

**UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on
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**Republic of Azerbaijan
Country Report**

The total area of the Republic of Azerbaijan is 8.6 million hectares, of which 1213.7 thousand hectares is a state forest land. The area covered by forests is 989.5 hectares. The share of forests in the total area of country is only 11% that is 2–3 times less than international standards, while in the nineteenth century forests covered 30–35%.

The management and utilization of forest lands and forests is governed by the Forest Code and the Environmental Protection Act.

All forests in the country are state-owned, and fulfil generally protective and environmental functions such as water and soil protection, conservation of environment. Consequently, they are belonged to the first category declared as “reserved forests”.

Forests are distributed unevenly across the country, almost 95% of them is situated in the mountainous regions, while 5% on the plains. Forest cover here varies between 18–43%, while in lowland areas comprises only 0.5–2%.

The wide variety of soil and ecological conditions occurred in the country is resulted in very rich species composition of forests. More than 450 trees and shrub species are presented, but the most of trees in state-owned forests (88%) belongs to the hardwoods. Soft and conifers species are respectively 2.2 and 1.6%.

Problems in Forestry

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in response to the declining supplies of electricity and gas the level of uncontrolled illegal logging has been increased, particularly in the mountain regions. The destruction process of forests resources has led to the deforestation, which has increased rates of soil erosion in the country.

The key problems are:

- a) About 25% of state-owned forest is under the occupation (261 ha)
- b) Erosion protection, development of erosion control

Possible solutions

To solve environmental problems, accumulated over a long time due to objective and subjective reasons (economic, social and political) some improvement efforts are being implemented. Thus, our Republic has joined several international conventions relating to environmental protection and natural resource management and vital statutory regulations have already approved. In addition, with the assistance of international organizations is taking steps towards solving relevant environmental issues in the country.

In order to answer consecutively to all existing problems at the state level, in assistance with relevant government institutions of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources have been developed National Programs on “Environmentally sustainable social and economic development» and «Reforestation and enlargement of forest area».

The implementation of actions specified by these national programs, along with environmental issues, highlighted above, will provide opportunities to address other concerns of our society.

The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources within its activities have taken decisive steps to overcome shortcomings and correct mistakes takes place in the protection and renewal of forests as well as management of natural resources.

Government police aimed at conservation of forests and sustainable forest management that includes efficient and sustainable use of land and forest resources.