



PRESS RELEASE

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Sustainable production of forest biomass

Climate change is one of today's core challenges and demands urgent solutions. Forests, sustainable forest management and forest products play a vital role in climate change mitigation. Bio-energy from forests will play a major role to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Production of forest biomass has to be sustainable. The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) has elaborated the criteria for sustainable forest management in the pan-European region. MCPFE is evaluating the existing tools for sustainable forest management in relation to new demands for sustainable production of biomass.

“The ministers responsible for forests in Europe have underlined that efforts should be made to ensure that all wood production, including short rotation and fast growing energy crops, should be guided by the principles of sustainability”, says Arne Ivar Sletnes, Head of the MCPFE Liaison Unit Oslo. Norway is currently holding the chairmanship of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe.

The MCPFE has established a working group on sustainability criteria for forest biomass production as a response to, among others, increasing demands for renewable energy. Sweden plays a leading role in this work. At a meeting yesterday in Rome, the experts discussed the applicability and adequacy of the existing MCPFE tools for sustainable forest management in the context of new demands. Results of the work are anticipated in the first half of 2009.

The objective of the work is to assess the MCPFE criteria and indicators, and the Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management. As the MCPFE tools are applicable at the pan-European level, this work can contribute to ensuring sustainable production and consumption of renewable energy. The MCPFE tools have been developed through a participatory process with governments, private sector, environmental and social NGOs and the scientific community, and have been endorsed by the ministers responsible for forests in Europe.

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