



RESOLUTION H1

General Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Forests in Europe

The Signatory States and the European Community,

- A. Recalling that the Signatory States and the European Community have endorsed the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 and signed the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in June 1992 and considering that they therefore recognise the need to reconcile the legitimate and sustainable use of wood and other forest products with all other functions of forests in the ecological and social conditions prevailing in Europe, and that the conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in all types of forests is an essential element in their sustainable management,
- B. Recognising the non-legally binding authoritative statement of principles for a global consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, as adopted by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, hereafter referred to as the Statement of Forest Principles,
- C. Considering the objectives of sustainable management as stated in the Statement of Forest Principles: *viz.* "Forest resources and forest lands should be sustainably managed to meet the social, economic, ecological, cultural and spiritual human needs of present and future generations",
- D. Agreeing that, for the purposes of this resolution, "sustainable 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,
- E. Acknowledging the need when implementing policies for sustainable management to take account of potential impacts of climate change on forest ecosystems,

- F. Acknowledging the need to carry out sustainable forest management in accordance with national development policies and priorities and on the basis of environmentally sound national guidelines, and recognising that in the formulation of such guidelines account should be taken of internationally agreed principles relevant to the various conditions in Europe,
- G. Recognising that forests provide wood as an essential product that can also, to a large extent, substitute for products from non-renewable resources, as well as provide energy and a multitude of other goods, services and functions, which will be necessary for the welfare of society and the environment for the foreseeable future,
- H. Recognising that forests in Europe grow in a widely varying environment (boreal to Mediterranean, continental to maritime, alpine to lowlands), have a long history and have been influenced by human settlements and actions over centuries, leading, *inter alia*, to knowledge, skills and experience in forestry practices, to the development and implementation of management policies and regulations based on long-term planning, and to a fragmented ownership structure increasing in some areas, all of which factors have a bearing on the protection and sustainable management of forests in Europe,
- I. Noting that the report 'The Forest Resources of the Temperate Zones' (the UN-ECE/FAO¹ 1990 Forest Resource Assessment) shows that the European forest resource is continuing to expand in terms of area, standing volume and increment, and that the demand for non-wood products and services is increasing in absolute and relative importance,
- J. Noting with concern that on average more than one fifth of the trees in Europe have in recent years shown damaged foliage, as stated in the 1992 report 'Forest Condition in Europe' by the UN/ECE International Co-operative Programme on Assessment and Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Forests and the Commission of the European Communities, and that a continuation of the present pollution load for extended periods of time or an increase in pollution levels will threaten the vitality of forests over large areas of Europe,
- K. Considering the adverse effects on forests in some parts of Europe of storms, inadequate management, pests, diseases, game, overgrazing and unregulated browsing, and of inadequately planned large industrial and infrastructure development, and being concerned over the destruction of large areas of forest by fires,
- L. Considering the responsibility of Europe to contribute to the sustainable management of the global forest;

¹ UN-ECE/FAO: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe/Food and Agriculture Organization

commit themselves to promote:

1. *The implementation of the General Guidelines set out in Part I of this resolution, these being regarded as particularly relevant to the achievement of sustainable forest management in Europe;*
2. *Cooperation in carrying out the Future Action set out in Part II.*

PART I: GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Human actions must be avoided which lead, directly or indirectly, to irreversible degradation of forest soils and sites, the flora and fauna they support and the services they provide. Efforts should be increased to keep the emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases below the expected tolerance level of forest ecosystems, taking into account the long- term cumulative and/or synergistic effects of pollutants. Forest fires and the pollution of soils must be strictly controlled and could dictate overall policy and management objectives and practices in particularly sensitive parts of Europe.
2. Forestry policies, as adapted to local laws within the framework of national traditions and constitutional processes, should recognise the long-term nature of forestry by having an appropriate level of continuity in legal, institutional and operational matters and should strongly encourage practices in state and private forests which facilitate multiple functions and sustainable management, including the conservation and appropriate enhancement of biodiversity. Forest owners who provide multiple-use benefits to the community should be encouraged and supported by society or other beneficiaries, as appropriate, when such provision involves them in excessive costs.
3. Forest management should be based on stable and long-term land-use policies and regulations, which, *inter alia*, are aimed at conserving functional forest ecosystems and take account of the ownership structure in Europe, and which are based on the general presumption that forest land, particularly land considered natural or semi-natural, will remain dedicated to that use.
4. Forest management should be based on periodically updated plans or programmes at local, regional or national levels, as well as for ownership units, when appropriate and on forest surveys, assessments of ecological impact and on scientific knowledge and practical experience.
5. Forest management should provide, to the extent that it is economically and environmentally sound to do so optimal combinations of goods and services to nations and to local populations. Multiple-use forestry should be promoted to achieve an appropriate balance between the various needs of society.
6. Forest management practices should have due regard to the protection of areas of ecological fragility, to the conservation of primary and climax forests, areas with cultural

