

**UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on
Forest Policy in Eastern Europe and Central Asia**

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**Republic of Armenia
Country Report**

The current rapid growth in the use of natural resources tends to be accompanied by man-made environmental pollution, manufacturing waste, decline of the potentials of resources that ensure the environmental, nature protection and ecological benefits. Among them, the natural renewable resources, particularly the forest resources, play a key role.

Owing to the energy crisis and widespread illegal logging, the forests of Armenia have been damaged on a large scale over the past 15 years. Moreover, the permanent lack of financial support from the state budget for forestry has led the forest sector as a whole having degraded and currently lagged behind world level.

In recent years, however, some positive shifts have been noticed in the development of Armenia's forestry sector.

A number of relevant documents had been developed and approved by the government, such as: the new Forest Code, RA (2005), "Forest Policy and Strategy Development of the Forests of Armenia", "National Forest Program of the Republic of Armenia", and the "Program to combat illegal logging", etc.

Due to the fivefold increased state budget financing for the forestry sector that took place over the past 2-3 years, it has become possible to enlarge the volume of reforestation, to raise the wages of forestry workers (mean wage of \$15 increased to \$150). The volume of illegal logging has been reduced at several times as well.

Despite some notable accomplishments in the forest sector in Armenia, there is still the need to solve several issues connected with sustainable forest management, among others:

1. Completion and approval of plans for forest management (forest inventory).
2. Carrying out the institutional reforms in the forest sector – a clear separation of functions related to the environmental and forest control, forest industries sector and forest management.
3. Development of education and training in forestry.
4. Introduction of remote sensing for forest monitoring.
5. Increasing forest income and ensuring stable state financing of the forest sector.
6. Encouragement of community and private forests.
7. Increasing the share of private sector participation in state forest management.
8. Increasing awareness and public participation in the decision-making activities in forestry.
9. Reduction of illegal logging.
10. Increasing volumes of afforestation and reforestation.
11. The development of Forest Nursery Management (Propagation and Nursery management practices).