

Statement of Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Ecology - Head of Federal Forest Agency of the Russian Federation I.V/ Valentik at the 72 session of UNECE COFFI

Distinguished Mr. Chairperson,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all allow me to read out the welcome address to the participants of this current session of the UNECE Committee on Forests and Forest Industry by the Minister of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation, Serguei Yefimovitch Donskoj.

(Address read out)

Distinguished Mr. Chairperson,

I would like to express warm words on behalf of myself and of the Federal Forest Agency, led by me, and to wish all of us substantive and fruitful discussions in the coming days.

Russia has the largest forest resources in the World and is among the most active of participants in inter-State cooperation related to forests. At the present moment, we attach special attention to the improvement of sustainable forest management and proper integration of this topic in the United Nations Post 2015 Development Agenda, which is currently being shaped.

The leading role in these processes at the Pan-European regional level is played by the multilateral mechanism established on the basis of close and indissoluble partnership between the United Nation European Economic Commission (UNECE) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

We would like to underscore the high demand for UNECE as a platform for inter-State dialogue on forest policy issues. We highly value the expert and technical potential accumulated by the Commission, which has become a reliable source of best practice in support of state measures in the area of forests, including on matters related to the functioning of the forest industry and trade of forest products.

In this context, Russia calls for further strengthening, within this dedicated Committee of UNECE, of our collective efforts aimed at improving the situation with forests in Europe. We count that the UNECE and FAO will continue - on the basis of the joint Section in Geneva - providing comprehensive services to meet the needs and demands of member States in the Pan-European region. We also see the strong need for continuation of the long-term practice of holding joint meetings of the governing bodies of UNECE and FAO dealing with forests. We look with anticipation for the next such meeting in Switzerland in 2015 as the central event of the European Green Week.

We consider the Rovaniemi Plan of Action on the Role of Forests in a Green Economy adopted in Finland in 2013 as an important achievement. We hope that here in Kazan we will be able to come up with concrete initiatives and proposals aimed at the practical implementation of the goals and tasks laid out by the Plan.

I am happy to stress that Russia considers this Plan as a fundamental strategic document and has already started, with no delay, the implementation of its provisions at the national level.

Distinguished Mr. Chairperson,

Looking from a broader, global perspective, we currently attach high importance to carrying out a successful review of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). This central UN body on forest matters provides the necessary conditions for close coordination of actions from the international community based on the principles of openness, equality and mutual benefit, which are inherent to the United Nations. We trust that the review will become yet another step in the development and strengthening of the practical potential of the Forum.