



Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe
Oslo 14-16 June 2011

Oslo Ministerial Mandate for Negotiating a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe

1. RECALLING the Declarations of the Ministerial Conferences in Strasbourg 1990, Helsinki 1993, Lisbon 1998, including the vision for the European forest sector, Vienna 2003 and Warsaw 2007, which identified issues of transboundary nature and common concern with regard to forests and recognised the need for strengthening cooperation between the states of the entire European continent in the field of sustainable management of their forests;
2. REITERATING commitments to work towards addressing global environmental challenges and contributing to the achievement of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on all Types of Forests, with its Four Global Objectives on Forests, as well as other global objectives such as: the Millennium Development Goals, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the climate change commitments;
3. REITERATING former FOREST EUROPE commitments, and TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the work undertaken by other international forums on forest-related policies, including the Rio Conventions and the United Nations Forum on Forests as well as regional organisations and initiatives;
4. TAKING NOTE of the recent findings of the *State of Europe's Forests 2011* report, stating significant progress made in most indicators for sustainable forest management as well as future challenges and opportunities for forests and their sustainable management in Europe, while acknowledging the improvements achieved in data collection as well as the need for further improvement in forest information;
5. REAFFIRMING that sustainable forest management means the stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national, and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems;
6. RECOGNISING that climate change is one of the gravest threats faced by society and AWARE that urgent action is required to minimise risks of damage from events such as storms, floods, fire, drought, pests and diseases in order to protect European forests and their functions;
7. RECOGNISING that forests and sustainable forest management contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, provide renewable raw material, energy supply, water and soil protection and other ecosystem services as well as protect society and societal infrastructures against natural hazards;
8. RECOGNISING the importance of economic functions of forests and their potential in fostering a green economy and for generating and maintaining jobs and income, contributing to rural development and enabling the long term economic viability and competitiveness of forestry and forest-based industries;

9. BEING CONCERNED about the negative impacts of illegal logging and related trade on society, the environment and markets, and CONVINCED about the need to further strengthen efforts to improve forest law enforcement and governance;
10. RECOGNISING the value of adequate and accessible forest information, such as forest inventories, monitoring, assessing and reporting on implementation of sustainable forest management as well as science-based knowledge, for decision making at all levels;
11. SEEKING the best way to enhance the role of European forests in contributing to solving the national and global challenges posed by climate change, desertification, loss of biodiversity and other environmental challenges while responding to the growing need for timber as a renewable material, and maintaining the ability of Europe's forests to contribute to the quality of life and the well-being of people;
12. STRESSING the importance of national circumstances, national sovereignty over natural resources and national responsibilities in implementing sustainable forest management bearing in mind the forest ownership structure in Europe and UNDERLINING the added value of European cooperation and joint actions for enhancing progress in sustainable management of forest and of sharing forest-related information;
13. TAKING NOTE of the External Review of the FOREST EUROPE process carried out in 2008/2009 and WELCOMING the outcomes of the work and reflections done afterwards;
14. AWARE that the challenges faced by forests in a rapidly changing environment cannot be addressed through forest policy measures alone and SEEKING to strengthen relationships and synergies in the work of the forest sector with other sectors and institutions for greater coherence in forest-related policy-making;
15. UNDERLINING the will to ensure that all forests in Europe are sustainably managed, and to promote and raise awareness in society about their multiple goods and services;
16. CONVINCED about the need to take effective measures to improve coherence in forest policy development and implementation with appropriate participation of stakeholders;
17. CONVINCED that a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe is necessary to reinforce and strengthen implementation of sustainable forest management with the view to achieving balanced and stable continuity of all economic, environmental, cultural and social forest functions in Europe, and will contribute to achieving the vision, goals and targets for forests in Europe (Oslo Ministerial Decision: European Forests 2020);

As representatives of the Signatories of FOREST EUROPE, we

18. DECIDE to take further international action consisting of the elaboration of a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe and DECIDE to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee with the mandate to develop a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe;
19. DECIDE to adopt the Rules of Procedure which will apply to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and which are annexed to this Mandate (Annex 1);
20. DECIDE to establish a Bureau for the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, which shall consist of the Chair of the Committee and representatives of the following countries: Austria, Czech Republic, France, Norway, Poland, Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine, and Spain as permanent observer;
21. NOMINATE Mr. Jan Heino (Finland) for the Chairmanship of the Committee;
22. REQUEST the Chair and the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to facilitate the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in fulfilling its mandate and to guide the secretariat in providing necessary service to the negotiations;

