

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

**United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

**January 2003**

## **I. Key Contacts**

### **Senior Forestry Official in the United Kingdom:**

Name: Mr David Bills

Title: Director General, Forestry Commission

#### Contact information:

Address: Forestry Commission, Silvan House, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh, EH12 7AT, Scotland, UK

Phone: + 44 (0) 131 314 6463

Fax: + 44 (0) 131 334 1903

E-mail: david.bills@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

### **UNFF national focal point for the United Kingdom:**

Name: Mr Mike Dudley

Title: Head, International Policy, Forestry Commission

#### Contact information:

Address: Forestry Commission, Silvan House, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh, EH12 7AT, Scotland, UK

Phone: +44 (0) 131 314 6115

Fax: +44 (0) 131 334 0442

E-mail: mike.dudley@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

### **Person to contact concerning the national report, if other than the UNFF national focal point:**

Name: Mrs Libby Jones

Title: International Policy Adviser, Forestry Commission

#### Contact information:

Address: Forestry Commission, Silvan House, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh, EH12 7AT, Scotland, UK

Phone: +44 (0) 131 314 6137

Fax: +44 (0) 131 334 0442

E-mail: libby.jones@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

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

### **General**

The UK is committed to sustainable forest management and, although our forests cover only about 12% of the land, we recognise the important role that international discussions can play on forests and aim to share our experience and make a practical contribution. Forestry is a devolved matter and forest policy is developed and implemented by the countries which make up the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.) Following the Forest Devolution Review, a committee involving Ministers from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, was established to discuss international issues and any cross-cutting issues where collaboration would be advantageous.

We have a good story to tell on sustainable forestry, having taken a lead in implementing forest certification and developing standards for industry. We are equally proud of our long record of contributing to international forestry policy and of co-operating with developing countries on forest issues. Forestry in the UK has become increasingly recognised for its multi-purpose functions which, in addition to timber production, include benefits for the wider economy and the provision of non-market social and environmental benefits.

The UK Government's involvement in international forestry developments is led by the Forestry Commission (FC) and the Department for International Development (DFID) and is co-ordinated through the International Forestry Group. This group comprises representatives from the FC, DFID, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Cabinet Office, Treasury, the Prime Minister's Office, the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Scottish Executive and the National Assembly for Wales.

Our international involvement has five aims: to represent and promote UK interests in international discussions; to influence policy development; to demonstrate the high standard of management of our forest resource; to share the UK's experiences with others; and to contribute to a fuller understanding of sustainable forest management.

International discussions on forests and forestry, and their conclusions provide a framework for national action and it is true to say that UK forestry has gained from the international processes in which we have taken part, but national priorities need to reflect national circumstances. In this context, it has been a valuable lesson for us that the issues discussed in the international and regional fora often coincide with the important domestic policy issues that emerge for forests in the UK.

For this reason, the FC, as an active participant in the discussions, needs to ensure a balanced approach between international commitments and developments in policy and practice in Britain. At the UK level we are helped by our colleagues in the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

### **National Forest Programmes**

National Forest Programmes play a key role in making the links between developments on sustainable forest management at the international level and developments and implementation of sustainable policies at the national and local levels.

Similar to the situation in many countries, following devolution, forestry in the UK is the responsibility of devolved administrations and the key programmes and actions for delivering sustainable forest management are set down in individual country strategies for England,

Scotland, and Wales and in the strategy currently being prepared for Northern Ireland. These strategies will help to ensure that we continue to honour our commitments under international agreements related to forests.

The individual country strategies, together with the UK Forestry Standard constitute the UK's National Forest Programme which will be formally launched in February 2003.

In early 2002, we put together a guide to some of the key international commitments on forests and the actions associated with each, and explained simply how they related to the UK situation. The booklet was launched at UNFF2 in March 2002 and although initially conceived for a limited domestic audience within the Forestry Commission, particularly those not normally exposed to international processes, it has proved of interest to many more, both within the UK and further afield.

### UK Forestry Standard

International criteria and guidelines for sustainable forest management are expressed in broad terms. To have value for managers, owners and consultants, these need to be put into context.

