www.unece.org/index.php?id=34303

The Rovaniemi Action Plan – a milestone for a sustainable forest sector

Rovaniemi, 11 December 2013 - The Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy was adopted today by the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC).

The Action Plan provides a solid platform for the forest sector to support transformation to a green bio-based economy in Europe, North America, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Forest leaders decided to name the strategic document - The Rovaniemi Action Plan, after the city where their joint session "Metsä2013" is taking place.

Heikki Granholm, Co-chair of Metsä2013 and Chair of COFFI, said "The forest sector in the region has already significantly contributed to the emerging green economy. This Action Plan is meant to inspire further action to enhance the contribution of forests in a green economy".

Experts say that forests' will play a critical role in greening the economy as they can sustainably provide alternatives to a range of products that are harmful to the environment and the climate. Bioproducts and biochemicals are already being used in the food, clothing and packaging industries. Forests sustain economies by the products and services they provide and furthermore, directly employ around 4 million people in Europe alone.

The forest sector can do still more if governments and the private sector seize the opportunity to produce and use wood based products. The Plan outlines concrete steps, which will help countries to deliver a steady, secure and sustainable future for forests in the region in five key areas:

Sustainable production and consumption of forest products
A low carbon forest sector
Decent green jobs in the forest sector
Long term provision of forest ecosystem services
Policy development and monitoring of the forest sector

"It is remarkable that the Rovaniemi Plan was approved during the European Forest Week 2013 as the theme of the week this year is the role of forests and forest products in a green economy," said Andrey Filipchuk, Co-chair of Metsä2013 and Chair of EFC.

The day also witnessed a roundtable, which discussed how to acknowledge, monitor and communicate the contribution of the forest sector to a green economy. A distinguished group of speakers and experts, including from other sectors, explored possibilities for monitoring of the forest sector in green economy when implementing the Action Plan. "When putting in place ambitious plans, it is wise to foresee how progress in achieving them can be measured and how the forest sector is performing compared to other sectors" said Nina Dobrzynska, Director of Nature and Conservation Department, Ministry of the Environment of Poland on behalf of Janusz Zaleski, Undersecretary of State.

For more information visit: http://www.unece.org/forests.html or contact Arnaud Brizay at arnaud.brizay@fao.org