

**Statement of the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Latvia,
Mr. Martins Roze
FAO Conference, Rome, 2007**

Mr. Chairmen, Excellence's, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honor and pleasure for me to address Special event Forests and Energy of FAO Conference on behalf of Latvia's Government.

Let me first to give some general remarks.

Forests and energy is not a new issue. Forest based energy was one of the first energy sources for humanity. Then water energy, fossil energy sources and finally atomic energy sources become available.

Now we are coming together to discuss "old new issue".

What is the reason to do so?

Humanity has passed its different development stages, but basic issues still remain – security, food and energy. Now we are facing other new development challenges besides of "Forest and energy" - among them Climate change is of utmost importance. And these two issues are closely linked together.

Forests and Energy challenge is a really cross-sectoral issue and is bringing some basic policy issues together:

- Sustainable land use;
- Balanced and compatible development of some related policies such as Forest policy, Energy policy, Agriculture policy;
- Environment and Nature protection policies;
- Sustainable General Economic and Social development and overall - reaching Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Chairmen, Excellence's, Ladies and Gentlemen

Why am I speaking about all these so different issues while addressing very particular topic – “Forests and Energy”. This is because we – Ministers and Heads of the State responsible for forests have to invite society and all responsible parties both nationally and internationally to look out of the “Forestry box” in order to develop really harmonized and therefore sustainable policy planning.

To address “Forests and energy’ issue we have to achieve, may be not in a first approximation, synergetic, but at least compatible policy balance.

This means for example that:

- Forest energy development does not harm wood supply to other traditional uses.
- Forest based industries; value added forest products and forest based energy are not competing each other for raw material.
- Wood supply to industry and energy is not threatening sustainable forest management and environment protection challenges;
- These issues are reflected in a balanced way in our land use policies;
- And overall we are able to address human resource development challenges in order to resolve knowledge related technology and financial issues.

We don’t have a set of problems but a scope of opportunities.

Let’s use them today in our deliberations and for our further work.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.