



EUROPEAN NEIGHBORHOOD  
AND PARTNERSHIP INSTRUMENT  
(ENPI) EAST COUNTRIES FOREST  
LAW ENFORCEMENT AND  
GOVERNANCE (FLEG) II PROGRAM  
COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES FOR  
ARMENIA AND GEORGIA



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# Main Threats to the Forests in Georgia

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# Presentation Structure

- Georgian Forests
- Main threats as described in forest policy documents
- Main threats - FLEG findings





# Georgian Forests

- One of the WWF's 35 “priority places” covers the Caucasus region;
- Georgia is located within the two “biodiversity hotspots” – the Caucasus and Iran-Anatolia - from the 34 “biodiversity hotspots” identified by Conservation International;
- Occupy about 40% of the territory of the country;
- Have an exceptional importance at national, regional and global level;
- 95-98% of the Georgian forests have natural origin;
- Rich biological diversity – up to 400 tree and shrub species;
- 61 species are endemic to Georgia and 43 - endemic to the Caucasus;
- Forests meet different demands of the national economy and the population of forest resources.



# Main Threats as Described in Forest Policy Documents

Key policy documents:

- Forest Policy Concept for Georgia (26.12.2013)
- National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan II 2014-2020
- National Environmental Action Programme II – 2012-2016



# Main Threats - Forest Policy Concept

- Imperfect legislation, weak forest management institutions and poor enforcement
- Insufficient consideration given to forest values in planning processes and decision making
- Poverty level
- Lack of awareness
- Inadequate financing

Mainstreaming threats: unsustainable forest management, social background, lack of a political will, etc.



## Main Threats - NBSAP

- Unsustainable (and often illegal) forest use;
- Excessive grazing - especially around human settlements and on summer and winter pastures—excessive numbers of livestock result in non-sustainable grazing in nearby forests ;
- Forest fires - an estimated 2,500 hectares of forest were destroyed or seriously damaged due to forest fires in the last 3-4 years;
- Pests and diseases - *Box blight, Caterpillar Cydalima Perspectalis, great spruce bark beetle, Chestnut blight/chestnut cancer , etc;*
- Improper hunting;
- Climate change - forest degradation contribute about 10-15% of the total emissions of greenhouse gases;
- Poorly planned infrastructural projects - construction of roads, pipelines, reservoirs etc. and by open-pit mining (e.g. manganese mining in Chiatura).



## Main Threats – NEAP II

- **Absence of a sustainable forestry system**
- **Unsustainable forest use (unsustainable logging) and overgrazing on forest lands:**
  - Unsustainable logging of industrial timber for processing and sale in domestic and international markets;
  - Unsustainable cutting of trees for fuel-wood by or for rural people;
  - Overgrazing damages and prevents regeneration of herb, shrub and tree layers;

*Causes: Rural poverty, lack of awareness among graziers and the lack of alternative livelihood opportunities*



## FLEG Findings

- The welfare of poor and less poor population is significantly depended on the access to forest and natural resources;
- Absence of alternative sources of income;
- Absence of alternative energy supply;
- The existing regulations and practice of forest use is challenging for the local population;
- License holders do not allow local people not only to use forest resources but also to collect wood waste (brushwood/branches);
- Despite of the government control, massive illegal logging is still happening that causes a variety of geological processes;





# FLEG Findings

## Firewood:

- The actual annual rate of firewood exploitation exceeds 2,400,000 m<sup>3</sup>;
- Presently, the NFA allocates approximately 600,000 m<sup>3</sup> of firewood annually;
- This volume of firewood still only satisfies 25% of the overall demand;
- Georgia faces a real risk of a part of the population finding themselves without any firewood and lacking the ability of obtain it even by illegal means.

A scenic mountain landscape with a valley filled with clouds and a forested slope in the foreground. The text "Thank You" is overlaid in the center.

Thank You