



No 1014

The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Permanent Mission of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva and referring to the letter of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic Gabriela Matecna dated 19 December 2018 has the honor to inform that the Russian Side has observations on a number of paragraphs of the draft Ministerial Decision on Resuming the Negotiations on a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe (attached herewith).

We would highly appreciate the assistance in forwarding this information to the FOREST EUROPE Liason Unit Bratislava.

The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Permanent Mission of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva the assurances of its highest consideration.



March 2019

Permanent Mission of the Slovak Republic
to the United Nations Office and other
International Organizations in Geneva

Geneva

Observations of the Russian Federation on the draft Ministerial Decision on Resuming the Negotiations on a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe

The Russian Side would like to inform the FOREST EUROPE Liason Unit Bratislava of its concerns regarding the draft Ministerial Decision on Resuming the Negotiations on a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe.

In particular, the Russian Side believes that the entire text of the draft convention should be opened for negotiations in order to reflect global decisions concerning forests which have been taken since 2013 as well as to take fully into account current developments in global and European forest industry (para 3 of the draft decision).

The Russian Side also considers it premature to identify the scope of participating negotiating partners and to determinate their mandate as potential parties to the convention before opening the negotiations (para 4 of the draft decision). We proceed from the assumption that the parameters of the negotiation process are to be further considered taking into account the mandate, terms of reference and rules of procedures of the Organization which will host the negotiations.

We deem it expedient to invite the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) to convene and to serve further negotiations on a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe on the UNECE platform in accordance with the Commission's rules and procedures. In this regard the Russian Federation proposes to amend para 10 of the draft decision as follows: "INVITE the Minister of the Slovak Republic to send this decision on behalf of FOREST EUROPE signatories to UNECE requesting to convene further negotiations on legally binding agreement on forests in Europe".

Taking into account the abovementioned concerns we are obliged to inform that the Russian Side cannot agree with the current draft Ministerial Decision on Resuming the Negotiations on a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe.

The Russian Side requests to make its position known to all member-states of FOREST EUROPE. We expect that the status of the silent procedure for the draft ministerial decision will be reported by the Liason Unit Bratislava to the Expert Group Meeting (Bratislava, 19-20 March 2019) under item 5 of the provisional agenda. The Russian Side also believes that further consideration of the draft Ministerial Decision on Resuming the Negotiations on a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe and the respective decision will be taken at a later stage upon consensual approval by all parties concerned.

The Russian Federation is committed to strengthening multilateral cooperation on forests and confirms its willingness to engage in a further dialogue with all parties concerned with a view to promote responsible and sustainable development of forests.