

**National Reports to the Third Session  
of the United Nations Forum on Forests**

**Republic of Korea**

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

### **General**

#### **1.1. Assessment of IPF/IFF proposals (including the relevance, priority, and planned actions)**

- In 2002, the *Korea Forestry Research Institute (KFRI)* of the *Korea Forest Service (KFS)* assessed the issues on the relevance and urgency with respect to IPF/IFF proposals for action. The primary purpose of the evaluation was to confirm the duties of our nation to perform the proposals.
- In 2003, we are planning to carry out the *Gap Analysis* about the implementation of the proposals into policies, surveying not only *KFS*, but also related government agencies based on the valuation done in 2002. Moreover, we are going to give priority to performing the proposals, to reflect the priority in forest policies, and to intensify monitoring of the implementation.

#### **1.2. Development and implementation of national forest programme or similar national policy framework for forests**

- Since the Republic of Korea established the *Forest Law* in 1961, we have been legalized the *Forest Basic Planning* system for nationwide forests, and now, we are carrying out the 4<sup>th</sup> forest basic plan. In addition, we newly enacted *Basic Forest Policy Law* in 2001, to guide a basic strategy of the forest policy focusing on sustainable forest management (SFM) at the national level.
- *National Forest Basic Planning* is designed for nationwide to carry out the Sustainable Forest Management. When devising the 4<sup>th</sup> plan (1998-2007), we framed a variety of the forest policies. intended to promote ecological, social, economical, and cultural sustainability of forests. With having the principle of SFM as a basic component, we announced the *Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in Forestry* to the public in 2002. We also set the new forest management strategy as a core part of the national sustainable development plan in 2002.

#### **1.3. Mechanism/initiatives to enhance stakeholder participation in forest sector planning, decision-making, and/or forest management**

- We hold public hearings for interest groups when making *Forest Basic Plan* and other important policies. Besides, we encourage on-line participations of our people as well as

interest groups and reflect their various opinions in the policies.

- We ensure the participation of interest groups by putting articles about holding public hearings when issuing a permit for forest transformation or quarrying in place in the 2002 Mountainous Area Management Law effective from Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003. Also, we encourage active participations of the interest groups to be liable for public hearings, concerning the utilization of mountainous areas.

## **2. Economic aspects of forest including trade**

### **2.1 Economic aspects**

#### **2.1.1 Valuation of forest goods and services (development and use of new valuation methodologies and evaluation of wider ranges of goods and services, and policy decision reflecting a more comprehensive assessment of forest values)**

- The environmental and social values of forests are increasing along with rapid economic growth and increased leisure time spending. We forecast that the recreational forest value will be increased after the changes of social environment such as the introduction of 5 days working system and urbanization. To deal with those changes, our government established a comprehensive *Forest Recreation Project* to extend the formulation of recreational forests, urban forests, and school forests.
- On the other hand, *KFRI* has been evaluating the value of various public services from the forest: promotion of water supply, water purifying capacity, air purifying capacity, and forest recreation benefits, and etc. Furthermore, *KFRI* is now under way to develop a measure to assess the social benefits like the conservation function of forest biodiversity.

#### **2.1.2. The amount, scope, or quality, market data and information of wood/non-wood forest goods and their substitutes**

- We are annually collecting statistical data on wood products and non-wood products. Forest products statistics are gathered by the administrative network through mountainous areas, and we consult export/import data of the *Office of Customs Administration*. Moreover, we refer to *KFS* and *National Forestry Cooperative Federation (NFCCF)* on the information about the prices of forest goods. Nevertheless, the data is not so precise because it is collected by administrative vein. Therefore, we into an executive research for every five to

ten years to improve the accuracy and confidence of statistics. Also, we are taking steps to practice sample surveys between those two terms.

- *KFS* is publishing ‘ an Annual Report of Forest Statistics,’ including the data of forest production, export, and import. Beside, *KFS* and *NFCF* are providing information about forest production prices on-line.
- We are carrying out the forest inventory to figure out the tendency of forest resources every 10 years; we divide the whole country into 10 districts, and forestry researchers operate the forest inventory. In addition, the outcome of research on forest areas and its volume is issued in ‘ a Report of Forest Resources’ annually. We are also reorganizing the research system of forest resources to develop an appropriate forest basic statistics, meeting OECD’s standard. We are under investigation to include ecological factors in the research categories when practicing the national forest research, starting in 2006.

### **2.1.3. Use of economic and policy instruments to promote the progress toward *SFM***

- Approximately, private forests occupy 70% of the total forestland areas, and the number of private owners is about 2 million. However, many private owners hold only about 2.1ha. Moreover, voluntary forest investment is very low as the production cost of cutting logs in a relatively small area rises, and the price of timber stagnates. Hence, our government is offering these private forest owners economical and social incentive to induce them for promoting *SFM*.
- To maintain the deliberated forest management, we draw distinctive support between those owners who make out forest management plans and who do not make out the plans. That is, we provide fund and tax cuts of total land and forest income for those whom make out forest management plans.

## **2.2 Trade aspects**

### **2.2.1 Policy to minimize negative impacts of trade**

- No comment.

### **2.2.2. Forest certification and labeling scheme, and work toward mutual recognition and comparability of such scheme.**

- Quantities of timber produced in Korea are relatively insufficient. Since Korea is largely depending on import of raw timber materials, private forest owners and forest industries pay less attention to timber certification. However, *KFRI* has examined timber certification at the regional and the national levels to introduce timber certification into Korea forest gradually as one of the policy tools to maintain *SFM*. As mentioned above, the private forest ownership system is poor in Korea; therefore, we take the circumstances into consideration to introduce expense-efficient group certification. In the mean time, we draw no distinction between certified timber and non-certified timber.

