Editorial

Autumn season is the most challenging for forests. Local population is preparing to resist the cold winter. The lack of alternative energy supply leads to overuse of timber forest resources by the forest dependent communities. Procrastination of creation of proper forest management system in the country is additional challenge as well.

Another important issue is the global climate change, which is becoming more and more obvious. The development of proper forest management system is essential to mitigate its impacts.

Read the newsletter to find out more.

ENPI FLEG program supports the International Year of Forests. We care and we are trying to help...

ENPI FLEG Program News

ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS FOR FOREST DEPENDENT POPULATIONS

Pilot projects on the establishment of the Wood Art Workshop and Training Centre as well as on Charcoal Production will benefit local population in Sagarejo district, Georgia.

The project on the Wood Art Workshop and Training Centre is a great opportunity for local people to learn how to make wooden souvenirs and generate income for their families. Mr. Giorgi Zuliashvili from Manavi village is involved in one of IUCN’s pilot projects. A self-educated wood carver, he has organized a workshop for his fellow villagers. He specializes in making original tables, chairs, religious icons and other wood products with extensive ornamentation. Among his best and highest valued works is a large table and chair complex with carved animal figures. The big root of a walnut tree was used to create this piece of work.

Through the project, implemented by the Georgian based business consultancy firm TBSC Consulting, Zuliashvili’s workshop was extended to other villagers. TBSC is supporting the project beneficiaries to find markets to sell the product. Intensive training was provided to interested people on small business management, accounting and marketing. Besides, Mr. Zuliashvili will teach local schoolchildren woodcarving. An agreement was achieved with Sagarejo municipality to open a weekend school in Sagarejo district. The municipality will provide Mr. Giorgi Zuliashvili with a teaching room and monthly salary.

The new Wood Art Workshop and Training Centre will support the Manavi population to learn create wooden souvenirs and make alternative livelihood. It will also educate and involve local children in forest issues. “The project gave me the possibility to expand my workshop. It is very important for me. I will continue my work with high motivation. I am happy to see the interest of my neighbors and that my experience is helping them to create additional income for their families”, Mr. Zuliashvili said.

Another example of the small pilot projects from the same municipality is the Charcoal Production project in the village Kochbani. Mr. Gela Maghaltadze, an experienced charcoal producer settled in the village several decades ago and started producing charcoal. Prior to this, he conducted research on charcoal production technology, bought drawings of charcoal furnaces from Russia and built the furnaces himself. After gathering all the required legal documents, necessary to operate a charcoal production plant he became a licensed producer of charcoal in Georgia.
The product proved to be successful and Mr. Maghตลาด督 periodically increased the production to meet the growing demand. However, the production capacity was limited due to problems related to operating only one furnace and obtaining the raw materials. In the framework of the project the production capacity has been expanded and many villagers have received business-related training. This allowed other villagers to get involved in the charcoal production business. TBSC consulting will continue monitor and support the projects till the end of the year and ensure that they are running properly.

For more information on the projects, please contact Irakli Tekturmanidze from TBSC Consulting: Irakli@tbsc.ge
For more information on ENPI FLEG program in Georgia, please contact Ekaterine Otarashvili: ekaterine.otarashvili@iucn.org

FOREST MANAGEMENT IN BELARUS – GEORGIAN JOURNALIST REPORTS
(By Manana Kvelaishvili, “Best Green Blogger”)

In the framework of the ENPI FLEG program I participated in a press tour in Belarus in June 2011. The main objective of the press tour attended by journalists from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine, was inform journalists on the reforms in the forest sector in Belarus.

The reforms carried out in the forest sector are important. Forests are the most important natural resource of the country and they are managed quite well. More than 38%, approx. 9.39 million hectares of the country are covered with forests. The forest coverage has almost doubled in the last 60 years.

The agenda of the three-day press tour was pretty full. The first official meeting was organized at the Ministry of Forestry of Belarus, with the Minister Mikhail Amelianovich. According to the Minister, the sustainability of the country’s economy depends on proper care to forests. We visited almost all nurseries of Belarus and got acquainted with their work. Small nurseries are present in the whole country. Different tree species are growing in those nurseries, and later used for afforestation of different areas. New forest areas are created every year and 100 tones of seeds are kept by nurseries.

