Re: the Roundtable on Measures to Prevent Illegal Timber Trade and Legislative Basis for Russian Timber Export in the Context of the New EU and USA Legislation

First Information Letter

In accordance with international obligations accepted at the International Ministerial Conference on Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in the Northern Eurasia Countries (ENA-FLEG) and in accordance with the Government’s Assignments, the Russian Federation approved the Plan to Prevent Illegal logging and Illegal Timber Trade for 2009–2011. In accordance with this Plan activities to improve forest and adjacent law, to develop a state timber accounting system, etc. are implemented.

In the same time the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument – Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (ENPI-FLEG) Program is implemented in the Russian Federation in 2009-2011 to support FLEG process development in the Northern Eurasia countries. This Program is financed by the European Commission and implemented by the World Bank, IUCN – The World Conservation Union and WWF Russia.

The problem of illegal logging and trade raises a lot of concerns at the international level. The European Union and the United States as the largest timber importers had to introduce legislative measures to meet the challenge of illegal logging and trade of timber with illegal or doubtful origin. These measures are focused on prevention of illegal timber to penetrate markets of these countries. The problem of illegal logging is a serious challenge for Russia, in order to secure competitiveness of Russian timber exporters which products largely end up at the EU and the US markets it is necessary to ensure that new legal requirements are met, to develop and introduce a complex of measures to track timber origin along a chain of custody from a felling site to a consumer abroad.

On March 31, 2011 the Roundtable on Measures to Prevent Illegal Timber Trade and Legislative Basis for Russian Timber Export in the Context of the New EU and USA Legislation will take place in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation. The Roundtable is organized by the Committee for Nature Use and Environment of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation. The Roundtable is organized by the Committee for Nature Use and Environment of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation. Representatives of legislative and executive Russian authorities, EU and the US organizations, forest industry companies and NGOs are invited to participate in the Roundtable.

The objective of the Roundtable is to inform stakeholders on the new approved EU and US legislation on illegal timber trade, potential challenges and opportunities created by it for the Russian forest sector, discuss mechanisms to ensure Russian timber export legality including practical legislative and law enforcement measures taken in Russia at both federal and regional levels, and private sector initiatives to ensure timber legality.
The following issues will be discussed at the Roundtable:

- New approved EU and US legislation focused on prevention of illegal timber trade and requirements for timber exporters;
- Potential challenges for Russian companies in the context of implementation of the new EU and US legislation and opportunities to meet them;
- Practical measures to improve the Russian forest legislation on harvested timber accounting in the context of EU and US legislation requirements;
- Practical measures to ensure Russian timber legality;
- Regional and private sector initiatives to tackle illegal logging and illegal timber trade.

We invite you to participate in the Roundtable. The Roundtable will take place in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation (Moscow, 6 Ilynka St.)

Official invitations and the Roundtable’s agenda will be sent later. **Please inform us about your interest in participation in the Workshop before February 25, 2011.** The contact person is Nikolay Shmatkov (WWF Russia) at:

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Sincerely,

Elena Kulikova

Head, WWF Russia Forest Program

Moscow, February 1, 2011