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Timber Committee

Seventieth session

Geneva, 16-19 October 2012

Report of the seventieth session of the Timber Committee

Introduction

1. The Timber Committee held its seventieth session in Geneva from 16 to 19 October 2012. Representatives of the following 25 countries attended the meeting: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America.
2. Representatives of the European Commission attended the session.
3. Representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) attended the session. The European Forest Institute (EFI) and the Liaison Unit Madrid of Forest Europe (the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe) were also represented.
4. The following international non-governmental organizations were represented: Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI), European Panel Federation (EPF), European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR), Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC), European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-BOIS).
5. The Chair, Ms. Linda Langner (United States), opened the session. The Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Mr. Sven Alkalaj, also delivered opening remarks.

I. Adoption of the agenda

Documentation: ECE/TIM/2012/01

6. The provisional agenda was adopted.

II. “The green life of wood: assessing wood’s environmental impact”: report of the workshop and recommendations

7. A workshop on “The green life of wood: assessing wood’s environmental impact from cradle to cradle” was held on Monday, 15 October. The workshop was organized to learn more about the life cycle of wood products and gather scientific evidence on the sustainability of the material.

8. The secretariat reported on the recommendations of the workshop. An informal drafting group was formed to complete the set of recommendations (contained in the annex to the present report) and to prepare specific recommendations for the consideration of the Timber Committee.

9. The Timber Committee:

(1) Requested the ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section

(a) to prepare a policy brief based on information provided at “The Green Life of Wood” workshop;

(b) to survey member States for any current, projected or anticipated regulations affecting environmental impact evaluations for materials, subject to the availability of funds;

(c) to organize an awareness and capacity-building workshop for all relevant actors based on the survey results and on life-cycle assessment best practices, subject to the availability of funds.

(2) Suggested that the ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section and the member States explore opportunities to promote and advocate for design professionals (architects, engineers and others) to receive comprehensive training on material impact evaluation.

(3) Encouraged member States, industry and other stakeholders to develop a comprehensive, credible, validated life cycle inventory for forest products consistent with internationally recognized standards such as ISO 14040.

III. The contribution of forests to economic development

Documentation: ECE/TIM/2012/2

10. Mr. Steven Stone, Chief, Economics and Trade Branch, UNEP, delivered a keynote presentation on “The State of the Green Economy”. He stressed the importance of creating wealth and employment without depleting the countries’ resource base and the need to look at natural resource stock depletion when analysing wealth. Mr. Stone also outlined the major outcomes for the green economy at the Rio+20 conference. The importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting had been emphasized, as well as the need to achieve future sustainable development goals. The positive developments in support of the green economy had been stressed as well as the many challenges ahead, as the green economy moved forward at different speeds in different economies. He concluded by

reiterating that, in addition to political will, market forces were necessary to drive the green economy.

11. Mr. Kit Prins, international consultant, presented a paper on “Forests and economic development” prepared as a contribution to the tenth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) to be held in April 2013, whose theme is Forests and Economic Development. The paper describes how forests contribute to economic development in the ECE region, presenting major trends and challenges.

12. A discussion followed and specific suggestions were made by Norway, the United Kingdom, the European Commission, Ireland and Finland. Norway expressed concerns regarding the nature of and mandate for the paper. In particular, if the paper was to provide policy advice, Norway was of the opinion that it needed more thorough and detailed discussion.

13. The secretariat clarified that the paper had been prepared at the request of the joint TC/EFC bureaux in order to summarize for a wider audience the results of recent major studies carried out under the auspices of ECE and FAO (e.g. outlook studies, forest products market reviews). The paper would be presented to the UN Forum on Forests as a publication and was not meant to be an official submission representing the views of ECE member States.

14. The United Kingdom called for greater emphasis to be placed on the role of regulation in stimulating innovation in the forestry and wood-processing sector and for further thought on how the paper’s main messages could be conveyed to a wider audience.

15. The need for better identification of cause and effect relationships was pointed out by the European Commission.

16. Ireland stressed the need to use the most updated data available in the paper.

17. Finland stressed the communication value of such a paper, which would draw the attention of UNFF to the contribution that forests in the ECE region make to economic development.

