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

Budapest, Hungary, 4-6 March 2009

Sweden
Country Report

Major changes affecting forest policy in Sweden

Markets: In the long–term, continued strong demand for forest resources and expected growing competitions on raw-material between traditional forest-based industries and bioenergy production.

Climate: Changing conditions for the forest ecosystems and forestry. Possible increase in growth rates (long-term) but also higher risk for damages caused by storms, insects and pathogens and higher costs for logging operations because of warmer winters. Actions to mitigate climate change increases demand for bioenergy and other renewable raw-materials. There is a need for improved information on current and projected impacts, as well as research, policies and practices that are needed to manage healthy, productive forests in order to meet future needs for the full range of forest goods and services.

Conflicting interests: Increased competition of the forest raw-material coupled with stronger demands from society on other values and services (e.g. biodiversity, water) from forests is leading to more pronounced and complex conflicts of interests. While main emphasis remain on ecological concerns such as biodiversity and water there is a growing understanding of forests' contribution to human living conditions in terms of health, rehabilitation and integration. Actions taken by forestry institutions are expected to be placed under increased scrutiny by media, citizens and different interest organisations.

Ownership structure and forestry in a changing environment: The forest owner community is changing in terms of age structure, gender, absentee owners etc. This change is largely driven by a continued urbanisation. The goals for the ownerships are more diversified and less forest operations are carried out by forest owners. Forestry is expected to play a larger role in rural development and be better integrated into regional development policies.

Effective institutions: Forestry institutions are expected to do more with fewer resources. Forestry institutions need to be able to operate in a more complex setting with stronger cross-sectoral links and cooperation with other institutions, for example on matters concerning regulations and communication. Forestry institutions are also expected to be more transparent, accessible and customer oriented to the citizens.

Mosaic of regulations and market signals: Forest companies and forest owners face regulations and other influences on decision making in many different dimensions, e.g. national and EU -regulations, economic incentives (fiscal and subsidies), soft regulations and market driven incentives such as certification schemes. The influence from policy processes outside forestry is increasing, for example regional development, trade, environment, climate and energy.