Following commitments made at the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe in Helsinki in 1993, the UK reviewed its guidance to forest managers and, after major public multi-stakeholder consultations, published the UK Forestry Standard in 1998. This set out the Government's vision and framework for sustainable forest management and also set out what this implied for the management of different types of forest with different levels of environmental, social and economic sensitivity, in terms of standards for the sustainable management of all forests and woodland in the UK.

The Standard is linked to the developing international protocols for sustainable forestry and provides a system to guide and monitor forestry in the UK. The Standard was published in 1998 prior to devolution, but devolved administrations have agreed to co-operate in maintaining the Standard and to frame their policies within the standards and guidelines.

The Standard describes good forestry practice that supports the objective of sustainable forest management and the context in which decisions need to be taken. It contains a series of Standard Notes, which describe the practices appropriate to a variety of operations and management systems, linked to a range of supporting publications that provide more detailed advice. The Standard is monitored through Indicators of Sustainable Forestry and through a wide range of survey data and research findings that provide information about the current state and trends of our woodlands. This work informs the reports we make internationally.

### National Strategies

As noted above, England, Scotland and Wales have each produced a Forestry Strategy, and Northern Ireland is currently preparing a strategy. These form the over-riding policy frameworks for forestry in the UK and they take account of the concept of sustainable development and sustainable forest management as set out in the UK Forestry Standard. The structure and content of each strategy is tailored to meet the needs of each country, but there are common elements including a vision, guiding principles, implementation, monitoring and review. The strategies set out key programmes and priorities for action to deliver sustainable forest management with a number of common themes including effective exchange of information, improving the environment, promoting wood as a renewable resource, recreation and tourism, and empowering communities.

Wide-ranging consultation exercises were carried out in preparing each of the strategies. Consultation was a key element in the development of the strategies, so that these reflect the views of the wider community and gain public support for well-managed forests and woodland. Action to implement the strategies is determined by each country's own priorities

and programmes. These include direct action through regulation and the targeting of incentives, as well as the management of the public forest estate. Successful delivery of the strategies will also depend on the development of effective partnerships, where partners can bring different skills and resources to the various initiatives.

#### Monitoring & Reporting

The National Inventory of Woodlands and Trees, completed in 2002, provides reliable information about the size, distribution, type, general condition and treatment of our forests and woodlands. More detailed information on woodland and forest condition is required for assessing delivery of biodiversity action plan targets.

The Forestry Commission, in collaboration with the Northern Ireland Forest Service, also developed a set of Indicators of Sustainable Forestry, covering the economic, environmental and social aspects of forestry as well as the traditional statistics on forestry land use and timber production and these were published on 31 October 2002. These indicators are linked to the UK Forestry Standard and the international criteria and indicator processes. They were developed through two rounds of consultation in 2001 and 2002.

In total, there are 40 indicators, grouped under six themes: woodland, biodiversity, condition of forest and environment, timber and other forest products, people and forests, and economic aspects. They provide information about the current state, and trends over time, of woodlands and their management, monitoring forestry's contribution to sustainable development. They will enable us to track the contribution that our forests make to our quality of life, although it must be acknowledged that some indicators still lack adequate datasets in order to track year to year, or even decade to decade changes.

The set of indicators also provides a comparable overview by giving information for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland that can be supplemented by indicators linked to the special objectives and actions in each country's Forestry Strategy.

The publication of the indicators was the culmination of a long consultative process to which many people have contributed. This indicator set is the start of a journey, not the end, and we will be refining and developing the indicators as our understanding grows. In the meantime the Inventory and other surveys and research data will be used to monitor and report progress. The range of annual statistical publications has been extended, adding new publications "British Timber Statistics" and a compendium "Forestry Statistics" to the existing booklet "Forestry Facts and Figures". These all gained National Statistics status in 2001, as a sign of quality assurance, confirmed by a quality review in 2002.

