

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

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Georgia Country Report

Forest represents the natural resource has special value to Georgia, which covers more than third of the total area of the country and bears significant vital and economic functions both in national and regional aspects. Out of 25 hot spots acknowledged worldwide in terms of bio diversity, which includes Caucasus, eco systems of Georgian forest occupy distinguished place.

By the beginning of 1990, political – economic crisis, the process of transition to the market economy and growing demand on wood materials at the world market affected the conditions of forest resources. Extensive cuts and grazing caused degradation of the significant massifs of forests. Continuation of the mentioned negative processes caused significant ecological and economic damage.

After Georgia has become independent, (1990) independent document determining the forestry policy has not been developed until 2002. The first independent document related to the forestry policy was signed on May 14, 2002 by the State Minister, and is called “Main Principles of Government Policy for Georgia’s Forest Sector Development in 2002-2010”. The document includes only the key aspects of the sustainable development of the forest however the document had not been viewed and prepared as the document bearing political significance.

The Forest Policy and Strategy draft document prepared to resolve problems reflects key priorities and directions of the forestry policy of Georgia. It includes the objectives of the forest policy, guiding principles, overview of the existing problems, key issues and challenges and the actions to be exercised in the coming years.

During the current and next year, it is planned to conduct forest inventory and categorization (change of the existing systems of forest classification according to the MCPFE system) for obtaining the information necessary for preparation of forest usage and management plans.

Consistent with inventory and management plans, by the end of the next year, the forests which do not pertain to any of the MCPFE categories or to the category of protected territories or the forests of protective functions, are projected to be managed for production of timber resources, hunting, recreation, tourism and other purposes if it is in consistency with the principles of sustainable forestry. Such forests may be transferred for long term utilization.

Those forests, which historically were used intensively by the communities, will be transferred to the bodies of local governments. By 2007-2008 the forests of local significance will be identified, delineated and transferred.

As for the territories already covered by inventory, transfer of the forests for long-term utilization is planned by the end of the current year.

Forest Policy Goal

The major goal of the forest policy is to ensure conservation, enhancement and management on sustainable basis of quantitative and qualitative characteristics of forest lands, which entails:

1. preservation of environmental assets and functions of Georgia’s forests;
2. rational use of the economic potential of forests with the aim of obtaining long-term benefit;
3. fulfillment of social functions by forests.