Only in 2010 reforestation and afforestation were applied on 29 thousand hectares of land. In addition to creating new forest, the country is also making efforts to protect existing forests. Different preventive measures are taken, among which fire protection. There are 239 fire stations in the country equipped with special techniques. Besides, there are 72 web cameras installed in the country. The main function of those cameras is the overall control of forests, but they also detect fire areas and timely inform relevant bodies. Law is very strict for offences in forests and for those who don’t follow rules for burning fire in the forest. According to the data from the representatives of the Ministry of Forestry about 800 people were accused of violation of forest security rules.

Forest management is the number one issue in Belarus. “Belgosles” is responsible for the monitoring of the forest sector in the country. The body which involves forest engineers, soil scientists, cartographers and forest monitoring specialists plays a very important role in forest protection. Forest monitoring is carried out in different directions in the country. Ecological, pathological and radiation monitoring is conducted constantly.
Belarus is very clean and this does not go unnoticed. I remembered Minsk with its clean streets, parks and large space. There are three things highly represented in the city: Soviet symbols, pictures of Lukashenko and lawn mowers. The last ones create order in the city, and not only in Minsk. I traveled to almost half of the country and everywhere the same situation: order, order and cleanliness. It can be said that each and every bush and tree are cared for there. Forests are well protected and controlled.

Environmental News in Georgia

DRAFT LAW ON FOREST NOT ACCEPTABLE FOR ENVIRONMENTALISTS
(Liberali, October 28, 2011)

According to Georgian environmentalists the draft law on forests contains lots of gaps. Because of this, the draft law in its current form should not be submitted to the Parliament for discussion.

Allowing clear cuts, leasing out large areas of forests, allowing cutting trees on any slopes – all this, according to the co-chair of the Greens Movement of Georgia NGO, Ms. Nino Chkhobadze, will cause the degradation of Georgian forests.

MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO INTRODUCE NEW FOREST MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
(Transparency International Georgia, 29 August 2011)

Over the past months there has been discussion and speculation with regards to the reorganization of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources. One of the main questions that have been raised is related to forest management in Georgia. This is, however, not a new issue for post-revolution Georgia.

A new system for leasing Georgia’s forests was first initiated in 2006 by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources. The first auction was held in 2007. Since 2008 the process has been led by Kakha Bendukidze. In 2009 the leasing process was ceased by the newly appointed Minister of Economic Development, Lasha Zhvania, and the Minister of Environmental Protection, Goga Khachidze. The 2006 legislation had some gaps and it was necessary to work out a new strategy on forestry and carry out an inventory of forests. In 2011 when the Ministry of Environmental Protection was restructured, management of natural resources was separated from it and consequently the forestry sector is now the responsibility of the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources.

In July 2011 Alexandre Khetaguri, the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, unexpectedly stated that the Ministry had decided to introduce a new system of leasing forest, and that the first auction would take place in the middle of August. The statement was strongly criticized by the non-governmental sector, which led Khetaguri to organize a meeting to briefly present the upcoming forest reform plan. The meeting was held on August 4, 2011 and was attended by NGO representatives and other experts.

For more information please follow the link:
DIRECTORS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARRESTED FOR TAKING BRIBES WHILE PROVIDING SCHOOLS WITH FUEL WOOD
(Medianews, 12 December 2011)

The employees of the Investigative Unit of the Ministry of Finance of Georgia arrested the school directors of several villages of the Gori district: Flavismani, Nikozi, Garejvari, Mr. Giori Kareli, Ms. Marine Tarashvili and Mikhail Bibilashvili and the head of the economic unit of the school of the village Garejvari, Sophio Chalauri. Bribes are the charges against these people.

The investigation established that the above mentioned people made criminal arrangements with one of the private entrepreneur in order to provide fuel wood for school heating. According to the arrangement, the accused would buy fuel wood from the workshop of that entrepreneur and transfer the money from the school account to his private account, but the amount of money would be much more then the real price of the fuel wood. Afterwards, the amount of the money above the fuel wood price would go back to the accused as a bribe.