#### Research

Research is essential to inform future development of forest policy and practice, and the Forestry Commission supports a wide range of programmes covering economic, environmental and social issues. These research programmes will continue to be updated to provide long-term support for sustainable forestry policy and practice. The Forestry Commission's Research Strategy sets out how the research programmes will be determined, linking them to national objectives and to the individual country forestry strategies. More detail on current economic research is described under "Valuation of forest goods and services".

#### UK Woodland Assurance Standard

The UK Government facilitated the development of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) to provide independent certification of forest management. UKWAS was developed in response to the growing consumer demand for timber products from sustainably

managed forests and this was the world's first national certification standard to have the unanimous support of all stakeholder groups.

In 2000, the entire UK public forest estate managed by the Forestry Commission and the Northern Ireland Forest Service was certified against the Standard. Wood products from state forests are now eligible to carry the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) logo of sustainable forest management.

#### Stakeholder Participation and Consultation

The development of the UK positions for key international forest meetings and events is based upon the existing policies that have already been the subject of some form of consultative process. These positions are developed and elaborated across Government within the International Forestry Group. Currently the main forum in the UK for the involvement of wider civil society groups interested in the ongoing international forest dialogue is the Policy Working Group of the Tropical Forest Forum (TFF). The TFF is open to all UK-based governmental, non-governmental, public and private organisations, companies and individuals with an interest in the sustainable utilisation and conservation of tropical forests, and aims to strengthen the coherence and effectiveness of UK-based actions in support of the sustainable use and conservation of forests and forest lands, for the benefit of their peoples, and for the forest's global environmental values.

A wide range of other consultation arrangements exist for domestic issues and policy, from those at local level through country level to the Great Britain level, for example through quinquennial reviews required by Government of the Forestry Commission's agencies - Forest Enterprise and Forest Research.

A workshop will take place in early 2003 under the auspices of the TFF to consider current practices and it is hoped that this will help set out clearly how stakeholders can contribute to and influence the UK's position for the various international forestry dialogues.

Another important element of stakeholder involvement is the inclusion of representatives of non-governmental organisations on the UK delegation to major international meetings and events. Their involvement in recent years, prior to, during and following the events, has provided valuable additional perspectives, a useful resource and links to broader interests.

A further potential for involvement is the UK Forest Partnership for Action, whose members include the forest and wood processing industries, Government departments, devolved administrations and environmental NGOs. This partnership was developed as a result of meetings held in the run up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The Prime Minister brought together a group, co-ordinated by the Forestry Commission, to represent the forest sector in the UK. The group's task was to look at the implications of sustainable development for forestry and wood processing, both at home and internationally, and to develop joint actions. The Partnership is the main platform for taking forward WSSD commitments on forestry, as far as the UK is concerned. The partners agreed five priority areas for action and as the UK Forest Partnership for Action, decided that it wanted a life beyond the Summit. The Partnership is in the process of integrating wide-ranging commitments on certification, forest restoration and protection, illegal logging and timber procurement into an action plan. The partners aim to develop a programme in the fifth area, promotion, in the coming months.

A booklet describing the commitments and planned actions was launched in October 2002 and is available in the sustainable forestry pages of the Forestry Commission website ([www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk))

## International Development Assistance

Forests play a major role in the livelihoods of poor people and the economies of many poor countries. Ensuring that forests are managed and developed in ways that support sustainable development and poverty eradication has been a key focus of the UK's international development programme for many years.

Over time, the nature of our support has changed reflecting changing perspectives and more importantly an improved understanding of the issues and challenges involved in ensuring that forests play their full and most effective role in poverty eradication. Primary attention is now given to addressing the policy, institutional, legal and governance issues which often dictate how the sector is managed in many countries. Rights and the needs of the poor, including forest dependent people, are central to our objectives.

In undertaking this work the UK, primarily through the Department for International Development, works closely with a number of developing countries around the world and increasingly in partnership with other development agencies both bilateral and multilateral.

