

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

POLAND

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

General

1. Please provide additional or new information on initiatives taken or lessons learned since 1997 further to the information on forests included in your national reports to UNFF 2, UNFF 3 and UNFF 4, the Commission on Sustainable Development, and other international instruments and organizations on the following points:
 - assessment (including of the relevance, priority, status of implementation, planned actions) of the IPF/IFF proposals for action in the national context;
 - development and implementation of your national forest programme or similar national policy framework for forests;
 - international cooperation, including development and implementation of partnerships;
 - mechanisms or initiatives to facilitate stakeholder participation, including indigenous and local communities, in forest sector planning, decision-making and/or forest management.

As it was already stated before, Poland has committed to provide for sustainable management of forest, and it has recognised the important contribution that the international discussions can provide for development of both the relevant policy and practice. Moreover, these international discussions on forests and forestry, including their conclusions, have provided a framework for the national action. Polish forestry has gained much from the international processes in which Poland has taken part (for example such like UNFF, UNCCC, UNCBD, MCPFE, ECE/TC).

Currently, the total forest acreage in Poland is 8,942,000 ha, that accounts for 28.6 % of the national territory (following the Main Statistical Office, data as of 31 December 2003).

Additional information on the initiatives taken in relation to the forest issues and included in the Polish report to UNFF4 is following:

A. In 2003, the major activities in Polish forestry sector were focused on the further works on Regional Operational Programmes, which result from the National Policy on Forests (ROPs NPF).

In 2002, preparation of the National Forest Programme was begun, in Poland through development of the Regional Operational Programmes of the National Policy on Forests (as of 1997), and in 2004, completion of this process is envisaged. Seventeen consultative groups were appointed to develop the Regional Operational Programmes.

The aforementioned regional operational programmes have been prepared upon agreement and consultation with competent regional authorities. Ultimately, this process will help to develop the directions for regional development policies in the particular areas, as well as the prospects for the future.

Once the public consultations are complete, the objectives of ROPs NPF, the final approval by the Minister of the Environment, and the detailed report on the implementation progress in ROPs NPF in 2004 will be published in mass media by the end of January 2005. Also, the Regional Directorates of the National Forest Holding - State Forests, and the relevant provincial authorities and local self-governments will be provided with the tasks to be implemented in the framework of ROPs NPF. Successful effects of ROPs NPF will depend upon development of efficient partnerships to various initiatives, in relation to development, negotiation, and final implementation actions.

The public consultations which were begun in 2003 with the aim to develop each of the ROPs NFL, have not only to reflect the views of general public, but they are also expected to produce general public support to good forest management.

B. In 2003, Poland as the Signatory co-presiding the Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) began its preparation activities to the take over the presidency from Austria, and also initiated to undertake active role in the development of the background for the MCPFE Vienna Declaration and Vienna Resolutions which were adopted by the Ministers responsible for forests during the IV MCPFE held in April, 2003, in Vienna.

Throughout the recent decade Poland achieved preparedness to take the Presidency of the MCPFE (for the period of 2004 - 2007) and it developed the background for the activity to be managed by Secretariat of the

Process (Liaison Unit, Warsaw).

Since during IV MCPFE Poland signed the Vienna Declaration and the relevant five Resolutions, it will have to implement their resultant commitments at the national and local levels. Poland continues its efficient collaboration in the framework of the MCPFE and plays active role in development of its activities, and also contributes with relevant inputs to solutions of the future challenges facing the European forestry.

Implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to thematic issues of UNFF 2

Combating deforestation and forest degradation

2. preparing diagnostic studies to analyse historical and underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, including processes outside the forest sector

The current degradation of forests in Poland results from continuous and simultaneous impacts of a number of factors (abiotic, biotic and anthropogenic) which have given rise to unfavourable phenomena and caused changes in biodiversity and tree health .

Generally, the main threats to forests have been well identified. They are caused mostly by anthropogenic changes in the environment, including:

- gaseous and particulate pollution of the air ,
 - excessive fragmentation of forest areas,
 - schematic forest management to produce raw materials (including substitution of mixed and broadleaved forest being the natural climax communities in the Central European lowlands by intensive production of coniferous monocultures, in the past),
 - forest fires.
3. formulating and implementing national policies and strategies, through an open and participatory process, for addressing the underlying causes of deforestation

Poland has strong legal framework in place to prevent deforestation, as reflected by the actions aimed at the expansion of forest areas and the preservation of their continuity and biological diversity in the future.

