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IMPROVEMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF FOREST USE IN RUSSIA

Fifth session

**Basic paper prepared by the representative of the Russian Union of
Timber Producers and Exporters, Russia**

Summary

Issues of forest use in Russia, the preservation of forests' ecological potential and the establishment of favourable conditions for the operation of the forest products sector have in the past year been subjects of intensive discussion not only by the direct participants in forestry practices in Russia - forest managers and industries, but among the general public, and also in various executive and legislative bodies. One example of this is the International Forestry Forum, "Forest and Man", which was held in Moscow in September 2002 and brought together more than a thousand participants, including people from 62 foreign countries.

Such discussions have resulted in a number of programme documents on the development of Russia's forest sector. These include the National Forest Policy and proposals for making important changes in Russia's Forest Code, and the Russian Government-approved Main Guidelines for the Development of the Forestry Sector until 2015.

The problem, however, is that these proposals at the practical level - in terms of effective forest use - have not as yet made a significant impact. According to data from Russia's Ministry of Natural Resources, no more than 25% of the allowable cut has been utilized in any of the last few years. One of the reasons for this is certainly the non-regulation and often inconsistency in the methodology of forest management.

The tasks to be accomplished in the immediate future may therefore be said to include the following:

- Completion of the development and approval of the National Forest Policy at the highest level;
- Completion of the development (review) of the legislative framework for forest management in Russia, and especially the Forest Code of the Russian Federation;
- Formulation of a national system of voluntary forest certification, making it an integral part of international certification systems;
- Review of the many laws and regulations and methodological documents governing forest use and bringing them into conformity with today's political, economic and environmental realities and with the requirements of national forest policy;
- Establishment of an effective system for constantly upgrading the skills of the directors and specialists concerned with practical issues related to the organization of forest use in the regions.

The above tasks should be accomplished drawing on the wealth of international experience and recommendations of specially constituted interdisciplinary expert groups. Experience with the establishment of such groups has been gained by the Russian Union of Timber Producers and Exporters and it has shown its effectiveness.

Key words: forest policy, forestry legislation, forest management, organization of forest use.