## **Economic aspects of forests, including trade**

### Valuation of forest goods and services

Forests in the UK are valued for providing a wide range of economic, social and environmental benefits and a balance amongst these benefits is critical for sustainable forestry. These benefits include marketable outputs such as income and employment generation, as well as a range of non-market benefits, such as open-access non-priced recreation, landscape, and other environmental and educational benefits. From an economic perspective, under-valuation of these non-market social and environmental benefits (SEBs) impedes the efficient allocation of resources to achieve sustainable forest management. The range of benefits generated by the forestry sector has also increased awareness of the role of forestry in supporting other economic activities. Forestry in the UK is, therefore, being increasingly recognised for its contribution to the wider rural economy.

The Forestry Commission has funded a number of major studies in recent years to measure the economic benefits of forestry. In terms of marketable outputs, these studies include Input-Output analyses in England, Scotland and Wales to assess output, income and employment generation (including multiplier effects), and a Forest Employment Survey across Great Britain. Considerable effort has also been devoted to enhancing understanding of the non-market outputs of forestry. Two pieces of current research are of particular note.

First, the Forestry Commission is funding research to estimate values for a range of non-market social and environmental benefits (SEBs) of forestry. The following non-market goods are being examined: biodiversity; landscape; recreation; carbon sequestration; water quantity and quality; air pollution absorption; and archaeology.

Second, the Forestry Commission is funding research, with contributions from other government agencies, into the role of forests in supporting the tourism industry in Great Britain. Forests, woodlands and trees provide amenity services that attract visitors to forests and the countryside. Expenditure associated with these visits generates income and employment in rural areas which, through a positive externality effect, is at least partially related to forests. The study is examining the role of various forest characteristics and attributes in generating visitor expenditure, and the role of forests in generating expenditure by visitors to the wider countryside. It is using data collected through surveys of visitors and forest managers to investigate visitor expenditures related to forest-specific visits and those

related to other countryside visits where the presence of forests may influence expenditure levels.

#### Economic and policy instruments

The key economic instruments used to support forestry in the UK are the incentives provided through the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) and the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme which are currently being revised and tailored to the needs of each country of the United Kingdom. In addition to providing incentives for private owners to engage in new planting, these schemes – which encompass a number of separate grants – have in recent years placed increasing weight on restoration and enhanced management of forests in order to deliver improved benefits for landscape, biodiversity and recreation.

The implementation of these schemes is regionally differentiated in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to more clearly reflect the needs of the country strategies and emerging strategy in Northern Ireland. In England, a broader range of factors have been introduced for assessing WGS applications. In Scotland, the current WGS will be replaced by the Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme in 2003, with greater emphasis on management of existing woodlands.

The use of tax as an economic instrument has not been subject to major change since forestry was removed from the income tax system in 1988, thereby removing the previous incentive for private owners to invest in forestry in order to offset forestry management costs against their income tax liability. Forestry operations are, of course, affected by a wide range of taxation measures affecting rural land-uses and businesses. Future changes to taxation affecting forestry may be determined by the needs of broader agendas pertaining, for example, to the environment and socio-economic needs of rural areas.

Forestry is not currently part of the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (established under the auspices of the Kyoto Protocol) which was set up in April 2002 to trade carbon credits. No government schemes have been established in carbon trading from forestry, although markets have begun to develop in the private sector whereby firms and individuals pay for the planting of trees to offset carbon emissions.

Although a relatively small producer of wood and wood products itself, the UK plays a major and highly influential role as a substantial net importer. Wood and wood products constitute the third largest commodity import into the UK, and with imports of around £8 billion each year, the UK is the world's third largest new importer of wood and wood products. The UK's impact on the way forests are managed in other countries is therefore significant. This is recognised, particularly in terms of issues related to the sustainable forest management and the governance and legality of forest utilisation.

Recognising this role and its responsibilities, the UK took a prominent role within the G8 Action Programme on Forests agreed in Birmingham in 1998 and in its follow up. We have worked closely with other G8 partners and other consuming and producing countries to take this important initiative forward into a number of practical areas.

Key amongst these have been the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) Processes in South Asia and in Africa. The Asia FLEG has progressed significantly following a highly successful conference held in Indonesia in September 2001. As a direct result of this conference, the UK entered into a bilateral agreement with Indonesia seeking to tackle illegal logging in Indonesia and the associated trade between the two countries. This agreement has encouraged other countries to seek similar agreements with Indonesia. The Bali conference has also encouraged African countries to organise a similar conference to address these issues in their region. This will be held in April 2003 and will be co-hosted by Republic and Congo

and World Bank with the UK, France, Switzerland, the US and the European Commission acting as co-sponsors.

### Timber Procurement Policy

The UK Government, the devolved administrations and many local authorities recognise their responsibilities in leading by example by ensuring that when they buy goods and services, they apply their sustainable development policies and objectives. For example, by only procuring timber that has been legally logged from sustainably managed forests.

Arms of government, the devolved administrations and a number of agencies and local authorities have taken steps to purchase timber and timber products from legal and sustainable sources. For example, for central government departments in England, this policy has been active for two years and has been supported in principle by environmental non-government organisations and the Timber Trade Federation.

Contracts awarded by departments require all wood supplied to be legally obtained and the majority of wood to be from sustainable sources. Sustainable sources can be either recycled wood or new wood from trees that were grown in forests or plantations that are managed to sustain their biodiversity, productivity and vitality, and to prevent harm to other ecosystems and any indigenous or forest-dependent people – as addressed by relevant internationally agreed protocols.

Independent verification of both sources of wood and the chain of custody from forest to final customer is critical to the success of this policy for without it there is no credible assurance of suppliers' claims. Standard-setting bodies and certification schemes are the most recognisable source of assurance but there is no common standard and public procurement regulations do not allow public contracting authorities to demand such schemes as the sole means of verification. Thus contracting authorities have to set their own standard for legal and sustainable timber sources and indicate to suppliers what criteria are used by authorities to determine the credibility of claims made. In so doing, authorities must allow suppliers sufficient flexibility to avoid discrimination and unnecessary barriers to trade.

In addition to providing buyers with a model contract specification for timber and wood products the Government will be providing wider guidance and assistance. The concept of creating a dedicated central organisation for this purpose is being actively considered. Among other functions it would assess certification schemes to determine which ones meet the required standard for Government contracts, publish best practice advice and raise awareness of its timber procurement policy through training courses, workshops and other related events.

The Government is also taking action to encourage the wider public sector to buy timber that has been legally logged from sustainably managed forests.

It is the Government's vision that a single effective policy be adopted by public sector organisations throughout the UK.

### **Forest health and productivity**

Together with climate change, air pollution constitutes one of the most important threats to the health and continuing productivity of European forests. In the 1980's, following widespread forest decline, many countries including the UK began to establish surveys to assess the condition of their forests. Under initiatives by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE) the various national surveys were incorporated into a pan-European survey in 1987 and the European Commission passed Regulation 3528/86 requiring member states to undertake periodic inventories of forest condition. This is commonly referred to as the Level I monitoring programme.

In the UK, monitoring of tree health has been undertaken since 1984 with results published annually. However the damage symptoms and parameters measured in the Level I network are non-specific and the results of these surveys cannot be used to make causal statements. The original EU regulation was amended in 1994 (1091/94) in order to establish an intensive, continuous monitoring network (Level II) to improve the understanding of cause-effect relationships for pollutant depositions and forest condition. Intensive monitoring provides a means of establishing the relative importance of pollutant depositions compared with the other factors (biotic and abiotic) which influence forest stability and productivity.

Twenty long-term intensive monitoring plots covering five tree species have been established. The plots form part of a European-wide network ('Level II') established under European Union legislation. Data from these plots are being used to support other national environmental research programmes e.g. soil critical loads and climate change, and will provide information to support wider Forestry Commission objectives of protecting Britain's forests and woodlands and conserving their biodiversity. Data are published regularly.

This monitoring is in compliance with EU Regulations 3528/86, 2157/92, 1091/94. The forestry commitments of the UN/ECE Long-range Trans-boundary Air Pollution Convention, of Resolution S1 of the first Ministerial Conference of the Protection of Forests in Europe (Strasbourg, 1990) and Resolution H1 of the second Ministerial Conference of the Protection of Forests in Europe (Helsinki, 1993). The data are also valuable in the monitoring of sustainability.