18. A revised paper will take into consideration the suggestions by the Committee, review the supporting data and incorporate the findings from recent studies such as the *Russian Forest Sector Outlook Study*.

19. Delegates were invited to submit further comments and suggestion by 30 October 2012.

IV. Market developments in 2012 and prospects for 2013

Documentation: ECE/TIM/2012/3

20. The segment opened with a series of presentations covering various themes in forest products markets. Mr. Dieter Lechner (Austrian Woodworking Industry Association) demonstrated the importance of the construction industry in driving innovation and the use of wood in Europe. The secretariat gave an overview of the *Forest Products Annual Market Review*, focusing on the lagging wood markets amid a weakening economic outlook, although growth outside of developed economy markets promised opportunities for the industry.

21. Ms. Svetlana Atanasova (European Commission) provided an overview of the EU Timber Regulation and its due diligence requirements.
22. Mr. Bernard De Galember (Confederation of the European Paper Industry - CEPI) outlined the goal of reducing carbon emissions by 80% compared with 1990 levels. He pledged that the industry would do its utmost to reach this goal through innovation and research.
23. Future use of wood energy was the topic of the presentation given by Mr. Francisco Aguilar's (University of Missouri, United States), which brought out the significant potential for this product although price competition and policy changes could heavily affect demand.
24. Mr. Ivan Eastin (University of Washington, United States) highlighted the internal drivers of demand for forest products in China and the potential impact on the ECE region.
25. As follow-up to their chapter in the *Review*, Mr. Douglas Clark and Mr. Olin Bartlomé (Lignum, Zurich) discussed innovation in the forest-products industry and recent developments in cross-laminated timber.
26. Questions were raised about the EU Timber Regulation's impact on the industry and trade flows, with concerns expressed about cost implications and the regulatory burden. A further issue was the use of wood from EU forests that is processed outside the EU and exported back into the EU. Although a number of issues remain to be clarified, the intent of the Regulation was to ensure that timber was legally harvested and not to require more information than would otherwise be needed in normal commerce.
27. Interest was expressed in improving information on the costs and forest impacts of wood-energy subsidies and policy support. A number of delegations raised the issue of evaluating the transportation and environmental costs of wood energy. One delegate pointed to life-cycle analysis as a suitable method for measuring such costs. The cascaded use of wood and a sufficiently high price for timber were considered important in ensuring a stable supply of wood for energy purposes.
28. In response to questions about China's impact on the ECE region, the increasing role of domestic consumption in China was seen as a factor impacting the continued improvements in productivity and technology. However, plantation-supplied timber from within China was not expected to meet the growth in demand.
29. Delegations strongly supported the new chapter on innovation in the *Review*. The need to widen the scope of discussion on innovation was raised using the example of wood-fibre insulation. Other issues included the possibility of using hardwood in cross-laminated timber (which seems to be difficult due to fasteners), the importance of providing comprehensive solutions from building construction, and the possible lowering of costs to support innovative products, along with the proven environmental benefits.
30. The Chair moderated a session reviewing the draft Statement on Forest Products Markets in 2012 and 2013. Some changes were incorporated, and then reviewed by the drafting committee. The Statement can be viewed on the website at: www.unece.org/forests.html.
31. Mr. Alexander Panfilov, State Secretary and Deputy Head of the Federal Forestry Agency of the Russian Federation presented the main findings of the FAO *Russian Forest Sector Outlook Study*. This report presents an independent expert evaluation of the state of

the Russian forest sector and how it might develop, based on several alternate scenarios, going up to 2030. It addresses many aspects of the sector, including management, industry, policy, science, education, the environment, certification and legality of wood origin. It is based on internationally accepted approaches to sustainable forest management and recognition that the Russian forest is an ecological asset of global importance.

V. Review of activities since the sixty-ninth session and activities for 2013

Documentation: ECE/TIM/2012/4

32. The secretariat informed the Committee about activities undertaken since the sixty-ninth session and presented a list of proposed activities for 2013, based on the programme of work.

