



Warsaw, Poland, 10 June 2013

## **Forest Owners Statement, LBA INC4**

With great satisfaction, CEPF and Copa-Cogeca, representing private forest owners in Europe, are happy to see the positive attitudes, transparency and good progress made in this process. After more than one year of negotiations it finally seems possible to reach the first legally binding multi-national forest agreement in the world. We are pleased to witness this process happening in Europe.

Europe is unique with its forest ownership pattern with approximately 16 Million private family forest owners. Policy developments in several EU Member States regarding ownership and user rights are on-going. These specific conditions should be clearly acknowledged in the LBA.

The LBA is a tool that will certainly support the multiple opportunities and solutions that the forest sector can provide.

Forests' contribution to the Green Economy is of significant importance. Therefore it is relevant to ensure consistent and coherent pro-active policy developments.

A key strength of the FOREST EUROPE and the LBA process is its pan-European scope, receiving the commitment and common understanding of more than 40 member countries. It is a policy process for the sustainable management of the continent's forests, with a clear global meaning. For us, this is a clear added value of this process. The LBA should therefore be clearly acknowledged as a legal reference for the forest sector also at EU level. The linkage to and coordination with the new EU Forest Strategy and other EU's forest-related policies is of utmost importance.

European forest owners consider it very positively that the key concept in the LBA is Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), as defined and adopted under MCPFE Resolution H1. The LBA has to become THE horizontal reference instrument for other sectoral policy processes and tools.

Policy deliberations provide a theoretical framework, but forest management is of practical nature in its essence. Thus it is necessary that practitioners are involved in the policy-making process from the very beginning. Forest owners should therefore not be seen solely as mere stakeholders, but as resource holders, with a key responsibility in implementing SFM as well as the LBA and its provisions on the ground. This important role and active involvement of forest owners and practitioners could be secured and enhanced through e.g. the setting-up of an Advisory Committee to the LBA COP under Article 12.

A decision was made earlier this year in April in St. Petersburg that the LBA will be established under the UN umbrella. However, no decision has yet been taken on which of the three UN organisations (UNECE, FAO, UNEP) will host the Secretariat. For various reasons CEPF and Copa-Cogeca prefer to remain neutral in this discussion. We do, however, hope that a

constructive solution will be developed and presented at INC4. This process is far too serious and its success should not be put at risk.

Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF)  
European Farmers and European Agri-Cooperatives (Copa-Cogeca)