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12 September 2014

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Concluding Meeting
Prague, 10-12 September 2014

Session IV

OSCE Experiences in Enhancing National Capacities in Fire Management and Wildfire Disaster Risk Reduction

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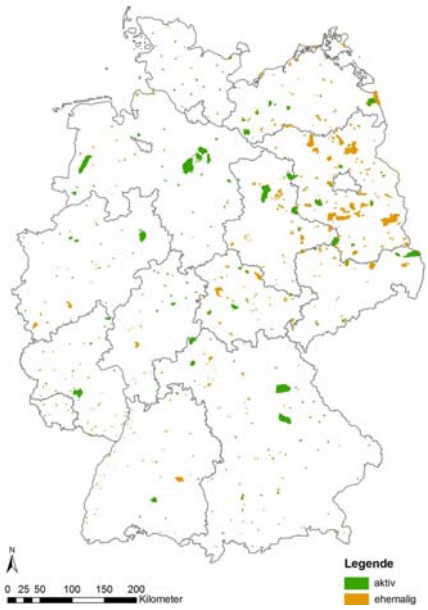
United Nations
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY

Some remarks (1) connecting the previous Session addressing "Slow-onset Natural Disasters" and (2) a perspective from the host country of the GFMC – Germany

(1) Vegetation fires are a major contributor to ecosystem degradation and slow-onset disasters

(2) GFMC is operating out of Germany, a country that is facing to deal with the heritage of past armed conflicts and the Cold War



Extent of UXO-contaminated sites in Germany

Out of the ca. 700,000 ha active and former military training sites (i.e. 2% of German territory) ca. 250,000 ha are contaminated by UXO, additionally ca. 300,000 ha former (WW-II) combat sites

Extent of UXO contamination in Germany

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“Enhancing National Capacities on Fire Management and Wildfire Disaster Risk Reduction in the South Caucasus”

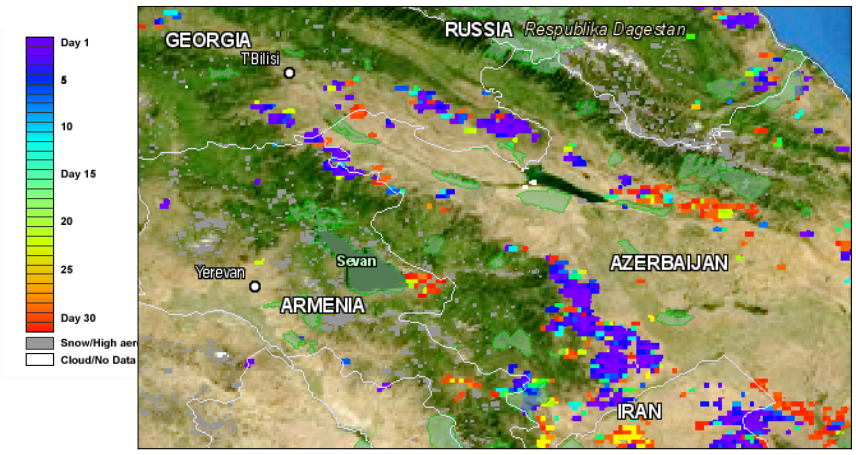
Phased project:
Phase I – initiated in 2009
Phase III – until 2015

Target countries / region

- Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia
- The greater region spanning the South Caucasus and Western Balkans

Historic Fire Assessments – Example 2010

Wildfires / land-use fires are omnipresent in the region



August 2010


Georgia 2010


Armenia 2010
OSCE
OSCE

Basics (I)

“Fire Management”: Definition

- **Prevention** of fire application and wildfires resulting in destruction or damages of ecosystem services
- **Suppression** of damaging fires
- **Avoidance** of “unnecessary” burnings
- **Use** of prescribed (controlled) management fires where fire effects are beneficial for ecosystems / land-use systems

Basics (II)

Fire management will contribute to

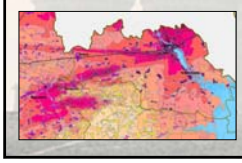
- Protection of stability, productivity and carrying capacity of the ecosystem itself

- Reduction of secondary risks / effects of wildfires, slow-onset, creeping disasters
  - Depletion of soil
  - Increasing surface runoff & erosion
  - Land slides, mud slides
  - Flash floods and excessive flooding of lowlands

Basics (III)

Fire management will contribute to

- Reduce of secondary risks / effects on human health and security
  - Smoke pollution affecting human health
  - Smoke affecting traffic security
  - Redistribution of contaminants (chemicals, radioactivity)






Basics (IV)

Fire management at national and regional levels

➢ Address the transboundary dimension, i.e. fires or smoke pollution crossing national borders

➢ Prioritizing fires burning on contaminated terrain affecting human security
- Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) and land mines
- Redistribution of radioactivity

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Main focus of work in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia (I)

➢ Initiating awareness and dialogue at national level: National Round Tables on Fire Management and establishment of mechanisms for inter-agency cooperation
➢ Involvement of civil society, notably local communities
➢ Development of national fire management policies with inter-agency / cross-sectoral participation