### **2.2.3 Measure to prevent illegal trade**

- No comment.

## **3. Forest health and productivity**

### **3.1 The present condition of damage to forest from air pollution and its preventive counterplan**

- From 1991~2002, we established analytical DB of 65 forest areas on air pollution, soil, and forest decline to understand the actual damage condition of forest ecosystem and change of ecosystem by air pollution and acid rain.
- Air pollution and precipitation *pH* research proves that the average concentration of *SO<sub>2</sub>* in the air of the whole forest area was *5ppb*, which hasn't changed much since 1997(the atmospheric environmental standard of Korea is below *20ppb*). The yearly rain acidity was *pH* 5.3, which increased from last year's average *pH* 5.1. The acidity of soil has been increasing since 1993; there were 10 places that indicate the possible impediment level of plant rearing with under *pH* 4.5 soil acidity. Moreover, we classified forest damage sensitivity based on rain acidity, soil acidity, forest deterioration degree, and we learned that 8 places out of 65 (12%) appear to be sensitive to forest damage.
- Because of the change in a plant community, we discovered the slight change of numbers in the individual pine trees that has been slightly reduced around the industrial complex. Though the death of upper trees in urban and industrial complex occur, an inflow of a herbaceous plant and *Phytolacca americana* caused an increase in numbers of present species.
- As the preventive countermeasure, we performed restoration project on the forest areas

destroyed by pollution. The main purpose was to help propagation of the ground animals as well as microorganism and to facilitate timber production by spreading soil neutralizer to adjust *pH* of acid soil caused by air pollution and acid rain.

### **3.2. International cooperation efforts to reduce the impacts of air pollution on forests**

- As a part of international effort to reduce forest damage caused by air pollution, we have been conducting a collaborative research with China and other northeast Asian countries since 1996. The collaborative project between Korea and China, “Research on migratory air pollution of the northeast Asian regions,” has instituted 5 trial bases in *Yuju*, *Taewon*, and other cities in China. Not only are we cooperating with *Chinese Academy of Forestry* and *Institute of Forest Ecology and Environment*, but also we are monitoring air pollution, soil, and decline of trees in a long-term. Moreover, we continue to interchange experts and useful information.
- Besides, we have also united our efforts with Mongolia since 2001; we set up and began to operate trial bases in *Ulaanbaator* and *Sanjay* area.

## **4. Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs**

### **Maintaining forest area**

- The population density is relatively high in Korea. Therefore, it is inevitable to utilize our forests for other purposes in an efficient way. However, we restrain reckless use of forests to maximize social benefits of our forests. According to the Forest Law enacted in 1961, we charge substitute afforestation fee for an exclusive use of forest for other purposes while we provide incentive when people convert marginal farmlands and wasted lands into forests (Forest law, Article 22/5). In addition, we newly established mountainous area management law in 2002 to prevent the indiscreet use and unplanned development of forests.

### **Assessment for long-term trend in national supply and demand of forest services.**

- We legalized to establish the *Forest Basic Plan* based on ‘A Long Term Prospect of Forest Resources and Forest Products’ that was legislated in 2001 *Basic Forest Policy Law*. Based on this law, *KFRI* of the *Korea Forest Service* is developing the econometrics model to presuppose the future use, supply and demand not only of forestry properties such as forest, forest volume, timber, non-timber forest product income, but also of forest services such as

outdoor recreation and water resources. The research data on a long-term supply of forest properties and services will be the fundamental material while devising the 5<sup>th</sup> *Forest Basic Plan* (2008~2017).

- Meanwhile, in accordance with the timber supply and demand by the *KFS*, the timber self-sufficient rate of Korea will rise from 6% in 2002 to 30% in 2030. Consequently, we are supposed to depend on foreign supplies for a while. We established the plan to foster economic forests to raise the self-sufficiency rate and to conduct an intensive management of 350 million *ha* forests. At present, we place our priority on a project nurturing for forests under 30 years old.

### **III. Preparation of the Report**

- In the course to complete the report, we had couple of inputs from related divisions of *KFS* and *KFRI*: Forestry Policy Div., Forest Protection Div., Wood Utilization Div., Forest Soil Conservation Div., Forest Economics Div. We first gave out the format for the national report to the above-mentioned divisions. This aims to see if they consider IPF/IFF proposals for action when drafting and conducting forest policies. The experts from Forest Economics Div., inter alia, made an active contribution to preparing the report.
- *KFRI* has studied the countermeasures to the various international conferences and treaties related to forestry as its research project since 2002. It particularly has a plan to classify the proposals into several sub-groups, and then, to make the performance evaluation of them more feasible.
- Draft report was circulated to the previously mentioned sections to make sure it coincides with the reality of current policies. There was no significant amendment to the draft except some minor inputs. The final report took about 2 months to be completed.
- IPF/IFF proposals for action have a wide scope of 287 sub-elements. Lots of these elements in the proposals can cause problems in evaluating the performance if the public officials of *KFS* and *KFRI* don't have enough understanding of the proposals. This challenge has been identified during the preparation of the report.
- We have a valuable lesson that the proposals need to be assorted clearly according to the urgency and priority of them at the national level. After this process being done, we can reflect these factors into forest policy decision-making and implement the proposed actions by step-by-step basis.