23. DECIDE that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, basing its work on existing FOREST EUROPE Resolutions and Declarations and relevant international commitments relating to forests, and taking into account the Non-paper on a possible legally binding agreement on forests in Europe, is to develop a holistic legally binding framework agreement for forests, to address, inter alia, the following possible subjects:
- a. To ensure sustainable forest management in Europe and the long-term provision of a broad range of goods and forest ecosystem services;
 - b. To maintain and enhance forest resources in Europe, their health, vitality and resilience, and their adaptation to climate change;
 - c. To increase the resilience of forests to natural hazards and to protect forest against human-induced threats;
 - d. To enhance the contributions of forests to the mitigation of climate change;
 - e. To maintain and enhance the protective and productive potential of European forests;
 - f. To halt the loss of forest biodiversity in Europe and combat desertification;
 - g. To create and maintain enabling conditions for European forests to contribute to a green economy, employment and the development of rural and urban areas;
 - h. To maintain and enhance the cultural and social functions of forests in Europe;
 - i. To reduce, with the aim of eliminating, illegal logging and associated trade in timber and timber products;
 - j. To improve the forest knowledge base through research, education, information sharing and communication;
 - k. To enhance participation and cooperation on forests at local, national, regional and global levels;
24. REQUEST that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, in developing a legally binding framework agreement for forests, considers the following:
- a. The importance of flexibility, so that Parties can take decisions adjusted to their specific forest conditions and to provide for addressing changing and emerging needs in the future;
 - b. Global discussions on possible improvement of international arrangements on forests, including those related to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20 Conference), with the view to seeking for synergies;
 - c. The need to achieve cooperation and coordination and to avoid unnecessary duplication of proposed actions with relevant provisions contained in other international agreements;
 - d. The importance of securing the effective participation of stakeholders;
 - e. Agreement on common terms and definitions, based on the broader involvement of FAO and other organisations with the necessary expertise;
 - f. Efficient organisation and streamlined secretariat arrangements;
 - g. The possibility of the agreement being brought under the United Nations umbrella;

25. DECIDE that participation in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee will be open to FOREST EUROPE Signatories (Annex 2) and INVITE them to actively contribute to the success of the negotiating process;
26. INVITE FOREST EUROPE observer States, agencies and organisations, including non-governmental organisations, to participate in the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure;
27. REQUEST the Liaison Unit and INVITE the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme and the European Forest Institute to service jointly the negotiating process in accordance with the Annex to the Rules of Procedure and based upon the respective expertise of each organisation and the resources that they can contribute within their mandates;
28. INVITE also other interested governments and organisations to contribute by supporting the negotiation process;
29. DECIDE that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee will commence its work not later than 31 December 2011 with the goal to completing its work not later than 30 June 2013 and will present its results to an extraordinary FOREST EUROPE ministerial conference to be organised within six months after the conclusion of the negotiations, for its consideration and possible adoption and opening for signature.

Annex 1:

Rules of Procedure for the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to prepare a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe

I. PURPOSE

Rule 1 - Purpose and application

These Rules of Procedure shall govern the negotiations on a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe, conducted by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee established by the Oslo Ministerial Mandate for Negotiating a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe.

II. DEFINITIONS

Rule 2 - Definitions

1. "Party" means a UN member state or a regional economic integration organisation, which is a Signatory to Forest Europe and which is participating in the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe.
2. "Regional economic integration organisation" means an organisation constituted by sovereign States of a given region to which its member States have transferred competence in respect of matters covered by the Committee's work.
3. "Committee" means the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC), for the purpose of negotiating a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe.
4. "Chair" means the Chair nominated by paragraph 21 of the Oslo Ministerial Mandate for Negotiating a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe.
5. "Bureau" means the Bureau established by paragraph 20 of the Oslo Ministerial Mandate for Negotiating a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe.
6. "Secretariat" means the secretariat established by paragraph 27 of the Oslo Ministerial Mandate for Negotiating a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe.
7. "Representatives present and voting" means representatives of Parties present and casting an affirmative or negative vote. Representatives who abstain from voting are considered as not voting.
8. "Official documents" means documents directly related to agenda items and which form the basis of discussions foreseen on the agenda.
9. "Signatory to FOREST EUROPE" means the countries listed in Annex 2 to the Oslo Ministerial Mandate for Negotiating a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe.

