



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

## Oslo Ministerial Decision: European Forests 2020

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;

*As representatives of the Signatories of FOREST EUROPE, we*

### **VISION FOR FORESTS IN EUROPE**

17. SHARE the following vision:

To shape a future where all European forests are vital, productive and multifunctional. Where forests contribute effectively to sustainable development, through ensuring human well-being, a healthy environment and economic development in Europe and across the globe. Where the forests' unique potential to support a green economy, livelihoods, climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation, enhancing water quality and combating desertification is realised to the benefit of society;

### **GOALS FOR EUROPEAN FORESTS**

18. DECIDE on the following goals for European forests in support of the shared vision:
  - I. Sustainable management of all European forests ensures multiple forest functions and enhances lasting provision of goods and services
  - II. European forests contribute to a green economy, including through increased provision of wood, other forest products and ecosystem services from sustainable sources
  - III. Forest management in Europe is being adapted to changes in climate, forests are healthy and resilient to natural hazards and protected against human-induced threats such as forest fires, and the productive and protective functions of forests are maintained

- IV. The potential of European forests to mitigate climate change, through carbon sequestration in trees and soils, carbon storage in forest products and substitution of non-renewable materials and energy sources, is utilised to minimise Europe's ecological footprint without harming the global carbon balance
- V. The loss of forest biodiversity in Europe is halted and degraded forests are restored or rehabilitated
- VI. The role of forests in combating the progress of desertification is strengthened
- VII. Socioeconomic and cultural benefits, especially for livelihoods, rural development and employment from European forests are optimised
- VIII. Illegal logging and associated trade in wood and other forest products are eliminated in Europe;

## **EUROPEAN 2020 TARGETS**

19. DECIDE on the following European targets to be achieved by 2020 in support of the shared vision and the goals for forests:
- I. All European countries have developed and are implementing national forest programmes, or its equivalent, in line with the shared vision and goals and the pan-European approach to national forest programmes
  - II. In addressing emerging issues forest knowledge is improved through research, education, innovation, information sharing and communication
  - III. In response to political objectives on the use of renewable raw material and energy in Europe, the supply of wood and other forest products from sustainably managed forests has increased substantially
  - IV. The full value of forest ecosystem services across Europe is being estimated with a view to using common valuation approaches, and that values are increasingly reflected in relevant national policies and market-based instruments such as payments for ecosystem services
  - V. All European countries include strategies for forests and climate change adaptation and mitigation in national forest programmes or equivalents and all other relevant national strategies
  - VI. The rate of loss of forest biodiversity at habitat level is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and measures are taken to significantly reduce forest fragmentation and degradation and to restore degraded forests
  - VII. The role of forests in combating desertification is fully recognised and forests are also managed to that end
  - VIII. All European countries have policies and measures which ensure a significant increase in socio-economic and cultural benefits, especially for human health, livelihoods, rural development and employment from forests
  - IX. Effective measures are taken at regional, sub-regional and national levels to eliminate illegal logging and associated trade;

## **MISSION OF FOREST EUROPE**

20. DECIDE on the following mission for FOREST EUROPE to advance realisation of the shared vision, the goals and the 2020 targets for forests:

FOREST EUROPE enhances the cooperation on forest policies in Europe under the leadership of ministers, and secures and promotes sustainable forest management with the aim of maintaining the multiple functions of forests crucial to society;

21. DECIDE that to fulfil the mission, FOREST EUROPE will undertake the following tasks:
  - a. Develop and update policies and tools for sustainable forest management, including by facilitating open and flexible policy dialogue, active participation by relevant stakeholders and cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination with other actors;
  - b. Monitor, assess and facilitate implementation of commitments on forests and sustainable forest management in all European countries and in the region as a whole;
  - c. Promote education, research and the use of scientific knowledge and facilitate sharing of experiences across countries, sectors and stakeholders on all aspects of sustainable forest management and other forest related issues;
  - d. Raise awareness and understanding of contributions by FOREST EUROPE to sustainable forest management in relevant fora including at international level and among the public, including through implementation of the communications strategy;

## **EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL ACTIONS**

22. ENDORSE the Pan-European Guidelines for Afforestation and Reforestation with a special focus on the provisions of the UNFCCC, developed in collaboration with Environment for Europe/Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy;
23. NOTE the progress made on European Forest Types and encourage continued refinement of forest classification integrated with work on further reporting and development of sustainable forest management and its tools;
24. DECIDE to develop a FOREST EUROPE work programme with prioritised joint European actions to be carried out in cooperation with partners and other organisations, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the European Forest Institute. The work programme should, in parallel to the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on preparing a legally binding agreement, address the following actions:

- a. *Further development of sustainable forest management and its tools*

Responding to increasing attention and new scientific knowledge on the multiple roles that forests and sustainable forest management play in tackling global challenges, FOREST EUROPE will step up efforts and further consolidate the pan-European policies and tools for sustainable forest management, taking into account biodiversity and climate change commitments, emerging threats to and pressure on forest resources as well as the role of forest owners;

- b. *Further improvements in forest monitoring and reporting*

Stressing the importance of adequate, accessible and evidence-based forest information at all levels of policy making, and for informing the broader public, FOREST EUROPE will further improve the basis for forest monitoring and harmonised reporting systems to serve emerging needs, including for verification of legality and sustainability;

- c. *Strengthened efforts against illegal logging and related trade*

Responding to the severe consequences of illegal logging and related trade and to the challenges posed by global deforestation, and in order to complement and underpin efforts by the European Union and the ENA/FLEG process against illegal logging and related trade, FOREST EUROPE will further strengthen efforts for good governance and forest law enforcement, inter alia by cooperating to ensure that timber traded within or into FOREST EUROPE signatories' derives from legally harvested forests, and by facilitating the exchange of lessons learned;

*d. Valuation of forest ecosystem services*

Stressing the importance of the full range of forest goods and services, FOREST EUROPE will develop a common approach to valuation of forest ecosystem services and promote its use, with the aim of raising awareness of the contributions to societies of multiple forest functions, to serve informed decision making and to assess achievements against the 2020 targets;

25. COMMIT to further develop and implement national policies for sustainable forest management in accordance with national and local conditions and priorities, and to monitor and report on the progress towards sustainable forest management, and in line with this jointly explore measures to improve monitoring of the achievements of the European 2020 targets;
26. COMMIT to identify and implement national actions to fulfil the shared vision and the related goals and 2020 targets for forests in Europe;
27. ENCOURAGE potential donors, on request, to support the development and implementation of national forest programmes or forest sector plans and strategies in countries undertaking forest sector reform, particularly countries with economies in transition.