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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE  
Timber Committee

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION  
European Forestry Commission

**JOINT FAO/ECE WORKING PARTY ON FOREST ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS**  
Twenty-fifth session

to be held in the Palais des Nations, Geneva  
24 – 26 February 2003, starting at 10.00 hrs on Monday, 24 February

Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda

**Guidance of work area 2: Forest Resources Assessment**

***Regional Forest Resources Assessment Work in the Global Context***

The present document contains the overview of the activities in Work Area 2, and highlights issues to be addressed at the current Working Party session.

The topics for the Working Party discussion include:

- strengthening of ECE/FAO co-operation in the Forest Resources Assessment;
- modalities of work on the regional FRA in the light of new global FRA approaches and methods;
- FRA implementation and expected outcome from this work area;
- questions of the regional FRA governance and organisation.

The Joint Working Party is invited to provide guidance for future activities in Work Area 2 in the light of the current developments, and to make recommendations on the future work of the FRA team of specialists.

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

1. The Working Party at its session in April 2002 approved the planning for the years 2002-2004 and provided guiding recommendations on how the regional FRA activities should be carried out within the Work Area 2 of the ECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work. The activities and accomplishments on forest resources assessment were reported to the UNECE Timber Committee session (24-27 September 2002). The Timber Committee endorsed the regional FRA Work Plan as it was approved by the Working Party.

2. The FRA work during the reported year 2002-2003 has been implemented in full compliance with the relating decisions of the ECE/FAO parent bodies. The regional FRA-2000 information posted on Internet at the ECE Timber Committee website has taken one of the leading positions in UNECE according to “hits”, “downloads” or “visits” during the last years. The ECE/FAO FRA-2000 database and main report were downloaded over 10,000 times.

3. The further regional forest resources assessments will strongly depend on the outline of the next round of the global FRA which, in its turn, will be based on the proposals elaborated by the “Kotka-IV” expert consultation (Finland, July 2002), and recommendations of the first meeting of the advisory group on the global FRA (Nairobi, October 2002). The structure and governance of the global forest resources assessment should outline modalities and directions of the future regional FRA. It will also influence the scope and organisation of the ECE/FAO forest resources assessment, which is expected to be complementary to the global FRA. A more definite structure of the next global FRA is expected to be available by mid-2003.

## **B. DEVELOPMENTS SINCE APRIL 2002 AND NEEDED GUIDANCE FOR 2003-2004**

### **a) UNECE/FAO FRA Team of Specialists**

4. The meeting of the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on the Forest Resources Assessment, held in Krakow (Poland) in May 2002, summarised the future global and regional FRA features as follows:

- FRA work should be integrated into the international processes on Criteria and Indicators (C&I) for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), and supported by independent surveys;
- Forest resources assessments should aim (to the extent possible) at evaluating all benefits from forests;
- Global FRA is expected to be based (mainly) on national reporting;

- Intensive communication with countries and partner organisations will be the key element of the assessment;
- A global FRA advisory group should be established to support the forest resources assessment methodologically;
- Field sampling was seen as an efficient way of data collection, which might help with "relatively small amount of money" to get data;
- Country forestry profiles should continue to be a feature of the assessment work.

5. The team noted that this vision of the global FRA strategy corresponded (in fact) to the current methods and approaches of the ECE/FAO regional FRA. The support to national forest inventories and forest assessments was discussed specifically. The team noted that not only developing countries, but also some central and eastern European countries in transition might need financial support for the forest resources assessment work. This has also raised the question of the cost of the assessment work, which should be taken into account when planning the next FRA rounds.

6. The team supported the view that the forest resources assessments should address all possible variables relevant to C&I for SFM, but this question is also linked with the reporting frequency, and increasing burden on countries (FRA national correspondents). With this respect it was noted that reducing reporting burden did not necessarily mean fewer reporting, but also a better organisation of storage and maintenance of the FRA datasets.

7. The key objectives of the Work Area 2, namely: "*collect and make available the best possible data on the forests of the industrialised countries (ECE region, plus Australia, New Zealand and Japan)*", were reflected in the mandate and terms of reference of the regional FRA team. These objectives could be achieved only in close cooperation with the FAO global forest resource assessment programme, and with the practical support from the global FRA.

***The Working Party is invited:***

- *to consider the work of the team and to provide guidance for its future activities including the "operational style" of the regional FRA team in the new global FRA context,*
- *to endorse the regional ECE/FAO ToS Terms of Reference and Mandate (Annex I),*
- *to express gratitude to all members of the regional FRA Team led by professor Michael Köhl for the excellent work accomplished during the FRA-2000 round.*

**b) Results and implications of the global FRA expert consultation “Kotka-IV”**

8. The theme of the “Kotka-IV” expert consultation (Finland, July 2002): “*Global Forest Resources Assessments – Linkages between National and International Efforts*” was in line with the main directions of the regional ECE/FAO FRA work. The “Kotka-IV” findings and recommendations were aimed mainly at the national and global levels of the forest resources assessment, but will strongly influence the FRA developments at the regional level. It is expected that the ECE/FAO FRA work can now be better planned to make the best possible regional contribution to the global FRA.

9. The Kotka-IV consultation noted, in particular, that “*Regional initiatives related to forest resources assessment should continue to contribute to and, where appropriate, be co-ordinated with the Global FRA work, notably in relation to concepts, definitions and core parameters. Regional Forest Commissions have an important role in increasing political support for country involvement in forest resources assessment. The participants recognized the benefits of the regional FRA effort contributing to FRA 2000, co-ordinated by the UNECE/FAO secretariat in Geneva (“TBFRA 2000”), wherein variables and information specific for the regional needs were incorporated in addition to the global information requirements. This regional FRA effort continues. Participation in such regional FRA initiatives should be determined by the countries themselves*”.

10. The governments in each country have been informed about recent developments of the global FRA process, and asked to nominate or confirm their national correspondent to global FRA (the same as for regional FRA), including allocating time and resources for the correspondent to be able to contribute to the global FRA work. The secretariat will keep national correspondents informed about timing of future work and reporting, and request information from the correspondents about national assessment activities, to enable good work planning.

11. The FRA national correspondents should be prepared to submit updated national data to global FRA as it becomes available. FAO should facilitate the transformation from national to global FRA data for instance through guidelines, consultations and efficient use of information and communication technology.

12. The consultation recommended FAO to establish a multi-disciplinary and informal advisory group (AG) to global FRA, in order to advise FAO and its partners on the global FRA implementation, in particular on its concepts, classifications, definitions, methods, organisation, timing and communication of results. The group should meet about annually.

13. Among other key points from the “Kotka-IV” consultation, which might have the important implications for the regional FRA are the following:

- developments at the national level are expected to be aimed towards comprehensive forest resources assessments, including all aspects of forest resources. The assessments may include information on physical quantities, qualitative aspects as well as estimates of values of forest products and services;
- significant gaps in FRA information and its timeliness have been identified by FRA 2000 for many countries. Potential reasons for this include low priorities and awareness at the national level, low national capacities, and lack of financial resources;
- national forest inventories and assessments, and the capacity to implement these over time, will only be maintained if the information demand originates from national forest policy processes;
- FAO has a mandate to offer support to countries in the field of forest inventory and assessment, including methodology development as well as support to implementation and capacity building. Countries should assess whether they need external assistance to implement national forest assessments and consider to seek such help from FAO, for example through the National Forest Programme Facility, implemented by FAO;
- FAO should work with countries and the donor community to revive and/or maintain the interest in committing resources to National Forest Assessments being an important part of national policy development, including capacity building and capacity maintenance; and to promote co-ordination of efforts in the field of forest resources assessments;
- the global FRA should be carried out in close collaboration with national correspondents, and advised by the advisory group, which is recommended to be established, as well as periodic expert consultations with the participation of users and national correspondents;
- the incorporation of national information into global FRA database should be undertaken collaboratively between countries, regional and the global FRA, and be transparent and documented to ensure credibility and consistency in the FRA database. It is expected that this approach will over time reduce the effort required to maintain the global FRA database.