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

### Long term supply and demand

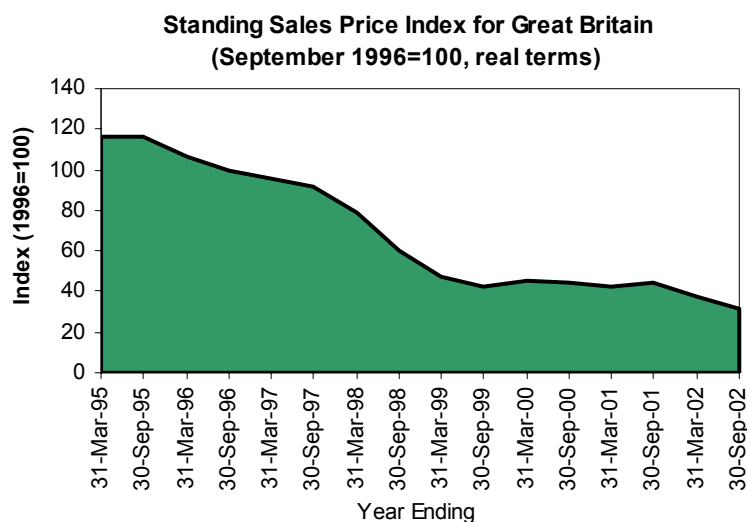
Long term supply from UK forests is an important issue for UK processors because of the rapid increase in production forecast to flow from the major period of softwood afforestation in the uplands in the 1960s and 70s. National revisions of the forecast from both public and private sector forests were conducted and published in 1995 and 2001. These largely confirmed earlier projections despite increased consideration of environmental impacts and changes in the economic situation affecting harvesting planning. A major market outlook study was commissioned to address the issues of this rapidly increasing resource and the implications for investment in UK wood processing in a UK market where over 80% of supply is imported.

An immediate impact of the market study was much greater awareness by the various sub-sectors of the industry of the need to work together to address the problems and opportunities. In Scotland, where the major increases in harvesting potential are concentrated the development agencies, encouraged by the scale of the economic potential, took a fresh look at forestry and wood processing and helped the industry to establish a Forestry Sector Cluster. This has been a major catalyst for leadership and activity in the area on many of the issues identified by the study including timber transportation, e-commerce, and research into investment potential. A major issue has been the need to quantify the timber quality of the future softwood supply and research silviculture and product development to accommodate it. The success of the major cluster initiative in Scotland has inspired similar structures in Wales and in other afforested regions of the UK.

Efforts to assist the extremely poor outlook for the UK hardwood industry have been taken forward on a more local basis, with some centrally organised research particularly into utilisation of small dimension and lower quality timber. However for both softwood and hardwood growing areas much could be done to exploit the market for renewable energy (including local heating schemes). 2002 in particular has seen a great deal more interest in

developing this sector, and a more co-ordinated approach both in the industry and across government.

However this has all taken place against a background of ever deteriorating prices for timber in the UK as shown by the published softwood index.



	PERCENTAGE CHANGE	
	Nominal terms	Real terms (1996=100)
Year to September 2002	-26.7	-28.6
Year to September 2001	2.3	0.3

Standing sales timber from state forest sales. The Index is expressed in real terms (1996 prices), and is adjusted for timber size mix

The UK and Nordic producers are now in the third year of a major collaborative initiative to promote wood in the market place. The *Wood for good* campaign is a generic campaign, which focuses on increasing the market for sustainably grown wood regardless of the country of origin. Its strategy has been to address the need to change attitudes to wood in the UK, (which does not have a wood using culture and has low per capita consumption) but also to increase technical understanding and confidence in using wood among key target audiences. With this in mind, the campaign and members of the Timber Trade Federation have supported an industry initiative to establish a new Centre for Timber Engineering at Napier University in Scotland. This project aims to increase very significantly the profile of timber engineering and the number of engineers and architects who are able to use timber effectively. The centre opens in 2003. A similar centre is being proposed in Wales by the Welsh Development Agency together with the Building Research Establishment.