According to the 1991 Act on Forests (as further amended) the main principles applied to forest management in Poland are: general protection, sustainable maintenance, continuity of forest use, and enlargement of the resources. Following these principles, the National Forest Holding - State Forests (State Forests) and other forest owners are obliged to ensure such continuity of forest use that will involve commitment to reintroduce forest stands within 2 years after stand removal, and within 5 years in case of damages caused by forest fires and/or other natural disasters.

The issues, which relate to sustainable use of forests, are stipulated also in the 1998 Regulation by Minister of Environmental Protection, Nature Resources and Forestry on the Detailed Rules for Development of the Forest Management Plans, the Simplified Forest Management Plans and the Forest Inventories. Both, the Act on Forests and the aforementioned Regulations make the owners of forest committed to rational use of forest in a way which ensure permanent optimum compliance with all forest functions, by: timber harvesting in the amounts not exceeding forest productive capacity and harvesting of non-wood raw materials and products in a way to secure the opportunities to their biological regeneration and the protection of the ground cover.

The 1995 National Programme for Augmentation of Forest Cover (as revised in 2003) is another document which expresses Poland's commitment to expansion of the national forest acreage. This Programme provides the background for all afforestation activities in Poland. It anticipates an increase in Poland's forest coverage to reach 30% by 2020 and 33% by 2050, as a result from afforestation efforts on lands of marginal significance to agriculture along with definition of spatial priorities reflecting the role of forests in shaping the environment. In addition to afforestation of agricultural or waste land, forest cultivation activities have to be implemented along with restocking of the areas from which mature trees have been removed.

According to the provisions in the 1995 Act on the Protection of Agricultural and Forest Lands, the protection of forest lands is based "upon (...) limited designation for non-agricultural purposes, (...) prevention of degradation or devastation processes in forest land and of damage in tree stands, and forestry production arising is a result of non-forestry activities; (...) restoration of the utilitarian value of land which

has lost its forest land character in result of non-forestry activities; improvement of their utilitarian value and prevention of declining productivity...”.

4. raising awareness of the importance of issues related to deforestation and forest degradation and the multiple values of forests

The Promotional Forest Complexes (PFC) – under Regulations by the General Director of the National Forest Holding - State Forests on the Establishment of Promotional Forest Complexes (1994, 1999 and 2002) - play significant role in upgrading of public awareness in relation to forests, including such issues as the problems of deforestation and forest degradation and promotion of the values of forests. Once enforced, they provide the background for efforts being made with the aim to ensure representation of different natural forest regions. They serve for promotion and implementation of forest economy based practically upon ecological principles. The total acreage of 13 Promotional Forest Complexes is 627,000 ha and the area managed by the State Forests (SF) is 616,000 ha, accounting for 8.8% of the total forest area currently under SF management.

See also point 27.

Forest conservation and protection of unique types of forest and fragile ecosystems

5. creating or expanding protected areas to safeguard forest and related ecosystems and their full range of values and, developing and applying criteria and methodologies for assessing the conditions and management effectiveness in protected forest areas

Forests constitute the major component of all the forms of nature protection and landscape conservation. They account for 43.7 % of the total forest area and include the National Parks, landscape parks and 32.2% of the areas of protected landscape. Within the State Forests, about 46.8% of Poland's forest cover have been declared as the protective forests. This category includes water-protecting forests, soil-protecting forests, forests surrounding cities, and forests damaged by industrial activities.

As it was mentioned in point 2 above, forests in mountain areas are one of the most fragile forest ecosystems, which can be found in Poland (following the classification, all the areas situated on elevation above 300 – 350 m of are considered mountain areas). At present, almost all the mountain forests are under protection, which ranges from passive protection in the National Parks and nature reserves through active protection in forests protecting soil, water and landscape. Public forests in Poland account for about 83% of the total forest area, with the remainder owned by private owners (about 17%). For all the mountain forests, these figures are 80% and 20%, respectively. Composition of the stands largely differs from that in natural forests. Nevertheless, some parts of the mountain forests in Poland are considered primary forests. Deformation of species composition in the mountain forests is worse on higher elevations where inclination of slopes is steeper and the erosion processes are more intensive. The major factors, which affect health of the mountain forests, are: air pollution, weather conditions, insects and fungi. The consequences of the air pollution impact are damaging to forests in Poland, and particularly to the mountain ones. The lack of conformity of the stands and forest sites has negative effects on vitality of trees, susceptibility to insects, fungi, wind, state of plants communities, and consequently for water retention.

6. developing and implementing partnership mechanisms to engage forest owners, private sector, indigenous people and local communities in the planning and management of forest conservation areas and developing and implementing a range of innovative mechanisms for financing and encouraging forest conservation

Generally, apart from the provisions in the 1991 Nature Conservation Act (as further amended), the 1991 Act on Forests (further amended in 1997), and the 1997 National Policy on Forests, certain guidelines on the conservation of forests are included also in the following documents: the 1993 National Programme for the Protection of Forest Gene Resources and Selective Breeding of Forest Trees in Poland for 1991 – 2010, the 1994 Decision No 23 by Minister of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry on the Protection of the Bialowieska Primeval Forests, the 1995 National Programme for Augmentation of Forest Cover (as revised in 2003), the Regulations by the General Director of the State Forests, No. 11 (1995) and No. 11a (1999) on the Ecological Background for Forest Management, Complex Policy on the Protection of Forest Resources (1994), the 1996 Manual on the Preparation of Nature Protection Programme as an Integrated Part of the Forest Management Plan for Each Forest District.

New strategies, as developed for mitigation of natural hazards, and particularly, the problems and tasks associated with mitigation of flood and drought impacts in the mountain areas, are regulated by the 2001 Water Law Act. The Natural Disaster Emergency Act passed in April 2002 forms an auxiliary document to the former Act. The principal objective of the latter is to define precisely the responsibility scope for various administrative levels, and the tasks and activities relating to natural disasters. The responsibility scope depends upon the area affected by a disaster and it makes the village heads, mayors of towns, county heads, provincial governors, and the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration obliged to undertake and manage relevant rescue activities. The activities have to be conducted at the proper level, and the crisis response teams involving many institutions (Institute of Meteorology and Water Management, Regional Water Management Boards, Province Land Reclamation and Water Management Boards, etc.) have been set forth with the aim to collaborate in this regard. There are also other organizations to collaborate with the crisis response teams e.g. Volunteer Mountain Rescue Service, Volunteer Water Rescue Service. Moreover, the crucial role is to be played in form of continuation of the activities to implement the National Programme for Augmentation of Forest Cover and the river-basin management programmes according to the Water Law Act and the EU Water Framework Directive.

7. giving high priority in national forest programs to the rehabilitation and sustainable management of forests and trees in environmentally critical areas, recognising the linkage between forest protection and sustainable development and improving the coordination among such policies and programmes

One of the objectives of the 1997 National Policy on Forests is to aim at the strategy for permanent development of forests so as the performance of their economic, ecological and social functions are secured.

The major effect on the improvement in forest habitats and stand quality will be achieved by means of introduction of the broad-leaved understorey into 40-60 year-old pine stands that will consist mainly of a single species.

In addition, the stand conversion measures, for instance, adoption of the species composition to the new ecological conditions reflecting industrial or transport pollution, have been introduced.

The 1991 Act on Forests (as further amended in 1997), contains many provisions ensuring sustainable forest management and maintenance of forest biological diversity, in particular, the protection of the most valuable forest ecosystems as well as threatened components of flora and fauna, and has included the most important conservation provisions concerning wildlife refuges and endangered species.

The 1993 National Programme for the Protection of Forest Gene Resources and Selective Breeding of Forest Trees in Poland for 1991 – 2010 provides for the following activities, for example:

- development and implementation of regional programmes for conservation of genetic resources,
- enhancement of the activities towards the protection of rare and endangered tree and shrub species, wild fruit trees, relict plant species, and their restitution.

Research on the *ex situ* protection of forest genetic resources (cryogenic methods, embryogenesis and tissue cultures) is another form of conservation of tree species. Such activities have been conducted by the Forest Research Institute, in Warsaw, and the Forest Gene Bank, in Kostrzyca.

Rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover

8. expanding forested area, establishing and managing plantations to enhance production of forest goods and services, while avoiding the replacement of natural ecosystems, and recognizing the role of imports in satisfying the needs for forest products and services

Besides implementation of the 1997 National Policy on Forests and the 1995 National Programme for Augmentation of Forest Cover (as revised in 2003), the preservation of degraded secondary forests and forests established on former agricultural land and other landscapes is carried out, in particular, through:

- reconstruction of the stands in conformity to the principle of adoption of the species composition of the stands to their habitat conditions;
- designing and protection of forests and mid-forests ecosystems having significant value in relation to their biodiversity;
- development and implementation of far reaching forestry programmes (including forest management

- plans for seed production, stand reconstruction and nature conservation programmes);
- combating fire hazards.

See also point 7.

9. promoting the regeneration and restoration of degraded forest areas including through partnerships and building capacities to promote effective participation in decision making, and development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies

In order to achieve reconciliation of diverse requirements relating to forests both nowadays and in the future, and to comply with the international obligations to promote sustainable forest management, Poland continuously improves its national forest laws in line with various international developments. Subsequently, the strategic and executive documents aimed at further improvement in sustainable forest management are implemented successfully (See point 6) or have been already elaborated, e.g. the Regional Operational Programmes for the National Policy on Forests (See point 1).

Good performance of all the above-mentioned efforts is well reflected by the state of forest resources in Poland, in particular, State-owned forests and those managed by the State Forest Service.

In this regard, the solutions might be sought in development of the strategies and programmes for development of rural areas and implementation of agro-environmental and forestry measures in agricultural holdings, with use of external funds.

10. improving the efficiency of international cooperation to support the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and building capacity to monitor forest resources

Poland, as a Signatory of various international agreements, conventions, processes, etc., participates actively in ongoing discussions on development of directions for various international commitments, at the global level – FAO, United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UN/FCCC), United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), and regional level - United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE) - UNECE Timber Committee, Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), European Forestry Commission, and Baltic Agenda 21. Participation to these initiatives provides for harmonisation of the national laws with relevant international solutions, and forms the background for discussions and co-operation with other countries, in particular, Poland's neighbouring countries.

Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands and promotion of natural and planted forests

11. promoting the creation of new forest resources through plantations and recognizing their role in rehabilitation of degraded lands and forests in environmentally critical areas

Recently, the growth of afforested areas on privately owned land has been noted. Despite notable progress, the afforestation process needs speeding-up, especially on individually owned land, and a higher State budgetary support. Besides, afforestation of post-agricultural land is carried out, and new forests have been introduced in result of reforestation.

12. promoting policies to meet increasing demand for wood and non-wood forest products and services, through sustainable forest management.

The Polish forest policy provides for compensation system, as designed to satisfy the owners of forest, by means of acquiring non-market environmental benefits from public and private forests. This instrument consists of tax relief for forests, aged above 40 years, those are put on register of the national heritage sites, and it provides relevant subsidies for afforestation activities, and secures budgetary support to the actions which are aimed at reduction of adverse impacts from pests and diseases.

According to the provisions in the 1991 Act on Forests (as further amended), collection of non-wood forest products such as forest fruit from herbaceous cover is allowed in the State-owned forests, for both the proprietary needs of their owners, and the commercial purpose. However, the collection for commercial

purpose requires a contract to be concluded with competent Forest District.

Implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to thematic issues of UNFF 3

Economic aspects of forests, including trade

13. valuation of forest goods and services (this may include, among other things, the development and use of new valuation methodologies, valuation of a wider range of goods and services, and policy decisions that reflect a more comprehensive assessment of forest values),

In Poland, forests coverage accounts for 28.6% of the total national territory, that is 8.9 million hectares. Being an essential factor of ecological equilibrium, forests are the form of land use that enables biological production of market values. The National Forest Holding - State Forests has predominated the market, while owning 78% of the total forests area in Poland, and 85% of timber resources. The State Forests responsible for 95% of round-timber removals. The total Polish forests resources amount to about 220 m³ merchantable timber per hectare as obtained in the National Forest Holding - State Forests, and 124 m³ in other forests. About 39,000 people are employed in forest industry, and the share of timber industry in the global output and the gross value added accounts for about 0.3%.

