

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

Turkey

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

General

Forests cover about 26 percent (20.7 ha.) of Turkey's land area and have significant economic, environmental and cultural functions. Almost half of the country's total forests are unfortunately degraded, unproductive and needs to be rehabilitated and protected. Furthermore, forested areas in the country are not evenly distributed and some parts of the country are totally poor of forest resources. About 15 percent of Turkey's population (about 9.5 millions) lives in forest or forest-neighboring villages where forest resources make a vital contribution to livelihood of local communities whose daily life are highly dependent on these resources. However, the life standards of these communities are quite lower than the country's average.

The Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MEOF) and its associated branches are primarily responsible for the forestry activities over the country. The Ministry draws up the necessary arrangements through forestry related laws and other legislative tools in a close cooperation with interested parties. The Forest Law 683 which has been in force since 1956 is the main framework of the forest policy and forest administration practices. However, some parts and articles of this Law have been renewed in accordance with the up to- date approaches and society's demands.

The Structure and Duties Laws of MOF 3800 and the General Directorate of Forestry 3234, National Park Law 2873 (1983), Forest Villages Development Law 2924 (1983), Terrestrial Hunting Law 3116 (1937), the National Afforestation and Erosion Control Mobilization Law 4122 (1995), Rangeland Law, Environment Law etc. are the other major laws that put forward the general outlines of the subject specific forestry aspects.

"Forestry Expertise Reports" associated with the Five Year Development Plans are also significant leading instruments that provide policies, strategies and targets for the future and assess the achievements/ constraints encountered during the former period. These plans are obligatory documentation of the State Planning Organization that mandates the general framework policies, strategies and the targets of state organizations during the related period.

To address emerging issues in the forestry sector, a Forest Sector Review has been undertaken with the assistance of the World Bank. The review has identified several vital challenges facing the forestry sector which include poverty, land tenure, the need to establish multi-purpose, participatory forest management planning, and to control soil erosion in degraded areas; and the need to restore the sector's financial viability. The IPF/IFF process and its proposals for action were taken into account during the review. The Review that concluded in 2001 identified a long-term vision for Turkish Forestry. It contains sustainable production of forest products and services, poverty alleviation, employment generation and environmental conservation.

The preparation of the Turkish "National Forest Program" (nfp) was initiated in 2001 and finalized in 2003. The program has been developed with the involvement of all interested parties including forest villagers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academics, forestry sector, forestry professionals, other Governmental agencies etc. At all stages of the development process of the nfp, participation of all stakeholders has been ensured and their views and proposals incorporated into the final report. The process has been assisted by FAO. The program undertakes a review of the current situation of Turkish Forestry. According to the program, the main policy for promoting sustainable forest management is multi-purpose forest management under ecosystem approach. The participation of all interested groups and integrated planning at catchments level is also regarded essential issues in this context.

National Forest Program contains 30 policies, 56 strategies and 147 proposals for action. 40 proposals for action were identified as long-term proposals and the remaining as short-term proposals.

For the future development of Turkish forestry, the main issues that need to be further elaborated were founded out as follows during preparation stages of the National Forest Program;

- Poverty alleviation in forest-dependent populations is still one of the main issues of forestry sector,
- Combating to soil erosion, desertification and reclamation of degraded lands through integrated watershed programs and projects are the priority challenges,
- Since forest management planning is highly centralized, decentralized planning and decision making in forestry by taking into account active participation of all stakeholders should be promoted,
- Forest conservation, multi-disciplinary management of protected areas, national parks, biodiversity consideration, wildlife management practices need to be addressed by more comprehensive planning and implementation practices,
- Problems encountered through uncertainties of land tenure and ownership structures in or around the state forests should be urgently solved,
- In kind and financial subsidies provided by the forestry sector to the forest villages create financial difficulties on implementation of essential forest practices,
- Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management are needed to be promoted and implemented in the management units,
- Appropriate legislative tools and mechanisms are needed to promote and strengthen the participation of wide range of stakeholders.

