



Geneva, Switzerland, 7 November 2013

**European private and state forest owners and managers call for a definite and positive conclusion of INC negotiations on a LBA on Forests in Europe**

Mr Chairman,

Thank you for this opportunity to address the resumed 4<sup>th</sup> negotiation round on the Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe. The European State Forest Association and the Confederation of European Forest Owners have always been those stakeholders, which consequently supported the negotiations towards a first ever forest convention of this kind in the world. The arguments why the LBA is needed and what added value it may bring have already been broadly discussed and there is no need to repeat them again.

However, as the resource holders and key actors of the European forest sector we are strongly convinced that this Convention would come at the right time, considering the increasing role that forests and forest products and services will play in the future.

EUSTAFOR and CEPF are proud to participate in this transparent and constructive process. The content of the main body of the LBA has already been solved and we hope that the remaining elements on the institutional arrangements can be successfully solved if there is enough will among all negotiating Parties. We believe that it would be extremely disappointing if the five years of deliberations are not coming to a successful end at this stage, due to institutional and legal formal reasons, while most of the substantial issues have been solved.

Therefore, we hope that constructive solutions will be presented at this meeting in order to successfully complete these negotiations. In case a consensus on a more long-term setup of the secretariat cannot be found yet, we call on all parties to agree on at least an interim solution so we can move forward with this important process.

Mr Chairman, thank you for your attention.

Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF)  
European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR)