

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF FORESTRY

MYANMAR FOREST POLICY, 1995
POLICY STATEMENT

FEBRUARY 23, 1996

The Government of the Union of Myanmar

Ministry of Forestry

Notification No.21/96

Yangon, the 6th Waxing Day of Tabaung, 1357 M.E

(23rd February, 1996)

With the approval of the Cabinet Meeting (27/95) of the Government of the Union of Myanmar which was held on the 20th of July 1995, the Ministry of Forestry hereby issues the following Myanmar Forest Policy 1995, Policy Statement:-

1. PREAMBLE

In view of the importance of the Myanmar Forestry Sector in enhancing national socio-economic development, and ensuring ecological balance and environmental

Stability, the Myanmar Forest Policy has been formulated in a holistic and balanced manner within the overall context of the environment and sustainable development taking full cognizance of the forestry principles adopted at the UNCED.

2. IMPERATIVES

The policy has indentified six imperatives which the Government must give the highest priority in order to achieve broader national goals and objectives. These are:

- A. PROTECTION of soil, water, wildlife, biodiversity and environment;
- B. SUSTAINABILITY of forest resources to ensure perpetual supply of both tangible and intangible benefits accrued from the forest for the present and future generations;
- C. BASIC NEEDS of the people for fuel, shelter, food and recreation;
- D. EFFICIENCY to harness. In the socio-environmentally friendly manner, the full economic potential of the forest resources;
- E. PARTICIPATION of the people in the conservation and utilization of the forests;
- F. PUBLIC AWARENESS about the vital role of the forests in the well being and socio- economic development of the nation.

3. OBJECTIVES AND POLICY MEASURES

In this context, the Myanmar Forest Policy Provides for, inter alia:

3.1 LAND USE:

Objectives

- To evolve a system of balanced and complimentary land use under which land is only diverted to used where it would produce most and deteriorate least;
- To phase out existing practices which are incompatible with sound land management and which support adverse environmental consequences;
- To discourage shifting cultivation practices causing extensive damage to forest through adoption of improved practices for better food production and a better quality of for shifting cultivators.

Policy Measures

- Establish a National Land Use Advisory Board with responsibilities to oversee and coordinate overall land utilization in the country;
- Regularize existing areas under shifting cultivation and encroachment in forest lands. And fully enforce the provisions of the Forestry Act in the eviction of any future encroachment and other forms of forest land misuse;
- Base rehabilitation of shifting cultivation areas not only on extension and welfare but also on investment and development;

3.2. PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT:

Objective

- To dedicate unclessed and protected public forest areas strategically located in the country to extend existing areas under forest reserves and protected area system in order to ensure; sustainable forest management benefits for the country and its population; restoration of ecological balance and biodiversity conservation as well as checking soil erodin anti the deduation of river catchments to safeguard water supplies and the premature siltation of reservoirs;
- To strengthen wildlife management through establishment of a network of national parks, wildlife reserves and sanctuaries.

Policy Measures

- Gazette 30% of the total land area of the country as reserve forest and 5% under protected area system;
- Define and establish safe minimum standards for environment conservation in respect of all development activities and make Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of development projects obligatory with related rule/regulation:
- Regulate a system of environment pricing based on the "polluter pays" principle to compensate for environmental and ecological degradation;
- Regulate mining on all forest lands.

3.3 FOREST REGENERATION AND AFFORESTATION:

Objectives

- To pursue sound programme of forest development through regeneration and rehabilitation operations to optimize productivity from natural forest;
- To encourage planting of fast growing multipurpose tree species in degraded forest lands, rebuilding forest and farm lands to meet industrial and domestic demand, as well as restore ecological balance.
- Assign MTE an autonomous status so that it runs on a business enterprise basis with capability to make on the spot decisions;
- Privatize processing units owned by MTE for increasing efficiency and improved returns over investment Phase out obsolete and outdated sawmills;
- Liberalize foreign exchange facilities for processing industries to facilitate import of equipment/spare parts and operating supplies needed for efficiency in conversion and utilization of timber;
- Recognize the socio-economic importance of non-wood forest products in the list of priorities for forest development.

Pricing

- Abolish concessional pricing of forest produce;
- Abolish price controls except for consideration of social equity.

