

PROGRESS MADE ON SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN MANAGEMENT IN TURKEY

The territory of Turkey is located within the Alpine-Himalayan orogenic belt where the mountainous areas are dominant with the elevation over 1500 meters. Mountains represent almost two thirds of the country's territory. In terms of geological formation, three types of mountains; *orogenic*, *tectonic* and *volcanic* represent the majority of the mountains in Turkey.

The average altitude of the country is 1032 meters. There are two major parallel mountain ranges running alongside the Black Sea in the north and to the Mediterranean coastlines in the south respectively. In addition, there are important mountain regions in the west, middle, east, and south east Anatolia.

Turkey has only one peak over 5000 meters, three over 4000 and 219 peaks exceeding 3000 meters. Most mountain regions in Turkey represent mainly by forests and alpine grasslands, in many cases mixed with croplands. Accordingly, these irregular topographic structures create vast diversity of ecological, climatic, landscape and biodiversity. Forests in mountain areas play an important function on the properly growth of related sectors such as agriculture, water resources, tourism, and wood-based industries and generate employment opportunities for those people living in mountainous and hilly areas.

The mountainous areas of Turkey confront a number of impediments such as erosion, floods, landslides, avalanches and increasing incidence of hazards overall. Mountain and upland regions experience destruction and loss of assets with such processes, In addition, the living standards of mountain people are lower than the national average, and mountain and upland areas are often marginalized in terms of provision of infrastructure and social, educational, and health services as compared to lowland areas. Therefore, efficient measures are needed in the immediate future to improve the management of the natural resources, to promote the livelihoods of mountain people and to introduce sustainable mountain development approaches.

Turkey is one of the 78 countries in the world which set up a national committee for the International Year of Mountains (IYM) 2002. It actively observed the objectives of the year by initiating and implementing a number of actions/events such as disseminating of awareness raising materials and publications on mountain related subjects, TV and Radio interviews and organised two milestone events, namely a symposium on Turkish Mountains and the Bolu Workshop on Mountain Management Planning. Through those activities, the situation of the mountains and mountain management matters were broadly discussed at all levels.

Beyond the year, following achievements and progresses made on the sustainable mountain related debate in Turkey:

- By means of the occasions realized during IYM 2002, mountain related issues came into the agenda at national and local levels over the country so that the impact of those on the attention in the mountain issues is being promoted and getting more interest;
- Turkey has joined the Mountain Partnership launched by the FAO in order to increase the national capacity and implement integrated and inter-disciplinary approaches on sustainable mountain development through the international experiences and achievements;
- Two comprehensive Watershed Rehabilitation projects were launched by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry through the World Bank loans. The Eastern Anatolia Watershed Rehabilitation project started in 1993, implemented in 11 provinces (in 66

catchments) and completed in 2003. The Anatolia Watershed Rehabilitation project is being implemented in 6 provinces. Both of them aimed at rehabilitation of degraded natural resources, degraded forests in particular in uplands, soil protection in hilly areas, improvement of the livelihood of rural communities, introducing of innovative approaches on resource management etc. through integrated, multi-disciplinary and participatory approaches;

- The Ministry of Environment and Forestry requested a financial assistance from FAO-Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) for a pilot project to be implemented in Turkey. The expected outcome from such project was mainly to be benefitted from FAO's experience and build/develop capacities in modern approaches to sustainable mountain development and watershed management. The request of the Ministry was approved by the FAO and the text of a two year model project titled "***Development of public participation and improvement of socio- economic prosperity in mountain communities: Yunttagi Model***" (TCP/TUR/3102) was completed at the end of 2006. The aims of the project are; to assist the Government of Turkey to implement sustainable development in its mountain areas and to improve the livelihoods of rural mountain people through the establishment of viable and area-specific income-generating activities. The project put into implementation in 2007 in the Yunttagi region in Manisa. Apart from the pilot activities to be implemented in the project area, appropriate strategies and institutional structure at national level for the sustainable mountain management in Turkey will be developed through this project;
- The EC and the Turkish Government have started with the identification of priority areas for IPARD program. In this content, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Service together with the related institutions proceeded to define the "mountain areas" and criteria for "less advantageous areas" in Turkey;
- On behalf of the Turkey, the Ministry of Environment and forestry has taken part as a third-country partner to the EU financed project namely, "***Economic valorization of the natural and cultural heritage of the Mediterranean Mountains (MEDITERRITAGE)***" together with the 12 regional partners from the Southern Europe and Northern African countries. The project started in 2006 and lasted two years. The aim of the project was to search and look for possible cooperation for innovative approaches and new methods to develop the mountainous areas through the economic valorization of their natural and cultural heritage of the Mediterranean mountains. A number of sub-projects were lunched and several workshops and meeting were realized in order to exchange the experiences among the experts and to find appropriate solutions for common problems in the region.