Dear Mr. Chairman,  
Members of the Committee, 
INC Bureau, 
distinguished delegates,

With great satisfaction, CEPF and Copa-Cogeca have noted the far-reaching steps made at INC1, INC2 and INC3. The progress on the draft negotiation text clearly indicates the high commitment of all participating parties in this process.

A coherent, stable and effective policy agreement is necessary in order to maintain the vitality and multi-functionality of forests, as well as to address emerging challenges at European and global level. We consider this initiative as a major policy development of critical importance for the whole European forest sector.

CEPF and Copa-Cogeca have a long lasting commitment of collaboration with FOREST EUROPE as well as many other international organisations. We regard very highly the dialogue developed between government and stakeholder representatives under the FOREST EUROPE process over the past 20 years. This provides a unique combination of governance and practical knowledge, which certainly helps to reach complementary and sound results for the benefits of European forests and forestry. We truly hope that this open and direct dialogue will remain the guiding principle also in the LBA and its implementation.

Regardless of the format, and the organisational umbrella under which the LBA ever will be implemented, forest owners and managers should be well integrated and have a clear role in its implementation process. Forest owners and managers should not just be seen as mere stakeholders, but as resource holders, which have a key responsibility in implementing SFM as well as the LBA and its specific provisions on the ground.

The draft text underlines, so far, several major principles valid and important for the forest sector, and which can be regarded as positive from a European forest owner perspective. For example, the definition of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), the key concept of the LBA, is taken as defined and adopted under MCPFE Resolution H1.

However, a few items still remain to be improved. Therefore, CEPF and Copa-Cogeca propose the following amendments to the draft negotiating text for a legally binding agreement on forest in Europe, as presented after its reading at INC3, in Antalya, Turkey on 1 February 2013 at 18:30. See attached Annex.

Unfortunately, due to other obligations, the CEPF and Copa-Cogeca representatives are not able to join the extended INC3 meeting in St.Petersburg on 3-5 April 2013 – which we very
much regret. However, we strongly hope that our perspectives, and the herewith written contribution and proposed amendments will be taken into account during the next negotiations.

Thank you for your collaboration and support.

Sincerely yours,

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Annex: CEPF and Copa-Cogeca proposed amendments to the draft negotiating text for a legally binding agreement on forest in Europe, as presented after its reading at INC3, in Antalya, Turkey on 1 February 2013 at 18:30.

Title

Preferred title: “Framework Convention of Forests”

Justification: Agreement should meet at eye level with other international agreements/conventions e.g. Convention on Biodiversity. For some signatories it will be important to clarify that the LBA is a framework only, leaving certain level of interpretation and freedom in implementation to the national level.

Preamble

Para 4
...and the need to take measures to improve understanding and exchange of information with stakeholders;

Delete “between these”.

Justification: There is not only a need for debate between different stakeholders. It is rather important that the dialogue between decision makers and stakeholders is strengthened.

Terms and definitions

Para 2 Forest. Keep as stated.

Justification: Forest characteristics and conditions vary throughout the pan-European region, which is reflected by the different national forest definitions in place. It needs to be avoided that national laws and monitoring systems have to adapt per se their specific forest definition to a common definition. The monitoring, assessment and reporting at European/international level instead should follow the FAO definition, as agreed and already practised for the SoEF and FRA.

Para 3 Forest ecosystem services.
Para 4 Goods and services.
Comment: A certain harmonisation between the two different terms used is needed, as it otherwise might cause confusion. However, it should be also noted that the term “good and services” is in fact until now not used in the DNT. Only the terms “forest ecosystem services”, and “goods” or “products” are used. In case “goods” or “products” will be used differently a clear definition distinguishing the two terms would be needed.

Para 8 Afforestation. Keep as stated

**Para 10** Forest fragmentation. First formulation preferred. 
“Forest fragmentation” is the result of transforming large forest patches into smaller, more isolated fragments of forests.

Justification: In some countries no definition of forest fragmentation exists. The proposed definition is short and simple, and addresses the main results/challenge of forest fragmentation.

**Objective**

**General remark**: Objectives to be numbered.

Keep in last listed objective the word “livelihoods”.

To ensure that forests contribute effectively to sustainable development, **livelihoods** and the well-being of society by providing economic, environmental, cultural and social benefits at all levels.

Justification. The contribution of forests and forest sector to livelihoods in particular in rural regions is essential in all countries in Europe and should be recognised by the LBA.

**General Provisions**

**Para 4 (old 15.)** To be consistent, the last sentence should be reformulated by inserting "...in particular for enabling participation of forest owners and other stakeholders in development and implementation of forest policies".

Justification: Consistency. See also proposed amendment para 27.

**Para 9 (old 6.alt.)** To maintain or enhance forest resources and the capacity of forests to contribute to global carbon cycles [in accordance with international, regional and national obligations to that end];

Delete:...and...

Justification: Having the “and” in this para, would mean that countries are obliged to increase their forest resources constantly. This might be critical for countries with large/extensive forest areas, and have negative impacts on forest owners and their forest management.

**Para 9 and 10.alt.** to be deleted. Para not as ambitious as para 9 and 10, which would be very much preferred.

**Para 11 (old 9.alt.alt.)** preferred wording:
To reduce the negative impacts of forest fragmentation through restoration, afforestation, and/or other relevant measures, and to maintain the positive impacts of forest fragmentation, depending on national circumstances;

Delete: including through a balanced approach in land use planning and measures [to enhance connectivity]

Justification: This could mean limitations to rural areas and could prohibit construction and livelihoods on rural areas. This would be extremely harmful to countries with extensive forest areas where it is difficult to build power lines, roads etc. without felling trees first.

Keep: [depending on national circumstances]

Justification: This should stay in the text to allow country differences to be taken into account.

**Para 15 (old 10.alt.) preferred wording:**
To aim at increasing the use of wood from sustainable sources and as a substitute for non-renewable materials and energy sources as well as use of non-timber forest products;

Delete: [apply measures aimed to ensure the fulfilment of productive functions of forests inter alia with the aim of]

Justification: Softens the text too much and makes it blurry.

**Para 19 (old 8.alt.bis.) To maintain or further develop protected forest areas and to apply forest management practices appropriate to the purpose and category of the protected areas;**

Delete: [networks of] [representative]

Justification: Protected areas can be developed, but developing connections between them can lead to enormous problems/challenges in most of the countries, and therefore should not stay as an pan-European legal obligation in the LBA.

**Para 26 (old 17.)**
Delete “intangible”

Delete: [, in particular their regulating, cultural and supporting services,]

Justification: Forest ecosystem services cover, by definition, all services provided by forests. Not only their soft, intangible services.

**Para 26 alt** Delete whole paragraph.

**Para 27 (old 19.alt.)** Reformulate the following:
To facilitate communication between policy makers, forest owners and other stakeholders in order to improve policy development and implementation and to increase awareness of sustainable forest management;

Justification: The formulation “policy makers, forest owners and other stakeholders” should be kept consistently through the entire document when making reference to “other stakeholders etc.”. The proposed list is incomplete and leads to confusion only.

“To improve policy development and implementation” needs to be kept in the paragraph. Stakeholder participation must improve policy development and implementation, not only increase the awareness of SFM.