FORUM: Environmental Commission

QUESTION OF: Measures to Protect Forest Environment and Ecosystem from Wildfires

MAIN SUBMITTER: The Kingdom of Norway

CO-SUBMITTERS: United States of America, Central African Republic, the Russian Federation, People's Republic of China, Republic of Paraguay, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, French Republic, The Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Colombia, The Republic of Zambia,

THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION,

*Acknowledging* the increasing frequency and severity of wildfires worldwide,

*Deeply concerned* about the devastating effects the forest wildfires have on the ecosystem including the deterioration of air quality due to the emission of significant amounts of hazardous chemicals,

*Be aware* that approximately 85% of the nearly 100,000 wildland fires that afflict North America each year are caused by human activity. In addition, between 1992 and 2012, man-made fires tripled the length of North America's fire season, from 46 to 154 days,

*Recognizing* the loss of vegetation caused by wildfires leads to adverse impacts on decreased soil stability, water quality, habit structure, and biodiversity, which can increase erosion, decrease nutrient availability in soil, heighten the danger of disease and pest infestations, and cause animal ecological unbalance,

*Noting* the significant economic costs incurred due to wildfires, including loss of agricultural productivity, and increased expenditure on firefighting and recovery efforts,

*Further Noting* the negative consequences of wildfire on human health, as the hazardous smoke and pollutants released can cause respiratory problems and illnesses,

*Recognizing* the critical role of forests in maintaining ecological and environmental balance in mitigating climate change, as wildfires release a large amount of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere,

*Highlighting* the vulnerability of communities near fire-prone areas, their increased self-danger,

*Recognizing* that wildfire is mainly caused by lightning (causes approximately 60% of wildfires), and Human activity (causes approximately 40% of wildfires),

*Noting* that since1983, the National Interagency Fire Center has documented an average of approximately 70,000 wildfires per year in the US,

*Further noting* that over 6.6 million hectares of tree cover were lost to forest fires in 2022 globally,

1. Encourages the creation of a national task force or working group to coordinate strategies for protecting forests, combating wildfires, and promoting sustainable developments such as but not limited to:
2. Bringing together government agencies such as the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), experts, and communities to develop effective measures for forest protection by,
   * 1. establishing laws and policies that citizens follow in order to reduce the amount of wildfire cases caused by human activities,
     2. using experts' best practices, and analyze collected data, to promote sustainable developments,
3. Implementing comprehensive wildfire prevention and preparedness, such as but not limited to,
   * 1. enhancing early warning systems, surveillance, and monitoring technologies to detect and respond to wildfires promptly,
     2. strengthening firefighting capabilities, including the availability of firefighting equipment, aerial support, and trained personnel,
     3. improving land-use planning and implementing fire-resistant building codes in fire-prone areas,
     4. promoting research and innovation in wildfire prevention, early detection, and firefighting techniques;
4. Urges all nations in collaboration with governments in establishing and strengthening the policy against wildfire through ways such as but not limited to:
   1. Restriction on specific times when citizens are limited to the amount of campfire and debris burning, especially during dry or drought periods when the risk of wildfires is high, such as but not limited to,
      1. citizens getting permission or a license to have campfires or burn debris. This helps make sure they follow the rules, and the authorities can keep track of what's happening,
      2. instead of burning debris, finding other ways to get rid of it, like composting or recycling since this reduces the need for burning and lowers the risk of starting a wildfire,
      3. using technology to detect if someone is having a campfire or burning debris when they're not supposed to since this helps authorities respond quickly in stopping the fire from spreading,
   2. Governments collecting and gathering data on weather conditions to inform citizens when camping is available such as but not limited to,
      1. collaborating with weather organizations such as the National Weather Service (NWS) with data gathering,
      2. average of at least monthly data collection,
   3. Collaborating with firefighting departments, agencies that manage land, and community groups to make sure everyone is following the rules such as but not limited to,
      1. checking if people are complying, enforcing the rules, and teaching the public about the importance of following the restrictions,
      2. hiring a manager for every department, and agency;
5. Encourages all other member states to work with non-governmental and governmental organizations to raise public awareness on the issue of wildfire through ways such as but not limited to:
   1. Working with organizations such as The International Association of Wildland Fire (IAWF) to spread knowledge of wildfire through various ways of communication methods such as but not limited to,
      1. oral presentation in different cities, especially cities that are struggling with wildfires,
      2. newspaper and journal publication,
      3. television shows/commercials,
      4. social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), Youtube, etc,
   2. Requiring education about wildfires in schools through ways such as but not limited to,
      1. collaboration between educational organizations such as UNESCO, The National Education Association (NEA),
      2. collaboration between environmental organizations such as Greenpeace, World Wide Fund (WWF);
6. Calls upon all regions and nations to raise funds under the supervision of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to help and sponsor all nations' firefighting equipment, aerial support, training, and professional personnel such as but not limited to:
   1. Member countries of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) who are not currently actively involved in preventing wildfires or experiencing an increase in wildfires. Propose the implementation of an additional tax such as,
      1. implementing an additional tax on member countries of the CEC that are not actively engaged in wildfire prevention efforts or experiencing a significant increase in wildfires,
      2. setting the amount of tax fee based on and proportional to the amount of monthly debris burning,
      3. restricting the amount of debris burning, and countries exceeding the restricted amount must pay an extra tax fee,
   2. Soliciting donations from allied countries, individuals, and private charity fund organizations through websites or direct transactions such as but not limited to,
      1. establishing a user-friendly website to facilitate donations from allied countries, individuals, and private charity fund organizations,
      2. creating multiple channels for direct transactions to ensure ease of donating to the Norway Aiding Funds (NAF),
   3. Using funds in various ways, including but not limited to,
      1. assisting countries in building domestic infrastructure such as fire prevention camps, disaster resilience buildings, etc,
      2. allocating funds to support the construction of fire prevention camps and disaster resilience buildings in countries facing wildfire risks,
      3. ensuring that the infrastructure is equipped with the necessary firefighting equipment and resources,
   4. Providing financial support to countries in need, particularly undeveloped nations, to enhance their wildfire prevention and response capacities through ways such as but not limited to,
      1. allocating funds to support training programs, capacity building, and the provision of necessary equipment,
      2. collaborating with organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR);
7. Further encourages all nations to collaborate with NGO non-government organizations in protecting endemic species and the environment that are affected by wildfire through ways such as but not limited to:
   1. Providing financial support to initiatives by collaborations between organizations in focusing on conserving endemic species affected by wildfires such as,
      1. World Wildlife Fund (WWF),
      2. International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN),
   2. Collaborating with environmental organizations in restoring trees that have been burned down due to wildfires. This collaboration can include partnerships with environmental organizations such as,
      1. One Tree Planted,
      2. International Tree Foundation (ITF);
8. Urges member states to cooperate and facilitate international collaboration, including the sharing of expertise, resources, and technologies to strengthen global wildfire prevention and response efforts, members should do but not limited to:
   1. Facilitating the exchange of information, best practices, and lessons learned on effective wildfire prevention and response strategies through ways such as but not limited to,
      1. sharing data on successful strategies for wildfire prevention and response,
      2. documenting and disseminating lessons learned from past wildfire incidents,
      3. facilitating the exchange of information, best practices, and lessons learned on effective wildfire prevention and response strategies,
   2. Encouraging joint research and developing initiatives to advance technologies and techniques for wildfire prevention, early detection, and firefighting methods such as but not limited to,
      1. promoting collaborative research projects on innovative wildfire prevention and detection technologies,
      2. support the development of new firefighting methods and equipment through joint efforts,
   3. Promoting training programs and exchanges to enhance the skills and knowledge of personnel involved in wildfire prevention and response such as,
      1. organizing joint training programs and exercises to ensure firefighting teams from multiple countries are prepared to work together effectively during wildfire emergencies,
      2. collaborating with countries to share firefighting resources, including personnel and equipment,
      3. establishing more efficient strategies for both countries to spontaneously resolve these problems;
9. Suggests that governments employ various methods to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and mitigate the risk of wildfires. These methods may include but are not limited to:
   1. Reducing the use of vehicles for transportation, such as by implementing car usage restrictions and promoting the use of electric cars and bikes,
      1. government restricting the use of cars for several citizens on typical days to reduce carbon emissions,
      2. government reducing the cost of electric cars and bikes to encourage citizens to choose eco-friendly transportation options;
10. Urges governments to establish public services that can deal with emergency responses to wildfires, such as the Wildfire Emergency Service (WES), including but not limited to:
    1. Recruiting experienced volunteers capable of providing assistance in emergency response operations, such as,
       1. hiring experienced staff members such as United Nations workers who have past experience in environmental protection organizations,
       2. collaborating with the United Nations to train and mentor inexperienced workers to enhance their effectiveness,
       3. hiring regional representatives to each region to have a quick response to emergency situations and the consequences to the government.