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*Key note speech by Switzerland*

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Slide 1 title

## **Regional implementation of global challenges**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Slide 2 global challenges

2015 is a very intensive year for forests globally. Important decisions have been taken at the eleventh United Nations Forum on Forests with the important commitment by the Ministers to address drivers of deforestation. A Strategic Plan will be developed and implemented in the years to come. This does also include the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs). For many of the SDG's, forests are part of the solution.

In the forthcoming climate negotiations in Paris, some important decisions on mitigation and adaptation are forest-related, and will have direct impacts on forest management. The REDD+ mechanism will provide new and additional finance for the forest sector in developing countries.

We all know that also the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has strong links through its forest-related Aichi Targets in the Strategic Plan 2010-20.

Switzerland is very pleased about all the forest related goals and targets that have been included in current international processes. Globally there are many deficits in managing forests sustainably which require a coherent, integrated approach. Sustainable forest management should have a strong voice to promote this well proven concept globally.

Of course it is up to the countries to adapt national policies and strategies and to integrate international decisions. This is also very relevant for Switzerland at our national level, since forests cover one third of our total land area. Many forest relevant issues are regulated in other sector policies. In the Swiss climate policy one of the goals is to replace fossil energy with renewable energy sources. Here wood energy plays an important role.

Furthermore we make full use of the potential of CO<sub>2</sub>-storage in construction timber as we should also keep in mind the substitution effect of timber. Finally, half of our forest area has protective functions and as the effects of climate change increase in severity and frequency it is important to implement an adaptive forest management with the aim to maintain the key functions of these forests.

The relevance of forest for other sectors implies also increasing demands on forests, including climate, energy, biodiversity, drinking water, wood industry and land use by agriculture and urban development. This calls for a holistic and

integrated forest policy. This is the only way to coordinate and manage these demands in an effective manner.

And: challenges such as climate change, forest protection and invasive species do not stop at borders and require regional collaboration at technical, but also at political level. Cooperation and synergies between actors and processes in Europe are required to ensure coherent forest-related policies.

#### Slide 4 technical cooperation is key

The collaboration between UNECE and FAO functions since 70 years to address technical issues at regional level most efficiently, to coordinate on forest resilience and health, and to ensure sustainable forest management in the region. The support by the two UN organizations relevant for forests in the region will also help in future to cope effectively with the ongoing challenges at both regional and global level. The joint secretariat, the Forest and Timber Section, is another asset with which to focus on knowledge management with

impressing continuity. Working in the UNECE region, which includes also North America, Caucasus and Central Asia has another advantage – it addresses forest and forestry issues that are very relevant at global level. We can thereby streamline and render more coherent and powerful international forest governance, benefitting from an integrated work programme of COFFI and EFC. The results of this substantive work is intensively shared and discussed in the joint meetings. This helps us as countries to focus on lessons learned and good practices and to integrate them in our own forest policy work.

Another aspect is the monitoring of the implementation of global decisions. As a country we need criteria and indicators to measure and monitor goals and targets related to forests as well as for our reporting. Here it becomes quite obvious that regional collaboration is extremely important. The ongoing collaboration of UNECE and FAO on regional reporting has the advantage of drawing on advanced technical knowledge, know-how

and experience. The joint work and the technical work of the team of specialists provides a good platform to discuss amendment and adaptation of criteria and indicators at regional level. The exchange of experience will improve the reporting mechanism. The collaboration will guarantee the quality of the work on high technical UN standards and on safe data protection and archive. It has also the advantage for a wide dissemination of results translated in the official languages of the UN. A last advantage is the utilisation of the UN network for distribution of results to other UN regions as well as at global level.

### Slide 5 regional inputs

Typical examples of regional work are the recent UNECE/FAO study “Forests in the ECE region” or the Joint Forest Europe/UNECE/FAO reporting. Providing inputs from the regions has an advantage in contributing to setting the agenda of global discussions and should be continued.

Dear colleagues,

Slide 6 next steps

We consider it to be most important for the future work in UNECE/FAO to assist in finding robust and measurable indicators for forest-related goals and targets of the global SDGs at regional level, through collecting data in a harmonized and coordinated manner. This will also reduce the reporting burden of countries. We are positive that the ongoing work of the team of specialists will further streamline the list of indicators recently presented at the 7<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference of Forest Europe in Madrid.

Secondly, the joint work will continue to revise and to further develop the Integrated Work Programme of work of UNECE COFFI and FAO EFC that is valid until 2017. At that time we should have another joined session to assess the progress and analyze the results. Poland kindly made an offer to host that session in 2017.

Thirdly, UNECE/FAO should also continue to provide support to countries, through providing

tools and technical assistance, to integrate both climate change mitigation and adaptation into their forest and forest related sectors. This work should address forest and landscape restoration as well as policy and institutional support.

Last but not least we should make full use of the **Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy** that has been prepared by a large number of regional organizations, science and the private sector. This provides us with an excellent tool also to approach other sectors to jointly find ways for enhanced cooperation and to mainstream sustainable forest management into other processes.

Let us continue to join forces for the protection and management of our forests.

Sustainable forest management is the key to healthy forests and healthy societies.

I thank you for your attention