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Review

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FOREST POLICY BASIS AND TRENDS IN REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

ABSTRACT

The forest environment of Serbia believes that progress already made in institutional development which is based on experience accumulated in forestry sector development process creates foundation for further development efforts.

Serbian forest policy document reflects commitment of the Government in sustainable development of forestry sector and it is based on a broad participation of all stakeholders. This is a good basis for providing goods and services from forests in a sustainable way and, by that, improvement of quality of life of the whole society.

Capacity building process in forestry sector of Serbia, supported by FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), UNDP (United Nations Development Program) and WB (World Bank), have created a planning nucleus and soon will come up with a forest policy and a revised new forest law.

To date, Serbia has not had a comprehensively founded and defined forest policy. Forest policy has been defined by legal regulations and individual strategic documents, as the basis of forestry sector development. The global forest policy is subject to significant conceptual changes from an exclusively economic orientation, to an increasingly important protection role in all forest functions. In harmony with the European and the world forest policy trends, forest policy in Serbia should find the balance in meeting all the forest functions (economic, ecological, and socio-cultural).

This paper reviews several statements of the Forest Policy actions in the State as well as scientific and educational future development in the forestry branch.

Key words: forestry, policy, development

INTRODUCTION

Efforts in recovering a country require the improvement of public and private forestry sector in efficiency and in productivity to provide more significant contribution to the national economy. The new competitive environment and the increasing national and global awareness of sustainable natural resource manage-

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ment, requires new sector orientation and mobilization of all available resources. Capacity building process in forestry sector of Serbia, supported by FAO, UNDP and WB, have created a planning nucleus and soon will come up with a forest policy and a revised new forest law. That will set forestry development objectives and develop programs for their implementation with new knowledge and skills in GIS, remote sensing and better knowing the ITs. The state forest administration and all other major stakeholders are not yet adequately equipped to cope with the national forestry development directives. For this reason, the national forest program is going to be continuing and never ending process, with secured extensive support and guarantees for participatory implementation of the new policy and legal framework. In addition, process of certification is also recognized as an important concept of providing and ensuring sustainability.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

With the support of international forestry organizations and community, a problem of lacking clear Forest Policy document and forestry legislation in Serbia is now overcome. Both documents (Policy and Law) are in a draft form waiting for approval in Serbia, while in Montenegro a new forestry legislation framework is already approved by the Parliament. Serbian forest policy document reflects commitment of the Government in sustainable development of forestry sector and it is based on a broad participation of all stakeholders. This is a good basis for providing goods and services from forests in a sustainable way and, by that, improvement of quality of life of the whole society.

The main goals of such policy are:

- Increased contribution of forestry sector to economic and social development of the country;
- Achievement of sustainable forest management in state forests through protection and improvement of forests;
- Management of private forests and forest lands performed by the forest owners in a sustainable way;
- Conditions provided for game management using appropriate measures of forest management in order to maintain the genetic potential of game, their number and quality as well as to enable control of game population;
- Education of adequate forestry professionals for the sector;
- Efficient exchange of information internally in the forestry sector, and externally between the forestry and other sectors, as well as raising public awareness on the importance of forestry and forests for the society;
- Strengthening international and regional cooperation in forestry and related fields;
- Protection of forest areas, biodiversity and gene pool of tree species, using protected areas for education, recreation, tourism and other ecologically acceptable means of management;

- Mitigation of negative effects and impacts in forest areas; and
- Active participation of all stakeholders in the implementation of the national forest policy and the legal framework (FAO, Directorate for forests Case Study 2004).

DISCUSSION

In the Republic of Serbia the following projects were done or are in the process of executing by members of several science and high education institutions, Directorate of forests and members of professional forestry institutions: a) FAO is supporting Institutional Development and Capacity Building for the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management through a Technical Cooperation Programme; b) Forest Sector Development is financed by the Government of Finland and implemented as GCP-FRY-003-FIN Project by FAO; c) Programme for the Forest Sector in Serbia is being financed by the Government of Norway; d) Participatory Development of a Plan to Implement PE Serbia Forests Restructuring, the initial 6-month phase of this project being funded by the Austrian Development Agency; e) Public Relations Strategy, prepared with the assistance of the Canadian Executive Service Organisation; f) Strengthening Capacities of Education and Training for Forest Economics and Policy Development in the Western Balkan Region. This project is running, financed by the Government of Finland.

The specific objectives of the projects are: To draft a forestry policy and strategy, to revise and update the forestry legislation, to design a self-reliant forestry institutional framework capable of providing leadership for the sustainable development of the sector, including private forestry development, to strengthen education and research national capacities for forestry policy and programme development (Nevenić and Nonić 2005).

CONCLUSIONS

Through analysis of the present situation in forestry sector, it can be concluded that the sector is constrained, namely by the lack of forestry policy, outdated regulations in forestry, deficiency of realistic plans for development of forestry, institutions and guidance type which were developed in former period as well.

Complete legal framework and legislations related to the environment and nature protection in the Republic of Serbia, as well as the criteria for protected areas should be harmonized at all levels: international (European), and national (Republic's).

The need for a new forest law for Serbia is essential for including Serbian forestry in the modern process of the European and world's forestry. The IUCN and

national criteria have to be harmonized, and Serbia is now in the process of revision and harmonization of national criteria with IUCN criteria, which are also obligations in accordance to the ratified Convention on Biodiversity.

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