

DECLARATION

On Sustainable Management of Forests and Certification of Sustainably Managed Forests

The Baltic Assembly

recalling that the Baltic States have joined the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, have signed the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and are participants in the Ministerial Conference on the protection of forests in Europe,

recognizing the non-legally binding authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests, as adopted by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, hereafter referred to as the Statement of Forest Principles,

considering the objectives of sustainable management as stated in the Statement of Forest Principles and the definition of “sustainable management“ as stated in Resolution 1 of the Second Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe,

considering that forests play an important role in securing environmental, economical and social needs in the Baltic States,

considering that the idea of the certification of sustainably managed forests and labeling of products coming from the above sources has become an important item on the international forestry and environment protection agenda,

considering that the idea of certification of sustainably managed forests and labeling of products coming from the mentioned sources is a market driven initiative,

understanding that the ultimate goal of forest policy development is a sustainable management of forests,

considering the responsibility of the parliamentarians of the three Baltic States — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — to contribute to the sustainable management of our forests,

recommends that the Baltic Council of Ministers:

1. **Harmonize** forest policies in the countries concerned towards the achievement of the goals of a sustainable forest management.
2. **Harmonize** forest policies and legal regulations to remove obstacles for the companies in the countries concerned when obtaining certification of forests under their management, if the market situation so requires.

3. **Promote** exchange of information between the decision-makers of the forestry sector of the Baltic States concerning sustainable management of forests, the certification of sustainably managed forests, and the labeling of products coming from the above sources.

4. **Promote** the development of a common understanding of the fact that the three Baltic States — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — have to support each other in a broader European context, addressing the issues mentioned above.

Rīga, October 6, 1996