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Main focus of work in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia (II)

- Capacity building of agencies involved (forestry, parks, emergency situations)
- Support formation and capacity building of volunteer groups

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The OSCE-ENVSEC project combines

- the „Top Down Approach“ through the national policy dialogue
- the “Bottom-up Approach” by capacitating local rural communities

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Main focus of work in the region (I)

- Joint regional training supporting a culture of transboundary cooperation: Antalya Fire Management Training Center (2010-2014)
- Participation of Western Balkan countries

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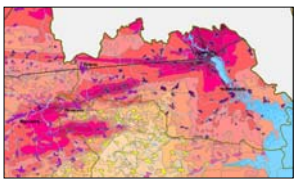
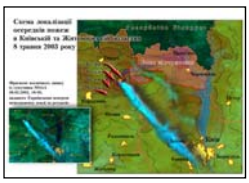
Main focus of work in the region (II)

- Advanced Seminar “Wildfires and Human Security: Fire Management on Terrain Contaminated by Radioactivity, Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) and Land Mines”, Kiev / Chernobyl, Ukraine (6-8 October 2009)

- Theme addressed at the Regional ENVSEC Meeting in Minsk (Belarus), 8-9 September 2014





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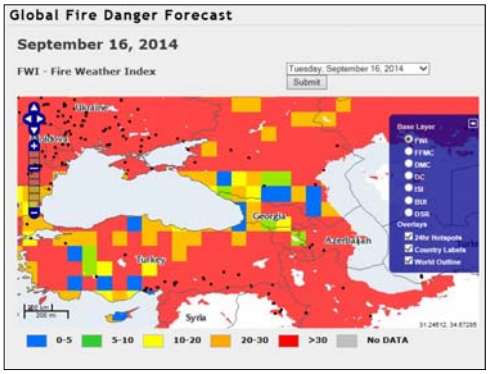
Main focus of work in the region (III)

- Development of a regional Wildland Fire Early Warning System
- Use of near-real time satellite information



Global Fire Danger Forecast
September 16, 2014
FWI - Fire Weather Index
Tuesday, September 16, 2014
Submit
Ukraine
Moldova
Georgia
Azerbaijan
Turkey
Syria
Base Layer
FWI
FFMC
DMC
DC
ISI
BUI
DSR
Overlays
24hr Hotspots
Country Labels
World Outline
200 km
200 mi
31.24512, 34.67285
0-5
5-10
10-20
20-30
>30
No DATA

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Lessons identified (I)

- Addressing a disaster risk such as wildfire requires a **holistic approach**, i.e. across natural and cultural landscapes and institutional responsibilities
- Accordingly, a **cross-sectoral mechanism** must be created to initiate a dialogue in society and to identify the underlying reasons of wildfire risks (socio-economic, environmental, climate change, institutional), with emphasis on involvement of civil society

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Lessons identified (II)

- Any solution requiring legal and institutional reforms and investments for capacity building (technical, human resources) requires the formulation of a national policy based on consensus and co-operation with the involvement of all relevant national stakeholders.

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Lessons identified (III)

- Donor-supported projects and programmes must have a long-term scope and timeline since efficient, effective and sustainable capacities cannot be realized in short-term projects

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Lessons identified (IV)

- Establishment and embedding national measures in an international nexus (e.g. through networks, bilateral and multilateral agreements)

  - will benefit from experiences of other countries and regions

  - and thus are economic

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Lessons identified (V)

- Establishment and embedding national measures in an international nexus (e.g. through networks, bilateral and multilateral agreements)

  - will allow the development of interoperable systems for cross-boundary exchange and assistance in wildfire emergency situations, and to jointly achieve the goals of related legally binding international agreements

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Conclusions (I)

- Developing the ability of society to address wildland fire in a holistic approach from local to global requires the **endurance and patience for doing this in a medium- to long-term time scale**

- Encouraging the OSCE to address the „**microcosm**“ of vegetation fires as drivers of land degradation, desertification and slow-onset disasters

