



PRESS RELEASE

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Co-ordinating Policies for Forest and Water Resources

Forest management, supply of good-quality fresh water, and watershed management are closely related. At the most recent Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), in Warsaw in 2007, the ministers endorsed a Resolution on Forests and Water. As an important step towards implementing this commitment, a workshop on Forests and Water begins today in Antalya, Turkey. More than 110 participants from more than 30 countries in Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa will attend this important meeting, which ends on Thursday, 14 May. The workshop is jointly organised by Turkey, Switzerland, the MCPFE, the UNECE Water Convention and the FAO.

The availability and quality of clean water in many regions of the world is increasingly threatened by overuse, misuse and pollution. Sustainable forest management and water quality are closely linked, so their relationship is a critical issue that must be accorded high priority. Through the Warsaw Resolution on Forests and Water, which was adopted at the 5th MCPFE, the ministers emphasised the vital role of sustainable forest management in protecting water quality and in overall watershed management. The MCPFE member countries committed themselves to maintaining and enhancing the protective functions of forests for water and soil, as well as for mitigating local water-related natural disasters through sustainable forest management, and public and private partnerships. They stressed the importance of developing, improving and co-ordinating policies for forest and water resources management.

Share Knowledge and Strengthen Co-operation

The workshop on *Sustainable forest management and influences on water resources – Co-ordinating policies on forests and water* will examine the multiple inter-relations and mutual influences of forests and water, how countries approach this, and how it could be reflected in forest and water policies. The main goal of the workshop is to contribute to the development of stronger linkages between the two sectors, and to promote the implementation of the Resolution on Forests and Water.

The workshop gives an outstanding opportunity for communication, dialogue and collaboration. Experts working with forest and water issues will share their knowledge and experiences to further strengthen their co-operation.

The workshop is bringing together experts from the pan-European and UNECE region and neighbouring states.

Background information:**The MCPFE**

The MCPFE is the pan-European policy process for the sustainable management of the continent's forests. It develops common rules for its 46 member countries and the European Community on ways to protect and sustainably manage forests. Founded in 1990, it is a continuous process which has led to achievements such as the Sustainable Forest Management Principles, which are now being applied to 95% of Europe's forests. High-priority topics of the MCPFE are the elaboration of principles for sustainable production of bio-energy and biofuel from forests, and to enhance the role of forests in mitigating climate change, securing water supplies and protecting against droughts and floods. These are highly topical issues on the political agenda in Europe. Other important tasks are to develop a framework for future forest collaboration and to explore the possibilities for a legally binding instrument on forests in Europe. Norway currently holds the chairmanship of the MCPFE.

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