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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

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**ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND OF OTHER ECE PRINCIPAL SUBSIDIARY BODIES  
RELEVANT TO THE TIMBER COMMITTEE**

(Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda)

Note by the Secretariat

This note informs the Committee about FAO forestry activities of interest to the ECE region (paras. 1-61) and other ECE Principal Subsidiary Bodies (paras. 62-65). The Committee is invited to review this information, comment on it, and take it into account when determining its programme of work.

**GENERAL**

**a) FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO)**

1. The 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) was held in Rome from 12 to 16 March 2001. One hundred and one countries participated, of which 32 were members of UNECE. Policy-related agenda items included: Forest information and knowledge management;

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Criteria and indicators of sustainable management of all types of forests and implications for certification and trade; and FAO support to the implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests / Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IPF/IFF) proposals for action.

2. COFO members emphasized the need for FAO's continuing role in supporting the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the associated Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). The potential of the Regional Forestry Commissions as regional fora to bring regional forestry issues to global attention (*i.e.* in the UNFF) was identified.

3. They also emphasized the importance of FAO's role in:

- supporting and facilitating the development of national forest programmes,
- the provision of data and information, especially the Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) but also in forest fires;
- the use of data and information in forestry sector outlook studies;
- capacity building;
- the development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, and possible links to certification;
- advising members on, and acting as neutral forum for discussion of, the implications of the Kyoto Protocol for the forestry sector;
- International Year of Mountains, 2002

4. Innovations at the 14<sup>th</sup> Session included informal discussions of agenda items amplifying and in support of plenary sessions, a large number of side meetings, including a meeting of the ECE/EFC on the strategic review of the joint programme and a meeting of the Bureaux of the Regional Forestry Commissions which was held before COFO and whose conclusions and recommendations fed into the plenary COFO session related to Regional Forestry Commissions. The report of the Bureaux meeting has been circulated.

**b) Strategic review of the joint ECE/EFC programme**

5. FAO actively participated in the strategic review of the joint programme, reported elsewhere

**c) FAO participation in international processes**

6. FAO has played a leading role in the establishment of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), which was set up to support the newly established UN Forum on Forests. Secretariat support was provided to a formal meeting of the Inter-agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF) held in October 2000 in Rome. An informal meeting was held in Bonn (November) on the occasion of the 8-country Initiative while another meeting was held at the preparatory meeting of the UNFF in February 2001. The inaugural formal meeting of the CPF was held in Rome in May

2001, composed of the original eight members of the ITFF, while two further meetings were held in New York at the time of the first session of the UNFF which included two new members, the GEF and UNFCCC. Meetings are planned in August and November 2001, where the membership criteria and the CPF work plan in support of the UNFF MYPOW and Plan of Action will be discussed.

7. FAO, as Task Manager for Chapters 11 (combating deforestation) and 13 (mountains) prepared drafts for Parts 1 (factual) and 2 (policy related) of the Secretary-General's report to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

**d) Web Site**

8. FAO has actively continued to develop its Forestry Website; this report includes several references to Divisional homepages and databases linked to the Forestry Website.

**Unasylva**

9. *Unasylva* was produced in English, French and Spanish:

#202 - *Forests, food security and sustainable livelihoods*

#203 - *(No theme)*

#204 - *Looking forward*

#205 - *Rattan*

#206 - *International conventions*

10. The complete *Unasylva* collection (from 1947 to present) is now available in full-text on the FO Web site, in all three languages. CD-ROM produced containing the full (1947-2000) *Unasylva* collection.

11. *Unasylva* Web site was completely re-designed, with addition of customised search engine permitting search of complete collection.

**e) NGOs**

12. The Forestry Department of FAO has continued to implement the Organisation's policy of improving relations with NGO's and the private sector. A Letter of Agreement was signed with the International Network of Forests & Communities (British Columbia, Canada) to undertake a survey to identify means to improve working relations between FO and NGOs and a report has been prepared. Meetings have been held to improve collaboration with WRI and WWF. Management staff of the World Resources Institute (WRI), Global Forest Watch, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and Association Technique Internationale du Bois Tropical (ATIBT) visited the Forest Department to discuss possibilities of collaboration. The dialogue with the private sector through the Advisory Committee on paper and Wood Products (ACPWP) was intensified.

