

SIXTH FOREST MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

Venue: 'SIRIUS' HOTEL, Prishtina

Date: February 19th, 2013

MEETING AGENDA

- 10:30 – 10:40 Welcome speech and adoption of meeting agenda,
Mr. Kushtrim Cukaj, Chairman of Forest Management Board
- 10:40 – 10:50 Adoption of minutes of the Fifth Forest Management Board meeting,
Mr. Kushtrim Cukaj, Chairman of Forest Management Board
- 10:50 – 11:00 Brief information on participation of the representatives of the FMB at the Third
Session of Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in Antalya Turkey for
preparation of a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe and granting an
Observer Status for Kosovo,
Mr. Kushtrim Cukaj, Chairman of Forest Management Board
- 11:10 – 11:30 Presentation and adoption of Forest Sector Annual Progress Report 2012,
Mr. Tahir Ahmeti, Forestry Department, MAFRD
- 11:30 – 11:40 Brief presentation and discussion about consultancy report "Support to the
Implementation of a National Afforestation and Reforestation Programme in
Kosovo"
Mr. Aleksandar Nikolovski, FAO Chief Technical Adviser
- 11:40 – 12:00 Brief presentation and discussion about the Terms of Reference for preparation
of Kosovo Forest Information System,
Naser Krasniqi, FAO National Team Leader
- 12:00 – 12:10 Elaboration of the idea "Climate Change and Forestry Sector"
- 12:10 – 12:20 AOB
- 12:20 – 12:30 Conclusions and further steps
- 12:30 Lunch

Participants on the meeting:

Forest Management Board

- Mr. Kushtrim Cukaj, Chairman of the Forest Management Board
- Mr. Bashkim Gashi, Member, President of the Association of the Private Forest Owners in Kosovo
- Mr. Xhavit Dakaj, Member, General Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
- Mr. Matti Maatta, Member, EU Representative
- Mr. Brian Fahey, Member, USAID Representative
- Ms. Emine Telaku, Budget Analyst, Ministry of Finance (on behalf of Secretary General)

Absent:

- Mr. Kapllan Halimi, Member, General Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
- Mr. Arben Çitaku, Member, General Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning
- Mr. Naim Ismajli, Member, President of the Association of the Municipalities in Kosovo

Coordination Unit, project staff and consultants, observers:

- 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
 - Mr. Ahmet Zejnullahu, Chief of Executive of Kosovo Forest Agency
 - Mr. Hysen Abazi, Director of MAFRD/Forest Department
 - Mr. Tahir Ahmeti, Officer at the Forestry Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
 - Ms. Perihane Ymeri, Observer, USAID Representative
 - Ms. Vera Muhaxhiri, FAO National Consultant for Institutional and Policy Development "Support to the Implementation of the Forestry Policy and Strategy in Kosovo"
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MINUTES OF MEETING

1. Mr. Kushtrim Cukaj, Chairman of the Forest Management Board (further in the text - FMB) opened the sixth FMB meeting by wishing a welcome to the Board Members and other participants. He informed the board members present that some of the board members were not able to join the meeting due to official trips outside the country and that their contribution to this meeting will be handled by e-communication, i.e. they will be requested to send their comments/approvals by e-mail.

Mr. Cukaj presented the agenda of the sixth FMB meeting asking members of the Board to comment or add new topics to the proposed meeting agenda. The Agenda has been approved with no comments.

2. The Chairman of the FMB requested the FMB members to comment and approve the minutes of fifth FMB meeting. The Minutes of the meeting held on December 28th, were adopted unanimously by FMB members present in this meeting.

3. The Chairman of the Board, Mr. Cukaj, briefed the members present regarding the FMB participation to the 'Third Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Legally Binding Agreement on Forest in Europe'. He informed the Board that 3 participants were present for 3 days and that this travel was supported by FAO. He emphasized that at INC-Forests3 session is taken an important decision for the Forest Management Board in Kosovo, FMB is granted with the status of observer in the INC, and he added that the overall objective is to have status of committee member for Kosovo in the future. Mr. Cukaj summarised the discussion and outcomes of the conference, which were mainly on continuing to revise draft negotiating text for a Legally Binding Agreement (LBA) - a document that will be a reference for the countries to develop, implement and update their national forest programmes. Mr. Cukaj, suggested that Kosovo forest sector takes into account the 'general and other provisions' of the LBA while preparing the draft Law on Forest.

Mr. Abazi appreciated the presence of FMB to such an important conference but suggested that in future any of high officers of Forest Department or Kosovo Forest Agency to take part too. He agrees that LBA could serve as guidance for a draft Law on Forest, as a document that needs to be prepared based on professional and practical criteria rather than political desire.

4. The Chairman of the FMB invited Mr. Ahmeti to present the draft Annual Progress Report 2012 on Implementation of Policy and Strategy Paper (PSP).

Mr. Ahmeti presented briefly the progress of forest sector achieved during 2012 against planning components of PSP and he appreciated the support of FAO in drafting the report. He summarized the progress in the sector as satisfactory, where out of the 27 activities in the Forest Policy and Strategy, 21 are on-going. Mr. Ahmeti emphasised that although, some trends were progressive, the sector is still far away from reaching the planned results and that the most of the progress made, except is some particular intervention area, has to do with development

of preliminary analysis, preparatory work and various studies, approved plans but not implemented yet, guidelines, identification studies and TORs for studies. He concluded his presentation on that despite the significant progress that was achieved in the areas of developing long-term management plans, the tendency for annual coverage of forest areas with new management plans is met; the national forest inventory has been completed, as well as planned afforestation of bare forest lands; still the high degree of illegal cutting of forests remains a great challenge.