The accused were arrested by the law enforcement bodies during the criminal fact. The amount of the damage to the state budget will be defined during the investigation process. The investigation is ongoing under article 338, part 1 of Georgian Criminal Code. The Sanction for this crime could be 6 to 9 years of prison.

Legislation

THE OWNERS OF THE SAWMILLS WILL BE RELEASED FROM ADMINISTRATIVE FINES IMPOSED BEFORE NOVEMBER 1
(Medianews, November 17, 2011)

The owners of primary timber procession units (sawmills) will be released from the principal and additional administrative fines imposed before November 1. For this purpose the Georgian Government addressed the Parliament with a legislative initiative and submitted the draft law on releasing from administrative fines". The draft law that will be discussed by the law committee of the Parliament with first hearings promotes only a one-time measure.

A person will be released from administrative fines only in case the decree of the authorized body on administrative penalization has not been executed. “The implementation of such a human measure and expression of a good will by the state is caused by the fact that the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources is developing new regulations for the owners of the units of primary procession of round wood and the state is giving them the chance to start their business clean” was mentioned during the committee session.

FINES FOR ILLEGAL FOREST CUTTING WILL BE DECREASED
(Medianews, November 17, 2011)

Changes will be introduced to the Administrative Offences Code, according to which the fines for illegal forest cutting will be decreased. The person committing the offence will be warned in case of illegal primary fuel wood production for personal use within the Forest Fund area, but the repeated offence will be fined with 500 Georgian Laris. Previously, 500 Georgian Laris was the fine for the primary action, but for the secondary action there was a fine of 1000 Georgian Laris.

International News

CLIMATE CHANGE FOR FOREST POLICY-MAKERS

An approach for integrating climate change into national forest programmes in support of sustainable forest management.

The critical role of forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation is now widely recognized. Actions to support this role are taken on different levels from international to local. However, in many countries climate change issues have not been fully addressed in national forest policies, nor have the forestry mitigation and adaptation needs been thoroughly considered in national climate change...
strategies. Also cross-sectoral dimensions of climate change impacts and response measures have not been fully appreciated.

The FAO Forestry Department and the NFP Facility are working to support countries on integration of climate change into their national forest programmes. The publication is a key part of this support and seeks to provide a practical approach to the process of integrating climate change into national forest programmes. The aim is to assist senior officials in government administrations and stakeholders, including civil society organizations and the private sector, prepare the forest sector for the challenges and opportunities posed by climate change.

FAO and the NFP Facility stand ready to support countries in the application of the approach and warmly welcome ideas and suggestions for use and improvement of the approach.

FAO and NFP Facility wish to thank all those who were involved in the development of the approach during national stakeholder workshops, expert and public consultations, and finalization of the publication. The approach and the publication have been developed with the financial support of the FAO-Finland Forestry Programme.

Download the publication in English, Spanish or French: http://www.fao.org/forestry/climatechange/64862/en/

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR RESPONDING TO IMPACTS OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE ON FORESTS IN THE SOUTHERN CAUCASUS

The impacts of climate change on forests are likely to be substantial, and the negative impacts many times greater than any positive impacts. Forestry agencies and forest managers in some countries have already started to take practical steps to mitigate the impacts of climate change on forests. Comparison of present forest cover in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia with the potential forest cover determined by the study indicates that 55% of forest cover has been cleared, equivalent to 5 million hectares from a potential former area of 9 million hectares.

The governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are now committed to elaborating and implementing forest adaptation strategies. Those strategies must address research needs, educational needs, information to evaluate how forests respond to climate change, the mitigation and adaptation options that are available, barriers to implementing mitigation and adaptation measures, the policies and instruments that need to be put in place, and monitoring to identify problems and allow an early response.