## FOREST RESOURCES, MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION

13. The Forest Resources Assessment 2000 was brought to a conclusion in April 2001. FRA 2000, which included the TBFRA (reported elsewhere) compiled and analysed all available information on the area, composition, protection and utilisation of forests for each country. Special attention was given to estimating the rate of change of forest resources and to documenting the various factors implicated in these changes. New studies were included, as requested at the FRA planning meeting in Kotka in 1996 e.g. a report on *Trees Outside Forests* in collaboration with CIRAD-Forêt, France and an *analysis of status and trends in forest management. The latter includes a review of the material on forest management from ECE countries from 1980 and 1990 as well as from 2000*

14. Results were stored in a comprehensive forestry information system, and made publicly available in a number of Working Papers and on the World Wide Web (<http://www.fao.org/forestry>). The information is being up-dated on a continuing basis. Findings are being published in a comprehensive manner in 2001, including in SOFO 2001. Efforts were made to provide transparent documentation of all findings to the general public. FRA 2000 output, available as web pages on the Forestry Department website, was finalized, amounting to about 5 000 pages, covering 200 countries.

15. Overall support to countries continued for the further development, validation and implementation of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, with special reference to the nine on-going international processes, and to the international forestry dialogue. Activities included the organisation of an *Expert Consultation on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management*, in collaboration with UNEP, ITTO, CIFOR and IUFRO (Rome, November 2000) which recommended that FAO organise a larger International Conference on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management with a broader participation of all stakeholders.

16. Within the UK-funded project GCP/INT/628/UK, *Timber Production from Hardwood Plantations in the Tropics and Sub-Tropics*, a draft Terminal Report was prepared, including two special studies, on forestry outgrower arrangements, and markets and marketing of high-value tropical hardwoods.

17. Most ECE TC members are members of the International Poplar Commission (IPC) which held its 21<sup>st</sup> Session the 40<sup>th</sup> Session of its Executive Committee and Working Party meetings (on Diseases; Poplar Insects and Other Animal Pests; Logging and Utilisation of Poplar Wood; Production Systems for Poplars and Willows; Poplar Breeding; the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Nomenclature and Registration) in Portland, Oregon (USA), 24-28 September 2000. The Theme of the session was *Meeting the Needs of Society and the Environment*. A CD-ROM containing a *Directory of Poplar and Willow Experts*; and a *Register of Populus Cultivars*, were made available. The FAO IPC Web Site was finalised and updated.

18. Support was provided to a Special Study on Forest Fires carried out within the framework of FRA 2000 and work was initiated for the preparation of Fire Management Guidelines for Temperate and Boreal Zones. A study was conducted to review FAO's role in forest fire management and control in 2000; An Expert Meeting was recommended and as follow-up to this FAO/ITTO International Expert Meeting on Forest Fire Management held at FAO Headquarters in March 2001, a Fire Management Consultant and a Volunteer, Legal 'intern' have been working with FAO to initiate follow-up action based on the recommendations of the meeting, and to make recommendations for the future.

19. An international Forest Fire Management Network, was established immediately following the March meeting, and members have contributed to the work of the consultants in an interactive (e-mail) process.

20. An inventory of Global Fire Agreements has been prepared (15 agreements reviewed and included in the inventory, to date), from which a Matrix Table has been drafted to show common provisions among the Agreements, to be used in the future development of Guidelines which countries can use in the preparation of similar agreements.

21. Action was taken towards revision of the FAO Wildland Fire Terminology (Forestry Paper 70, FAO 1984).

22. TCP/SLO/0065 Protection of Spruce Stands in Kysuce Region in Slovakia became operational in April 2001 with the first inception mission. The TCP, which includes components on Integrated Pest Management and environmentally safe harvesting practices, will continue until December 2002.

23. TCP/MOL/ 8922 Emergency Programme for the Control of Leaf-eating Pests Affecting the Forests in Moldova was completed in April 2001 with a final provision for the supply of biopesticides for spraying a spring outbreak of insect pests arising after the severe drought of 2000.

