

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **from the Barents Euro-Arctic Council Forest Forum**

The Forest Forum of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) was held in the city of Arkhangelsk on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017, under the chairmanship of the Russian Federation.

Representatives of relevant government agencies, academia and business of the BEAC member-countries took part in the Forest Forum together with representatives of working groups of the Barents Cooperation, experts from international organizations, observers and other stakeholders.

### **Introduction**

1. *Noting* the relevance of the principles and objectives of the Barents cooperation aimed at strengthening the stability, prosperity and sustainable development of the Barents region, as reflected in the Kirkenes Declaration signed in January 1993 and reaffirmed in the Declaration of the meeting of the heads of government of the BEAC member-countries adopted in June 2013 in Kirkenes on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic region,

2. *Recognizing* that balanced economic, social and environmental cooperation is the key to a dynamic, multifaceted and sustainable regional development,

3. *Recognizing* that the Barents cooperation on forests and sustainable forest management can contribute to solution of many pressing global problems consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals agreed upon in The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in particular those related to forests and to climate change as well as the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030.

We, the participants of the BEAC Forest Forum,

- *taking into account* the results of the discussion on our countries' approaches to:

- ensuring efficient adaptation of forest management in the Barents region to the present and forecasted climate change,

- preparing and implementing strategies for the forest sector development, taking into account climate change mitigation and adaptation,

- achieving the goals of mitigating anthropogenic impact on the climate system,

- *noted* that the Barents/ Euro-Arctic region is one of the territories where the consequences of climate change can be most serious for forest ecosystems,

- *paid attention to the fact* that the rate of predicted climate change is likely to exceed the natural adaptive capacity of many forest species and ecosystems. And drew attention to the fact that the climate change is a direct threat to forest ecosystems, especially boreal, and to forest-dependent societies due to declining forest products production and reduction of forest ecosystem services,

- *expressed commitment* to the goals of holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above preindustrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, as well as achieving a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century. To this end, we reaffirm our determination to implement joint activities to study and enhance the ability of the forests of the Barents region to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change and to strengthen climate-regulating properties, as stipulated in paragraph 1 of Article 2 of the Paris Agreement while ensuring the ecological integrity of the forest,

- *welcomed* the activities launched by the Barents Working Groups of the Barents Cooperation to implement the Action Plan for Barents Cooperation on Climate Change, which was endorsed at the 14th BEAC meeting and adopted by the 11th Ministers of Environment Meeting in 2013.

Agreed to:

- 1) *Strengthen* the regional cooperation at the BEAC platform aimed at sustainable forest management in the Barents Region,

- 2) *Explore the possibilities* for a joint response to an urgent and potentially irreversible threat of climate change, including on the basis of the best available scientific knowledge and experience,

- 3) *Continue* the implementation of the Action Plan for Barents Cooperation on Climate Change, under the leadership of the Committee of BEAC Senior Officials and with the assistance of the International Barents Secretariat, taking into account:

- the actions proposed by the Barents Forest Sector Network to the revised Action Plan,

- development of tools for sustainable forest management that contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, in order to ensure good contribution of the forestry sector of the BEAC member-countries in the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for forests 2017-2030, the Paris Agreement the Convention on Biological Diversity and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals,

- implementation of joint strategic and practical measures to tackle the causes of deforestation and forest degradation, including support to development and strengthening of sustainable value chains in forestry;

- setting up and implement integrated approaches for climate change adaptation and mitigation activities, Including through strengthening cooperation with BEAC working groups and other stakeholders.

4) *Strengthen* the status of the forests of the Barents Region on the global forest agenda, namely

- to ensure a more comprehensive account of the unique and significant role of the forests around the Barents region in the international forest-related work, also by strengthening the regional cooperation on boreal forests.

- to ensure that the international community is being informed of the unique and important role, development trends and global functions of the Barents forests.

5) *Aim to address* the global decisions such as The 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, the UN Strategic Plan for forests 2017-2030 and the Paris Agreement in the work of the Barents Forest Sector Network, including through more efficient and sustainable use of forest ecosystem resources and advancing sustainable forest management methods, as well as conservation of forests.

6) *Ensure* the efficiency of the communication within the BFSN and the BEAC as a whole, as well as with other processes and organizations within and outside the Barents Region in order to achieve the goals set, while respecting mutual interests and on the basis of the international law.

The participants of the Forest Forum expressed their gratitude to the Russian Federation, which is finishing its chairmanship in the BEAC, and welcomed the Kingdom of Sweden to chair the BEAC for the period from 2017 to 2019.