III. PLACE AND DATES OF SESSIONS

Rule 3 - Place and dates of sessions

1. The Committee shall hold up to four sessions.
2. The date and place of the first session shall be decided by the Bureau.
3. The places and dates of the subsequent sessions shall be decided by the Committee in consultation with the Bureau and the Secretariat.

4. The Secretariat shall notify all Parties of the date and place of a session at least six weeks before the session is to take place.

IV. AGENDA

Rule 4.1 - Provisional agenda for sessions

1. The Secretariat shall, after approval by the Bureau, submit to the Committee at each session the provisional agenda for the following session. The provisional agenda shall include all items proposed by the Committee.
2. The Secretariat shall circulate the provisional agenda for the first session at least six weeks before the session takes place.
3. The Secretariat shall, at the request of a Party or the Bureau and with the agreement of the Chair, include in an addendum to the provisional agenda any issue suitable for the agenda that may arise between the dispatch of the provisional agenda and the opening of the session.

Rule 4.2 - Adoption and revision of the agenda

At the beginning of each session, the Committee shall adopt its agenda for the session based on the provisional agenda, and has the option to add, delete, defer or amend items.

V. REPRESENTATION

Rule 5.1 - Composition of delegations

The delegation of each Party participating in any session shall consist of a head of delegation and such alternate representatives and advisers as may be required. No credentials are required for the sessions of the Committee.

Rule 5.2 - Alternates and advisers

The head of delegation may designate an alternate representative or an adviser to act as a representative.

VI. BUREAU

Rule 6.1 - Number of officers and the Chair

The Bureau is established by paragraph 20 of the Oslo Ministerial Mandate for Negotiating a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe and is comprised of one Chair and eight other members who will act as Vice-Chairs, and one permanent observer.

Rule 6.2 - Substitution of a Chair

If the Chair is absent from a session or any part thereof, a Vice-Chair shall act as Chair.

Rule 6.3 - Replacement of the Chair

If the Chair is unable to continue to perform his or her functions, the Committee shall elect by consensus decision the Chair for the unexpired term. If no consensus can be reached, the decision shall be taken by a three-quarters majority of the representatives present and voting.

Rule 6.4 - Substitution and replacement of other members of the Bureau

Without prejudice to Rule, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3

1. If a member of the Bureau is temporarily unable to fulfill his or her function, a representative of the same

Party shall be named by the Party concerned to replace the said member. Such substitution shall not exceed the period of one session;

2. If a member of the Bureau resigns or is otherwise unable to complete or perform his or her function, a representative of the same Party shall be named by the Party concerned to replace the said member. If the Party does not provide the replacement, election of a new Bureau member shall take place according to Rule 6.5 at the next session.

Rule 6.5 - Election of officers

Without prejudice to Rule 6.3 for any replacement the Committee shall choose, by consensus decision a Party who shall nominate its representative to the Bureau. If no consensus can be reached, the decision shall be taken by a three-quarters majority of the representatives present and voting.

Rule 6.6 - Permanent Observer to the Bureau

Permanent observer to the Bureau as nominated by paragraph 20 of the Oslo Ministerial Mandate for Negotiating a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe contributes to the work of the Bureau, but cannot act as Chair and cannot vote.

VII. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARIAT

Rule 7.1 - The Secretariat

The Secretariat, established by paragraph 27 of the Oslo Ministerial Mandate for Negotiating a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe is tasked to service the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee under the guidance of the Bureau and perform all work that the Committee may require, as per the Annex to these Rules of Procedure.

Rule 7.2 - Session management

The Secretariat shall be responsible for convening sessions in accordance with rules 3 and 4 and for making all the necessary arrangements for sessions, including ensuring interpretation into the official languages during sessions, the preparation and distribution of all documentation for the session by e-mail and on the website at least six weeks before the opening of a session.

