

Statement of Poland

Item 8.1 FAO's work on urban Forestry and its contribution to urban agrifood system transformation

Wednesday 24 July 14:00-16:00.

Madam/Mr Chair,

Poland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

We are highly aware that climate change is the most important challenge of today and urban trees and forests provide the solution of tomorrow. Therefore Poland takes several actions to enhance and foster the role of trees and forests in urban areas. Let me present briefly the most important ongoing projects.

Almost 60% of Polish citizens live in cities. Polish cities are diverse both in terms of demographics, area and population density, but also in terms of the quality of the urban natural environment. Strengthening social and protective functions of urban trees and forests was one of the topics of National Forest Dialogue, held on 22-23 April this year. It was an answer of the Polish Government for the pertaining need of dialogue with society, regarding forests, forest management and forest governance.

One of the results is a new concept of social forests around urban areas and reinforcement of urban trees and shrubs protection. Currently the works are ongoing on the roadmap for establishing social forests in 9 biggest urban areas in Poland. The core of the concept is to strengthen the protection of forests to fulfil their social function: those forests will be places for rest and recreation, contributing to climate change mitigation and increasing resilience of the big cities and surrounding areas.

Ministry of Climate and Environment works also on law enforcement in the area of urban trees and forests. The works are ongoing on amending the Environmental Protection Law in order to strengthen the climate dimension of urban policy and appropriate coordination of adaptation activities at the city level. The most important element will be legal obligation of urban adaptation plans to climate change for cities with a population higher than 20 000. The plans will include, among others, concept of greening the cities by increasing tree cover.

To determine the scale of needs related to climate change adaptation in urban areas Ministry of Climate and Environment of Poland has developed a set of indicators for urban sustainable development, including indicators describing "green potential" and "area of urban forests". Those indicators help us to plan, monitor and design new environmental protection projects in the cities, including adaptation to climate change.

To ensure proper public participation, all those works are carried out in special teams composed of the wide branch of stakeholders: such as civil society, self-governments, local and regional authorities responsible for environment and forests.

All those projects currently developed by the Polish Ministry of Climate and Environment are part of our contribution to Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you for attention.