

## SWITZERLAND

### Land-Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF)

#### Submission to the AWG-KP

May 28, 2009

Switzerland welcomes the opportunity to respond to the AWG-KP's encouragement to Parties to submit to the Secretariat, for consideration at the eighth session of the AWG-KP, information and particularly data in order to enhance the understanding of the implications of the options and proposals for the treatment of LULUCF<sup>1</sup>. This present submission of Switzerland is intended to contribute to the further elaboration of the options and proposals on how to address definitions, modalities, rules and guidelines for the treatment of LULUCF prepared by the Chair at the AWG-KP's seventh session<sup>2</sup>, building on annex III of the report of the AWG-KP at its sixth session and annex IV of the report of the AWG-KP at its resumed fifth session. This submission is intended to provide information specific to the Swiss LULUCF context in support of the positions specified in our submissions of February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009<sup>3</sup> and of April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009<sup>4</sup>.

Switzerland's forest legislation prescribes sustainable forest management, prohibits clearing and bans deforestation unless it is replaced by an equal area of afforestation<sup>5</sup>. As a result of the Forest Policy Act of 1902, the forested area in Switzerland has increased by nearly 50% since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (figure 1). This increase of the area is the result of afforestation and change in land-use, and is still continuing. The forest law of 1993 reaffirms the long-standing Swiss tradition of preserving both forest area and forest as a natural ecosystem. These aims are accompanied in the Swiss National Forest Programme<sup>6</sup> inter alia by the objective of making better use of the potential of forests for timber production, the use of wood as an energy source, and the highest possible substitution effect through the principle of cascaded use.

Figure 1 illustrates Switzerland's long-term increase in forest stocks owing inter-alia to its traditions and policies promoting sustainable production. Current Swiss forest policy goals include both improving and maintaining the structure of forest stands in production while at the same time stopping any further increase in the growing stock, which is already the greatest of all European countries.

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<sup>1</sup> FCCC/KP/AWG/2009/L.3 p. 2, para. 6

<sup>2</sup> FCCC/KP/AWG/2009/8

<sup>3</sup> FCCC/KP/AWG/2009/MISC.5: pp. 67-68

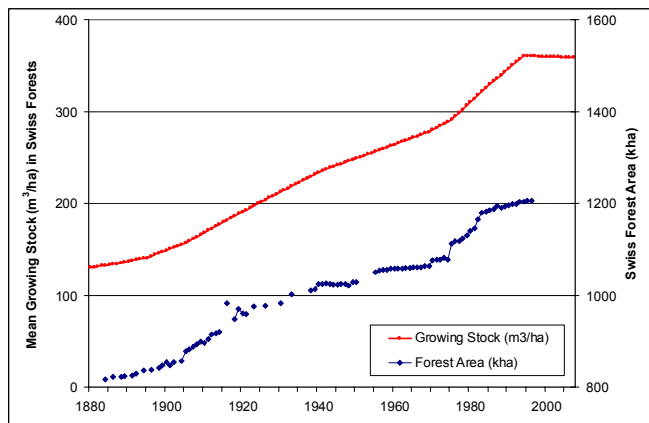
<sup>4</sup> FCCC/KP/AWG/2009/MISC.11: pp. 72-73

<sup>5</sup> UNFCCC Third National Communication (2001)

<http://www.bafu.admin.ch/climatereporting/00551/00553/index.html?lang=en>, p. 9

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.bafu.admin.ch/wald/01152/01154/index.html?lang=en>

Figure 1: Historical Increase and Leveling Off of Swiss Forest Growing Stocks



Source: Federal Office for the Environment FOEN

Swiss Forest Policy's climate related goal is to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by substituting for fossil fuels rather than enhancing sink capacity<sup>7</sup>. The sink potential of Swiss forests is dwindling. This, among other reasons, is because they are largely older forests, their productivity and the quality of the wood is decreasing, and there is a large proportion of mature trees to be harvested in the near or more distant future. Swiss forests will rather become a source of emissions; when this will happen depends not only on the intensity of wood harvest and use, but also on natural mortality, extreme events, bark beetles, drought, fire, etc.

Swiss Forest Policy is establishing Swiss Wood Resource Policy, which is intended to “contribute to the optimal use of wood, the balancing of the fields of tension, and where possible, the promotion of synergies between the different demands on the forest and the resource wood”<sup>8</sup>. A potential area of conflict is identified in which climate policy valuing forests as CO<sub>2</sub> sinks competes with the wood resource. The demand for Swiss wood is currently increasing<sup>9</sup>. Wood policy states that “an excessively strong focus on the forest sink service would hinder increased wood utilization”<sup>10</sup>, and prioritizes the “efficient use of wood, cascade uses, which prioritize material use before energetic use”<sup>11</sup>. As documented by the study, “The CO<sub>2</sub> Effects of the Swiss Forestry and Timber Industry”, the cascaded use of wood is the forestry principle offering the greatest beneficial effect on the Swiss CO<sub>2</sub> balance<sup>12</sup>. This should not be constrained by the LULUCF rules.

In summary, Swiss forests have reached a peak in growing stock and productivity, have diminishing sink potential, and demand for wood is growing. Additionally, ongoing climate change increases the risks of more frequent and more intense forest fires, disturbances from insects such as bark beetles, and more intense storms. This could be particularly damaging to

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.* p. 38

<sup>8</sup> Wood Resource Policy (FOEN 2008)

<http://www.bafu.admin.ch/publikationen/publikation/01002/index.html?lang=en>, p. 9

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.* p. 10

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.* p. 25

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.* p. 6

<sup>12</sup> The CO<sub>2</sub> Effects of the Swiss Forestry and Timber Industry, (FOEN 2007)

<http://www.bafu.admin.ch/publikationen/publikation/00076/index.html?lang=en>

forests and consequentially to their contribution within LULUCF accounting<sup>13</sup>. In order for LULUCF to continue offering an incentive for sustainable forest management, the rules must remain true to the principles of 16/CMP.1 and 11/CP.7, while at the same time taking into account the present condition of the forest. Switzerland believes that long-standing sustainable forest management and the achievement of high forest stocks must continue to be acknowledged and promoted through incentives by the new LULUCF regime.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.bafu.admin.ch/climatereporting/00551/00553/index.html?lang=en>, p. 57