14. One Kotka-IV recommendation, which in fact marked an important change in the global FRA strategy, underlined that FRA should address all variables (to the extent possible) relevant to Criteria and Indicators (C&I) for Sustainable Forest Managements (SFM). This is an

extremely ambitious goal, which could be achieved if supported by countries and with the full co-operation partner organizations. This approach should be applied taking into account the FRA reporting frequency, and constantly increasing burden on countries (FRA national correspondents)". The complete report of the Kotka-IV expert consultation is available on the Internet «<http://www.fao.org/forestry/foris/webview/forestry2/index.jsp?siteId=1320&Ia> ».

15. It was suggested during the "Kotka-IV" consultation that the scope and coverage of the future global FRA should be comparable to what was implemented during the TBFRA-2000 process (regional FRA). As the consequence of this new global FRA approach, the scope and coverage of the next regional FRA work should be re-defined, but that would be possible only after the global FRA-2005 questionnaire is elaborated. The key question would be "what other FRA information (additional to the global FRA core set) should be collected and processed at the regional level".

*The Working Party is invited:*

- *to discuss and comment on the "regional-global" co-operation and partnerships in Forest Resources Assessment work, with reference to specific features of the UNECE/FAO FRA and taking into account its regional identity within the global FRA programme,*
- *to provide guidance on how can the global and regional processes be further managed to achieve an optimum balance between global and regional objectives and capacities,*
- *to provide guidance and advice on the scope and coverage (geographical coverage, parameters/variables, degree of detail, timing, etc) of the next regional FRA work in the context of the global FRA strategy, and taking into account the Kotka-IV recommendations,*
- *to confirm that newly nominated global FRA national correspondents are also responsible for any required contributions to the regional FRA activities, in their capacities as members of the regional ECE/FAO FRA network.*

c) **Advisory Group to the global FRA, Nairobi, October 2002**

16. In accordance with the "Kotka-IV" recommendations (see above) the advisory group (AG) to the FRA process was set up by FAO to provide detailed technical guidance and to advise on specifications of future global forest resource assessments. The FRA advisory group held its first meeting in Nairobi (Kenya) in October 2002. The UNECE/FAO was represented at the first AG meeting by the Geneva secretariat and by members of the regional FRA team of specialists, including its deputy leader.

17. The AG suggested that the next FRA should be carried out in the year 2005, as it would satisfy UNFF's needs for a report in 2005 on progress towards sustainable forest management in all the countries. This would also respond to the needs of the next Global Environmental Outlook

(UNEP) report to be prepared in 2006/2007. The group observed that the 2005 FRA report would also meet the need of five year reporting envisaged in the UN Millennium Declaration. The AG suggested considering the development of some thematic reports for FRA-2005.

18. The AG endorsed the “Kotka-IV” proposal to establish a network of the global FRA National Correspondents (NC), and noted that it would be useful to organise regional / global meetings of FRA NCs, in order to expose them to the proposed FRA process and to seek their suggestions and proposals in the process of the preparation of the next global FRA round. This particular recommendation of the advisory group should be reflected in the work programme of the regional FRA, and corresponds closely to the activities of the present team of specialists, which usually meets together with national correspondents.

19. The FRA AG endorsed the approach when the core set of the global FRA variables and “data items” should respond to the key criteria for sustainable forest management. These criteria were analysed (and harmonised to the extent possible) across regional C&I for SFM process. The suggested list is compatible with the pan-European (MCPFE) set of criteria and indicators.

20. The proposed scope of the global FRA variables responds to the strategy chosen by Kotka-IV to “*address all variables relevant to C&I for SFM (to the extent possible), taking into account the FRA reporting frequency, and increasing burden on countries (FRA national correspondents)*”.

