

2ND FOREST MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

Venue: 'SIRIUS' HOTEL, Prishtina

Date: May 09, 2012

Time: 11:00

MEETING AGENDA

- 11:00 – 11:10 Welcome speech and adoption of the meeting agenda, Mr. Kushtrim Cukaj
Chairman of Forest Management Board
- 11:10 – 11:20 Introductions with International members of the Forest Management Board
Mr. Matti Maatta, EU and Mr. Brian Fahey US
- 11:20 – 11:35 Brief overview of the Forestry Sector Progress Report 2011 presented at Joint
Annual Review, Mr. Kustrim Cukaj Chairman of Forest Management Board &
Ahmet Zejnullahu Chief Executive of Kosovo Forest Agency
- 11:35 – 11:40 Overview of challenges of the Forest Management Board in the first year of
functioning, Mr. Kustrim Cukaj Chairman of Forest Management Board
- 11:40 – 12:00 Overview of six Public Investment Projects Mr. Kustrim Cukaj Chairman of
Forest Management Board & Kapllan Halimi General Secretary of MAFRD
- 12:00 – 12:10 Finland Study Tour update, Mr Aleksandar Nikolovski FAO Chief Technical
Adviser
- 12:10 – 12:20 Contracts, obligation and institutional arrangements for the members of
Forest Management Board, Mr. Kushtrim Cukaj Chairman of Forest
Management Board & Kapllan Halimi General Secretary of MAFRD
- 12:20 – 12:30 AOB
- 12:30 – 12:40 Conclusions and further steps
- 12:40 Lunch

Participants:

- Mr. Kushtrim Cukaj, Chairman of the Forest Management Board meeting
- Mr. Kapllan Halimi, Member, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
- Mr. Xhavit Dakaj, Member, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
- Mr. Naim Ismajli, Member, President of the Association of the Municipalities in Kosovo

- Mr. Bashkim Gashi, Member, President of the Association of the Private Forest Owners in Kosovo
- Mr. Matti Matta, Member, EU Representative
- Mr. Brian Fahey, Member, USAID Representative
- Mr. Ahmet Zejnullahu, Director of the Forest Agency of Kosovo, member of the Coordination Unit
- Mr. Agron Bajraktari, Adviser for forestry at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
- Mr. Bashkim Thaqi, Adviser for forestry at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, member of the Coordination Unit
- Mr. Hysen Abazi, Director of the Forestry Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
- Mr. Vesa Kotilainen, Representative of the Finnish Embassy in Pristina
- Mr. Fatos Mulla, Representative of the Swedish Embassy in Pristina
- Mr. Aleksandar Nikolovski, FAO Chief Technical Advisor, "Support to the Implementation of the Forestry Policy and Strategy in Kosovo", member of the Coordination Unit
- Mr. Naser Krasniqi, FAO National Team Leader, "Support to the Implementation of the Forestry Policy and Strategy in Kosovo", member of the Coordination Unit
- Ms. Hebera Gashi, Minutes Secretary, "Support to the Implementation of the Forestry Strategy and Policy in Kosovo"

Absent:

- Mr. Arben Citaku, Member, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning
- Mr. Naim Baftiu, Member, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance

1. Mr. Kushtrim Cukaj, chairman of the Forest Management Board opened the second meeting of FMB wishing a warm welcome to the members of Board and to other participants of the meeting. After some welcoming words, Mr. Cukaj has presented the agenda of the second FMB meeting and asked the members of the Board for any comments about agenda. Since no one commented the agenda is approved as prepared by the Chairman and Coordination Unit.

The chairman of the Board briefed the members on his activities in the period between first (Jan 30, 2012) and second meeting of the Board. As a Chairman of the Board, he has participated on the working group meetings for drafting new law on forests, he has participated on regular meetings with donor community involved in forestry sector, he had regular meetings with FAO staff and experts and conducted consultations with ministry staff, etc.

2. The chairman invited the representatives from International community, as non voting members of FMB in Kosovo to introduce themselves to the Board members and other participants of the meeting.

Mr. Matti Maatta, the representative of EU, from Finland, has presented himself, he is regional director at Finnish Metsähallitus, Finnish Forest and Park Service, while saying that he is honoured to be part of FMB in Kosovo. He has stated that Policy and Strategy Paper on Forestry Sector Development in Kosovo 2010 – 2020 is a very good document and it gives very progressive

guidelines for development of the Forestry in Kosovo. Mr. Maatta said that it's a great pleasure for him to be member of the Board and he expressed high expectations from the work of Board in terms of enabling necessary conditions for implementation of forest policy and strategy in Kosovo.

Mr. Brian Fahey, the representative of USA, nominated by USAID has expressed a high consideration for the FMB. Mr. Fahey mentioned USAID's contribution to the Forestry Sector and their expectations to collaborate closely with other sectorial partners.