Industrial demand of timber products is difficult to predict because of considerable distraction of the sawnwood industry where the 30 – 40% lack of raw materials per year has occurred. It is estimated that a greater usage is possible without causing any damage to forests. Nevertheless, the current market situation can change in line with unpredictable exchange rates of the Polish currency (Zloty). The amount of additional volumes that could be absorbed by the industry depends on decision on the increase in timber harvesting within the framework of the Polish legal provisions and information provided by foresters. In 2003, the industry did not suffer from the lack of raw materials, and the National Forest Holding – State Forests strived for purchase by industry.

As far as the likelihood to increase timber logging is considered, the Polish forest experts pay special attention to natural effects. Detailed analyses of forests management plans and harmonious co-operation between forestry industries and forest administrative authorities; long-term forestry policy and prognoses form the highly advised way towards the performance of forest activities.

14. the amount, scope, or quality of market data and information for wood and non-wood forest products and their substitutes

Statistic reports play significant role in decision-making processes and they are a source of substantial information for policy-makers, local authorities, forest owners, representatives of forestry industries, as well as general public. The Main Statistical Office and State Forests both used to prepare their annual statistical publications containing adequate data that enable estimation of the share of forests in the national economy, and in the quality of life and social well being. The Wood Technology Institute, in Poznan, deals with wood industry issues. It actively participates to preparation of data and reports on the wood market, including the prospects for Sessions of Economic Commission for Europe – Timber Committee.

15. use of economic and policy instruments to facilitate progress toward sustainable forest management (these may include improved tax policies and forest revenue collection systems),

A specific charge for taking use of the environment is one of the most commonly applied tools to mitigate any negative environmental impact from forestry industries. The charge is delivered to bank account of the National Fund of Environmental Protection and Water Management. Fibre production industries, the activity of which are considered mostly environmentally arduous, contribute with large shares to pro-ecological investments.

16. efforts to reduce negative impacts of trade,

In order to reduce any negative impacts of trade and to assist in satisfying of the demand, Poland continues to introduce the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certificates.

17. participation in forest certification and labelling schemes and work toward mutual recognition and comparability of such schemes, and

In 2003, the number of 6,800,000 hectares of forest areas was subject to certification, including sixteen of the total number of 17 Regional Directorates of State Forests, together with the "Experimental Forests", in Krynica, Rogów and Siemianice. They obtained Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certificates. That means, those forests are managed in a proper, sustainable way, and the timber removals are carried out without any hazard to natural environment. These areas account for 76% of the total forest area, and for 84% of roundwood removals in Poland.

In 2003, wood products manufactured of certified wood were awarded the "Chain of Custody" (CoC) Certificate. Currently, 255 entities have been certified (some enterprises possess more than one site, that makes the total of 323 certificates granted). Trading companies account for about 20% of these entities. Manufacturers of sawnwood and garden products predominate within producer group. All the manufacturers of particleboard and fibreboard have also had the CoC Certificates, as well as have certain manufacturers of furniture and plywood.

Implementation of the Council Directive 1999/105/EC of 22 December 1999 on the Marketing of Forest Reproductive Material, being also carried out in Poland, forms another very important step in valuation process of forest goods. In 2003, new Regulations under provisions in the Act on Forest Reproductive Material, entered into force. They are: Regulation of 14 April 2003 on the Certificate of Origin of Forest Reproductive Material, and Regulation of 14 April 2003 on the Scheme of Applications for Obtaining the Certificate of Origin of Forest Reproductive Material. New Polish law – the Act on Forest Reproductive Material together with its specific aforementioned Regulations meet the obligations as imposed by Directive 1999/105/EC. The aim of the relevant Polish provisions is to ensure that the forest reproductive material is clearly labelled and accurately identified, genetically and phenotypically adapted to the site, and that its quality is high.

18. efforts to reduce illegal trade (exports from or imports into your country) in wood or non-wood forest products. Please indicate achievements made, lessons learned, constraints encountered, and planned initiatives.

Legal provisions being set forth with the aim to prevent unsustainable harvesting of timber and its illegal trade are mentioned in point 17. The basic legal provisions concerning sustainable harvesting of timber were introduced in the 1991 Act on Forests (as further amended) which stipulates that forest management has to be performed in compliance with forest management plans considering the targets which include timber production (based on rational management) and utilisation of non-wood raw material and products.