heritage, and the landscape, to safeguarding the quality and quantity of water, and to maintaining and developing other protective functions of forests such as the protection of aquatic and agricultural ecosystems and protection against floods, erosion and avalanches.

7. Forest management practices should aim at maintaining and, if possible, improving the stability, vitality, regenerative capacity, resistance and adaptive capacity of forest ecosystems towards stresses, including their protection against fire, pests, diseases, game and other agents of damage such as overgrazing and unregulated browsing. The prevention and control of large-scale biotic and abiotic damage should be supported. Special attention should be paid to maintaining and, if needed, to improving the quality of forest soils. Silvicultural practices emulating nature should be encouraged. Practices contrary to sustainable management should be actively discouraged.
8. In the management of existing forests and the development of new forests, the chosen tree species should be well suited to local conditions and be capable of tolerating climatic and other stresses, such as insects and diseases, and potential climate changes, throughout the growing period. Genetic selection, which is commonly practised in Europe, should not favour performance traits at the expense of adaptive ones, except in particular cultures where intensive care may protect them against damage. Afforestation should be conducted in a manner that does not negatively affect ecologically interesting or noteworthy sites and landscapes.
9. Native species and local provenances should be preferred where appropriate. The use of species, provenances, varieties or ecotypes outside their natural range should be discouraged where their introduction would endanger important/valuable indigenous ecosystems, flora and fauna. Introduced species may be used when their potential negative impacts have been assessed and evaluated over sufficient time, and where they provide more benefits than do indigenous ones in terms of wood production and other functions. Whenever introduced species are used to replace local ecosystems, sufficient action should be taken at the same time to conserve native flora and fauna.
10. Due to the high levels of human consumption and waste common in many areas of Europe, recycling and use for energy of forest products should be encouraged both to alleviate the problem of waste disposal and to increase the potential of forest products to substitute for products from non-renewable sources.
11. Because of the expanding European forest resource, the use of wood and non-wood forest products should be encouraged on a basis compatible with the sustainable management of forests, thereby providing and increasing the potential for traditional and new forest products, sales of which can provide, for both the owner and society, a ready means of financing forest management.
12. As knowledge, skills and public opinion will affect forestry policies in Europe, public awareness and understanding of sustainable management should be promoted, and the provision, through appropriate research, of information and training to forestry

practitioners and forest owners on the concept and on methods of implementing it should be intensified. To ensure the sustainable management of forests, a sufficient number of adequately trained and competent staff is essential.

PART II: FUTURE ACTION

13. The Signatory States and the European Community commit themselves to preparing, without delay, specific national or regional guidelines and to incorporating them into their forestry plans and programmes for the implementation of the above General Guidelines, in a manner consistent with the Statement of Forest Principles, and will collaborate in the further development of these General Guidelines for the sustainable management of forests in Europe.
14. The Signatory States and the European Community will collaborate in efforts to increase reforestation, afforestation and forest conservation in Europe, in ways consistent with the above General Guidelines and the chapter in Agenda 21 on combating deforestation.
15. The Signatory States and the European Community will collaborate in order to develop common measures consistent with these guidelines that would favour the production, use and marketing of products from forests under sustainable management.
16. The Signatory States and the European Community will participate, under the aegis of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, in international activities towards the preparation of a global convention on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.