Mr. Ahmeti informed the FMB members present that in last Task Force meeting it was concluded that the final report shall include some additional activities that has been done in forest sector during 2012 but were not shown in existing draft.

Mr. Cukaj appreciated the contribution of those involved in drafting the report. He concluded that the sector showed some positive trends in 2012 and he suggested to high officers of forest sector to lobby for more support from Kosovo Government and donors. He also appreciated the support the sector got from donors during 2012.

Mr. Matta also appreciated the progress done so far from forest sector as well as the inter-ministerial cooperation, concretely with Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. He informed the Board members present that the donor community is very much concerned regarding the rejection of Law on Forest by Assembly of Kosovo, and that they are happy to help on redrafting the existing one.

Mr. Cukaj appreciated if donors can take part in working group for redrafting the Law on Forest and he confirmed that he is a part of this group as a FMB representative.

Mr. Abazi explained that the existing Law on Forest has been drafted by national and international experts and was very comprehensive and practical. He expressed his frustration why the Law was not approved by Assembly and added that the decision for rejecting the Law was rather political. He expressed his concerned regarding the overlapping of competences between MAFRD, MESP and municipalities.

Mr. Gashi commented that the Annual Progress Report 2012 was generally well drafted although it didn't elaborate the lack of engagement of government institutions, towards incorporating the private sector in the institutional forest sector, as committed to the PSP.

Ms. Telaku added that the transfer of competences from central to the local government was not a good idea in first place and that the recent request from MAFRD to get back the competences from local government might bring more complications. She emphasis that the Forest Department was never ambitious in submitting more than two project proposals through PIP system.

Mr. Ahmeti explained that the main reason of submitting a small number of projects through PIP was the financial constrain, i.e. the limited Kosovo Consolidated Budget allocated for forest sector.

Mr. Ahmeti confirmed that the Forest Department in cooperation with KFA have prepared at least 6 project proposals but only 2 have been approved. Mr Zejnullahu confirmed that revenues from annual wood harvesting are low due to low performance of municipalities in tendering wood harvesting on public forests. He mentioned that the illegal harvesting is high and that the courts do not review the cases in time.

The Chairman of the FMB invited the FMB members, with voting rights, to approve the Annual Progress Report 2012. The report has been approved unanimously by FMB members.

5. The Chairman, Mr. Cukaj invited Mr. Nikolovski to introduce the consultancy report 'Support to the Implementation of a National Afforestation and Reforestation Programme in Kosovo.

Mr. Nikolovski informed the FMB members that this report has been prepared by FAO experts and that the main findings were related, among others, to (i) reviewing existing methods and practices in forest plantation establishment, tending and utilization; (ii) reviewing the forest nursery capacities, (iii) reviewing the main challenges and constraints limiting commercial viability of the forest plantations and forest nurseries; (iv) preparing outline for the Terms of Reference for: Implementation of Management Inventory of Forest Plantations (MIFP) in Kosovo, preparation of development plan of forestry nurseries and preparation a National Afforestation and Reforestation programme. He added that the main recommendation of this report was a need for Kosovo forest to further conduct a study on forest plantations with the objective to assess the extent and quality of existing forest plantations, and the area potentially available for afforestation and reforestation.

Mr. Abazi added that due to lack of financial means the existing forestation programmes were prepared annually i.e. including one year planning only. He appreciates any support to forest sector to prepare long term national wide forestation programme.

Mr. Nikolovski confirmed that the forestation programme will cover 10 years planning.

6. The Chairman of the FMB invited Mr. Krasniqi to introduce the ToR for preparation of Kosovo Forest Information System.

Mr. Krasniqi briefly informed the FMB members that the ToR for KFIS have been drafted for implementation by an economical operator – vendor, and that the KFIS will be supported by FAO and owned by MAFRD. He confirmed that the whole KFIS component is foreseen to be developed within 9 months and the team requested for implementation consists of 7 core members. He also confirmed that there are 4 logical tasks including (i) Design and Development of Core KFIS modules; (ii) Design and development of the specific modules of KFIS; (iii) Deployment, installation, trainings, implementation, and monitoring of the pilot phase; and (iv) Maintenance, support and warranty services.

Mr. Cukaj confirmed that the KFIS is very much needed in Forest sector.

Mr. Matta appreciated the work done so far re KFIS but in order to choose a serious operator he advised FAO to apply strong criteria during selection process.

7. The Chairman of the FMB invited Mr. Nikolovski to introduce the preliminary idea on 'Climate Change and Forestry Sector'.

Mr. Nikolovski emphasized that the forest sector needs to take into account the 'climate changes' and that FAO support project will engage an expert to deal with this issue, i.e. the expert will assess the current situation and will prepare the strategy. He confirmed that FAO expert will not duplicate the work done by the Twinning project but will take it further.

Mr. Gashi informed the FAO support project that SNPV is also treating this issue in their project and he suggested cooperation between two projects.

Mr. Abazi agrees this is a hot global issue and is happy if FAO will take it further. He suggested the FAO support project to send the draft report to MAFRD for comments once it is ready.

8. Mr. Cukaj asked FMB members present for any other business to be discussed in this meeting.

Mr. Nikolovski took the opportunity to introduce the 'front page' of FMB website and he asked Board members present to send their comments, if any.

9. Since there were no more topics to be discussed under AOB, Mr. Cukaj has concluded the sixth FMB meeting as finished by declaring topics discussed and conclusions taken during this meeting.

Note: The date, time and venue for following FMB meeting will be confirmed later.

Prepared by:

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

February 22nd, 2013