

## **UNFF12 statement by FOREST EUROPE – Contribution of forests of the achievement of the SDG 5: Gender Equality and Empowerment of Woman and Girls**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

Gender equality has received recent attention in FOREST EUROPE, the high-level voluntary platform for forest policy dialogue and cooperation in the pan-European region. Its 47 signatories have committed themselves to efforts towards accomplishing gender equality.

According to the latest edition of State of Europe's Forests Report 2015, the workforce in the European forest sector is predominantly male. The percentage of male employees in most countries is in the range of 80-90%, however, in some countries women make up around half of the workforce in paper industry.

Mr. Chairman, at the Seventh Ministerial Conference held in October 2015, FOREST EUROPE signatories adopted the **Madrid Resolution 1 “Forest sector in the center of Green Economy”** where ministers responsible for forests in Europe made commitment to promote social inclusion and efforts towards gender equality along the whole forest value chain.

The ministerial resolution represents an important basis for actions at regional, sub-regional and national levels until the next Ministerial Conference in 2020. These include preparation of guidelines on the promotion of green jobs and exchange of knowledge and experience in education and training systems with emphasis on new skills requirement. Exploring possibilities for gender mainstreaming in these ongoing pan-European actions is an explicitly stated objective and part of the efforts.

The work of a FOREST EUROPE Expert Group working closely together with partners from UNECE and FAO, seeks to address innovative approaches to overcome gender barrier in forestry and generate green jobs. New green jobs related to eco-tourism, forest related environmental education and communication with a wide range of forest visitors could be examples of new possibilities for women within the forest sector. Recruiting the next generation of foresters, making forest sector more appealing to young generation, providing role models for girls by female foresters, could be steps towards strengthening social aspects of forest sector workforce as well as gender equality.

Please note, that a side event on forest green jobs is held this week on Thursday jointly with UNECE and FAO. Another joint event will be a workshop on promoting green jobs in the forest sector that will be held on 27-28 June in Bratislava.

Mr. Chairman, **the Second Ministerial Resolution** from Madrid addresses **protection of forests in a changing environment** including their adaptation to climate change. It is widely recognized that in many parts of the world, and in some parts of Europe, women may not only be vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, they are also effective actors and agents for climate change mitigation and adaptation. According to some studies women focus more on environmental values than men and often have unique knowledge and expertise, thus climate change could be turned into a business opportunity.

In conclusion, associating SFM with gender equality will strengthen contribution of the European forest sector towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda.