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## FAO FORESTRY NEWS

### New Assistant Director-General Forestry Department

Dr.M.Hosny El-Lakany has been appointed as Assistant Director-General and head of the Forestry Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization, with effect from 1 January 1998.

A national of Egypt, Dr. El-Lakany's professional career spans a period of 35 years. Starting as an instructor at the Forestry Department of the University of Alexandria in 1962, he took on positions of increasing responsibility culminating in his nomination as Chair of the Forestry Department in 1983. From 1983 through 1991, he served as Managing Director and Professor at the Desert Development Centre of the American University in Cairo. His international experience includes a term at the Australian National University, and service on the Task Force to incorporate Forestry into the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) system, which ultimately led to the creation of the Center for International Forestry Research.

Dr.El-Lakany joined FAO in 1992 as Regional Forestry Officer in Cairo, Egypt. In April 1995, he was appointed Assistant Directeur de Cabinet in the Office of the Director-General. In 1996, Dr.El-Lakany was appointed Director of the FAO Forest Resources Division, one of the three major divisions of the FAO Forestry Department.

Beyond his area of academic specialty (he holds a Ph.D. in Forest Genetics from the University of British Columbia, Canada), Dr.El-Lakany has broad experience in the forestry sector, including integrated natural resource management, environmental protection, arid zone forestry, desertification control, and development of forest resources.

"FAO must continue to fulfill its role as a leading partner in the quest for sustainable forest management", says El-Lakany, "We must further develop our ability to collect, screen, verify and disseminate forestry information - this is essential if we are to combat what I call 'information pollution'. We must continue to perform our duties as a neutral international forum. In this regard, I would stress that being neutral does not mean being passive - we must be actively neutral. This means not just providing a venue for discussions, but rather being an active part of the discussions themselves, and being prepared to offer an authoritative, unbiased view. The third area to which we must give priority is the re-building of our field programme - our direct technical assistance to member countries. This will be particularly difficult given the current financial climate, but it is a task that we cannot shrink.

"I would stress that in taking on these challenging tasks, the only hope of achieving our goals lies in continuing to collaborate and cooperate with the other organizations and institutions that are active in international forestry. There is room and need for everyone who is prepared to collaborate"

Dr.El-Lakany succeeds Dr.David A. Harcharik, who was recently named to the post of Deputy Director-General of FAO.