#### Sustainable Forest Management

The success in obtaining recognition of the UK Forestry Standard by all the main stakeholder interests encouraged their representatives to work together towards the production of a forest Certification standard. Partners worked on an independent standard and ultimately, after huge effort in various pan-sectoral working groups were able to publish the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) in 2000. The Standard is not in itself a Certification scheme

and is not used as a product label. The latter need is met through certification companies working with a scheme authorised to use the UKWAS. The Forest Stewardship Council has recognised UKWAS as conforming to its requirements and some 40% of UK forests are now certified on that basis by the FSC including all of the forests managed by the state forestry services. The cost issue for smaller forest ownerships and small woodlands is a serious impediment to the progress of certification, problems that are being addressed by UKWAS and other interests in the UK as a matter of urgency.

The development of the market for certified forest products has developed more slowly than forested area despite a major initiative from the processing industry in developing a code of practice for management with a chain of custody. Several major mills are now certified for chain of custody but, except where they use a high proportion of supply from state forests, they have had difficulty getting sufficient certified supply from the private sector to maintain certification. Up to 60% of timber harvested is in certified forests but these difficulties result in a much smaller proportion (so far unquantified) of timber retaining its certification beyond primary processing,

While some product retail markets and overseas markets demand certified supply the demand from the buying public remains weak. A major challenge for wood promotion programmes espousing sustainable forest management is to increase the profile of legal and sustainably produced timber in purchasing decisions like housing. The UK Government has taken a leading role by adopting a policy of purchasing wood products that will eventually derive only from legal and sustainably managed sources. There is considerable concern in the industry that unless evidence of sustainable production can be communicated easily and at low cost to producers the material will be disadvantaged against other materials not subject to the similar scrutiny of environmental and social impact.

Challenges for sustainable forest management in the UK include delivering EU and international commitments to safeguard key forest biodiversity, improving the environmental quality of the wider forest estate and taking action to restore important open ground habitats, such as semi-natural grassland, lowland heathland, heather moorland and peatbogs.

The forestry industries in the UK, from nurseries to wood processors and importers, have been working together to produce a sustainability strategy for the forestry sector. Through the Forest Industries Development Council, the industry engaged the environmental and social stakeholder organisations in this process and a draft strategy, including targets for progress on all significant aims and impacts was placed on the internet for comment after announcement at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002. The strategy is ambitious in its aims and in its intention for ongoing reporting and review.

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

Following the problems encountered in advance of UNFF2 and the lack of clarity surrounding the preparation of national reports, the process was undoubtedly better for UNFF3, and we were pleased to receive the reporting guidelines and suggested format developed by the UNFF Secretariat in collaboration with members of the Bureau and of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

Unfortunately, although the documents were dated 31 October 2002, we did not receive them in time to start work on the report until well into November, and therefore with a deadline of 22 December, we once again ran into problems with timing, particularly when we had hoped to involve a wide range of stakeholders in the preparation of the report and carry out a full open and transparent consultative exercise.

The Forestry Commission was tasked to compile the report on behalf of the UK and it was certainly helpful to have a basic format to follow with some clear questions to address.

Our first step was to write round the entire membership of the International Forestry Group, and a number of special advisers within the Forestry Commission, setting out some context, and inviting input to the report, either generally, or on the implementation of specific proposals for action. To our letter, we attached the outline format, together with the text of the relevant IPF/IFF proposals for action in addition to the summary.

As we were particularly keen to incorporate contributions from other stakeholders, and to make the process as participatory as possible, we also wrote round in the same way to a wide range of stakeholders and partners in the UK Forest Partnership for Action, to enable them to make an input on any issues they wished to see reflected in the UK's report. Ideally, it would have been preferable to allow more time and consult a wider range of stakeholders, but in the end, given the time constraint, we decided that it was best to make use of existing mechanisms, namely the International Forestry Group and the UK Forest Partnership for Action.

Once the various contributions were received and incorporated, the report was tidied up and checked for consistency in terms of content and style, and then forwarded to the UNFF Secretariat to meet the extended deadline of 17 January 2003. At the same time, the report was submitted to Forestry Ministers for their information.

**END**