*A draft core set of the global FRA variables, which should be reported in the next round of the global FRA, is being prepared. They will be available at the Working Party session, and on the FAO website, and the Working Party is invited to comment on their implication for the regional FRA work.*

*The Working Party is also invited:*

- *to discuss and provide guidance on the format and modalities of the regional FRA contribution to the Global FRA, taking into account the new scope and approaches in the global FRA process,*
- *to provide/ suggest recommendations on what FRA relating thematic reports would be appropriate and desirable within the regional FRA activities during the forthcoming FRA-2005 round.*

d) **Co-operation with the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe**

21. UNECE/FAO is making significant contribution to the preparation of the forthcoming Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe to be held in Vienna in April 2003.

Many activities on the implementation of the MCPFE commitments were carried out under the Timber Committee and European Forestry Commission Integrated Programme of work. The role of the regional FRA in the contribution to MCPFE work is especially important.

22. The report on the *‘State of Europe’s forests’* reviewing the situation with the sustainable forest management in Europe, will be submitted to the Ministerial Conference. This report will be based on updated and validated FRA-2000 information, which was collected by ECE/FAO during the year 2002. The most recent and best available FRA data were provided by country correspondents and supplied (in good time) to the Liaison Unit Vienna. The supplied information included more than 20 tables of the latest FRA statistics, as well as the analysis of this information (a sort of mini-TBFRA), which will constitute an important part of the reporting to the Ministerial Conference. The provided statistical data respond to the majority of the pan-European criteria and quantitative indicators for SFM, although coverage of change, even for major parameters such as forest area, is still weak. This work will also serve to updating the global FRA dataset.

23. The MCPFE assessment guidelines for protected and protective forests and other wooded land in Europe were elaborated on the basis of the analysis of national data reported in the process of the regional FRA-2000 (TBFRA). They are intended to provide a comprehensive picture and comparable information on the situation in Europe in this area. The guidelines provide an important tool for further work on the conservation and protection of all types of forests in Europe. A new detailed questionnaire was sent to the regional FRA correspondents, and the information on the “protected and protective forest areas” has been compiled according to the new MCPFE guidelines, stored into the electronic database and analysed. The preliminary results were presented to the Expert-Level Meetings of the pan-European process, and will ultimately be reported to the next pan-European Ministerial Conference.

24. The regional FRA contributed to the review in 2001-2002 of the original set of MCPFE indicators for SFM on the basis of experience gained in the TBFRA process. The work included the participation of the representatives from the regional FRA ToS and ECE/FAO secretariat in the Advisory Group, sharing the expertise, based on the FRA-2000 results, participation in the series of workshops, and contributing in the preparation of recommendations for the improvements of the Indicators. The Advisory Group consulted with a wide range of experts through a series of four workshops, open to all interested participants. This ensured that the diversity of national situations and experiences as well as the work undertaken by various bodies in Europe were adequately reflected in the recommended set of 36 quantitative and 17 qualitative indicators. The new set of C&I for SFM will be presented for endorsement to MCPFE-2003.

***The Working Party is invited:***



- to discuss and comment on the regional FRA reporting on the quantitative pan-European indicators for SFM (contribution to the MCPFE “State of Europe’s forests” report),
- to comment on reporting the information on protected and protective forest areas according to the MCPFE classification (<http://www.mcpfe.org>),
- to discuss possible implications of the newly elaborated set of Criteria and Indicators for SFM on the regional FRA work,
- to express gratitude to FRA national correspondents for the excellent cooperation, and to note the very good co-operation established between ECE/FAO and MCPFE process.

e) **Cooperation and contribution to EFSOS Programme**

25. The detailed approach and the first steps in the study “*Analysis of Long-term Historical Changes in European Forest Resources*” were presented at the last Working Party session. At the time of writing this document, the study is at the stage of finalising and preparing for the publication. As noted by the Working Party, this study is a good example of synergies between the two work areas of the UNECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work (FRA and EFSOS). The publication contains results of processing and analysis of the historical information for some 16 European countries. It is to open the discussion on the subject, and it is hoped that the results will trigger further work in this area on the basis of the contribution from the countries and individual experts.

