

5 August 2019

Economic Commission for Europe

Informal meeting to discuss the possible negotiation on a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe

First meeting

Geneva, 31 October and 1 November 2019

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Expected next steps

AGENDA ITEM 2

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

This background paper sketches out an indicative timeline and possible next steps for discussing whether and how the UNECE could serve as secretariat for negotiating a future legally binding agreement on forests in Europe (FLBA).

The note is presented to the meeting for information.

Fall 2019

Informals are convened to:

1. Agree on whether to accept the invitation “for UNECE, with the support of FAO, to convene and service jointly further negotiations on a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe by setting up a negotiating process in an appropriate format based on the parameters contained in this decision” (para 9, Ministerial Declaration, Forest Europe).
2. Determine modalities of the negotiation process. This includes:
 - Agree on the establishment of a negotiating group and parameters of the negotiation;
 - Agree draft Terms of References of the Negotiating Group;
 - Develop a draft decision reflecting the outcome of the informals for consideration of the Executive Committee (EXCOM) (reflecting the agreements above);
 - Clarify financial implications and proposed modalities (extrabudgetary (XB) pledges).

Once informals reach agreement

3. Revert to EXCOM with outcomes of the informals:
 - a. **If there is agreement not to resume negotiations:**
 - Agenda item to update on the outcome of the informals (possibly with a draft decision on not to continue negotiations);
 - The process ends.
 - b. **If there is agreement to resume negotiations:**
 - Table draft decision on the establishment of a Negotiating Group for the preparation of the text of the FLBA;
 - Draft decision on Terms of Reference of the Negotiating Group;
 - Once financial pledges are received, table the XB project to fund the Negotiation Group.

EXCOM meeting at date to be determined after informals have concluded

4. Subject to EXCOM adoption of the decisions listed under 3b and availability of resources, the negotiation process resumes.

Meetings of the Negotiating Group (2020 onwards)

5. The Negotiating Group will:
 - Develop and agree its own Rules of Procedure (modalities of work);
 - Finalize the draft text of the FLBA.