Marketing and Trade

- Impose an export assessment tax inversely proportional to the value-added content of the forest product in order to offset manipulation in tender sales as well as support the development of value-added industries;
- Commercialize all forest produce in an appropriately phased manner;
- Liberalize trade and tariff policies and ensure reasonable stability of the declared policies;
- Promote market for timber and products through over-seas trade offices and incentives;
- Organize official tours to all potential markets so as to establish contact with importers, agents and end-users as well as to attract investors including joint ventures for downstream manufacturing.

3.4 FOREST INDUSTRY, MARKETING AND TRADE:

Objective

- To promote efficient harvesting and sustainable utilization of all forms of forest produce;
- To upgrade and diversify appropriate wood-based industries with determined capacities commensurate with the resource flow to achieve high level of efficiency and to minimize waste of forest resources;
- To promote the export of value-added forest products and encourage use of under utilized species;
- To ensure that domestic requirement of all forms of processed timber is adequately met through domestic processing;

3.5 FOREST RESEARCH:

Objectives

- To determine the dynamics and functions of the components of natural forests and plantations of both indigenous and exotic species for the effective conservation and management of the forest resources to optimize productivity;
- To promote problem-oriented forestry/forest products and socio-economic research to support sustainable forestry development.

Policy Measures

- Recognize the pivotal role of forestry and forest product research in support of successful forest conservation and development programmes;
- Assign the Forest Research Institute an independent status with its own staff of dedicated researchers;
- Establish a flexible complimenting system for promotion of research staff in their field of specialization to ensure continuity of research.

3.6 FORESTRY PLANNING:

Objective

- To initiate development planning for the forestry sector to achieve sustainable development in resource production, processing and marketing, biodiversity conservation and restoration of ecological balance.

Policy Measures

- Establish an adequate system of planning and policy analyses in the ministry and Department of forest;
- Prepare a 10-years perspective plan for provideing general guidelines and broad targets for sectoral development.

3.7 INTERSECTORAL COORDINATION:

Objective

- To establish an adequate and effective coordination/cooperation among all related sectors of the economy having influence on forestry including international agencies and institutions concerned with forestry development.

Policy Measure

- Establish a National Forest Policy Advisory Board chaired by the Minister of Forestry to review forest policy implementation and establish coordination with other sectors including harmonization at policy inter-faces.

3.8 INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING:

Objective

- To ensure that the basic goals of forestry, environmental protection and increased economic benefits to be derived from forest and forestry are reflected in the institutional structure;
- To strength the forestry institutions in qualitative and quantitative terms to meet the changing needs.

Policy Measures

- Ensure human resource development both quantitatively and qualitatively;
- Strengthen educational and training facilities to cater for the above;
- Allocate appropriately professional, technical and vocational staff at various levels for efficient functioning and development of the forestry sector;
- Institute human resource management and manpower development through reviewing the organizational structure, and staffing essentially with professionally committed personnel, and introducing incentive mechanism and work performance audit to upgrade professional standards and national capacity of public forestry institutions.

3.9 BUDGET AND FINANCE

Objective

- To maintain a level of funding and investment in the forestry sector, sufficient to achieve the goals and objectives of the National Forest Policy.

Policy Measures

- Allocate a reasonable portion of the earning from forests for adequate reforestation and other forest development efforts;
- Increase investment in forest conservation and development and for supporting functions through the establishment of a forest development fund with appropriate participation of financial institutions and other donors, both national and international to be operated for development of the forestry sector, by the Ministry of Forestry with a high degree of autonomy: within the budgetary and financial framework as laid down by the Ministry of Finance and Revenue.

3.10 PEOPLES PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS:

Objective

- To enlist people's participation in forestry sector development activities in order to provide "people-based development" and also create public awareness and mass motivation for protection and conservation of forest.

Policy Measures

- Strengthen the extension capabilities of the Forest Department and develop mechanisms for greater public involvement in forestry programmes;
- Identify and publicize environmental, social and economic benefits of sustainable forestry development;
- Create an awareness of community forestry and significance of the problem it seeks to address;
- Demonstrate the cost/benefit of community development programmes as also the mechanism for distribution of benefits to facilitate adoption of the programme by the people.

**Minister
Ministry of Forestry**