26. The objective of this ex-post analysis is to harmonise overtime the historical forest resources data and to identify driving forces behind changes of main FRA parameters (*Forest Area, Growing Stock and Increment*) since the 1950s up to the 2000s. The changes in the forest resources and trends in the development of the forest sector, identified by the study, were a challenge to compare and they contrasted between different countries and sub-regions. This work was done in struggle to make the data comparable over-time, as the different FRA publications do not provide a consistent datasets since the 1950s, and terms and definitions have been changed from one FRA publication to another. The results of the study should help to provide an outlook on the future development of the forest resources and forestry sector in the ECE region.

27. Another area of the co-operation of the regional FRA national correspondents with the EFSOS team is in providing data for the outlook analysis on developments of forest resources. This work was done within the EFSOS baseline study, and it had demanded significant efforts from FRA national correspondents to provide data, which would be helpful for running the EFISCEN model for the long-term projections of European forest resources. Traditionally, ECE/FAO ETTS (now EFSOS) projects followed the FRA rounds and added value to the FRA statistics by its up-dating and additional validation.

28. It seems it would be difficult to collect in the process of the main FRA studies such detailed and specific information on forest resources, which could respond directly to EFSOS needs. This might cause an additional burden to FRA national correspondents, and would be a challenge to compile all the information in one publication. This would be a challenge not only because the outlook studies request specific break-downs of the key parameters (by regions, by species, by age-classes, etc), but also because the projection models applied in the outlook analysis might differ from study to study, thus the requested set of the FRA information might also be different.

29. The possible suggested solution could be a special study organised within the Work Area 2 in good time preceding the next round of the outlook study, but well in advance, i.e. immediately after the requested set of FRA data for EFSOS purposes are known.

*The Working Party is invited to discuss modalities of providing the FRA data for the outlook studies and, in particular, the possibility/ visibility to conduct a special study(ies) within the work area 2, which would directly respond to the future EFSOS needs.*

*The Working Party is invited to review, comment and provide recommendations concerning Work Area 2 of the Integrated Programme of Work as a whole, including its planning for the period 2003-2005 (Annex II).*

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**Annex I****TERMS OF REFERENCE & MANDATE OF UNECE/FAO FRA TEAM OF SPECIALISTS***Reference to Programme Work Area 2.*

<b>UNECE/FAO TEAM OF SPECIALISTS ON FOREST RESOURCE ASSESSMENT</b>	
<b>A. TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	
<b>ESTABLISHED BY:</b>	The Joint FAO/ECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics, 19 <sup>th</sup> session, 1993.
<b>References:</b>	TIM/EFC/WP.2/23 Programme element 2.7
<b>MANDATE:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ to advise the UNECE/FAO and FAO secretariats on the implementation of activities in Work Area 2 “<i>Forest Resources Assessment</i>” of the Integrated Programme of Work;</li> <li>▪ to advise on the concept, classifications, definitions and methods of the regional forest resources assessment in the global context, taking into account developments on indicators of sustainable forest management, UNFF, other relevant international processes, as well as ECE/FAO outlook studies;</li> <li>▪ to advise on updating key parameters between the main forest resource assessment 10-year cycles;</li> <li>▪ to advise on communication of forest resource assessment results, and implications of FRA results to a wider circle of users.</li> </ul>
<b>DURATION:</b>	To 2004
<b>MOST RECENT REVIEW:</b>	Joint Working Party, 24th session, April 2002, TIM/EFC/WP.2/2002/6.
<b>REPORTING:</b>	Joint Working Party
<b>EXPECTED OUTPUT IN THE NEXT 18 MONTHS:</b> - Contribution to the preparation of the global FRA-2005, contribution to the MCPFE process, and European Forestry Sector Outlook Studies	
<b>B. INFORMATION SHEET (as of 15 December 2002)</b>	
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	
<b>Past:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kotka III meeting in 1996; meetings of the team, March 1995, April 1996, March 1997 (Switzerland), March 1998 (Italy) March 1999 (Geneva), May 2000 (Finland), June 2001 Victoria B.C. (Canada), May 2002 (Poland);</li> <li>▪ Meetings of national TBFRA correspondents for CITs in Gmunden (Austria) 1997 and Geneva 1997; Review and revision of the final draft Main TBFRA-2000 Report;</li> <li>▪ Publication of the Main TBFRA-2000 report, and the TBFRA database (CD-Rom and Internet)</li> <li>▪ Contribution to the MCPFE-2003 reporting</li> <li>▪ Publication of the regional FRA-2000 accompanying papers</li> </ul>
<b>Ongoing:</b>	Follow-up to ECE/FAO FRA-2000 and preparation of next round of the ECE/FAO Forest Resources Assessment; Consolidation of experience and lessons learnt from TBFRA-2000, also based on replies to the “ <i>Use and Policy Implications Survey</i> ” and other sources, notably as regards definitions and measurement of “new” parameters, especially those with high policy relevance;
<b>Future:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ participation, as requested, in preparation of next round of the global Forest Resources Assessment;</li> <li>▪ support and contribution to the MCPFE process on indicators for sustainable forest management, UNFF related processes (as requested) and co-operation with ECE/FAO outlook studies;</li> <li>▪ consideration of how to update key parameters between the main FRA 10-year cycles;</li> <li>▪ consideration of communication of forest resource assessment results to a wider circle of users.</li> </ul>
<b>References:</b>	TIM/EFC/WP.2/2002/6
<b>TEAM LEADER:</b>	Professor Michael Köhl (Germany)
<b>CURRENT PARTICIPANTS:</b>	Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, European Commission, EU/Joint Research Centre (Ispra), WWF, European Forest Institute.