Mr. Cukaj thanked two international members of FMB for their introductions wishing them a good work and cooperation with other members of the Board.

3. Next topic of agenda was an overview of forestry sector progress report for 2011. Mr. Cukaj informed the Board that on April 19, 2012 the MAFRD has organized Joint Annual Review for forestry sector in Kosovo. At the Joint Annual Review the progress report on forestry sector for year 2011 was presented and discussed with relevant sector stakeholders. Mr. Cukaj has expressed a deep appreciation for MAFRD in organizing JAR and for presentation of a progress report for forestry sector in Kosovo. This practise is very useful for the sector itself and he encouraged MAFRD to continue on this way also in the next years.

On his overview for the JAR and for the sector progress report as well, the chairman has emphasised that in general we see some successes and some progress in the Forestry sector, despite that many difficulties are still present for achieving desirable results. Mr. Cukaj has underlined, based on progress report, that forestry institutions are making continues efforts, in accordance with their competencies, for implementing forest policy and strategy 2010 – 2020, but there still are rooms for improvements. Mr. Cukaj was focused on latest development at forestry institutions, he mentioned forestry legislation, a new draft forest law is prepared and expectations are that this year this law will be approved by the parliament. Delegation of competencies from central to local level is another major issue on administration of the forests. Decentralization process which stated 2010 mandated municipalities to be in charge for forest protection and for logging permits. Another change on forest institutional setup during 2011 that have been mentioned by Mr. Cukaj was the transfer of the forest inspectorate service from Forestry Department to Kosovo Forest Agency. However, the illegal logging is still substantial and despite transfers of the competencies to local level the ratio of supply and demand for legal logged firewood is unbalanced. This is a major problem of the sector, said Mr. Cukaj.

At the end of his speech, Mr. Cukaj have described a list of the projects funded by the various donors which contributes to implementation of the forest policy and strategy 2010 – 2020. After this general overview of progress report for forestry sector in Kosovo for year 2011, the chairman asked Mr. Zejnullahu, Chief Executive of Kosovo Forest Agency, to briefly present the current status of forestry sector and planning for year 2012.

Mr. Zejnullahu said that despite many difficulties that challenge the sector, significant progress is made during the 2011. This progress mainly is related to preparation of new long term management plans. According to Mr. Zejnullahu, the trends on preparing new management plans are upwards and as Policy and Strategy predicts, around 30 000 ha will be covered annually. On 2011, almost 40 000 ha were covered with new management plans. This year they are planning with same size of forest area to be covered with long term management plans.

Another progress that is mentioned by Chief Executive of KFA was regarding the state budget for forestry sector. There is a slight increase while the revenues from various services and selling of the wood mass, are increased up to 70 %, said Mr. Zejnullahu.

Regarding the planning for 2012, Mr. Zejnullahu has said that KFA is planning these amount of wood to be harvested 141 000 m³ on public forests and 180 000 m³ on private forests. Around 40 000 ha of forest lands to be covered with new management plans, to produce 1.600 000 seedlings and to conduct the national forest inventory.

The chairman of the Board thanked Mr. Zejnullahu on the updates and asked the other Board members to give comments on forestry sector progress report for 2011 and planning for 2012.

Mr. Naim Ismajli, member of the Board, has commented progress report and he asked why on the report are not given much attention to the local authorities in charge for forestry and illegal forest harvesting.

Mr. Bashkim Gashi, member of the Board, expressed his concern about the level of illegal forest harvesting. He said that the main focus of government institutions should be protection of forest environments, better control as well as increase of the level of legal harvesting.

The chairman has thanked members of the Board for the comments on the progress report and he concluded that the Board will consider these remarks on coming Board activities.

4. The chairman has proceed with the next topic of agenda and he presents an overview of the fields and challenges which Board will be focused on its first year of functioning. As a main goal of the Board, during the first year of work, will be coordination of the all stakeholders in implementation of forest policy and strategy 2010 – 2020, says Mr. Cukaj.

The main issues that need to be addressed during the first year of work, as the chairman proposed are as follows: Capacity building for KFA and Municipality forestry staff, coordination of works between central and local levels in terms of planning and harvesting of wood mass in accordance with demand –supply balance, decrease of illegal harvesting, coordination and joint actions with courts, consolidation of forest institute, increase of seedling production, establishment of premises for forest vocational training.

The chairman invited other members to give their thoughts on these presented issues for dealing with them during the first year of the Board's work.

Mr. Naim Ismajli, member of the Board, said that Board should deal with the issues that are very crucial for the current status forestry, like stopping of the illegal activities, strengthening of the forest guards in order to have a better forest protection, special treatment from the courts of the cases that are related to forest damages and capacity building for municipal forestry authorities.

Mr. Bashkim Gashi, member of the Board, said that private forest sector should be an issue that Board should be focused as well, in order to create conditions for development and enabling a healthy competition in the sector.