24. FAO provides technical and scientific support to Members' national institutes in the conservation, management, sustainable use and development of forest genetic resources. The focus, in line with recommendations of the FAO Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources and other FAO statutory and governing bodies, and in co-ordination with FAO's partners, is on the transfer of information, know-how and technologies, through networking and twinning mechanisms. The main programmes in this field relevant to the European region are reviewed below.

- *Conservation of genetic resources* actively contributes to elaborating forest genetic resources conservation methodologies and coordinates the evaluation of practical experiences with *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation stands. The Danida Forest Seed Centre, Denmark, provides technical and financial assistance. FAO is co-ordinating the publication of a practical guide on *in situ* forest genetic resources conservation.

- *Information activities* have contributed to developing the World-wide Information System on Forest Genetic Resources (REFORGEN), to support policy and technical decisions for genetic conservation, at national, regional and international levels. A user-friendly interface has been developed, to allow information retrieval through the Internet. <http://www.fao.org/forestry/FOR/FORM/FOGENRES/homepage/fogene-e.stm>
- the *Forest Genetic Resources* bulletin is published annually by FAO (in English, French and Spanish). The bulletin and other relevant information have recently been posted on the Internet, where an FAO forest genetic resources home page is regularly updated.

25. FAO has been closely involved with preparations of and follow-up to Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe, especially Resolution S2 concerning the *Conservation of Forest Genetic Resources*, which lead to the creation of the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme, EUFORGEN, coordinated by the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI). FAO continues to actively participate in EUFORGEN's Management and Steering Committees, and uses it as a reference to promote regional cooperation in other parts of the world. Regional coordinated mechanisms and instruments are seen as playing a leading role in the implementation of several priority activities listed in the regional action plans on forest genetic resources.

26. A workshop of the International Neem Network co-ordinated by FAO in collaboration with the Danida Forest Seed Centre, Denmark was held in Jodhpur, India. Continued co-operation between FAO, DFSC and IPGRI on the joint preparation of a series on guidelines to the conservation of forest genetic resources. An *ex situ* conservation guide for tropical pines, based on an FAO/UNEP project, was finalised by DFSC and FAO.

27. The CBD Secretariat prepared, with inputs from FAO, a review on the status and trends of forest biological diversity, for presentation at the *Ad-Hoc* Technical Expert Group on Forest Biological Diversity and for further development and discussion at SBSTTA-7 and COP-6 of the CBD;

28. Development in collaboration with IPGRI and DFSC of practical guidelines to the conservation of forest genetic resources, published jointly in early 2001.

29. Collaboration continued with IPGRI in support to the European Forest Genetic Resources Network (EUFORGEN) and a training course for Central and Eastern European countries was jointly organised in Vienna, Austria in March 2001.

30. Within the framework of the FAO Partnership Programme, a Canadian national completed a 7-month assignment with a focus on integrated genetic resource management, including conservation and the use and application of new technologies.

## CONSERVATION, INCLUDING SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT

31. Activities were accelerated for the **International Year of Mountains 2002 (IYM)** The main achievements included:

- the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the EFC Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds, held in Toulouse (France).
- publication of an IYM leaflet for wide distribution, an informal monthly newsletter from the IYM Co-ordination Unit as well as contributions to the publication of the Mountain Forum Newsletter and to Mountain Research and Development
- The 7<sup>th</sup> Inter-agency Meeting on Mountains, held in Geneva with roughly 40 organisations represented and the main focus on preparations for the IYM.
- Support to the IYM Focus Group of Permanent Representatives of concerned mountain countries to the United Nations, New York, including preparations for the official launch of the IYM at the United Nations, New York on 11 December 2001.