Rule 7.3 - Document management

1. For all sessions of the Committee, the Secretariat shall in accordance with these Rules:
 - a. receive, translate into official languages and distribute the official documents;
 - b. circulate the documents of the sessions;
 - c. publish and circulate relevant documentation to the Parties;
 - d. have the custody of the documents in the Committee's archives.
2. The Secretariat shall distribute the draft negotiating text of each session of the Committee in official languages to the Parties and observers no later than six weeks after the closure of the session to which the negotiating text relates.

Rule 7.4 - Report of the sessions

The Chair shall prepare the reports by the end of the sessions and shall distribute the final reports in the official languages to the FOREST EUROPE Signatories and observers.

VIII. LANGUAGES AND RECORDS OF THE SESSION

Rule 8.1 - Languages of the sessions

English, French and Russian shall be the official languages of the sessions.

Rule 8.2 - Interpretation

Interventions made in a language of the sessions shall be interpreted into the other official languages.

Rule 8.3

A representative may speak in a language other than an official language of the sessions. In this case he or she shall himself or herself provide interpretation into one of the languages of the session, and interpretation into the other languages may be based on the interpretation given in the first language.

IX. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Rule 9.1 - Quorum

1. The Chair may declare a session open and permit the debate to proceed when at least one third of the Parties participating in the session are present. The presence of a majority of Parties so participating shall be required for any decision to be taken.
2. For the purpose of determining a quorum for a decision to be taken on a matter within the competence of a regional economic integration organisation, that organisation shall be counted to the extent of the number of votes it is entitled to cast according to the Rule 10.3.2.

Rule 9.2 - Powers of the Chair

1. The Chair is to facilitate the Committee in achieving its objectives with the support of the Bureau.
2. In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him or her elsewhere by the present Rules, the Chair shall:
 - a. declare the opening and closing of each session;
 - b. direct the discussion;
 - c. ensure observance of the present Rules;
 - d. accord the right to speak;
 - e. put questions to the vote;
 - f. announce decisions.
3. The Chair shall rule on points of order and, subject to the present Rules, have control over the proceedings of the sessions and over the maintenance of order at sessions.
4. The Chair may propose to the session the limitation of the time to be allowed to speakers, the limitation of the number of times each Party may speak on any subject, the closure of the list of speakers or the closure of the debate. The Chair may also propose the suspension or the adjournment of the session or of the debate on the question under discussion.
5. The Chair, in the exercise of his or her functions, remains under the Committee's authority.

Rule 9.3 - Vice Chair acting as Chair

A Vice-Chair acting as Chair shall have the same powers and duties as the Chair.

Rule 9.4 - Voting of the Chair

The Chair or a vice-Chair acting as a Chair shall not vote.

Rule 9.5 - Rules for Debate

No one may address a session without having previously obtained the Chair's permission. Subject to these rules, the Chair shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak. However, a Party will be given precedence over Observers. The Chair shall call a speaker to order if his or her remarks are irrelevant to the subject under discussion.

Rule 9.6 - Points of order

1. During the discussion of any matter, a representative of a Party may at any time raise a point of order and the point of order shall be immediately decided upon by the Chair in accordance with these Rules. A representative of a Party may appeal against the Chair's ruling. The appeal shall be put to the vote immediately and the Chair's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority vote of the representatives present and voting.
2. A representative of a Party raising a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

Rule 9.7 - Time limit, closing list of speakers and adjournment of debate

1. The Chair may limit the time allowed to each speaker and the number of times that each speaker may speak on any question. When debate is limited and a speaker has spoken for his or her allotted time, the Chair shall call him or her to order without delay.
2. During the course of a debate, the Chair may announce the list of speakers and, with the Committee's consent, declare the list closed. The Chair may, however, accord the right of reply to any Party if, in his or her opinion, a speech delivered after he or she has declared the list closed renders this justified. When the debate on an item is concluded because there are no other speakers, the Chair, with the Committee's consent, shall declare the debate closed.
3. During the discussion of any matter, a representative of a Party may move the adjournment of the debate on the subject under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, one representative of a Party may speak in favour of and one against the motion, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote.

Rule 9.8 - Closure of debate

A representative of a Party may at any time request the closure of the debate on the subject under discussion, whether or not any other representative of a Party has signified his or her wish to speak. Permission to speak on the closure of the debate shall be accorded only to two representatives of Parties opposing the closure, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. If the Committee is in favour of the closure, the Chair shall declare the closure of the debate.

