

**For immediate release:**

## **Mediterranean Forests fight for survival**

**Background:** The rapid and intense changes predicted in climate conditions over the next 100 years will cause significant impacts on Mediterranean forests and the people depending on them. Human presence and impact are high in the region, and forests are especially sensitive to environmental and land use changes. The scientific community and the governments are set in motion to identify and extend the best adaptation measures for Mediterranean forests to cope with the impacts of climate change.

**Key Issues:**

- The climate change exacerbation of extreme weather events, like periods of drought, heat waves, and strong winds, together with unsustainable land use changes and bad management practices, are contributing to the alarming trend of increased frequency, intensity and extent of large scale disturbances like fires.
- The Mediterranean people and economies will be chiefly affected by the diminishing of forested areas, usually replaced by fire-prone shrub communities and landscape fragmentation. This may consequently impede survival opportunities for a number of species at risk of extinction, cause the depletion of critical environmental services such as water and soil, and reduce yields and the subsequent income from a wide range of forest products. *The main barrier still remains the lack of political understanding of the problem and of will to deal with it*, states **Pedro Regato**, representative of IUCN. He adds that *Such a will would also include the development of good governance systems and enabling conditions allowing land users and owners, for the adaptation of their practices.*
- Mediterranean North-South cooperation at all levels is taking shape to face threats, improve knowledge sharing, scientific research, developing capacities, and developing partnerships for the implementation of adequate climate change adaptation processes to conserve our biodiversity and cultural values, and manage our natural resources.

**When and Where:** On Wednesday, 8 October between 13:00-14.30hrs, at the Forest Pavilion in the CCIB, Barcelona, the new publication “Adapting to Global Change - Mediterranean Forests” will be presented.

**Materials for the Media:**

<http://www.iucn.org/what/ecosystems/forests/index.cfm>

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