunteer)
Tel: +977-1-4476837
E-mail: aalinakarki@yahoo.com

- 23 Kharel, Mr. Bhawani P.
IUCN, Nepal
Tel: +977-1-5528761
E-mail: bhawani@iucn.org.np
- 24 Kunwar, Mr. Ripu
CBC, Nepal
E-mail: rkunwar@gmail.com
- 25 Mallik, Prof. A.K.
Dean
Institute of Forestry (IOF), Pokhara, Nepal
Tel: +977-61-430563
E-mail: iofdean@fewanet.com.np
- 26 Paudel, Dr. K.C.
Director General,
Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Nepal
E-mail: kcpaudel@hotmail.com
- 27 Paudel, Mr. Shishir
Himalayan Journal of Sciences (HimASS)
Tel: +977-1-5542489
E-mail: paudelshishir@gmail.com
- 28 Poudel, Mr. Kirtinath
National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), Nepal
Tel: +977-1-5526571
E-mail: kirti@hotmail.com
- 29 Pyakuryal, Mr. P.N.
Districy Forest Officer
DFO, Lalitpur, Nepal
Tel: +977-1-5525559
E-mail: pnpyakuryal@yahoo.com
- 30 Rana, Mr. C.J.
AFFAN, Nepal
Tel: +977-9841481334
E-mail: florian@mail.com.np
- 31 Sharma, Mr. Srawan
CESOD, Nepal
Tel: +977-1-4219374
E-mail: cesod@ntc.net.np
- 32 Sharma, Mr. Sundar P.
Department of Water Induced Disaster Prevention (DWIDP), Nepal
Tel: +49-761-808011
Fax: +49-761-808012
Mob: +49-17665377482
+977-9841311069/
Email: sharmasp1966@yahoo.com

- 33 Sherchan, Mr. Gopal
UNDP-GEF/SGP
Tel: +977-1-5000119
E-mail: grsherchan@wlink.com.np
- 34 Shrestha, Mr. Basanta
ICCIMOD, Nepal
Tel: +977-1-5003222
- 35 Shrestha, Mr. Kumud
Nepal Foresters' Association
Tel: +977-1-4785293
E-mail: nfa@mail.com.np
- 36 Shrestha, Mr. Suresh
Gorkha FM, Nepal (Media)
- 37 Tamrakar, Mr. J.K.
Chief, Foreign Aid Division, Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, Nepal
Tel: +977-1-4223862
E-mail: jktamrakar@info.com.np
- 38 Yadava, Mr. Birendra P.
AFFAN, Nepal
Tel: +977-9845059005
E-mail: affanrautahat@ntc.net.np
- 39 Yadhav, Mr. J.N.
Institute of Forestry (IOF), Hetauda, Nepal
Tel: +977-57-523365
E-mail: fyadhavjn@yahoo.com

ANNEX C: Members of the National Foundation Meeting Organising Committee Nepal

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| 1 | Sherchan, Mr. Gopal R.
UNDP-GEF/SGP
Tel: +977-1-5000119
Email: grsherchan@wlink.com.np | Chairman |
| 2 | Dixit, Mr. Pradeepmani
AFFAN, Nepal
Tel: +977-1-4412053
E-mail: pradeepmani@yahoo.com | Secretary |
| 3 | Baral, Mr. N.R. COMFORTC, Nepal
Tel: +977-14475115
E-mail: navraj-baral@yahoo.com | Member |
| 4 | Joshi, Mr. Govinda
ICIMOD, Nepal
Tel: +977-1-5003222
E-mail: gjoshi@icimod.org.np | Member |
| 5 | Kafle, Mr. Shesh K.
Program Manager
Disaster Preparedness Program
Tsunami Recovery Operations
Canadian Red Cross
Banda Aceh 23239
Indonesia
Cell: +62 (0) 8126991283
E-mail: shesh.kafle@redcross.ca | Member |
| 6 | Karkee, Ms. Krishna
AFFAN, Nepal
E-mail: kkarkee@hotmail.com | Member |
| 7 | Kunwar, Mr. Ripu
CBC, Nepal
E-mail: rkunwar@gmail.com | Member |
| 8 | Rana, Mr. C.J.
AFFAN, Nepal
Tel: +977-9841481334
E-mail: florian@mail.com.np | Member |
| 9 | Sharma, Mr. Sundar P.
Department of Water Induced Disaster Prevention (DWIDP), Nepal
Tel: +49-761-808011
Fax: +49-761-808012
Cell: +49-17665377482
+977-9841311069/
E-mail: sharmasp1966@yahoo.com | Member |

ANNEX D: 'Kathmandu Declaration 2007' of the Foundation Meeting of the Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network, 2-3 April 2007, Kathmandu Nepal



UN-ISDR Wildland Fire Advisory Group / Global Wildland Fire Network
**Coordinator and Secretariat: Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC),
Freiburg, Germany**



Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network

Foundation Meeting "Fire and Livelihoods in the South Asian Region"
Kathmandu Nepal, 2 to 3 April 2007

Kathmandu Declaration

The foundation meeting for the UNISDR Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network under the auspices of the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) and within the UNISDR Global Wildland Fire Network, funded by the GFMC and hosted by Nepal, was successfully held in Kathmandu, Nepal, 2-3 April 2007. Participants from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka attended and contributed to the meeting.

