

## Prospects of the United Nations Forum on Forests after 2015

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*The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) is the highest, most important and influential organization on forests in the world. The UNFF was established in 2000 in the context of a new International Arrangement on Forests (IAF). It was a direct result of the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The main achievement of the IAF over the last 15 years since its formation was adoption by the UN General Assembly in 2007 of a «non-legally binding instrument for all types of forests» (Forest Instrument). Despite certain achievements over the past 15 years, the IAF had a limited impact on the fate of the world's forests. UNFF remained mostly a discussion platform, did not have a serious impact on the world forests sustainable development, did not become a global forest leader, did not succeed to timely respond to the newly emerging problems such as climate change, trade, investment, valuation of ecosystem services, and other challenges. Consequently, international forest negotiations are stagnating. International forest mechanisms and tools are weakening and fragmenting. Russia is significantly underutilizing the UNFF as a tool for promoting national interests, technology, trade, standards, influence, cooperation, for adopting advanced technologies, for strengthening own economy and improving environment in the Russian forests – vitally important «lungs» for the entire planet. With almost 25% of the world's forests, Russia's share in the global wood products trade is slightly over 1%, mainly wood fuel and semi-processed raw materials. Major underestimation of the role and influence of the international organizations and processes, such as UNFF and IAF, essentially contributes to the current underdevelopment of the Russian forest sector. The IAF and UNFF processes after 2015 present to Russia a great reserve to protect and promote its own economic, commercial, technological, environmental and political interests, to transform the currently mono-polar forest world for the benefits of sustainable development and to increase positive contribution of Russia in the global economy and environment. Russia should assume a role in the UNFF political process, which fully corresponds to the country's forest economic potential.*