Draft Ministerial Documents for the 7th Madrid FOREST EUROPE
Ministerial Conference

Draft Ministerial Document 2
Green Economy and Social Aspects of SFM

The document is based on discussions at the RTM on topics and the ELM January 2015, on the Concept Notes sent to FOREST EUROPE focal points and on their inputs so far received.

This document is developed by the FOREST EUROPE General Coordinating Committee, GCC, for consideration by the Drafting Meeting on 25-27 March 2015.

Note:

The transition to a greener economy offers important opportunities to create decent jobs and increase the social inclusion, besides leading the global economy to a path of sustainable growth. In the meantime, the transition phase would possibly lead to some new challenges, especially to certain sectors and workers; therefore an integral approach will be needed in order to tackle all these challenges. In order to do so, contributing to employment, decent jobs and social inclusion should be an essential part of the strategy.

The development of a green economy is key to achieving a low-emission society. The forest sector is an important actor in this development and should be addressed as such; highlighting the employment and rural development, the economic potential of forests, and bearing in mind societal needs and demands.

The forest sector in most European countries is a source of employment with a great potential to generate sustainable jobs and income opportunities. Contributing to a holistic, integral approach of a green economy at all levels and sectors of activities will give the forest sector a great opportunity to demonstrate its potential in transitioning towards a green economy by generating and maintaining jobs and income, contributing to rural development and enabling the long term economic viability and competitiveness of forestry and forest-based industries.

European forests and the forest sector might provide an opportunity to give a new boost for jobs, growth and investment in rural areas in Europe.

In a transition towards a green economy the social use of forests should be specifically addressed. Education at all levels and raising environmental awareness are, furthermore, other social dimensions of sustainable forest management. Concerning this, the availability, quality,
transparency and communication of information related to the social use and perception of forests, as well as on forest cultural and spiritual values, might need to be improved.

Green jobs in the forest sector in a green economy, maintaining/enhancing the forest sector’s competitiveness, recognizing the full value of forests and the social aspects of SFM are emerging issues of high relevance for FOREST EUROPE signatories.

The following elements for a draft document for the ministerial conference are proposed:

**DRAFT MADRID MINISTERIAL RESOLUTION**

**Green Economy and Social Aspects of SFM**

We, the Ministers responsible for Forests, at the Seventh Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, in Madrid on 20-21 October,

1. **RECALLING** and **BUILDING ON** Lisbon declaration and resolution 1 “People, Forests and Forestry: Enhancement of Socio-Economic Aspects of Sustainable Forest Management”, Vienna resolution 3 “Preserving and enhancing the social and cultural dimensions of sustainable forest management in Europe” and the Oslo Ministerial Decision “European Forests 2020”.

2. **TAKING NOTE** of the global and regional on-going work on green economy and social issues, as the Rio+20 and Post 2015 development agenda including the development of the SDGs, the outcomes of the World Forestry Congress: Forests and People: Investing in a Sustainable Future, the Decent Work Agenda of the International Labor Organization and the ROVANIEMI action plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy.

3. **RECALLING** that the current status of our forests provide opportunities to increase the use of biomass for energy, to substitute more energy demanding construction material by wood, to create employment opportunities and to enhance the values of our forests.

4. **TAKING INTO ACCOUNT** the country-specific and sector-specific challenges and conditions to ensure that opportunities for decent work and social inclusion are achieved.

5. **NOTING** that for the scope of this ministerial resolution decent work is productive work for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity as defined by the International Labor Organization.

6. **NOTING** that the transition to a greener economy offers important opportunities to the forest sector, and creates a responsibility to secure decent green jobs and increase social inclusion.
7. ACKNOWLEDGING that forests are a source of employment with a great potential to generate jobs and income opportunities as well as to contribute to rural development, human well-being and social equity, enabling also the long term economic viability and competitiveness of forestry and forest-based industries.

As representatives of the Signatories of FOREST EUROPE, we commit ourselves to:

I. Enhancing the role of the sustainable forest management in a green economy

8. Improve the understanding of the forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits through the contribution of the sustainable forest management to a green economy.

9. Enhance the role of sustainable forest management in a bio-based economy stressing its importance for the development of the economy, employment, energy security and environment, being sustainably managed forests a source of renewable resources very relevant to secure a sustainable development in the future.

10. Take effective measures for the development of a culture of innovation and research by ensuring the necessary conditions, such as finance, skills and workforce, and promote the necessary innovative spirit, while maintaining the commitment to sustainably manage our forests.

11. Encourage measures on green public procurement in order to influence the markets towards a transition to a green economy.

12. Encourage a broader examination of the financial status of the European forests by integrating forest sector goods, sustainable business experiences and job creation, payment for ecosystem services as well as promoting public and private investment.

II. Promoting decent green jobs in forests

13. Ensure that at pan-European level all green jobs in the forest sector are decent and referred to those connected to the management and use of forest ecosystems respecting the principles of Sustainable Forest Management, and to environmentally friendly production processes based on goods and services from sustainably managed forests.

14. Take effective measures to adapt forest jobs to the changing requirements and to the new opportunities that this transition to a green economy might offer the potential of new employment opportunities.

15. Develop a pan-European strategy on how to promote decent green jobs in the region.
III. Enhancing the social aspects of sustainable forest management

16. Develop a pan-European approach in order to adjust policies for strengthening and enhancing education and training of forest workers, forest managers and forest owners.

17. Adapt education and training to new skills required by the sector in a holistic and comprehensive way.

18. Explore ways to use National Forest Programs or equivalents, as mechanisms for the development of adequate strategies with specific actions in order to improve occupational health and safety, labour skills and qualification of the workforce, forestry education, job stability, social equity and gender issues in the forest sector.

19. Ensure the gender equity along the whole forest value chain and secure the long-term competitiveness of the whole industry, and as such its overall sustainability, to ensure that competence is drawn from the whole population.

IV. Incorporating the value of forests ecosystem services in a green economy.

20. Enhance the contribution of the pan-European region to a stronger green economy by releasing the potential of the forest sector to provide ecosystem services and sustainable products.

21. Enhance the role of forest ecosystem services in the contribution of forests to a green economy.

22. Strengthen the knowledge base for assessing the value of forest ecosystem services.

23. Incorporate the value of forest ecosystem services in forest related policies, including specific policy tools such as NFPs or equivalents, guidelines.

24. Explore ways and means to develop long term public policies on the valuation of the environmental assets of the forest, the establishment of economic incentives and the availability of funds to be specifically allocated to encourage entrepreneurship in rural environments.