Mr. Kapllan Halimi, member of the Board, said that Board should prepare a work plan with the priorities and based on it to discuss about certain issues. These issues should be in full compliance

with forest policy and strategy paper 2010 – 2020, and when the priorities are determined then Board should discuss how to find the means for implementation of proposed activities.

Mr. Kushtrim Cukaj, chairman of the Board, has concluded that during the study tour will be discussed these issues and that a work plan for the first year of work needs to be prepared in order to have a proper planning activities.

5. The chairman of the Board has presented the new proposals for Public Investments Projects, as an outcome of Joint Annual Review Meeting. Mr Cukaj said that these proposals are drafted by the Department of Forestry and they are in accordance with forest policy and strategy paper 2010 – 2020. These project proposals are related to these areas:

- Silviculture measures for the new forests
- Long term management plans for the low forests
- Inventory of wild fauna and identification of potentials for hunting
- Capacity building: Forest Vocational Education and Training
- Program for recovering of the forest that are damaged from pests and diseases
- Efficient use of the wood mass

The chairman said that the Board has not received yet fully drafted projects proposals and as it was presented in the JAR. These proposals need to be discussed further regarding the funding. Currently there are discussions on some options for joint funding of these proposals between Kosovo government and donors.

Mr. Bashkim Gashi, member of the Board, said that as a priority for implementation of the forest strategy should be included a project proposal that will support development of the private forest sector.

Mr. Kapllan Halimi, member of the Board, said that in accordance with the mandate of the Board, we have to give advices and recommendations for the projects that should be treated as a priority for implementing the forest policy and strategy paper in Kosovo. After determining these priorities to do lobbying for ensuring the necessary conditions for their implementation.

Mr. Naim Ismajli, member of the Board, said that when the proposals are drafted they have to be in accordance with Kosovo Medium Term Expenditure Framework.

Mr. Kushtrim Cukaj, chairman of the Board, concluded that Board members have to analyze these project proposals. In the next meetings the Board will decide about priority list for their funding and implementation.

6. Mr. Kushtrim Cukaj, chairman of the Board, has informed about planned Study Tour of the Board in Finland and he asked Mr Nikolovski to give more details about this study tour.

Mr. Aleksandar Nikolovski, FAO Chief Technical Adviser and member of the Coordination Unit, has informed the Board for the Study Tour in Finland that will take place from May 21-25, 2012. He underlined that this study tour will comprise 2 components. The first component is a political and has to do with the visit of minister of MAFRD Mr. Stavileci in Finland and the 2nd component is about the technical aspect and is related to Board. The arrival date in Finland is 21 of May 2012, the program of the study tour is designed by Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Finland and they

have planned that Board will visit the main forestry institutions in Finland. The study tour will be held in Helsinki, Lahti and Evo. On these places, participants of the study tour will visit public forestry institutions, private forestry activities, national parks, forestry schools, etc. Study tour participants soon will get final program of the visit in Finland, says Mr Nikolovski. He also added that the expenses of the study tour will be covered by FAO project "Support to the Implementation of the Forestry Strategy and Policy in Kosovo".

The chairman has thanked Mr. Nikolovski for the information provided for organizing the study tour in Finland. He added that this is good opportunity of the Board to gather experiences from a well developed country such is Finland.

7. Mr. Kushtrim Cukaj, chairman of the Board, has asked Mr. Kapllan Halimi, General Secretary of MAFRD, for an explanation about administrative issues, like contracts, payments, etc, that are related to the members of Forest Management Board.

Mr. Kapllan Halimi, General Secretary of MAFRD and member of the Board, said that when the Government has decided to establish Forest Management Board, this decision is adopted along with followed documentation which describes the ways of payment for members of the Board. Based on these documents, the payments should be done in accordance with participation of the members per meetings, most likely this could be once in half year period, says Mr. Halimi.

The chairman thanked Mr Halimi for these explanations.

8. At Any other business point of the agenda, the chairman asked for any comments or issues to be raised. There were no comments or issues raised.

9. The chairman asked for the attention and he has summarized the meeting with these conclusions:

- I. The Coordination Unit and the Chairman of the Board, from the progress report, will list the challenges and problems of the sector and draw a map for the Board in dealing with them.
- II. The annual Work Plan for the Board should be prepared before the next meeting of the Board.
- III. The members of the Board, based on Forest Policy and Strategy paper 2010 – 2020, make priority list of the projects for implementation of the strategy, prior to that the members should have complete draft project proposals prepared by DoF.
- IV. The next meeting of the Board should be held by end of June 2012.

10. The joint lunch is organized for the participants of the meeting

Prepared by:

Kushtrim Cukaj, Chairman of the Forest Management Board, &
The Coordination Unit of the Board

May 16, 2012