Group of experts have worked out Strategic guidelines for Responding to Impacts of Global Climate Change on Forests in the Southern Caucasus and can be downloaded here: http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/where_we_work/black_sea_basin/caucasus/?201989/for-Responding-to-Impacts-of-Global-Climate-Change-on-Forests-in-the-Southern-Caucasus

PEOPLE AND FORESTS E-NEWS – SPECIAL ISSUE ON FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(The Center for People and Forests)

This month all eyes have been on Durban, South Africa, for the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The last such Conference before the expiry of the Kyoto Protocol in 2012, it is widely seen as a pivotal point in global climate negotiations and actions.

This special issue of the eNews has an added emphasis on forests and climate change: you’ll find thought-provoking blogs from our COP 17 delegation; selected commentaries from others; new RECOFTC publications on REDD+ capacity building needs and opportunity costs; as well as an FAO guide on climate change for forest policy makers.

For more information, please follow the link: http://us1.campaign-archive1.com/?u=a79eee76ce1869204bc04a12d&id=b900bd2994&esub=e=708e63ca04
UNEP SHIFTS MANAGEMENT OF BILLION TREE CAMPAIGN TO PLANT-FOR-THE-PLANET FOUNDATION

(IISD, 7 December 2011)

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) formally handed over the management of the Billion Tree Campaign, which has led to the planting of 12 billion trees in 193 countries, to the youth-led environment organization Plant-for-the-Planet Foundation. The handover ceremony occurred on the sidelines of the Durban Climate Change Conference.

Noting that the Campaign always had been considered finite, UNEP explains that it had a choice between bringing the Campaign to a close, or transferring it to a partner. According to UNEP, the Plant-for-the-Planet Foundation’s emphasis on young people, its academies on climate change and existing commitment to the Billion Tree Campaign will allow the Campaign to continue as a supportive element in a wider youth initiative.

The Billion Tree Campaign was inspired by the work of the late Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Wangari Maathai and the Green Belt Movement. It aims to improve quality of life and limit environmental degradation through the benefits provided by trees, including mitigating climate change through the sequestration of carbon, contributing to local economies through products such as timber, and providing ecosystem services such as soil regulation, erosion control and cultural values.

Read the full story at:

Publications/ Online resources

“BUY GREEN” - GUIDELINES FOR OFFICE PAPER PURCHASING PRODUCED IN GEORGIAN

The Green Purchasing Guidelines for Office Paper study has been produced by IUCN.

The main purpose of the Green Purchasing Guidelines publication is to provide guidance on reducing the ecological footprint of paper use in an office. The document analyses paper production related issues and provides recommendations on how to plan and make green purchases.

The electronic version of the Green Purchasing Guidelines (in Georgian only) can be found on the ENPI FLEG Georgian website.

THREE FOREST RELATED PUBLICATIONS RELEASED BY WWF IN GEORGIA

One of the studies includes “The Assessment of Georgian Legislation within the Context of Verification of the Origin of Wood Harvested and Processed by Logging and Timber Processing Companies”. The study is available at: 

Another is “The Training Report of Georgian Forest Inventory Specialists” organized by the WWF-Caucasus Programme Office and conducted by Edmundas Petrauskas in Bakuriani, Georgia, on 14-24 June 2010. The report is available at:

The third report published is “The Regional Workshop Report on Trans-Boundary Timber Flow – Problem Identification and Capacity Building Needs Assessment in the ENPI FLEG Region”. The document is available at:
About ENPI FLEG Program

The ENPI FLEG Program supports governments of participating countries, civil society and the private sector in the development of sound and sustainable forest management practices, including the prevention of illegal forestry activities. Participating countries include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. This Program is funded by the European Union.

www.enpi-fleg.org

Project Partners

European Commission

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The World Bank is a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world. Our mission is to fight poverty with passion and professionalism for lasting results and to help people help themselves and their environment by providing resources, sharing knowledge, building capacity and forging partnerships in the public and private sectors. Learn more: www.worldbank.org

IUCN

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges.

IUCN works on biodiversity, climate change, energy, human livelihoods and greening the world economy by supporting scientific research, managing field projects all over the world, and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice.

IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental organization, with more than 1,200 government and NGO members and almost 11,000 volunteer experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 staff in 45 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. www.iucn.org

WWF

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with almost 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. www.panda.org

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