

RESOLUTION

of International scientific and practical conference
«Addressing ecological and social challenges for forests and forest management»

October 23, 2018, Kyiv

International scientific and practical conference «Addressing ecological and social challenges for forests and forest management» has taken place in Kyiv, Ukraine. It has been organized by National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine, FSC Ukraine National Representative, State Agency of Forest Resources of Ukraine, Ukrainian National Forestry University, Ukrainian Forestry Society under assistance of German-Ukrainian Agropolitical Dialogue. The conference was devoted to hot issues of functioning and development of Ukraine's forestry branch.

The conference provided for holding 1 plenary, 2 technical and closing sessions. 26 oral reports have been presented on assessing state of forests and forestry, institutional and economic mechanisms of forestry transformation to adaptive forest management.

Leading scientists of research institutes and higher educational institutions of forestry profile from Austria, Belarus, Italy, China, Germany, Romania, Ukraine, heads and leading specialists of forest sector, representatives of non-governmental organizations, forestry enterprises, certification bodies and assistants of Verkhovna Rada Members of Ukraine have taken part in the conference.

The conference participants have noted that climate change is causing global challenges for forests and forestry. They are manifested in occurrence of catastrophic natural phenomena, in particular increase of large uncontrolled forest fires, worsening biological stability of forests and as a consequence – large-scale dieback of forest stands. In transition economy countries, particularly in Ukraine, the situation is complicated by lengthy process of transformation and aggravation of socio-economic problems.

Lack of political will and statecraft approaches to reforms, low law enforcement, undeveloped social institutions, and degradation of culture of multilateral dialogue increase underestimation of political role of forests and forestry in social development and economic growth. Lack of National Forest Policy and Strategy that is a basis for a comprehensive program on support of forest resources and ecosystem potential of the country's forests in the system of science-education-innovation-production, will further exacerbate the whole range of problems.

Forests of Ukraine are characterized by increased vulnerability to natural and anthropogenic impacts due to the fact that a half of forest stands have been artificially planted, and practice of reforestation and tending contributed to formation of monocultures with a simplified spatial, species and coenotic structure. Organization of forest management planning on basis of age classes and continuous increase in proportion of forests with limited use regime has determined the trend towards aging of forests.

The reform process in forestry sector is not systematic, but often discriminatory. This leads, on one hand, to increase of fiscal pressure on enterprises, eliminates possibilities for extended reproduction of forest resource potential, and, on the other hand, to introduction of additional legislative restrictions on economic activity and artificial barriers in eliminating consequences of extreme natural phenomena, implementation of measures to improve forests' sanitary condition etc.

Increasing controversial demands for simultaneous increase in securing useful properties and wood production under absence of public consensus on forests' role and importance and documents on strategic development of forestry sector make it impossible to use forest management models that are commonly accepted and tested in developed countries.

Voluntary forest certification in accordance with international scheme of FSC plays an important role in balancing the conflicting interests.

Reacting to the current challenges in forestry sector shall be done through transformation of integrated forest management based on adaptive approach. The following steps are deemed necessary:

- to organize a nation-wide dialogue on role and importance of forests aimed at finding societal consensus by development and approval of a law on National Forest Policy and National Strategy for Development of Forestry;
- to adopt amendments to the legislation to cancel discriminatory fiscal load (Law of Ukraine adopted 10.07.2018 No 2497-VIII "On Amendments to the Tax Code of Ukraine and Certain Laws of Ukraine on Stimulation of Formation and Activity of Family Farms");
- to adopt amendments to the legislation which unreasonable enforce ecological limitations on forestry enterprises activities and prevent the reduction of consequences of forest dieback spread, in particular through: Sanitary Rules in the forests of Ukraine (adopted 07/26/2016 No 756 of the Cabinet Ministry of Ukraine (CMU), Rules for improving the quality of the forests (adopted 12/05/2007 No 724 of the CMU), the Law of Ukraine "On Environmental Impact Assessment" (dated 23/05/2017 No 2059-VIII), the Law of Ukraine "On the Fauna" adopted 13/12/2001 No 2894-III (as amended) Act 39, On Regulation of Issues Concerning the Special Use of Forest Resources (No. 761 of the CMU adopted 23/05/2007) etc.;
- to develop risk-resilient strategies of forestry development, including those accounting for climate change;
- to improve forest monitoring system and to implement national forest inventory aiming at obtaining adequate information on forest resources, forecasting and preventing development of pests and diseases hotspots;
- to facilitate wide introduction of environment-oriented technologies for reforestation and close to nature forestry to forestry practice with the aim to enhance biological stability of forests;
- to add to the State classifier of professions of Ukraine professions of "forest firefighter" and "lead forest firefighter", to develop a system of qualification requirements, and to create a national center for training of forest firefighters to mitigate health risks for forestry personnel, population, rural and other infrastructure at fighting major forest fires.

There are the following institutional and economic mechanisms for implementing the outlined tasks:

- strengthening international collaboration on experience exchange and holding joint scientific projects and research aimed at improving scientific support of transition to sustainable forest management;
- setting up systems for transforming the latest knowledge and innovations into managerial decision support system at national, regional and local levels;
- creating a network of experimental facilities and enterprises on adaptive forest management;
- popularization of sustainable forest management ideology and responsible consumption of forest products including means of forest certification under FSC scheme;
- implementation of the FSC National Forest Stewardship Standard in Ukraine;
- diversification of certification directions and strengthening economic viability of forest industry through certification of a larger number of product groups, non-timber forest products and ecosystem services;
- strengthening of collaboration with NGOs and local communities through reporting both problematic issues in forestry sector and ways of their resolving, formation of public control mechanisms.

It is deemed worthwhile submitting this Resolution to Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, President of Ukraine, Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, international organizations and entities, central executive bodies and local government bodies.

Organizing committee