In addition, the issues relating to sustainable harvesting are provided for in the 1999 Regulation by Minister of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry on the Specific Principles for Timber Labelling, Patterns of Labelling Device Designs and the Guidelines for Their Application, as well as the Specimen of Document to Guarantee Legality of Harvested Timber. When harvested, the timber will undergo its marking, and in case it is acquired from forests other than those owned by the State Treasury, it must be provided with a certificate of its legal harvesting.

Illegal logging undergoes notification in Poland following the requirement to mark wood and to certify the legality of the sources of wood originated from forests other than those owned by the State Treasury. The Forest Guard who co-operates with the State Police, Fishing Guard, Nature Protection Guard, and other related services is held responsible for preventing theft and other illegal activities in forests. The Forest Guard has the power to instigate and track down perpetrators and to monitor illegal felling in private owned forests (i.e. felling done in violation of the current simplified forest management plan). Under Act on Forests, personnel of the Forest Guard is also authorised to inspect wood shipments carried on public roads and used in wood processing plants.

Forest health and productivity

19. If damage to forests from air pollution is a significant problem in your country, please provide information on recent national strategies or programmes to minimize damaging air pollution. Please indicate if your country is involved in any international cooperation efforts aimed at strengthening scientific knowledge, increasing information access or reducing the impacts of long-range air pollution on forests, as well as your views on the role of enhanced cooperation at the regional and international levels to facilitate such work.

Forests in Poland are under constant pressure from abiotic factors such like, for example, the air pollution. One of the measures to minimize damaging air pollution is to monitor continuously the forest health that paves the way towards the next steps to mitigate any negative impacts.

Forest Monitoring Programme was introduced in 1989, however in 1995, its preliminary scope was considerably expanded.

The prospects for the future development relate to enforcement of the provisions in the Forest Focus Regulation (EC) No 2152/2003 of 17 November 2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council, concerning monitoring of forests and environmental interactions in the Community (Forest Focus) and large forest stocktaking.

During preparation of the national monitoring programme, special attention was put on establishment of feasible implementation of new tasks provided by the Forest Focus Regulation, such like the impact of climate change on forests, carbon pool changes, biodiversity of ecosystems and protective functions of forests. The basic aims of forest monitoring are, *inter alia*, to:

- identify spatial distribution of damages to the stands;
- evaluate the level of biodiversity in forest communities;
- analyse the causal nexus between forest health and related environmental factors;
- formulate short-term prognoses as regard health conditions in forest.

These objectives have to be achieved by means of application of a network of permanent observation plots in line with the programme for measurements, observations and analyses as harmonized with the international programme ICP-Forests "Monitoring and Assessment of the Influence of Atmospheric Pollution on Forests".

Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs

20. Please indicate progress made and lessons learned in efforts to harmonize or to make compatible policy frameworks in your country (e.g. national forest programme or a similar policy framework for forests, biodiversity strategies and action plans, national action plans to combat desertification, etc.) that collectively address the full range of forest values

According to the provisions in the Polish law that is compatible with the international policy frameworks (Poland is a Signatory to CBD, UNFCCC) and the regional European processes (like MCPFE), forests can provide multiple functions, both naturally or in result of human activities, as specified below:

- ecological functions (protection, defined, *inter alia*, as positive influence on global and local climate, water retention, prevention of avalanches and floods, soil protection against desertification);
- economic functions, i.e. supply of renewable resources, in particular wood, and added values;
- social functions, in form of their positive influence on public health and recreation, and creation of new jobs.

The use of forests as renewable resource of raw material is driven, not only by market demand which ensures economic conditions for forest management, but also by silvicultural needs and the rules provided by the principles concerning maintenance of forest to meet the future needs .

21. Please provide information on recent efforts to assess long-term trends in national supply and demand for wood, non-wood forest products and services and whether your country's national forest programme or similar policy framework for forests takes into consideration future needs for forest goods and services. Please provide views on how enhanced cooperation at the regional and international levels, including through UNFF, could further facilitate implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action

Year 2003 was still the period of transition from stagnation to recovery of the Polish national economy. The Gross Domestic Product increased by 3.8% in comparison to the previous year. That accelerated economic growth was of importance also for forestry and woodwork industries. Since 1 May 2004, Poland has become the Member State of the European Union, and the likelihood to compete on the common market will certainly to cause that the Polish economy will face yet new challenges.

