

National Association of Communal Forest and Pasture

National conference "Time for deeper reforms in
communal forestry
Summary

Tirana, June 2006



National CFP Association - **Tirana**

Summary of the National Conference

National Communal Forestry and Pastures Association in cooperation with Mjaft Movement organized on **23-rd of June 2006** a National Conference focused on communal forestry in Albania, state of affairs and opinions on how to improve the actual situation and deeper the reforms in communal forestry.

The decentralization of the Natural Resources Management and the Transfer of rights and responsibilities to their users and Local Government, as well as the participation of communities in decision making in communal forestry, is a process that has positively impacted the starting of sustainable forest and pasture management in Albania.

This process, although a good start, didn't fully satisfy the interests of the direct beneficiaries (Local governments and their respective communities) this because of:

- ❖ Lack of clear and proper policies on land policy and transfer, marketing of forests products;
- ❖ Not well defined communal forestry in the law (not focused on main issues of forestry such as ownership and use, decentralization and delegation of competencies);
- ❖ The users do not have the right to generate incomes from activities in those resources.

The discussions in the conference were organized around these three main issues. In addition another very important issue was presented, the starting of the new Forestry Project (NRDP) financed by the World Bank and Albanian Government and the transparency and involvement of local government and their communities in this project.

The issues are:

- ❖ Lack of proper information provided by the project the beneficiaries;
- ❖ Untransparent process of application, selection and starting of communes and activities;
- ❖ Unclear tasks, responsibilities and contributions from each (project, commune, DFS, FUA, users).

The participants represented different Forest Users Associations from all over Albania (Tirana, Durres, Elbasani, Librazhd, Berati, Diber, Kukes, Puke, Korca, Lezha) and farmers about 170 participants. There were invited representatives from Local Government, Directorate of Forests and Pasture Policies, Ministry of Environment, Embassies, SIDA, World Bank, members of Parliament, agency of immovable property transfer, Faculty of Forestry etc.

What is very important to mention is that all the participants had an unanimous opinion related to the actual state of affairs and the ways how to improve the situation.

Briefly the following are what is being proposed and required:

Suggested:

Summary "Time for deeper reforms in Communal Forestry"

- Complete the transfer of communal forests and pastures in the ownership of villages and local government;
- Prepare policies that stimulate the income generation from communal forest and pastures, including non timber forest products and wildlife, and their use on users' benefit;
- Decentralization of the decision-making for forestry tariffs at the local government level;
- Establish an effective extension service for communal forests and pastures.

Required:

- Revision of law on forests in consultation with users' representatives;
- Approval of bylaws for the transfer and management of communal forests and pastures
- Transparency related to the new Forestry Project

During the conference several representatives had the chance to **express their opinions** in relation to the topic. Interesting were the opinions given by Forest Users, Mayors of Communes as far as property issue in forestry is concerned. **Representatives from Local Government** admit that the communities are ready to take over the management of forests and pastures and that LG can take over the responsibility for the management of communal forestry. It was stressed that they are ready and are waiting for the Government to speed up the transfer process.

Forest user (old farmer): we are protecting and taking care of our forests, but we want the government to give us more rights and why not consider us as the legal owners of the forests as we are by tradition.

One of the **specific objectives** of the conference was to create an understanding of the situation in communal forestry as far as the legislation and the support provided by the government (new forestry project).

Based on the **discussion of Mr. Nehat Collaku** Director of Directory of Forests and Pasture Policies it was clearly shown the willingness of the Government to positively consider the raised concerns and take into consideration the suggestions formulated by the Federations.

The National Communal Forest and Pasture Association offers its full support on collaboration with government bodies for the improvement of the legal framework on communal forests and pastures, and on collaboration for the implementation of the new Natural Resources Project, its transparency regarding the procedures, criteria, participants and time-frame.

Mr. Collaku's speech added to the cooperative, atmosphere and attitude which dominated the conference.

The National Conference was concluded with **a Resolution** that was approved by all the participants.

The continuation of the process is open for discussion with the Ministry of Environment and the Directorate of Forests and Pastures Policies related to the issues suggested and required by the Federations.