32. Other activities included collection of national information through a questionnaire on the IYM to all countries; further development of the IYM-website; development of a first draft for an IYM-communication strategy; establishment of an IYM-contacts data base; preparation of an IYM events data base; continued interaction with national IYM-committees in a number of countries; preparation of a tool kit for IYM observance at national level; finalisation and presentation to delegates from selected countries during the FAO Council of a multi-donor Trust Fund; development and strengthening of partnerships related to the IYM through travel and attendance of external meetings. They included meetings with partners in New York and Washington, the Alpine Forum, Bergamo (Italy), the African Mountain Association, Maseru (Lesotho), the ICIMOD donors and support group, Kathmandu (Nepal), and the Research for Mountain Area Development Workshop, Abisko (Sweden). A mission to Armenia and Kyrgyzstan was conducted to provide support to the management of mountain forests and to the IYM-preparations,

33. The review of *Silva Mediterranea* was finalised. The results were presented to the Near East and European Forestry Commissions and to an informal meeting of experts gathered during the 30<sup>th</sup> session of the European Forestry Commission, as well as to the 14<sup>th</sup> session of COFO. The 18<sup>th</sup> Session of *Silva Mediterranea* will be held in Ismaïlia (Egypt). Support was provided to the *Silva Mediterranea* research networks.

34. A number of activities supported the regional process on the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in the Northern Mediterranean and the Near East regions.

## **STRENGTHENING FORESTRY RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND EXTENSION SYSTEMS**

35. Assistance to member countries in adapting their forestry research, education and extension systems and approaches to the new requirements and conditions in the forestry sector remained the main focus.

36. A TCP project in Slovenia, "Capacity building for support to private forest owners and public participation", was completed successfully. On the basis of this positive experience, an outline for a regional project was prepared to develop similar activities in other countries in Central and Eastern Europe. A workshop for the finalisation of the regional project proposal will be held in Slovenia on 17-20 September 2001.

## **FORESTRY POLICY AND PLANNING**

### **a) Support to national forest programmes**

37. A study on "Cross-sectoral linkages in Forestry" was initiated in collaboration with the Chair of Forest Economics and Policy of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology while a study on "Privatisation, what does it mean for forestry?" was initiated with the collaboration of the Chair of Economic and Financial Policy, University of Rome. A study "An Overview of National Forest Funds: current approaches and future opportunities" was prepared as a contribution to the Oslo Workshop on Finance for Sustainable Forest Management (January 2001).

38. Under the framework of the EU-supported project "Information and Analysis for Sustainable Forest Management project" (GCP/RLA/133/EC), a study on "Forestry institutions: capacities and improvement opportunities" was started. It will cover 13 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

39. A number of short-term Technical Co-operation Programme projects are being carried out in countries of Eastern Europe and elsewhere. They include:

- "Support to the Preparation of the Forestry and Rural Development Plan of the Buják Region" in Hungary. The project will prepare a comprehensive regional forestry and rural development plan for the above-mentioned region and generate the documentation of lessons learned and of the various steps taken in the process that can be replicated elsewhere. A technical backstopping mission was carried out to the country in March 2000.
- "Assistance to strengthen the institutional development and improve the state forest management" in Albania.
- "Development of the Private Forestry Sector in Lithuania". This project was finalised and its Terminal Statement prepared.



- "Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of the Latvian Forest Authority". This project was also finalised and its Terminal Statement prepared.
- "Assistance for the Preparation of a National Forestry Programme for Turkey" (TCP/TUR/0066). Its long-term objectives are to build up institutional capacity and mechanisms for preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies and strategies for the forestry sector with the participation of stakeholders in decision making.
- "Forestry Institutions Capacity Building in Kosovo" (OSRO/KOS/101/NOR). The purpose of the project is to help to identify Kosovo long term strategic objectives, increase the institutional capacity to manage forest resources, set the sectoral policy and legal framework and a forestry development program in Kosovo, with particular emphasis on forestry policy and law development.

40. A FAO/Netherlands Partnership Programme was initiated with the objectives to support FAO's capability to facilitate the implementation and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of national forest programmes; strengthen national forest programmes in selected countries (as agreed between FAO and the Netherlands), including inter-sectoral aspects of national forest programmes; support decentralisation, devolution, and participatory processes in the agreed countries; and assist selected countries to improve their capability to collect and analyse reliable and timely information about forest resources, utilisation and conservation.

41. In response to resolutions from the European Council and the UN Commission for Environment and Social Affairs (ECOSOC is the host for the UN Commission on Sustainable Development), a group of agency representatives have worked together with FAO to develop a proposal for an innovative partnership - the National Forest Programme *Facility* - to assist developing countries with national forest programme processes. The proposal is the result of an intensive collaborative effort with a broad group of partners from both the European Union and its Member States, as well as with partner institutions from the developing countries and NGOs.

