



The Permanent Mission of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat and has the honor to provide the contribution of the Slovak Republic towards the implementation of global strategic goals and country-specific targets for forests, which was also presented during UNFF23 meeting.

Slovak Republic:

Voluntary National Contribution (VNC) towards achieving the global forest goals and targets of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030

In accordance with paragraph 30 of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 (UNSPF, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 27 April 2017, Resolution 71/285), Member States of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) may, on a voluntary basis, determine their contributions towards achieving the global forest goals and targets, taking into account their national circumstances, policies, priorities, capacities, levels of development and forest conditions.

In this respect, the Slovak Republic communicates the following Voluntary National Contribution:

1. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic has been paying due attention to the issue of valuation of and compensation for forest ecosystem services, with a special focus on those that are not marketed.
2. In light of the above, on 20 September 2017, the Government of the Slovak Republic approved the Degree of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic No. 226/2017 on providing **financial support in forestry for fulfilling non-productive forest functions**. The degree entered into force on 1 October 2017. It is based on the National Act on Forests No. 326/2015 as amended.
3. The Decree provides legal conditions for launching and implementing the system of direct payments for forest owners (holders) with the aim to support, so called, non-productive functions of forests. Non-productive functions of forests, as defined in the National Act on Forests, are ecological functions (such as protection of soil, regulation of water cycle, regulation of climatic conditions) and social functions (e. g. positive impact on human health, cultural function, educational function, recreational function, biodiversity protection, and protection of water sources).
4. In principle, every forest owner (holder) can utilize the system and is eligible to apply for financial support provided that he/ she manages and cares about forests according to a forest management plan, which means in line with principles of sustainable forest management (as internationally agreed). In addition to that, the system provides incentives to forest owners to practise and apply to a greater extent (than required by respective forest management plan) close-to-nature methods and adaptive measures in managing forests.
5. The purpose of the system is in line with objectives of the National Forest Programme and the National Strategy of Adaptation to Climate Change.

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6. **In 2017** (i.e. from 1 October to 31 December 2017), there was a **total amount of 2,069 million of euros** allocated to forest owners (holders) to support fulfilling non-productive functions of Slovak forests. These financial resources were granted to 116 forest owners (holders). **In 2018**, we plan that **the amount of 2,3 million of euros** will be allocated for the same purpose.

7. This Voluntary National Contribution supports specifically the achievement of **Global Forest Goal 1, target 1.4** (strengthening the resilience and adaptive capacity of forests to natural disasters and climate change), **Global Forest Goal 2, target 2.4** (increasing the contribution of forest ecosystem services to social, economic and environmental development) and **target 2.5** (enhancing the contribution of forests to biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation and adaption), and **Global Forest Goal 4, target 4.2** (increasing forest-related financing from all sources), as well as **Sustainable Development Goal 15**.

The Permanent Mission of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat of the assurances of its highest consideration. *RB*

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