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Promoting sustainable development in forestry

Illegal logging – a major challenge

The UNECE Timber Committee has identified illegal logging as an important market issue which denies revenues to governments, industries and forest owners, negatively affects workers and compromises sustainable forest management. It is a major challenge for both individual countries and the international community. Availability on world markets of wood products derived from illegal logging is drawing attention to the gravity of this problem and its place among the causes of deforestation and has also placed severe downward price pressure on products from legally and sustainably managed forest operations. UNECE and FAO are jointly organizing a Workshop on Illegal Logging and Trade of Illegally-derived Forest Products in the UNECE Region (16 and 17 September).



The Workshop will provide a forum for discussion on forest law enforcement, governance and trade, illegal logging and trade of illegally-sourced forest products in the UNECE region. Participants will try to identify the main types and causes of illegal logging in the region and to estimate, on the basis of national reports, the extent of the problem. The national reports will be based on a questionnaire that defines illegal logging as timber harvesting activities that fail to respect national and sub-national laws and norms that regulate such harvesting operations. Acts such as tax evasion or acquiring timber concessions through corrupt deals, or timber smuggling, although clearly criminal acts, are considered different illegal acts and are therefore excluded from this definition. Preliminary consideration will also be given to what international activity, if any, is desirable to combat illegal logging and trade in the UNECE region.

Strategic Review

The UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission launched in late 2003 a strategic review process of their integrated programme of work on forests and timber, which will be formally adopted at the joint session to be held on 5-9 October in Geneva. The strategic review process was carried out in wide consultation with member countries and stakeholders; it addressed issues such as the objective and strategy of the integrated programme, priorities, outputs, methods of work and resources, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement.

The UNECE/FAO integrated work programme on forests and timber contributes to achieving sustainable forest management, including the sound and legal use of wood, other forest products and services, throughout the UNECE region. In order to support forest management, including the use of wood, other forest products and services, which is sustainable from the ecological, economic and social point of view, a good balance needs to be maintained between these three aspects, based on

a consensus of all stakeholders as regards goals and methods. Although achieving sustainable forest management is essentially a national responsibility, regional international cooperation will contribute through, for example, developing and applying tools to analyse and monitor both policy and developments on the ground, collecting, validating and disseminating information and analysis, and stimulating the exchange of experience.

A number of new proposals based on member countries' priorities have emerged from the Strategic Review. Resource allocation focuses more on activities such as forest resources assessment (FRA) and indicators of sustainable forest management in the region as well as on policy development in the forest and forest product sector.

UNECE/FAO are at the centre of developing indicators for sustainable forest management, not only as regards wood but also diversity, protection, and social aspects.

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UNECE/FAO Forest Products Annual Market Review, 2003-2004

This part of the Timber Bulletin, Volume LVI, provides general and statistical information on forest products markets in 2003-2004 and forecasts up to 2005 in the UNECE region. An overview chapter is followed by a chapter on the policy implications of market developments, then a description of the economic situation and factors affecting forest products markets in the region. Market developments in five standard sectors, based on annual country-supplied statistics, are described for wood raw materials, sawn softwood, sawn hardwood, wood-based panels and paper and paperboard. Regular chapters discuss markets for certified forest products, value-added wood products and tropical timber. In each chapter production, trade and consumption are analysed and relevant developments on specific markets and policies are included.

The goal of the Forest Products Annual Market Review is to provide the earliest comprehensive statistics and analysis on forest products markets.

This information is intended for policy makers, researchers, investors and forest products marketing specialists in governments, research institutions, universities and the private business sector. It includes extensive statistical information combined with an analysis of trends and developments and draws attention to emerging policy problems.

The forthcoming joint session of the Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission in October will discuss markets and policy related issues and agree on a Statement on Timber markets in the UNECE region.

For more information on the activities of the UNECE Timber Committee FAO Forestry Commission, see the Timber Pages of the UNECE web site www.unece.org/trade/timber
e-mail: info.timber@unece.org
Those interested in receiving regularly the TimberBranch Newsletter, please contact the secretariat at the e-mail address above.

Effects of air pollution on forests

A report by the coordinating centre of the International Cooperative Programme on Assessment and Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Forests (ICP Forests) has reported that after a recuperation of tree crown conditions in the mid-1990s, a worsening was recorded in Europe in 2003 with nearly 23% of the trees classified as damaged – moderately or severely defoliated or dead – partly explained by the extreme heat and drought in large parts of Europe during summer 2003. Atmospheric sulphur and nitrate depositions have been decreasing since 1996 and have been



stable for ammonium at certain, mostly remote, forest plots. However the critical thresholds are still exceeded at many sites. Air pollution abatement policies have had positive effects but the recovery of forest soils will take decades, even if recent international agreements are fully implemented. Therefore sustained clean air policy at the international level is vital. Forest condition monitoring continues to be an essential instrument for the preservation of one of the most natural ecosystems on the continent.

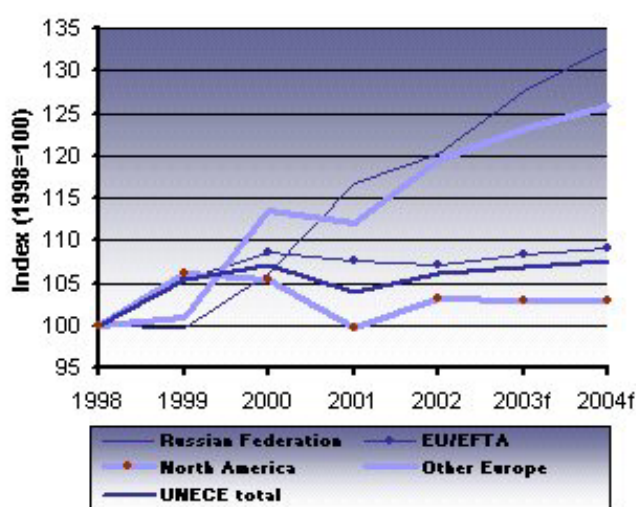
Public relations in forestry

The FAO-ECE Forest Communicators Network (FCN), formally called the Team of Public Relations Specialists in the Forest and Forest Industries Sector, was established by the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission in support of the overall goal of creating a positive image of the forest and forest industries sector in the UNECE region (including all phases of forest resource management and forest industry). The 12th meeting of the network, held in Sofia on 1-4 June, brought together forest communicators and experts from the whole UNECE region to discuss and develop solutions for fulfilling the Network's mandate (see the Timber website).

For further information please contact:
Information Service
UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
CH - 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Tel: +41(0)22 917 44 44 / Fax: +41(0)22 917 05 05
E-mail: info.ece@unece.org,
Web site: <http://www.unece.org>

Apparent consumption of forest products in the UNECE region, 1998-2004



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