The participants of the foundation meeting of Regional South Asia Wildland Fire Network:

Aiming at enhancing existing regional capability in fire management, including monitoring, early warning and impact assessment, and facilitating international cooperation in wildland fire management;

Recognizing the values of forests as providers of economic, social, and ecological benefits and environmental services to humankind globally;

Recognizing the region has diverse ecosystems, socio-economic and cultural settings and forest types resulting from a wide range of land-use systems and climate consequently having diverse fire regimes and vulnerabilities;

Recognizing the importance of information sharing, technology transfer with collaborative efforts for transboundary haze pollution reduction, establishing upstream-downstream linkages within the greater Hindu Kush - Himalayan region for reduction of negative impacts caused by wildfires;

Recognizing that not all fires are destructive and that fire management is an essential part in ecosystem management;

Being concerned that fire-induced vegetation degradation has resulted in reduction of carbon in forests in Asia in the last decades and that appropriate measures of fire management, including the application of prescribed burning, will contribute to an increase in carbon sequestration in the long run;

Noting the high expectations from sustainable vegetation cover, which provide goods and services including non-wood forest products and recreation, maintains biological diversity, mitigates the consequences of climate change, conserves watersheds, improves air quality and helps to reduce poverty through livelihood support to rural populations;

Recognizing social and cultural traditions and traditional knowledge related to the use of fire in reducing the incidence and impact of wildfires; the need to improve prediction, prevention, monitoring, rapid response to emergencies and restoration following fires; the need to use planned fires for reducing fuels and wildfire, for silvicultural purposes and habitat management; and the need to increase capacities of local communities with reference to their resistance and resilience to fires;

Recognizing community-based fire management and the need for institutional and technological capability development at all levels,

Recognizing the international instruments particularly the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, 1992), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 1992), Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (RAMSAR, 1971), Tribal Peoples Convention (International Labour Organization – ILO, 1989), International Plant Protection Convention (FAO, 1951, revised 1997), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD, 1994), International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTO, 1994);

Supporting the Declaration of the Tenth SAARC Summit Colombo 1998 on Environment;

Supporting the development of a non-legally binding instrument under the auspices of the United Nations Forum on Forest (UNFF); as well as the International Strategy to Enhance International Cooperation in Fire Management, including the Fire Management Voluntary Guidelines in accordance with the recommendations by FAO-COFO / Ministerial Meeting 2005, and FAO-COFO 2007;

Agreeing on outcomes of the International Wildland Fire Summit 2003.

Supporting the objectives of work / terms of references of the UN-ISDR Wildland Fire Advisory Group / Global Wildland Fire Network and Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC);

Expressing the intent to prevail over current gaps and problems in wildland fire management in prevention, preparedness, suppression, response and relief, rescue, and recovery and rehabilitation measures, integration of socio-cultural, economic, environmental considerations and institutions in developing policies and practices related to wildland fire, consistent information and statistics about fires, their causes and their effects, integration of fire as a component of land use and forest management, integrated community-based approaches to fire management, capability in the appropriate use of fire (for example, prescribed burning for fuel reduction and habitat management), capability in the safe and efficient use of resources for fire suppression (for example, appropriate equipment for fire suppression, wildland fire safety), capability in remote sensing, Geographical Information System and use of satellite imageries for wildland fire management, development and use of community-based fire hazard mapping, adaptive measures in the fire disaster;

Expressing interest in partnering and assisting in human resource development, institutional development, developing facilities and improving research tools and fire management and monitoring at regional and global levels

Expressing gratitude to the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) for the funds provided for this meeting;

Acknowledging the efforts and leadership of the UN-ISDR Wildland Fire Advisory Group / Global Wildland Fire Network through its Coordinator and Secretariat, the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC), in the wildland fire management arena within the region and internationally;

Recommend to governments, international organizations, non-government organizations and civil society the following action plan for cooperation at bilateral and multilateral levels on wildland fire research and management in South Asia:

- Stress on national focus and technical resource development for sustainable wildland fire management programme;

- Stress on national policy development and institutional set up for dealing with all wildland fire issues;
- Encourage countries to estimate the impacts of wildland fires;
- Conduct assessment and research on wildland fire outbreaks, suppression, ecology and management;
- Stress on development and improvement of national legal frameworks, resource generation and allocation and law enforcement;
- Stress on strategy formulation, fire management plan development and programme implementation;
- Give emphasis on improvement of community-based fire management and institutional and technological capabilities at all levels;
- Develop appropriate fire fighting tools;
- Conduct campaigns to raise the awareness about wildland fires in all sections of the society;
- Enhance cooperation amongst the countries for sharing technology and data;
- Incorporate wildland fire management courses in disaster management curricula at school and college level education specially in natural resource management courses;
- Encourage and endorse the use of FAO's Fire Management Voluntary Guidelines 2006;
- Develop guidelines in fire management at all levels;
- Conduct a first Regional Advanced Wildland Fire Management Training Course not later than 2008, based on experiences in other regions;
- Participate in the 4th International Wildland Fire Conference, Sevilla, Spain (May 2007);
- Convene the first regional network conference not later than 2008;
- Request FAO / GFMC support to conduct "National Assessments on Wildland Fire" within the region;
- Request FAO Technical Development Project (TCP) and/or other donors on "Development of a Regional South Asia Strategy for International Cooperation in Wildland Fire Management", preferably to be conducted before 2008;
- Seek support from all possible donors including national, international, bi-lateral, multi-lateral and private foundations for financial, technical and other resource support to accomplish the above tasks.