**Annex II****Work Area 2: Planning for 2003 – 2004**

<b>Programme element</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Duration</b>
<b>Work area 2: FOREST RESOURCE ASSESSMENT</b>			
2.1 Collection, updating and validation of data on forest resources; FRA methodological development, including work on the terms and definitions	Collection of forest resources data of the industrialised countries, mostly through national correspondents. Harmonisation of the relevant terms and definitions, and the development of methods and approaches. Checking, validation, storage, processing and dissemination of data.	Data stored in database, made available on Internet (ECE & FAO web-sites), information supplied on request to parent bodies and major clients.	Continuing
2.2 Main regional reports: strategic planning within the Global FRA Programme	Implementation of a comprehensive assessment of the forest resources of the region, and publication of the results, with the dissemination of the information.	Main reports, CD-ROMs, Internet, etc.	Periodic, at 10-year intervals
2.3 Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management: improve concepts, supply data at the international level	The contribution to the work on reporting on the existing sets of Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), mainly within the pan-European process. Providing data for SFM monitoring at the national level.	Advising, and reporting, to the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe as agreed.	To 2004
2.4 Contribution to Global FRA, including the preparation of the global FRA-2005 round.	Providing data on forest resources of the industrialised countries to the Global FRA process; participation in the elaboration of the common global framework for the forest resources assessment; global core set of variables and “data items”, and in the development of the assessment methods.	Sets of data on the forest resources of ECE region (temperate and boreal, including), and interim data sets. Guidelines for the assessment(s)	Continuing
2.5 Country profiles of countries in transition	The periodic preparation by national experts, and publication, of forestry country profiles, mainly of the central and eastern European and CIS countries. The profiles will provide supplementary, more specific and detailed information on forestry sectors of these countries than in FRA reports.	“ <i>Forest and Forest Products Country Profiles</i> ” published as Study/ Discussion Papers	Periodic, depending on demands and resource availability
2.6 Special studies (biodiversity, forest condition, carbon flows etc.)	Accompanying papers on the most acute and interesting FRA issues will be prepared and published, following the accomplishment of the periodic main FRA reports.	Publications of special studies as Study Papers or Discussion Papers.	Periodic, depending on demands and resource availability
2.7 In formation network, work area administration	Maintenance and regular up-dating of the network of national correspondents, and the regional FRA team of specialists (ToS), so that these structures would support, advise and contribute to the implementation of activities 2.1 to 2.6.	Meetings of the ToS according to its mandate, participation in the global FRA Advisory Group and periodic meetings of national correspondents.	Continuing