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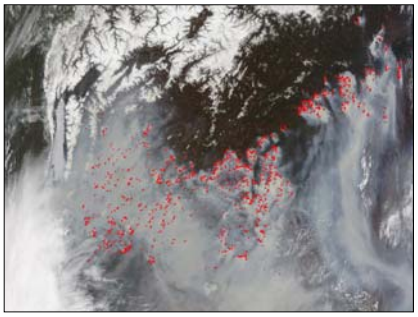
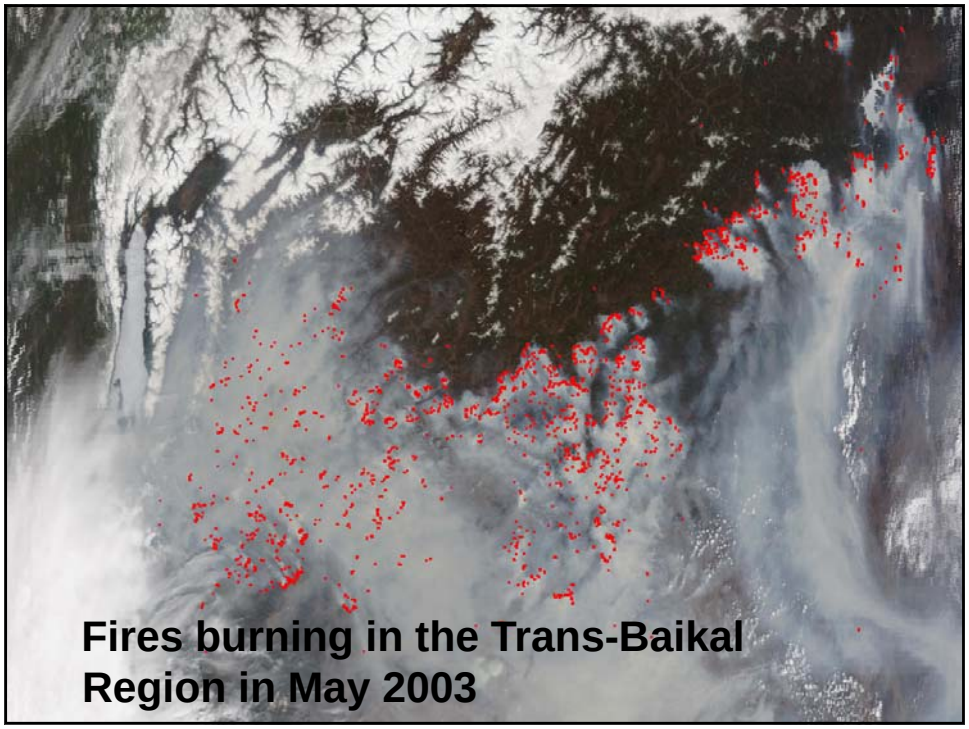
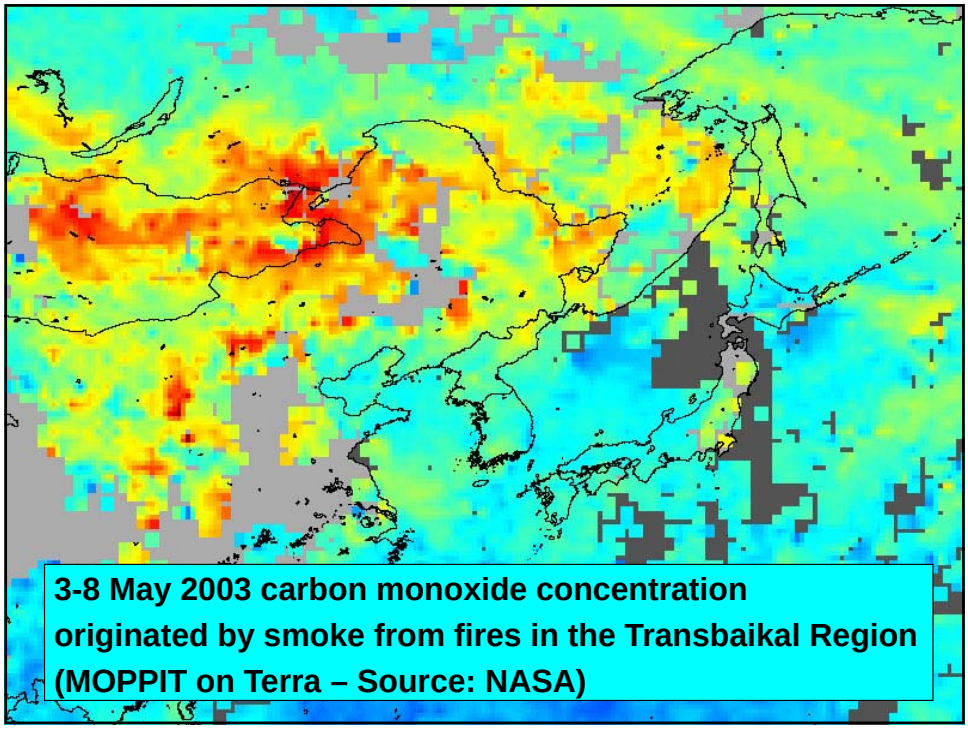
Conclusions (II)

- Encouraging the OSCE to address the „macrocosm“ of vegetation fires in the region of Participating States





Fires burning in the Trans-Baikal Region in May 2003



3-8 May 2003 carbon monoxide concentration originated by smoke from fires in the Transbaikal Region (MOPPIT on Terra – Source: NASA)

8 May 2003
Smoke from fires in the Transbaikal Region, extending to Sakhalin, Japan, Alaska and Europe

Лед и снег отражают солнечные лучи.

Отложения черного углерода затемняют поверхности и сокращают их отражательную способность.

Impacts of "black carbon":

The carbon deposits are darkening the snow / ice surface in the Artic region and reduce reflectivity, thus accelerate melting of snow and ice cover.

Source: A.Pettus / CATF Agricultural Fires and Arctic Climate Change: A Special CATF Report

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Thanks for Your Attention

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