

Check against delivery



**STATEMENT BY
MR. PEKKA PATOSAARI
DIRECTOR OF THE
UN FORUM ON FORESTS SECRETARIAT**

TO THE

EXPERT LEVEL MEETING OF THE MCPFE

Warsaw, Poland
3 September 2007

*Madam Agnieszka Bolesta, Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Environment of Poland,
Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,
Representatives and Colleagues:*

It is a great pleasure for me to be here this morning, in Warsaw, and I am honoured to address you, in this final Expert Level Meeting before the Fifth Ministerial Conference. Please allow me also to express my sincere gratitude for your support during these six years as Director of the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat, and in my former capacity as Head of the Helsinki Liaison Unit.

When I look towards you - it must be almost twelve years since I left the General Coordinating Committee - I see the coordination that was to be continued through the very capable hands of my Portuguese, Austrian and Polish colleagues. I feel a lot of pride for what we did during the Helsinki Process and for what you, my colleagues, have achieved, through Lisbon and Vienna. This has only been made possible by a very strong commitment and engagement in a continual, close collaboration between the European Governments and the forest experts. This process has evolved greatly during the last decade, producing new results, and thereby reinforcing the implementation of our earlier resolutions.

I must also mention how well-known and appreciated this process has become in a relatively short period. Globally, the Pan-European process has been distinguished, among other reasons, for its forward-looking vision on forests, its framing guidelines for SFM and its political commitment to the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests in Europe. The Second Ministerial Conference took place very soon after the Rio Earth Summit, concluding with clear Resolutions, taking into account the European vision and political framework for sustainable forest management, among other initiatives. Now, after the adoption of the Non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests by the UN Forum on Forests, the European region will have a golden opportunity to be a frontrunner in translating Global commitments into the European reality.

On a regional front, the MCPFE is a model of cross-border, participatory regional collaboration on forests. The broad involvement of various stakeholders and partners, collectively addressing critical issues on forests and putting the decisions of intergovernmental forest policy processes into action, is truly commendable.

Mr. Chairman,

Over the past two years we have achieved significant milestones in the field of Global forest policy, which have opened up new opportunities and expectations for the forest sector.

The potential of the Non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests is far-reaching. The Instrument offers both a new Global Vision and an articulation of Sustainable Forest Management as the overarching set of principles and objectives, at both national and international levels. It also offers a new framework to build a stronger intergovernmental and international collaboration - through concrete commitments leading to activities and joint programmes and projects. It serves as the vehicle for translating the policies and decisions, developed and adopted by the United Nations Forum on Forests, into clear national, regional and international actions for achieving sustainable forest management and the Global Objectives on Forests.

But this vehicle needs to run to be effective, and it will require the means for effective follow-up and maintenance, just as every vehicle does, as well as a long-standing commitment to make it serve the global community, and to adapt flexibly to our changing environment.

Means of implementation, and, in particular, the means of financing these commitments, remain critical in achieving our goals. The agreement on developing and considering for adoption a concrete global mechanism for funding sustainable forest management of all types of forests is really a bold step towards another landmark decision, scheduled for 2009. This issue has been, and appears to remain, the central force of the international negotiations on forests. I am confident that the development of a

global funding mechanism, and its supporting facilitation, will be the central and most significant topic at the Eighth Session of the UN Forum on Forests in 2009.

Mr. Chairman,

I also wish to remark on the Forum's new Multi-year Programme of Work, which reflects the new and broadened mandate to the UN Forum on Forests through ECOSOC. This decision builds upon the previous ECOSOC decisions, particularly resolution 2000/35, which is regarded as a foundation of the UN Forum on Forests. The new mandate is a comprehensive one, focussing particularly on achieving the Global Objectives on Forests and on implementing the Instrument. In so doing, it also creates reinforcing links to several other sectors and processes, such as: climate change, biological diversity, desertification and the internationally-agreed development goals. In addition, the Programme of Work provides new opportunities for linking regional and sub-regional experiences and activities for SFM to the global dialogue, thus helping the Forum to focus more strongly on implementation and actions on the ground.

Drawing on the Ministerial Declaration and the two Resolutions of the Warsaw Conference, it is apparent that the global-regional links on forests are strong and well-recognized. It is reassuring to see that their content, and the political message attached to the Declaration, places importance on the Global Objectives on Forests, the implementation of the Instrument and the enhanced interaction and cooperation between the international and regional forest processes.

Mr. Chairman,

I strongly believe that the long tradition of cooperation between the UN Forum on Forests and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe will strengthen even further in the years to come. The forthcoming session of the Forum in 2009 will address issues closely related to those of the Warsaw Conference, and I am positive that the proactive, visionary and collaborative nature of this process will undoubtedly contribute to the decisions to be taken by the UN Forum on Forests.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The actions of the Fifth Ministerial Conference, where European countries will take on yet another coordinated position on forests and recognize their own role in the implementation of forest-related decisions, will send the international community a significant message of the region's continuous commitment toward achieving sustainable forest management and sustainable development.

Your strong message will help pave the way to ensure the necessary resources enabling conditions and capacities to meet our common goal of sustainable forest management, including the achievement of the Global Objectives on Forests, and the effective implementation of the Non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests.

Mr. Chairman,

I look forward to participating today in these highly productive discussions. I wish the Expert Level Meeting much success in the preparations for the Fifth Ministerial Conference, and I thank you all for giving me this privilege to work closely with you.

Thank you very much.