***Forests and the circular economy***

*4 November 2019*

*Room XII, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland*

1. **Scope and objective of the session**

Forests are essential for climate regulation, water resources management, biodiversity conservation as well as cultural values preservation, and the local development. Forest ecosystems are a source of bio-based products, which can substitute for non-renewable materials and have a capacity to naturally restore and recycle the quality of their resources. Thus forest-based industries are strategic to the unfolding and the implementation of the circular economy.

Circular economy is about value chains. The key role of the forest sector in a circular economy lies in the fact that it provides biodegradable raw material – a strategic resource that can be used for creation of several advanced, reusable and recyclable bio-materials. These materials can feed into various value chains and prompt transformation in a number of strategic sectors of the economy such as construction and manufacturing (e.g. automotive, home and IT appliances, textiles, packaging etc.). The most illustrative examples of the emerging forest-based value chains are: wood-based construction, textiles production, and bioplastics.

Looking through the lens of the circular economy, each harvested tree can supply a wide range of materials and products. All of them are based on a renewable resource and many can be reused and recycled. However, it is important that the increased production of bio-based products does not compete with food production and does not have a negative impact on ecosystems, and the climate.

The production of biomass is only one of numerous benefits provided by forest ecosystems and forest can only provide all their services when they are managed sustainably. This is a key condition of a successful contribution of the forest sector to a circular economy.

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Two panel discussions on Forests and the Circular Economy will highlight ways to help achieve enhanced forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including those related to the UNFF Global Forest Goal 2. The session will also consider working towards a shared vision of the “zero-waste, carbon neutral, circular forest sector by 2030”

1. **Programme and tentative timetable**

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| ***Forests and the circular economy***  **Monday 4 November, 2019** | |
| **Keynote speech** | |
| 10:45 – 10:50  10:50 - 11:15 | Intro by the co- Chair  Keynote speech ***(Vasileos Rizos, Research Fellow & Head of Sustainable Resources and Circular Economy, Centre for European Policy Studies)***  (20min+5min questions) |
| **Circular economy value chains** | |
| 11:15: - 11:40  11:40 – 12:05  12:05 – 12:30 | How wood-based materials and cellulose could substitute some of the banned chemicals (**Carlos Martin Novella,** **Deputy Executive Secretary,** **Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm Conventions)**  (20min+5min questions)  World Bank's Green Growth Principle and the role of forests (**Paola Agostini,** **Lead Natural Resources Management Specialist, World Bank** )  (20min+5min questions)  **WBCSD tbc**  (20min+5min questions)  *COFFI/EFC housekeeping announcements before lunch* |
| **12:30 – 14: 30** | **Lunch break** |
| 14:30 -14:55  14:55 – 15:20  15:20 - 16:20 | Low impact harvesting in Turkey (**Ismail Belen, Member, Chamber of Forest Engineers of Turkey**)  (20min+5min questions)  Adressing resources scarcity in the circular (**Eveliina Pokela, The New Wood Project, Finland**)  (20min+5min questions)  Panel discussion about regulations and other tools needed to advance the transition to the circular economy and what it means for the forest sector |
| **Discussion on the direction of work on Forest and the circular economy** | |
| 16:20 – 16:30  16:30 - 17:30 | Presentation of the “Geneva vision for the circular economy in the forest sector” and possible direction of work (by the secretariat)  Discussion on the presented “Geneva vision” and the possible direction of work  *COFFI/EFC housekeeping announcements at the end of the day* |

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