In 2003, several concepts were revealed in relation to segmentation of wood market and public access to information on the total amount and types of wood available on the market. Consequently, it was agreed that unfavourable economic situation caused by the lower demand could be mitigated by the long-term supply

agreements to be concluded between General Director of the State Forests and the major recipients.

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

Social and cultural aspects of forests

22. promoting the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of forest genetic resources and addressing the issue of intellectual property rights, including the identification of the origins of forest genetic resources, taking into account work undertaken by the Convention on Biological Diversity and other international agreements

The 1995 National Programme for Augmentation of Forest Cover (as revised in 2003) is aimed at the increase of the resources and a better comprehension of the benefits that forests can provide for the society. Moreover, the above-mentioned Programme has emphasized the promotion of the forest protection concept amongst the public, i.e. through management of forest education centres, publication of informational and promotional materials, co-operation with schools and local authorities, etc.

The principles for forest management that integrate nature protection, enhancement of environmental functions and social forest management as a public property are mainly improved in the area of Promotional Forest Complexes (PFCs). Thanks to the PFCs, better contact between foresters and the society has been developed. Educational activities carried out in PFCs are aimed at the promotion of public awareness of the pro-ecological and multiple functions of forest management. Apart from upgrading public awareness and creation of their positive attitudes to forest and forestry, efficient communication with nature protection and ecological organizations and associations is an additional task of PFCs.

In Poland, the issues relating to the promotion of public participation, involvement, consultation or dissemination among local communities are conducted by the State Forests.

See also point 4.

23. strengthening the role of women in sustainable forest management, including through capacity building and greater participation in community-based forest management

Since Constitution of the Republic of Poland imposes preservation of equality of rights for men and women in both family and other political, social or economic life, no specific issue is currently under consideration that would relate to strengthening of the role of women in sustainable forest management. .

24. integrating local and indigenous communities in sustainable forest management programmes, particularly as regards (a) recognition and respect of the customary and traditional rights and privileges of indigenous and local communities, (b) participation in decision making regarding the management of forests, (c) the attainment of secure land tenure arrangements, (d) capacity building and technology transfer for sustainable forest management directed at indigenous and local communities

No specific issue is currently under consideration which would relate to indigenous people in Poland. However, the land tenure and property rights are fully respected. The legal framework accepts and respects the ownership rights of the owners. Moreover, according to the aims and priorities of the National Policy on Forests, the actions to enhance the functions of forests (especially those of the public forests) are directed towards social functions, i.e.: through integration of the aims of forestry with those of sustainable development of the society at local, regional and national levels, as well as the closer co-operation with local communities in development of the local models for sustainable development.

Private forests are another very important issue relating to integration of local communities in sustainable forest management. Private forests in Poland occupy about 17% of the total forest area (2003). They include forests being the property of natural persons, as owned by traditional land communities, co-operatives and other owners of private forests (properties of the churches, Trade Unions, social organizations, etc.).

Private forests are considerably fragmented and scattered, and such circumstances involve important problems for forestry sector. The average size of a private forest plot is 1.3 ha and even such small plots may be sometimes further fragmented to yet smaller forest sites. Private forests represent, in general, a poorer quality if compared to the State-owned forests. The reason is, apart from their fragmentation and worse management, in less fertile or often more moist habitats. The 1991 Act on Forests (as further amended)

imposed on private forest owners the duties pertaining to forest management, and in particular, their protection, sustainability and increase in their resources.

According to the aforementioned Act, the supervision over forest management in private forests has been assigned to the district managers, and also to the local authorities, to some extent. The private forests owners may organize their own forest services or they are empowered to entrust the supervision tasks to the foresters employed in the State Forests.

Financial assistance of the State to the owners of private forests includes the following issues: maintenance of supervisory and extension services; preparation of forest management documentation (simplified forest management plans); subsidies for afforestation activities on marginal agricultural lands; regeneration and rebuilding of the stands damaged by both natural disasters and industrial air pollution; treatment activities to control the hazards from insect and fungi.