Rule 9.9 - Suspension or adjournment of a session

During the discussion of any matter, a representative of a Party may request the suspension or the adjournment of any session. Such motion shall not be debated but shall immediately be put to the vote.

Rule 9.10 - Order of procedural motions

Regardless of the order in which they are submitted, the following motions shall have precedence, in the following order, over all other proposals or motions before the session:

- a. To suspend the session;
- b. To adjourn the session;
- c. To suspend the debate on the subject under discussion;
- d. To adjourn the debate on the subject under discussion.

Rule 9.11 - Proposals and amendments

1. Proposals and amendments shall normally be introduced in writing and submitted to the Secretariat, which shall circulate copies in official languages to all representatives of Parties 6 weeks before the opening of the session. As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any session of the Committee unless copies of it have been circulated in the official languages of the session to all representatives of Parties not later than the day preceding the session. Subject to the Committee's consent, the Chair may, however, permit the discussion and consideration of proposals or amendments that have not been circulated or have only been circulated the same day, in which case the proposal or amendment has to be read out in a formal session.
2. A motion is considered to be an amendment to a proposal if it adds to, deletes from or revises that proposal. The Committee shall decide on an amendment before it decides on the proposal to which it relates, and if the amendment is adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted on.

X. DECISIONS

Rule 10.1 - Adoption of decisions

1. The Committee shall make every effort to reach agreement on all matters of substance by consensus. If all efforts to reach consensus have been exhausted and no agreement is reached, the decision shall, as a last resort, be taken by a three-quarters majority of the representatives present and voting.
2. Decisions of the Committee on procedural matters shall be taken by a majority of the representatives present and voting.
3. If a vote is divided equally, the proposal shall be regarded as rejected.
4. Where there is disagreement as to whether a matter to be voted on is a substantive or procedural matter, that issue shall be decided by a three-quarters majority of the representatives present and voting.

Rule 10.2 - Voting on proposals and amendments

1. If two or more proposals relate to the same question, the Committee shall, unless it decides otherwise, decide on the proposals in the order in which they have been submitted. Any proposals or motions requiring that no decision be taken on the substance of such proposals shall, however, be considered as previous questions and shall be put to the vote before them.
2. When an amendment to a proposal is moved, the amendment shall be voted on first. If two or more amendments to a proposal are moved, the Committee shall first decide on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal, then on the amendment next furthest removed from the original proposal and so on, until all amendments have been decided on. Where, however, the adoption of one amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another amendment, the latter amendment shall

not be put to the vote. If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted upon. If no amendments are adopted, the proposal shall be put to the vote in its original form.

Rule 10.3 - Voting rights

1. Each Party shall have one vote, except as provided for in paragraph 2.
2. A regional economic integration organisation shall, on matters within its competence, exercise its right to vote with a number of votes equal to the number of its member States participating in the Committee. Such an organisation shall not exercise its right to vote if any of its member States exercises its right to vote, and vice versa.

Rule 10.4 - Method of voting

The Committee shall normally vote by show of hands, but any representative of a Party may request a roll-call, which shall then be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the Parties, beginning with the Party whose name is drawn by lot by the Chair. If, however, at any time a Party requests a secret ballot, that shall be the method of voting on the issue in question.

Rule 10.5 - Recording of roll-call

The vote of each Party participating in a roll-call shall be recorded in the report of the meeting.

Rule 10.6 - Conduct during voting

After the Chair has announced the beginning of voting, no representative of a Party shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting. The Chair may permit representatives of Parties to explain their votes, either before or after the voting - except when the vote is taken by secret ballot - and may limit the time allowed for such explanations.

Rule 10.7 - Division of proposals or amendments

A representative of a Party may request that parts of a proposal or of an amendment shall be voted on separately. If objection is made to the request for division, the motion for division shall be voted upon. Permission to speak on the motion for division shall be given to only two representatives of Parties in favour and two against. If the motion for division is carried, those parts of the proposal or of the amendment that are subsequently approved shall be put to the vote as a whole. If all operative parts of the proposal or of the amendment have been rejected, the proposal or the amendment shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

XI. OBSERVERS

Rule 11.1

Any State not a Signatory to FOREST EUROPE may be represented at the Committee as observer.

