

Press release given at the ENA-FLEG Ministerial Conference by Jouni Nissinen of the Taiga Rescue Network on behalf of the entire NGO and Indigenous Peoples community present in this St. Petersburg, Russia gathering, November 2005.

Dear representatives, of the media, dear participants of this press conference,

We, civil society and indigenous peoples' representatives representing civil society organizations from Europe, Asia, and North America want to draw the government representatives' attention to the following issues in this conference.

World's forests cannot afford another declaration without action. Thus, we urge all countries present at this conference to create **a time bound plan of national activities** comprising clearly defined targets, activities and indicators of success. **The Indicative List of Actions** provides an important framework to guide and inspire actions at the national level within agreed timetable to realize the objectives of the Declaration. Governments of the world, the world is watching.

Governments present here agreed that tackling illegal logging and associated trade requires effective bilateral and regional efforts. Therefore we need the countries in the region to mobilize their political commitment and resources if the problems are to be effectively tackled. Specifically, we are urging the governments of Austria and Finland to put illegal logging, associated trade and corruption to high political agenda while leading the EU in 2006.

The civil society representatives don't want to drive the car from the back seat. The lessons learned from Africa and Asia FLEG show that a tri-partite approach and effective communication is necessary to make sure that an effective **follow-up process** will happen.

We want to make sure that FLEG will not become "flegmatic."

Civil servants should not profit from not doing their job. No civil servant should earn an extra car by looking the other way when logging trucks empty the backyards of the nearby villages in the darkness of the night. We will never be able to curb illegal logging and predatory forest practices without addressing corruption.

We see an urgent need to promote greater transparency throughout the forest sector by providing information on all forest resources, their allocation and pricing, through information systems that are readily accessible to the public, including access and sharing remote sensing data. Inter-agency cooperation and public participation in data collection and review should be encouraged. We already have GPS, GIS, Satellites, ADSL, Internet, etc. Let us use them for the biggest living things on the earth!

To sum up, the NGO priorities of the ENA-FLEG process are:

- **National time bound plans of action for ALL participating countries**
- **Clear follow-up process with all the parties informed and involved**
- **Addressing corruption and promoting transparency**

As the last thought I would like to remind you that, currently, legal does not automatically mean sustainable and sustainable does not automatically mean legal.

I thank you for your attention!