Government and NGOs partnership on reforestation has also gained momentum recently. One of the most renowned NGO, TEMA¹, aims at contribution to forestry and environmentally based activities over the country. Among them, one protocol has been signed for financially contribute to oak plantation activities on suitable regions of Turkey. TEMA has been playing an important role in awareness building programs.

OR-KOOP² as a central unit of the forest village co-operatives is another important NGO that organizes the relationships between the state forestry administration and the cooperatives. Some other NGOs such as OMO³, TOD⁴, TKV⁵, DHKV⁶ etc. have actively been participated in forestry activities in Turkey. They often play an important role in awareness and fund raising, public education, increasing of stakeholders' interest and transfer of technology in forestry. Since the NGOs mostly consist of multidisciplinary staff, they play very important role on pushing the government authorities to provide and implement transparency, open and shared policy approaches and ensures stakeholders more involve in forest management.

It is recognized that the majority of the forestry related policy frameworks, strategies and the approaches addressed in these national instruments are quite relevant to the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action.

But, it is the fact that, some of the Proposals are not sufficiently undertaken. (E.g. assessment the effects of the air pollution (IPF 50 a, b, e), forest certification and labeling (IPF 133). However; consultative process is being kept in mind continuously and comprehensively in collaboration with all interested parties in order to further improvement the national forestry actions to address the elements of UNFF. Efforts on the reforming the forestry approach from the sustained yield to sustainable management have rapidly been undertaken. Emphasis is therefore being given to the social, economic

¹ TEMA, Turkish Foundation for Combating Erosion, Forestation and Conservation of Natural Habitats.

² OR-KOOP, Union of the Forest Village Cooperatives of Turkey

³ OMO, The Chamber of Forest Engineers

⁴ TOD, Association of Turkish Foresters

⁵ TKV, Turkish Development Foundation

⁶ DHKV, Association for Protection of Natural Resources

and ecological dimensions of forestry that will promote the achievement the sustainable forest management.

In the light of IPF/IFF proposals for action, a number of programs and projects have been initiated that summarized below;

- Strategy for 2000's have been prepared with a participatory approach,
- Information strategy for General Directorate of Forestry has also been prepared that includes a program of actions with 5 stages. The first stage is now being implemented.
- A new approach on forest protection task was initiated that state forest areas, under the treatment of regeneration, have been protected by forest villagers and forestry sector pay the villagers for their protection job.
- Geographic Information Systems model for forestry has been developed through a project with duration of 3 years.
- Forest management planning system has been improved. Functional planning tests, considering ecological, social and economical aspects of forest management units have been launched.
- A number of forest district which are now not functional have been closed down, as a part of Solid Forest District Model Program.
- Some projects on education of the village cooperatives, conservation of biodiversity, forestry operations, work safety etc. were organized and protocols signed between the state forestry sector and NGOs in order to promote public interest and participation and generate knowledge on forestry, environment and other natural resources.

Implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to thematic issues of UNFF 4

Social and cultural aspects of forests

Social and cultural aspects of forests are quite well addressed by the forestry sector in Turkey. Some rights to utilize forest resources have been granted to forest villagers who are the highest effected parts of the society by forest resources and their cooperatives by the Forest Law. In this context, logs for construction of their houses and fire wood are provided to forest villagers and their cooperatives at subsidized prices. In addition to legal obligations, efforts are being made to support the forest villagers by special grants and credit schemes for their income generating activities other than forestry. Conversion of coppice forests, for instance, to high forests is carried out in such areas where there is not any social problem. To compensate damages that can be arising out of conversion activities, legislation work is now underway.

Non - wood forest products including medicinal aromatic plants, mushrooms, and bulbous plants make an important contribution to the income of forest villagers. Forest villagers harvesting non-wood forest products from state forests that correspond to 99 % of total forested area pay subsidized prices for the harvested products for their own needs. Those villages have also special privileges to sell those products in the markets.

Forest village cooperatives can buy certain portion of round wood and fuel wood they harvested and transported to depots inside forest at the cost price. Taking into account the fact that market prices may some time be lower than the cost prices, the Forest Law in force have been amended recently in a way that the price paid by the cooperatives is at least 20 % lower than the market price.

