



## **PRESS RELEASE**

Oslo, 30 March 2011

### **Sustainable Decisions for Growth and Diversity FOREST EUROPE experts prepare ground for forthcoming Ministerial Conference in Oslo 2011**

Europe's forests, and the need to safeguard their vital goods and services for our environment and society, will be the centre of attention at the forthcoming FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference in June in Oslo, Norway. Representatives from the countries participating in this policy co-operation process are meeting on 30-31 March in Oslo to prepare the ground for the Ministers' summit and the important political decisions they will take there.

The Expert-Level Meeting represents the final step in the preparation for the FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forest in Europe on 14-16 June in the Norwegian capital, Oslo. Experts at this month's meeting are expected to finalise and agree on the commitments that will be presented for decision to the ministers responsible for forests at the conference in Oslo. The meeting will be attended by around 90 representatives from 34 FOREST EUROPE countries and the European Union, as well as 13 observer organisations.

#### **Sound forest policies to meet pressing needs of society**

Europe's forests are vitally important for solving climate change challenges, safeguarding biodiversity and the supply of quality fresh-water, creating new jobs and fostering a green, low-carbon economy. Sustainable forest management in Europe and wise use of the continent's expanding forests can also contribute towards reducing pressure on forest resources in other parts of the world.

"At the Ministerial Conference, ministers responsible for forests will meet to take far-reaching, high-level policy decisions concerning the continent's forests", says the Norwegian Minister of Agriculture and Food, Mr Lars Peder Brekk, on the occasion of the Expert-Level Meeting in Oslo. Norway currently holds the chairmanship of FOREST EUROPE, and will therefore host the approaching Ministerial Conference. The decisions that are expected to be taken by ministers will lay the foundations for providing effective means of enhancing the role of forests in mitigating climate change, conserving biodiversity, fostering a low-carbon economy, providing green jobs and addressing ways and means of tackling the illegal logging.

A key item to be addressed at the conference is the elaboration of a strengthened policy framework for sustainable forest management throughout Europe. In this context, the ministers are expected to decide whether to enter into negotiations on a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe. Moreover, it is expected that ministers will adopt a vision, goals and targets for forests in Europe as part of the future FOREST EUROPE strategy.



Taking action to preserve forests and safeguard their environmental, economic and social benefits is particularly relevant in 2011, the United Nations' International Year of Forests. The FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference in Oslo will be a significant European contribution to highlighting the importance of our forests.

The conference website, [www.foresteurope.org/conference2011](http://www.foresteurope.org/conference2011), is being launched today and will provide comprehensive information for participants, media and the broad public about the conference.

- For more information about the FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference Oslo 2011 visit [www.foresteurope.org/conference2011](http://www.foresteurope.org/conference2011).
- For more information about FOREST EUROPE visit [www.foresteurope.org](http://www.foresteurope.org).
- For further information about the International Year of Forests, visit [www.un.org/en/events/iyof2011](http://www.un.org/en/events/iyof2011).

### **About FOREST EUROPE – The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe**

FOREST EUROPE is the pan-European policy process for the sustainable management of the continent's forests. It develops common strategies for its 46 participating countries and the European Union on how to protect and sustainably manage forests. Founded in 1990, the continuous co-operation of FOREST EUROPE has led to achievements such as the guidelines, indicators and criteria for sustainable forest management.

Priority topics of FOREST EUROPE are to strengthen the role of forests in mitigating climate change, to secure the supply of good-quality fresh water, enhance and preserve forest biodiversity and provide renewable forest products. Other important tasks are to develop a framework for future political collaboration and to prepare options for decision by ministers on a possible legally binding agreement on forests in Europe. Norway currently holds the chairmanship of FOREST EUROPE and will convene the next Ministerial Conference on 14-16 June 2011.

#### **For further information, please contact:**

FOREST EUROPE

Liaison Unit Oslo

Kristin Dawes, Head of Communications and Public Affairs

Tel. + 47 64 94 89 32

Mobile: + 47 941 49 351

e-mail: [kristin.dawes@foresteurope.org](mailto:kristin.dawes@foresteurope.org)