

## Forests and Energy Celebrating the International Day of Forests

Tuesday, 21 March 2017, GENERAL DISCUSSION – Forests and Energy are essential for the 2030

### Agenda

The aim the Agenda 2030 is to turn the global development into a path where human welfare and human rights, economic prosperity and stable societies can be secured in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Last month the Government of Finland gave a report to the Parliament on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Finland. In line with the Government priorities, our national implementation builds on two themes – one of them is to achieve a carbon-neutral and resource-wise Finland. This means, *inter alia*, focusing on improving the energy, resource and material efficiency, and sustainably increasing the share of renewable forms of energy. It also means producing environmentally-friendly services and innovations, promoting their exports, and developing low-emission economic sectors and transport models.

The role of forests will play an important role in achieving this. In Finland, our indigenous energy sources are wood and hydropower. They have defined the direction of industrial development throughout our history. However, Finland has insisted right from the onset on sustainable management of forests, our main natural resource. Only sustainability can ensure that these livelihoods will benefit also the future generations, and resource efficiency is key to international competitiveness. This policy has made Finland today also as preferred location for cutting-edge biofuel refineries which, *inter alia*, provide also traffic fuels and bymaterials for manufacturing.

The implementation of Finland's National Forest Strategy 2025 is closely linked to the implementation of other national policies and strategies, such as the energy and climate, and biodiversity strategies. The latest national climate and energy strategy was adopted last November. Ambitious national targets for increasing renewable energy by 2030 include, for example, increasing the share of renewable energy to over 50% of the final energy consumption. One crucial target is to channel wood-based biomass to replace fossil fuels in heating and in Combined Heat and Power (CHP) production.

Already today, wood accounts for 80% of our renewable energy. Most of that is produced on market terms from the side streams of sawn wood and pulp & paper production. By ensuring that wide range of different residues, side streams and by-products are used efficiently for energy production, we expect a remarkable increase in the share of renewables in our energy production.

In addition to climate benefits, a great advantage offered by wood-based energy production is that it creates jobs while also improving the security of supply in energy production, thus improving stability and predictability in the operating environment. Finland has important know-how both on the industrial use of wood as well as of traditional household use of wood which benefits local population. Finland has also extended its support for the Clean Cookstoves initiative as part of our development cooperation.

National governments play a key role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and also bear responsibility for its success. However, governments cannot succeed alone. We need cooperation with all stakeholders; and we have to strengthen and build new public-private partnerships. Participatory and inclusive implementation are crucial. For example, empowerment of women is needed also in energy and forest sector. In this context, I would also like to mention a side event Finland is hosting at the UN Forum on Forests in May on Women, Forests and Business Opportunities.