

Roundtable 2 – „Functional model of forests – national perspective: challenges and expectations.”

Dear Prof. Szyszko, [Minister of Environment of Poland,]

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

It is going be rather easy to interlink the current intervention to my first one on sustainable forest management in the light of Paris Agreement. Naturally, I have to start from challenges and here I can repeat without going into details that rather dramatic impacts of climate change are one of them.

Apart from climate change, our society expects increased provision of multiple forest goods and services. One of the ongoing challenges is how to increase contribution of forests and forest sector to bioeconomy, and at the same time promote forest biodiversity. There is a continuous pressure to expand protected and especially set-aside forest areas without active management. Integration of nature protection and biodiversity enhancement into sustainably managed forest could be way how to accommodate both seemingly contradictory goals.

In the context of changing climate, it is really important to establish legal, institutional, financial and educational framework, which would be based on long-term outlooks taking into account various scenarios and at the same time able to flexibly respond to actual development of natural conditions, forest vitality, timber markets, etc., such as in the case of the bark beetle outbreak that we are facing in the Czech Republic now. I believe that forest law should be less prescriptive in terms of forest management methods and more effective when it comes to coping with large-scale natural disturbances, including efficient forest civil service and crisis management.

Much more emphasize should be put on soft tools supporting forest owners and forest manager in their effort to adapt to climate change and keep providing forest goods and services at unchanged or even higher level. This may include providing frameworks for forest management planning (e.g. mid-term regional plans of forest development), targeted state aid and consultancy services and promoting transfer of scientific knowledge into policy making and practice, and education and vocational training. The same attention should be paid to the adaptation of a forest-based value chain.

For tackling all those interlinked and complex issues, it is extremely important to share lessons learned and exchange the best practise among countries, with the support of forest-related intergovernmental organizations and processes. Here I would like to mention the

outcomes of the international conference Mariánské Lázně +70, which took place in the Czech Republic a few weeks ago and the related “Anniversary Message” in which participants “commend UNECE and FAO for their longstanding partnership on forest-related matters in the region, acknowledge further considerable potential for its development and invite the two organizations to continue and reinforce their partnerships on forests in a mutually beneficial way”.

Dear Mr. Minister, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for your attention!