Statement of Mr. Pekka Patosaari
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to the

5th Ministerial Conference of the MCPFE

Warsaw, Poland
6 November 2007
Your Excellency, Mr. Jan Szyszko, Minister of the Environment of Poland,
Your Excellency, Mr. Terje Riis-Johansen, Minister of Agriculture and Food of Norway,
Excellencies responsible for forests in Europe, Distinguished Delegates and Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I speak to you at the 5th Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe with a great sense of privilege and honour. At the outset, I would like to congratulate all the European countries and members of the MCPFE for the manner in which you have collectively driven the Pan-European process forward during the last decade and a half.

Globally, this process has become known for its dynamic and long-term prospects on forests and its comprehensive guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management, as well as its emphasis on global-regional policy coherence, leading to their integration into national measures and technical solutions. Likewise, it is well-recognized as a cross-border participatory model, engaging relevant forest-related processes in the development and implementation of joint actions on forests. The interaction of a wide spectrum of countries, international, regional and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, forest owners and local communities is truly commendable.

Excellencies,

It is my pleasure to inform you that the Economic and Social Council recently adopted the “Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests” (E/2007/L.39) as well as the whole Report of the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

By these decisions, ECOSOC has approved the mandate of UNFF and its Secretariat, including the Multi-Year Programme of Work for the period 2007-2015, and transmitted the NLBI for adoption by the General Assembly during its 62nd Session. As part of this resolution, ECOSOC decided to develop and consider a voluntary global financial mechanism/portfolio approach/forest financing framework for all types of forests, with a view to adopt said mechanism at the Forum’s eighth session.

These decisions of the Council represent a real landmark in the international forest policy dialogue. The Instrument is the first of its kind, and reflects the international commitment to promote implementation of sustainable forest management through a new, more holistic approach. The resolution on the NLBI takes a bold step, by its clear recognition of the need for adequate finance to support the implementation of the Instrument and achievement of the four Global Objectives on Forests. To this end, the MCPFE member countries’ support to the Forum’s Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting in 2008, as well as of other country-driven activities preceding this preparatory meeting, would be highly appreciated.

In my view, the Instrument has a great deal of potential embedded in it. It opens a new era in the pursuit of Sustainable Forest Management, with a stronger focus on implementation and inter- and intra-regional cooperation than ever before. It brings all sectors of society, from civil society and business, to local governments, under a global umbrella offering an articulation of Sustainable Forest Management as the overarching set of principles and objectives, at both national and international levels. In addition, it provides countries with a number of policy proposals intended to steer and assist in the implementation of Sustainable Forest Management. These include guidance on such issues as:

- Forest Law Enforcement and Governance
- International Trade in Forest Products
- Protection of Forests
- Science and Research
♦ Public Awareness and Education
♦ Private Sector and Industry
♦ Indigenous and Local Communities
♦ Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting

Excellencies,

The UN Forum on Forests’ new mandate is a comprehensive and an engaging one. In order to achieve progress on the implementation of the four Global Objectives on Forests and the Instrument, we need to reinforce the links to several other processes and sectors, such as climate change, biological diversity and desertification, and those seamlessly linked to the promotion and implementation of the internationally-agreed development goals.

Drawing on the Ministerial Declaration and the two Resolutions of this Conference, it is apparent that the global-regional policy coherence and action on forests is strong and well-conceived. I firmly believe that the long tradition of cooperation on Sustainable Forest Management will be even further strengthened in the years to come. The next session of the United Nations Forum on Forests will be addressing issues that are closely related to the themes of this Conference, and I am positive that the proactive and visionary nature of this process will undoubtedly contribute to the preparations and the discussion of the UN Forum on Forests.

Excellencies,

Your message will also constitute a significant contribution to the 2nd Annual Ministerial Review of the ECOSOC under next year’s theme, “Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development”. You can be assured that the act of this Ministerial Conference is sending a strong message of the region’s continuous commitment and innovative actions in achieving sustainable forest management.

I thank you.