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Country statement

Uzbekistan

- Overview of Forestry-

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FORESTRY OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

The Republic of Uzbekistan is located between Amu-Darya and Syr-Darya rivers in deserts of moderate zone in the middle part of the Central Asia. There are four zones corresponding to geomorphological steps in the country: plains (desert), foothills, mountains and high mountains. According to these zones forests are classified as follows: mountain, plain and deserted forests.

The main feature of forestry of Uzbekistan is in that forests have basically protective, water-security and sanitary importance. They protect agricultural and other lands from water and wind erosion, prevent mud flows, and fix moving sands.

Uzbekistan is a low-forested country. Since the beginning of XX century the forests area of Uzbekistan was reduced in 4-5 times, especially sharp reduction was observed in tugai forests the lands of which were allocated for agricultural production. At present the Forest Fund totals 8597.4 Thousand Ha, that is 19,8% from the total area of the country, and the area covered by forests is equal to 3314.8 Thousand Ha.

The principal stakeholder of the Forest Fund in the country is the Main Forestry Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan with 8052.5 Thousand Ha or 91.7% from the total forest area. The area covered with forests is totaled to 2221.2 Thousand Ha or 93.5% of the total forest area of Uzbekistan. Other forest stakeholders are Tashkent Regional Khokimiyat, State Committee on Nature Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan and other agricultural enterprises and organizations.

The Forest Fund of the Main Forestry Department is located basically in deserted - sandy zone – 7190.8 Thousand Ha (89.3%); the area covered by forests 1948.0 Thousand Ha, other area: 748.7 Thousand Ha (9.3%) in the mountain zone, the area covered by forest of which totals 246.6 Thousand Ha; 75.5 Thousand Ha (0.9%) in tugai zone with the area covered by forests of 17.8 Thousand Ha and 38.0 Thousand Ha (0.5%) in plain zone with the area covered by forests of 8.9 Thousand Ha.

The management in the field of protection, use and reproduction of forests is carried out by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the government bodies in sites, the Main Forestry Department of the Republic of Uzbekistan under the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources and the State Committee on Nature Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

There are about 8000 people are working the forestry sector, 673 of them as administrative personnel, 670 foresters and 30 huntsmen.

The Forestry Management is guided by the «Law about Forest», the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan «About organization of activity of the Main Forestry Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan», «Code about Lands», and other legislative documents, such as «About Protection and Use of Fauna», «About Protection and Use of Flora», «About the approval of Regulations about the definition of forest protection categories».

With transition to market economy in Uzbekistan many branches of national economy including agriculture were transformed from budgetary financing on self-supporting activity. But the government of Uzbekistan kept financing the forestry sector and exempted from taxation till 2008 by the Decree №610 dated 28.12.04. At the same time the sanction to own activity was given to the forestry enterprises.

Forestry enterprises received last year from the state budget 2161.4 Million Uzbek Sum, which is equal to approximately 2 Thousand US Dollars. Besides forestry from manufacture had the income 1750 Million Uzbek Sum or 1.6 Thousand US Dollars, at this the expenditures in the forestry sector was in total 3911.4 Million Uzbek Sum or 3.6 Thousand US Dollars.

At the established system of financing the basic emphasis is done on search of additional sources of financing that can be achieved only by the development of agricultural and industrial production.

One of sources of the income in forestry is using of non-wood products and other activity such as mowing, grazing, permanent and timely agriculture activity, beekeeping, picking nuts, fruits and berries, mushrooms, fruits of hop, medicinal and technical plants, collection of cane, etc.

In some forestry enterprises non-wood products give the basic economic income. So, the primary activity of many forestry enterprises consists in picking and processing of fruits and nuts, beekeeping. The forestry enterprises receive the additional income also from realization of seeds and planting material.

As the forests of the country have basically protective functions, the removal of industrial wood is prohibited. However during the sanitary felling and care cutting about 32 Thousand cubic meters of wood is annually removed. Industrial wood is used as a local construction material. Wood also is used for manufacture more than 60 kinds of various items for household purposes. More than 50 shops of consumer goods are working in the forestry. They produce the construction items (for window and doors), khan-takhta (the local furniture), brooms, various baskets and wum products, shanks for shovels, plates from cane and many other things. Some wood is used as wood fuel.

However the most part of need in wood products is covered from import of roundwood and semifinished wood being used for construction, furniture industry and pulp-and-paper industry.

The Main Forestry Department is a branch of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Ministry also includes Fruit, Vegetable and Wine-making Industry, Water Resources Department, Karakul Industry, Agricultural Machinery Industry, Agricultural Chemistry Industry, etc. The forestry sector has close contacts with these departments. Till 1991 forestry enterprises of the country created on contractual basis the field protective shelterbelts for agricultural and cattle-breeding enterprises of the republic on the area more than 3 Thousand Ha, 2 Thousand hectares from them were for pasture protection, 1.2 Thousand hectares for field protection, and 0.8 Thousand Ha were terraces made on mountain slopes of gardening. To perform these works the budgetary funds were allocated in the centralized order. The process of performance and acceptance of works was done under the established regulations developed by the State Committee of Forestry of the USSR. Forestry enterprises of the republic planted also the protective forest plantations under contracts with the Ministry of Automobile Roads and Railways. However with disintegration of the former Soviet Union and with transition to market relations the system of planned economy was broken. The agricultural enterprises were transformed into the private farms or small shirkat farms with collective property which are not capable to pay for the creation of protective forest shelterbelts. Therefore during the last ten years the Main Forestry Department does not plant the protective forest shelterbelts under contracts.

The creation of protective forest belts along hydraulic engineering constructions, channels and water reservoirs is made by irrigational forestry enterprises which are not included into system of the forestry sector of the country.

In total in the republic the new forests on the area more 42.0 Thousand Ha, 80 % of which in the deserted zone, are annually created. So, on dried Aral seabed the territory of which is about 1.5 Million Ha, the forestry enterprises annually create the protective forest shelterbelts on the area of 18-20 Thousand Ha. For last 13-14 years protective forest shelterbelts on the area of 200 Thousand Ha have been created.

Expansion of irrigated territories and improper management of water and land resources caused the deficiency and deterioration of water. The mineralization of water and its pollution with chemicals has been increased; the salinity of irrigated lands has occurred. In connection with deficiency of water the process of desertification of territory of Uzbekistan and formation of moving sand is observed, in particular on the dried seabed of Aral Sea. The dimensions and complexity of these problems demand complex intersectoral cooperation of all countries of the region. The Republic of Uzbekistan contributes to process of struggle against desertification and moving sands. Uzbekistan has signed and ratified many international agreements and conventions, namely: the Framework Convention on Climate Change; the Convention to Combat Desertification in the countries; the Convention on Biological Diversity; the Convention on International Trade in Endangered species; the Convention on Prohibition of Military or any other Aggressive Destructive Actions to the Environment, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Within these Conventions the development of regional projects with participation of forestry sector of countries of the Central Asia, Transcaucasian region, Bolivia, Sri Lanka, Madagascar is carried out.