42. The *Facility* will directly support the processes of formulation, updating and implementation of national forest programmes in those developing countries that could need and request its assistance. The main support will be addressed to improve the country capacity to carry out national forest programme processes, improve related information system and management and capturing local knowledge. Particular emphasis would be made on addressing poverty alleviation and governance issues through civil society empowerment and enhanced participation of a broad range of stakeholders. The projected costs for a five-year period is US\$ 32 million.

43. Countries nominated National Focal Points for the FAO-EC Data Collection Project in Asia and a network was established for the day-to-day communication among the project staff and the National Focal Points. An inception workshop was held.

44. The *1999 Yearbook of Forest Products* was produced in all five official languages of FAO. This is the first FAO Yearbook produced in-house that has met the five-language standard requested by member countries. The five-language edition is on the FAO Forestry Department web site. Preparations for the *1999 Yearbook of Forest Products* are well underway based on a joint interagency questionnaire that involves FAO, the International Tropical Timber Organisation, the Statistical Agency of the European Union (EUROSTAT) and the UN Economic Commission for Europe.

45. European Forestry Sector Outlook Study (EFSOS) – support was provided to the meetings of EFSOS focal points.

## **FOREST PRODUCTS**

### **a) Harvesting, Engineering and the Environment**

46. The database on Environmental Impact Assessment Related to Forest Utilization for Tropical Asia and America, an output of an Austrian Trust Fund Project was completed. In a review of 266 publications on forest harvesting economics of "Reduced Impact Logging "(RIL) were assessed. FOP formed an alliance with the "Association pour le développement de l'information environnementale" (ADIE) and a network with WWF, IUCN, USAID, TFF, ITTO, CIFOR and CIRAD Forêts to collaborate in the improvement of forest harvesting in Central and West Africa. A first step into this direction was the completion of a case study in Central African Republic for the draft Regional Code of Forest Harvesting in Africa was completed, under the auspices of an EC/FAO Project. To enhance the communication amongst the collaborating agencies, FOPH started an electronic list server on harvesting techniques in French.

### **b) Trade and Marketing of Forest Products**

47. The web site for the Forest Products Marketing Programme was completed and the *Compendium of Forest Products Marketing Databases* was published, including on the FAO web-site.

48. A seminar *Building confidence among forest certification schemes and their supporters* was organised with GTZ and ITTO in Rome in February 2001. The report is available on <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/003/X6720E/X6720E00.HTM>. FAO continued to play a role in the international dialogue on forest certification. The Forest Department was represented in two international seminars on Mutual Recognition between forest certification schemes held in Brussels, as well as on a number of other international events. Jointly with ITTO and GTZ, a workshop on confidence building amongst representatives and supporters of different certification schemes. The Forestry Department also actively participated in the FAO Working Group on Follow-up to Multilateral Trade Negotiations

49. In April 2001, a Trust Fund project on trade and sustainable forest management was signed with the Japanese Government.

50. An International Workshop on Sustainable Development of Marketing of Non-Wood Forest Products in Countries in Transition to Market Economies was held in Chisinau, Moldova, in October 2000.

**c) Forest Products Utilization**

51. Recovered paper data 1997-1998 & 1998-1999 and Pulp and paper capacities 1999-2004 were published.

52. Two project proposals were prepared in collaboration with the University of British Columbia, IIASA and CIFOR: "Future forest harvests and sustainable forest management"; and "Considerations in the management of secondary forests and plantation forests in tropical countries".

53. A joint FAO/CEPI meeting was organised in Rome to review the respective roles of the Advisory Committee on Paper and Wood Products (ACPWP) and the International Forum of Forest Industry Associations (IFFPA) and to strengthen collaboration with private sector. The FAO Advisory Committee on Paper and Wood Products held its forty-second session on 27 April 2001 at FAO HQs in Rome. It was attended by 15 members and 44 other participants from 24 countries and 5 international organisations.

54. Collaboration with ATIBT and the private forest industry sector was strengthened and FAO staff participated in the ATIBT Forum, held in Turkey on 11 and 12 May. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ATIBT will be celebrated with a forum at FAO in October 2001.

