

**National Report to the third Session of the  
United Nations Forum on Forests**

**Kingdom of the Netherlands**

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## **II Progress and issues related to implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action**

### **General**

1.1 Following up on the reporting to CSD the following remarks can be made:

Concerning valuation of forest goods and services the Netherlands has prepared a non-paper on Financing Sustainable Forest Management to be used in the framework of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests, based on several studies by Dutch researchers and experts with contribution from the NGO-community. The contents of this paper, together with other sources of information will form the basis for a presentation at the World Forestry Congress in 2003. In the Netherlands, with its low forest cover and high population density, the recreation function of the forest is the most important. Therefore it is important for the Netherlands to further develop instruments to value the services the forests provide

In the framework of the UN ECE Trade Department, Timber Division, the Netherlands prepares annually a report on the timber market.

In about 70% of the forests of the Netherlands timber production is one of the functions. In spite of that, the Netherlands is still a major importer of timber.

About 90% of the timber comes from abroad. The Netherlands therefore thinks it is important to play an active role in international processes to attain sustainable forest management in all forests at the global scale.

Concerning forest health and productivity the Netherlands participates actively in the programme of ICP Forests. See for more under 4.0.

Concerning the maintenance and extension of forest cover to meet present and future needs, the Netherlands implements its Forest Act and annually plants about 1000 ha of new forest.

1.2 In the Netherlands nature management includes the management of forests and landscape. In July 2000 the policy document for nature, forest and landscape in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the accent on the first coming decade Nature for People, People for Nature, was presented to Parliament. The policy on forests outlined in this document is considered to be compatible with a national forest programme. The policy is now in the implementation stage.

1.3 Stakeholder participation in forest sector planning is in part guaranteed by the Physical Planning Act . Apart from that, selected stakeholders such as forest owners, environmental NGO's and the industry are consulted when new policies are developed or old policies reviewed.

2.1 The Netherlands imports approximately 90% of the timber to fulfill its needs. Given this fact as well as the fact that only 11% of the area of the Netherlands is covered

with forests and that the Netherlands is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, valuation of the services the forest provides has a high priority and many studies and research have been executed in this field by the National reference Centre of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries and by the Alterra Institute of Wageningen University and Research Centre. Valuation of forest goods however has a slightly lower priority. Through the Programme Management services the forests (as well as nature areas) provide are compensated.

2.2 The Netherlands provide the UN ECE Timber Committee with data, with the exception for non-wood forest products, which are compiled by the Stichting Bos en Hout (Foundation Forest and Timber) at the request of the government of the Netherlands. These data are considered adequate and reliable. Data on amongst others non wood forest products are collected by the National Reference Centre of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries in the framework of the Programme Measuring Network Function Fulfillment Forests, most recently in the report The Forests of the Netherlands in 2001.

2.3 Instruments to facilitate progress towards sustainable forest management include tax incentives such as dispensation from inheritance tax for forests with public access that are listed in the estates Act, incentives for investors in approved environmental projects, dispensation from income tax for income for forests and dispensation from property taxes for forests owned by legal bodies. The government recently announced its intention to develop several new green tax measures and will review the possibilities of these.

3.1 The Netherlands is active in developing together with developing countries instruments to achieve sustainable forest management through national forest programmes, thus helping in reducing negative impacts of trade. See for more under 3.2.

3.2 In the Netherlands certification is seen as an important way to achieve sustainable forest management, but the actual development is left to market forces. The government plays a facilitating and stimulating role. An FSC country table has been established with government participation to develop a national standard including criteria for certification of sustainably produced timber. This standard has been approved at the national level and is now up for

At the government level the Minimum Demands for certification schemes are now under review in order to be able to harmonize different schemes and discussions are being held on the necessity of an accreditation scheme for the Netherlands.

3.3 At this moment in time support is actively given to the development of systems to identify, verify and track the legality of timber and related forest products. These activities are done in close co-operation with DG Environment of the European Commission.

4.0 For forests the most relevant aspect of air pollution in the Netherlands is the high level of Nitrogen deposition. Acid deposition has decreased considerably during the last decades. Especially in forests on poor sandy soils (approximately 80 % of the forest area) the high levels of N deposition have resulted in an unbalanced nutrient status of the trees and a decrease of plant species characteristic for nutrient poor conditions. At the same time lowering of ground water tables and intensive drainage of agricultural land have caused important losses of characteristic plant species in former moist and wet forest types.

The Netherlands is actively participating in the implementation of the Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution, with both the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries involved in amongst others the development of abatement strategies, mapping of critical loads and monitoring of forest condition. For the monitoring of air pollution effects on forests there is an intensive co-operation with and support from the EU, in the framework of EU Regulations on the protection of forests against air pollution (Reg. 352/86 and 2157/92). Both schemes together have provided important information on the forest condition in Europe and on the role of air pollution on forest ecosystems. Moreover, the scheme has stimulated co-operation between researchers in Europe.

5.0 The Forest Act of the Netherlands is generally considered adequate to maintain present forest cover for present and future needs, although there are possibilities for improvement. It's main purpose is to make sure that forestland remains forestland. However, the quality of forests is not covered by the Act. In spite of this, there exist a few loopholes in the Act, resulting in the loss of a few hundred hectares of forest annually. On the other hand, through the Governments programme each year approximately 1000 ha of new forest is planted.

6.0 The Netherlands participates in the European Forest Sector Outlook Study (EFSOS) that is organized by the UN ECE Trade Division in Geneva.