Rule 11.2

Organisations with a status as observer of FOREST EUROPE can obtain the status of an observer within the Committee in accordance with Rule 11.3.

Rule 11.3

Any body or agency qualified in matters relevant to this agreement which is either:

- a. an international agency or body, either governmental or non-governmental, or a national governmental agency or body; or

- b. a national non-governmental agency or body which has been approved for this purpose by the State in which it is located;

and which has informed the Secretariat of its desire to be represented at the Committee by observers, shall be permitted to be so represented unless one-third of the Representatives present and voting object. Once admitted, the right of observers to be represented may be withdrawn if so agreed by one-third of the Representatives present and voting.

Rule 11.4

The Chair may invite observers to participate in discussions on specific issues, or particular problems. No proposal by an observer shall be discussed unless this proposal is supported by at least one Party.

Rule 11.5

Observer delegations may provide written statements to the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall distribute copies of the written statements in the language in which the statement was made available to them.

XII. SUSPENSION AND AMENDMENT OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

Rule 12.1

Any Rule of Procedure may be amended or suspended by a decision of the Committee taken by consensus in accordance with the procedure of Rule 9.11, provided that at least 24 hours' notice of the proposal has been given.

Rule 12.2

In the event of a conflict between any provision of these Rules and the Oslo Ministerial Mandate the latter shall prevail.

Annex to the Rules of Procedure: Distribution of roles among the Liaison Unit, UNECE, FAO, UNEP and EFI

To the extent that the resources and mandate of the Liaison Unit, UNECE, FAO, UNEP and EFI allow, the tasks should be allocated as shown below. If, for any reason, this becomes impossible, adjustments may be made by the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in consultation with all parties.

Liaison Unit

- Facilitating arrangements for servicing the negotiating process
- Supporting other work in the inter-sessional periods as requested by the Bureau or the Committee
- Advising on FOREST EUROPE matters and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe commitments as well as providing a link to the FOREST EUROPE work programme
- Liaising with countries, other processes, stakeholders and civil society
- Developing and maintaining the website
- Preparing and organising the next Ministerial Conference
- Undertaking communication activities

UNECE, FAO and UNEP

- Servicing meetings of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and its Bureau including session management, document management and reporting as well as any other relevant tasks as requested by the Bureau or the Committee
- Providing legal advice
- Providing advice on synergies with Multilateral Environmental Agreements and processes
- Liaising with UN organisations
- Providing analysis and information in support of the negotiations

European Forest Institute

- Providing independent scientific and policy advice in support of the negotiations
- Providing inputs to information needs identified by the Committee.

Annex 2: FOREST EUROPE Signatories

Albania
Andorra
Austria
Belarus
Belgium
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
European Union
Finland
France
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Holy See
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Monaco
Montenegro
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Republic of Moldova
Romania
Russian Federation
Serbia
Slovak Republic
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom

Additional successor states of the former Soviet Union not mentioned in the above list should be entitled to join the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, as the USSR was a signatory of the Strasbourg Resolutions of 1990.



A joint contribution of European Forest Owners

to the

first session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe

27 February 2012

At the Forest Europe Ministerial Conference in Oslo in June 2011, the signatory parties adopted a mandate for negotiating a Legally Binding Agreement (LBA) on Forests in Europe including the establishment of an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC). The first session of the INC takes place from 27th of February to the 2nd of March 2012 in Vienna, Austria.

The undersigned associations, representing and managing the vast majority of Europe's forests, herewith express their support and like to highlight the following aspects to be taken into account when negotiating and drafting a LBA on Forests in Europe.

Forest owners' strong commitment to LBA

Forest owners in Europe highly welcome the Oslo decision towards a LBA. For a prosperous and vital future of forests and forestry, it is decisive to strengthen the forest and forest based sector in the globally competing spheres with other sector policies. The visibility and the political recognition of the unique role of our sector can clearly be strengthened in the long term by a feasible LBA that meets with legal instruments covering other sector policies. To manage the current challenges, an early availability of the LBA is needed. Therefore, the timetable agreed on in the Oslo decision should be maintained. In the past 21 years, the pan-European region has created a comprehensive opus of political commitments and implemented various measures on the ground. The ambition to capture the holistic nature of forestry within a LBA at a pan-European level can be achieved only by well integrating and making best use of the already existing results of the FOREST EUROPE process.