One of the main objectives of the forest policy is to sustain employment created from forestry activities and special attention is paid to this issue in the preparation of forest management plans.

Forest workers employed seasonally in forestry activities are mainly from forest villages. To provide social security to them, the measures necessary are taken to ensure their employment for a certain period, at least four months a year. A project called "City Forests" has been initiated recently and city

forests established in 70 provinces. Guidelines for the establishment and management of city forests have also been prepared.

Forests in Turkey host a vast number of cultural values and monuments. Their conservation is carried out in close cooperation with the Board of Conservation of Natural and Cultural Values.

A project titled “Education of the administrators and members of the village cooperatives on in-situ conservation of biodiversity” was organized by two NGOs and supported by UNDP with participation of 250 cooperatives in 2002.

An education and supervision protocol was signed by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and the OR-KOOP on forestry related issues such as sustainable forestry, rural development, cooperative, harvesting and standards, work safety, ergonomics, afforestation, wildlife, protected areas and national park management etc.

Traditional forest related knowledge

Given the richness of Turkish forests both wood products and non-wood forest products and services, and the need to explore information about traditional forest related knowledge (TFRK) Forest Research Institutes and other related organizations are encouraged to conduct studies on TFRK.

In order to provide a better understanding of the expectations of the forest villagers and other stakeholders from the forest management practices the Ministry of Forestry organized a “Forest Villages Summit” in 1997. The Summit aimed to provide and explore the ways and models how the public-forest relations should satisfy with villagers and the other stakeholders. In this regard, policies, strategies and constraints were broadly discussed by the multidisciplinary teams and groups for a better understanding of the needs of society and then wider receiving the sustainable management of national forests.

The outcomes of the Summit have showed that those villagers and their groups (e.g. village cooperatives) and NGOs have recalled their willingness for participation to whole stages of the management practices of country’s forest resources.

The forest village cooperatives which, have been given some privileges and priorities for employment of forestry works in the state forests, have gradually gained some rights in their neighboring forests through forestry legislation since 1970s. The number of these cooperatives has reach up to 2.123 by 2000 and 60% of the workforce in the harvesting operations was carried out by them in the same year.

Presently participation of the local stakeholders, villagers and other parties in decision making and planning processes as well as the use of traditional knowledge is quite limited in Turkey. In order to involve the active and broad participation of the local stakeholders and villagers in forest management, planning and implementation stages awareness of local people, legislative structure and institutional capacity should be improved and promoted.

Scientific forest -related knowledge

Scientific forest related knowledge and research can play an important role in addressing issues faced by forestry sector in Turkey. Forestry research is currently undertaken by 9 regional and 3 topic-orientated research institutes. Traditionally forestry research has concentrated on technical topics such as silviculture, nursery and afforestation techniques, harvesting etc.

In the light of current challenges, the new vision of forestry research contain social, economic and environmental issues it includes, *inter alia*, conservation of biodiversity, participatory forest management systems with involvement of all interested parties in particular forest villagers, plantation with fast growing forest tree species, non-wood forest products and services, land use and, development of sustainable forest management policies at national level.

The priorities outlined above are recognized in the recently -prepared Forestry Research Master Plan as well as in the Special Forestry Report of the Five Year Development Plan.

Forestry Research Institutes are member of the European Forest Institute and actively participate in the international research networks like IUFRO and the European Poplar Commission. Scientific and forest-related practical knowledge is disseminated through technical bulletin, periodicals, booklets etc.

6 Forest Soil Laboratories located in different regions of the country provide assistance to the implementing agencies in such activities like afforestation, reforestation, erosion control, and nursery practices.

National Forest Program that has been prepared recently also identifies research priorities.

In particular, the Poplar and Fast Growing Tree Species Research Institute as a subject-specific research institute carries out on farm trials in farmlands in order to encourage the private land owners to get interest in private plantation. Private poplar plantation has thereby reached up around 175 000 hectares by 2002.

To tackle challenges emerging currently, special emphasis is put on capacity building and institutional strengthening in the new research vision.