**d) Wood Energy**

55. Work continued on the Unified Wood Energy Terminology (UWET). The English version of the paper on UWET has been translated into Spanish. Activities continued on wood energy undertaken within the framework of the FAO-EC Partnership Programme. A Letter of Agreement was signed with IEA Bioenergy to initiate work on definition of a harmonised terminology and socio-economic aspects of wood energy systems.

56. FAO's woodfuel statistical data for Latin America, Near East, Asia and OECD countries were reviewed. New data was incorporated into the global woodfuels database and tables covering more than 150 countries for the years 1995 and 1997 were prepared.

57. Technical papers on the socio-economic aspect of Bioenergy: A focus on employment and Analysis of economic and financial aspects of wood energy systems and comparison with other conventional energy sources were prepared. The Forest Energy Forum (FEF) web site was

improved with new documents, additional links and new sources of information. FEF Newsletters Issues 6 and 7 were distributed. A working paper on Institutional and legal aspects regulating wood energy activities in European countries was published.

e) **Climate Change**

58. The FAO Forestry Department chairs the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Climate Change. As such, staff members participated on behalf of FAO in an observer capacity in the Sixth Conference of Parties (COP6) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (13-24 November). A Letter of Agreement has been signed with CIRAD-Forêt to initiate work on *The Potential of instruments related to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change for Forestry in Africa*. Together with CIRAD-Forêt FAO is presently preparing a booklet on "The Potential of instruments related to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change for Forestry in Africa", for foresters in African Member countries. FAO also restarted the process of discussing forest-related definitions like those on forests, afforestation, reforestation and deforestation, in order to accommodate the needs resulting from the Post-UNCED Conventions on biodiversity, combatting desertification and climate change.

59. As a response to the increased demand for climate related work in forestry the has opened a new professional staff position on forestry and climate change.

60. Within the framework of the FAO Netherlands Partnership Programme, FAO started a regional project in Central America on strategy- and capacity building to deal with the options and challenges resulting from climate change for the forestry sector. In this project, FAO is cooperating with the Central American Commission for Sustainable Development (CCAD), IUCN and CIFOR.

61. FAO also provided contributions to the IPCC Special Report on LUCF and participated in the Fourth Lead Authors Meeting of the Special Report on Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry convened by the IPCC Secretariat (Geneva, January 2001).

NOTE: The Annual Report of FAO's Forestry Department for 2000 is available from FAO Forestry Department, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, Roma 00100, Italy or from Forestry-Information@fao.org

## ACTIVITIES OF OTHER PRINCIPAL SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF ECE RELEVANT TO THE TIMBER COMMITTEE

62. Following the Economic Commission for Europe decision asking its Principal Subsidiary Bodies to develop further intersectoral linkages, the special topic at the Committee's session will be "ECE intersectoral cooperation, trade, timber, environment, energy" (see doc. TIM/2001/5). Under provisional agenda item 6, special topic, representatives of the following ECE PSBs: Committee on Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development, Committee on Environmental Policy and Committee on Sustainable Energy will be invited to present relevant activities of their programme of work which are of interest to the Committee.

63. The relevant activities of the Committee on Human Settlements are described below. The Committee is invited to review this information, comment on it, and take it into account when determining its programme of work.

### HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

#### a) Development of human settlements statistics

64. The Committee, together with the Conference of European Statisticians, develops and improves international human settlements statistics, and publishes the *Bulletin of Housing and Building Statistics for Europe and North America* every two years. The statistics are also available at the following website: <http://www.unece.org/env/hs/bulletin>. A group of experts coordinates activities in housing statistics in ECE and the European Union.

#### b) Country profiles on the housing sector

65. The housing sector has a critical role to play in ensuring the success of economic and social development in the ECE region and the reform process in countries in transition. At the same time, the process of transition to a market economy has had a profound impact on housing policy implementation and management. This project represents a tool for Governments to analyse their housing policies, strategies, institutional and financial frameworks for the housing sector and to compare the progress made internationally. Country profiles on Bulgaria, Poland, Slovakia and Lithuania have been published. The country profile project is presented on the website <http://www.unece.org/env/hs/cph>.

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