Credible and powerful involvement of stakeholders

Over the last decades a trustful dialog developed between governmental and stakeholder representatives, combining governance and practical know-how and experience in a powerful forum. This direct and open dialog should be still the guiding principle within the FOREST EUROPE and the LBA process. The participation and involvement of those who are responsible for the implementation of policy decisions is crucial and therefore shall be facilitated at its best.

Sustainable forest management to strengthen Europe's green economy

Green economy can be implemented only with managed natural resources, allowing legal and sustainable harvesting and ensuring sufficient raw material supply, both to the industry and other users. The economic functions of forests are crucial in fostering a green economy. The generation and maintenance of green jobs and income, rural development, long term economic viability and competitiveness of our sector, request an active and sustainable management of our forests, and a stronger promotion of the use of wood. In addition, the increased supply from productive plantations will help to meet the increasing demands on timber supply. The targets of the EU 2020 Strategy cannot be achieved without an increased production and use of biomass. Harnessing its long experience in sustainable forest management and industrial wood processing, Europe's forest-based sector is committed to act as a main pillar of the green economy and to ensure the maximum exploitation of all its advantages regarding its potential for green

jobs and livelihoods, resource and energy efficiency as well as the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Multifunctional use of forests to ensure multiple benefits for the society

Europe's forests serve multiple and interrelated social, economic and environmental functions, often at the same time and place. Safeguarding such a high multi-functionality requires sound management and policy decision-making approaches as well as a vital economy. Sustainable forest management provides a solid framework, which balance various interests.

Capitalizing on all benefits of the forest-based sector in mitigating climate change

Forests are a relevant part of the solution to cope with climate change, but only if they are sustainably managed and have competitive downstream industries to refine wood to a variety of products. Our sector offers a significant contribution to Europe's greenhouse gas mitigation strategy, which includes the storage of carbon in forest ecosystems, in harvested wood products, and the substitution of fossil based products and energy. The main elements to implement Europe's strategy for climate change mitigation are the increase of forest growth and wood increment through afforestation, active and sustainable forest management, and the increased production and use of wood, maximizing the substitution effects.

Biodiversity and protective functions - key elements in sustainable forest management

Forests in Europe have been managed to serve the needs of the society. Consequently, they are altered and fragmented. Forest management practice in Europe has changed towards a greater integration of biodiversity and landscape aspects during the last decades. There is an increasing use of natural regeneration and mixed tree species, and forest area, growing stock and the amount dead wood per hectare are growing. Forest and biodiversity protection has to be handled within a multifunctional approach integrating production and conservation functions, as defined by FOREST EUROPE and the concept of sustainable forest management. New voluntary forest protection tools have proved to be efficient and have managed to include forest owners in forest biodiversity conservation in a positive way. Forests deliver multiple ecosystem services to the society, contributing to the economic development and today's wellbeing of people in Europe. Enhancing valuing and marketing of forest ecosystem services, such as biodiversity, water purification and management as well as various protective functions of forests could provide a significant impetus towards a multiple and balanced use of Europe's forest resources.

Broad participation by all signatories needed

A key strength of the FOREST EUROPE process is its pan-European scope, receiving the commitment of 46 member countries. It is a policy process for the sustainable management of the continent's forests, with a global meaning. Founded in the early 90s, the continuous co-operation of multiple actors has led to several positive achievements such as the definition, the guidelines and the criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. The collaboration of governments and stakeholders responsible for forests in Europe has been of great economic, environmental and social importance at national and international level. The decision from Oslo 2011, to go ahead with the negotiations towards a LBA on Forests represents a major step towards creating the necessary structure for a coherent approach at pan-European level. Focusing on European needs, conditions and potentials in a global context, we strive for a viable instrument to foster sustainable delivery of multiple benefits from the forest sector to Europe's environment, economy and society. Therefore forest owners call for a wide contribution and clear commitment from all FOREST EUROPE signatory parties and observers in this process.

Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF)
Union of Foresters of Southern Europe (USSE)
European Farmers and European Agri-Cooperatives (Copa-Cogeca)
European Landowners' Organization (ELO)
European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR)
European Federation of Municipal Forest Owners (FECOF)