Collaboration between researchers, academics, forestry professionals from implementing agencies, NGO's and private sector is encouraged by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. Academics and researchers as well as other interested parties are integrated into policy formulation processes.

A project titled "Forestry Education, Academic System and Research Organizations in Turkey" was initiated with the financial assistance of the Near East FAO Office and is being carried out by 3 Turkish academics from a Faculty of Forestry.

In addition, a number of projects with small budgets are conducted between forest agencies, researchers and academics. The project topics include combating forest fires, functional forest management planning in a research forest, determination of forest tree species suitable for production of music instruments, log-line system in harvesting practices and plant species with higher biomass energy capacity.

Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting, and Concepts, Terminology and Definitions

In an integrated manner with the work undertaken for criteria and indicators, the activities of this group of actions are being continued. In this regard, a particular part of the workshop mentioned above has been allocated to brief the participants on forest information system, EXTRANET, that will be accessible via Internet.

In the system, forest district-based data will be transmitted to the main server in the headquarters of General Directorate of Forestry via Internet.

The work undertaken by FAO under Forest Resources Assessment is followed in terms of concepts, terminology and definitions. The draft of FAO has been put on the official web site of the Ministry to inform foresters, professionals.

The First National Forestry Forum (NFF) was held by the Ministry of Forestry. By this Forum, 10 committees of experts on different disciplines of forestry have examined all aspects of Turkish forestry. Reports prepared mainly stressed the need for the rationalization and streamlining of legal and administrative frameworks. The recommendations derived from the First National Forestry Forum are being tested and evaluated in order to reach the desired targets of forestry in the country. Findings

of this Forum are also evaluated in terms of their relevance the efforts on promoting and strengthening the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action at country level.

In a number of reports written on the issue of forestry administration structure of Turkey have urged the forestry sector should carry out comprehensive studies and make some core changes in the institutional and legislative framework of forestry organization *inter alia*, personnel planning and education, inventory and planning, research priorities, empowerment of local administrations and coordination, education of local population and so on.

Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management

Turkey has actively participated in the Pan-European Process for developing criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. Turkey has also made contribution to the development of the Near East Criteria and Indicators.

In 1999, regional set of criteria and indicators was translated into Turkish and circulated to the Forest District Enterprises for initial field test. Based upon the results of the initial period, the set was revised. A committee was set up to review the whole process and to provide advice on the future work. Within the General Directorate of Forests (GDF) criteria and indicators have been incorporated into the training process of forestry professionals and all related documents and guidelines translated into Turkish.

GDF initiated the process to prepare, through a participatory approach, national level criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management in 2003. For this purpose, a workshop was held with the participation of all stakeholders including 12 NGO's. At the end of the workshop, the draft national set of criteria and indicators were identified. The draft set was sent to all related groups including academics, forestry professionals, NGO's, representatives of forestry industry. Based upon the views received, the national set of criteria forest management was finalized.

In the light of work done during the development of national criteria and indicators, it is planned to initiate the work for developing forest management unit level criteria and indicators in 2004.

III. Preparation of the Report

The proposed Guidelines and Suggested Format for Voluntary National Reports to the Fourth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) was sent to all related institutions including all general directorates of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, 9 forestry faculties, two forestry related Associations, Chambers of Forest Engineers and Foundation of Turkey's Foresters, and several forestry related NGOs in order to get their views and ideas in September 2003.

Some of them have sent useful contribution to the report. However, some institutions and particularly the forestry faculties mentioned that they have some difficulties in elaborating the huge document including the proposals of IPF, IFF and the reports of prior UNFF sessions. At the same time, they mentioned that more time allocation is needed for preparation such report.

The main sources of information for this report are the study of "Turkey's Forestry Sector Review, Draft Report of the National Forestry Program, VIII National Development Plan, and Forest Management Plans, periodic reports of the State Statistics Institute and the various reports and document of the Ministry of Forestry. Additionally, some information was also compiled from the special reports and the discussion papers related the assessment of the implementation of IPF and IFF proposals for action in Turkey.

Majority of the information used on preparation of this report, was obtained from the National Forest Program Report which includes a range of opinions of the NGOs, individuals and other forestry related government institutions.