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## **Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe**

### **First session**

Vienna, 27 February 2012 – 2 March 2012

## **Annotated provisional agenda for the first session**

To be held at the Vienna International Centre  
starting at 10 a.m. on Monday, 27 February 2012

### **I. Provisional agenda**

1. Opening of the session
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Organizational matters
  - (a) Composition of the Bureau
  - (b) Rules of procedure
  - (c) Organization of work
4. Possible elements of a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe
5. Roadmap for the negotiation process
6. Other matters
7. Report of the session
8. Closure of the session

### **II. Annotations**

#### **A. Introduction**

At the fifth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, which took place in Warsaw from 5 to 7 November 2007, a proposal was made to explore, under the auspices of Forest Europe (Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe), the possibility of creating a legally binding agreement on forests in the pan-European region.

Consequently, two open-ended working groups were set up, consisting of Forest Europe signatories and observer countries and organizations. Working Group 1 (WG1) was to explore the potential added value of, and possible options for, such an agreement; and Working Group 2 (WG2) was to produce a "non-paper" setting out various options. The working groups were to prepare their findings for consideration at the next Ministerial Conference.

At the FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference, 14 to 16 June 2011, hosted in Oslo by the Government of Norway and organized jointly with the Government of Spain, the ministers decided to take further international action for drawing up this agreement on forests in Europe and established an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

Four meetings of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee are to be organized so that the work can be completed by the end of June 2013. The resulting agreement is to be submitted to an extraordinary Forest Europe Ministerial Conference, which will take place during the subsequent six months, for consideration, possible adoption, and opening for signature.

During its first session, the Committee is expected to have an open and inclusive discussion on possible elements of a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe. The Committee will then be invited to provide guidance on the basic structure, main components and content for drawing up the first draft of the negotiating text.

## **B. Annotations**

### **1. Opening of the session**

The meeting will be opened by Mr. Jan Heino (Finland) who was nominated as Chair of the Committee<sup>1</sup>. Other opening addresses may also be given.

### **2. Adoption of the agenda**

The Committee will be invited to adopt the agenda for its session, on the basis of the provisional agenda.

### **3. Organizational matters**

#### **(a) Composition of the Bureau**

The Bureau<sup>2</sup> 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. Spain will be a permanent observer.

The Chair will inform the Committee about the nominations received. The Committee is expected to welcome the Bureau members.

#### **(b) Rules of procedure**

The Committee will be presented with the rules of procedure governing the negotiations for the agreement (Document 2), which were adopted by the Ministerial Conference<sup>3</sup>.

In accordance with rule 11.3, the Committee will then be invited to consider and decide on the list of agencies or bodies requesting observer status.

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with paragraphs 20 and 21 of the Oslo Ministerial Mandate for Negotiating a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe

<sup>2</sup> In accordance with paragraph 20 of the Oslo Ministerial Mandate for Negotiating a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe

<sup>3</sup> As contained in annex 1 to the Oslo Ministerial Mandate

(c) **Organization of work**

The Chair will propose an organization of work during the session for the consideration of the Committee. The timetable is as follows: the Committee is expected to work from 27 February to 2 March from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Interpretation will be provided in English, French and Russian.

Most of the meeting will be conducted in plenary session, but on 29 February and 1 March, informal consultations (without interpretation) will be held between 10.30 a.m. and 1 p.m. During these consultations, the plenary session will be suspended.

**4. Possible elements of a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe**

The Committee is expected to provide guidance on the basic structure, main components and content for drawing up the first draft of the text. The Committee might wish to open the discussion by considering the Oslo Ministerial Mandate and the Ministerial Decision: European Forests 2020 presented in Document 2, as well as Document 3 “Non-Paper on a possibly legally binding agreement on forests in Europe”.

On this basis, the Committee is expected to give guidance on the basic structure of the draft negotiating text and then look at those structural elements and give further guidance on their suggested focus and contents.

**5. Roadmap for the negotiation process**

A draft roadmap (Document 4) has been prepared for the negotiations covering the period 2011-2013, including suggested timelines and modalities, which the Committee will be invited to discuss and agree on.

The Committee may wish to decide on the date, duration and venue of its second session, as well as on possible intersessional activities in the meantime.

**6. Other matters**

The Committee may wish to consider other matters raised during the session.

**7. Report of the session**

The Committee will be invited to consider the draft report of its first session prepared by the Chair and take appropriate action. The final report, including any amendments agreed, will be circulated by the Chair as specified in the rules of procedure.

**8. Closure of the session**

The session is expected to close at 6 p.m. on 2 March.

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