Traditional forest-related knowledge

25. Inventorying, cataloguing, and applying traditional forest related knowledge for sustainable forest management and promoting research on TFRK with the involvement of the knowledge holders

Since no specific issue is currently under consideration which would relate to indigenous people in Poland, and yet 17% of forests areas in Poland are those private-owned and tended by private individuals or their families, traditional forest-related knowledge is passed through generations.

26. supporting the application of intellectual property rights and/or other protection regimes for traditional forest related knowledge, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of traditional forest related knowledge, innovations and practices

All the matters, which relate to the intellectual property rights are stipulated by the 1994 Act on Intellectual Property Rights and Related Rights (as further amended)

Scientific forest-related knowledge

27. disseminating scientific knowledge to all interested parties, including through new and innovative ways, and strengthening capacity and mobilizing funding for national and regional research institutions and networks

The Forestry Faculties at the Universities and Agricultural Academies (in Warsaw, Cracow, Poznan), scientific institutes (for example, the Forest Research Institute in Warsaw, the Institute of Wood Technology, in Poznan), the Regional Directorates of State Forests play very important role in dissemination process of the forest scientific knowledge. The results of the forest science in Poland are, *inter alia*, the publications issued by the aforementioned institutions and organizations. The entities mentioned above have also launched their campaigns on topical issues shaping environmental awareness of the public and their proper attitudes toward forest and forestry, and promoting pro-ecological, multifunctional and sustainable forestry.

As it was mentioned above (point 4) these objectives are attained in the Promotional Forest Complexes on educational trails and at ecological education (information) points.

28. enhancing interaction between scientific research and policy processes, including priority setting of research, addressing of knowledge gaps and using scientific knowledge to support decision-making

Poland gives continuous support to research activities in the field of sustainable forest management through land-use planning, and nature protection in forests, etc. The National Programme for Augmentation of Forest Cover is also aimed at enhancement of research and knowledge on economic and environmental contributions of forestry.

The results of research activities are essential for provision of information to policy-makers on the future development of forests and practice. The forest experts support a wide range of programmes covering economic, environmental and social issues.

High priorities are assigned to the matters which relate to transfer of knowledge gained from research to both practitioners and the public.

The Polish experts on forest are deeply involved in works carried by various committees and councils, which produce research opinions and assignments aimed at the improvement in policy processes. A good example of the joint work and co-operation between scientific, professional and political circles can be reflected by the activity of the Polish Forestry Council. This advisory body grouping scientists and representatives of forest industries, was established by the Minister of the Environment and it pronounces its opinions on the current and vital problems being faced by the Polish forestry. The scientists also act as authorised Poland's representatives, nominated by the Government to participate in wide range of meetings and conferences to present official statements pronounced by the Polish Government.

Forestry research is aimed at achievement of sustainability, especially in case of very fragile forest lands, especially forest mountain areas. Various research pertaining to managerial issues of vulnerable river-basin is carried out by many institutions for example - the Forest Research Institute, in Warsaw; Agricultural and Technical Universities, in Cracow, Wroclaw, Warsaw, Poznan, Lublin; the Institute of Meteorology and Water Management etc. The surveys cover the issues of air and water pollution, soil erosion, flood protection and the quality of the environment, as well as the influence of anthropogenic activities, especially those relating to water pollution.

monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitions

29. improving information on national forest resources, making the information widely available, assisting other countries in their related efforts

The current, updated information on national forest resources plays significant role in maintenance of forests. Information obtained through diagnoses of forests conditions, monitoring of ongoing changes and hazards posed by biotic, non-biotic and anthropogenic factors, etc., is then further used to promote the idea of forest protection amongst the public through the management of forest education centres, publication of promotional materials, co-operation with schools and local authorities, etc.

criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management

30. developing and using criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management (at national level and/or subnational level and for policy, planning, management and/or monitoring purposes), and participating in regional and/or international C&I processes

The national criteria and indicators on sustainable forestry underpin Poland's input to the pan-European criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management as adopted at the III MCPFE in Lisbon (1998), as reviewed and updated at the IV MCPFE, in Vienna (2003).

III. Preparation of the Report

The National Report to the Fifth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests was prepared by Department of Forestry, Ministry of the Environment, in collaboration with and the use of information provided by the Forest Research Institute, in Warsaw, the Institute of Wood Technology, in Poznan, and the National Forest Holding – State Forests.