33. Norway recalled the need to also take into account the recommendations on the workshop on the Green Life of Wood when identifying tasks for 2013. Sweden stressed the importance of communications and of disseminating outputs. This was also reiterated by the delegation of Finland, which emphasized, in particular, the need for outreach beyond the forest-sector constituency. Finland also stressed the need to enhance and strengthen work on forest-based and wood energy.

34. Following a question on budgetary needs for 2013, the secretariat explained that the list of proposed activities would be priced after it had been approved, and that the information would be given to member States shared before the end of 2012 in order to seek their financial support.

35. The Committee approved the list of activities as contained in document ECE/TIM/2012/4, including updates presented by the secretariat. These included activities related to outlook studies for the ECE region, where the secretariat would coordinate or facilitate future work – in particular, by organizing in 2013 two meetings of the Team of Specialists.

36. The Committee also supported work on the collaborative forest resources questionnaire and the secretariat's involvement in the related partnership with relevant international organizations and agreed that all ECE countries be covered by the questionnaire.

37. The delegation of the Russian Federation proposed that a meeting be held in that country in 2013 to discuss problems related to wood energy. The modalities would be agreed upon with the secretariat.

VI. Communication and outreach

Documentation: ECE/TIM/2012/5

38. The secretariat presented ECE/FAO activities that contributed to the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All as well as an educational tool on European Forests that would be launched in November and be addressed to students and teachers. A proposal for a 2013 European Forest Week was also presented.

39. In response to a question from Norway, the secretariat explained that the European Forestry Commission held in Lisbon from 27 to 30 April 2010 had requested the TC/EFC bureaux to decide on the organization of a second European Forest Week (EFW) in 2013 and to base its decision on the assessment of activities developed and lessons learned from the International Year of the Forests (IYF) in 2011.

40. Given the success of the International Year, the joint ECE/FAO bureaux recommended that a second European Forest Week be organized in 2013, from 9 to 13 December, in parallel to Metsä2013.

41. The secretariat clarified that work for the Week would not draw on its resources, as the public outreach material would be provided online on different organizations' websites. It would be the responsibility of countries to undertake activities at the national and local levels.

42. Finland elaborated on the expected role of the ECE/FAO Forest Communicators Network in this regard, and mentioned that for the Week a special taskforce would be formed and was expected to meet in Rovaniemi on 3 and 4 December this year to develop messages and guidelines.

43. The Committee endorsed the proposal to organize the European Forest Week from 9 to 13 December 2013 and insisted on the importance of engaging other non-forest sectors in this event.

VII. Outcome of the ECE review process

44. The Committee was informed about the ECE review of the 2005 reform process, as far as the work of the Timber Committee was concerned. A new name was expected by delegations in the Executive Committee as part of the review process and in order to better reflect the current mandate of the Committee.

45. Delegates were asked to propose a new name for the Committee, for final approval by the Executive Committee. While mandates and activities had been evolving over time, since its establishment, the Committee's name had never changed, unlike those of other ECE committees.

46. Delegates discussed whether to change the name and possible options for the new name. In order to reach agreement on one of them, an informal group of interested countries was formed by the Chair.

47. The group consisting of Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Eurostat suggested a new name that would be in line with the mandate of the Committee, which is to "... provide member countries with the information and services which they need for policy-and decision-making as regards their forest and forest industry sector ...", as per paragraph 2 of the Mandate and Terms of Reference of the Timber Committee (ECE/TIM/2008/7).

48. The name would also clarify that the work of the Committee focuses on all forest-related products beyond strictly timber-related matters, as the current name implied, and that it is separate from other existing forest bodies.

49. The group therefore proposed the name “Committee on Forest and Forest Industry” (translated in Russian as: Комитет по лесу и лесной отрасли, translated in French as: Comité des Forêts et de l’Industrie Forestière), which was agreed by the Committee.

50. Austria expressed concern that the change of name of the Committee might lead to confusion with the name and mandate of the European Forestry Commission. France regretted the short notice given by the secretariat for considering this matter.

51. The secretariat explained that the matter had only recently been discussed in the ECE Executive Committee and that proposals for the change of name were contained in document ECE/TIM/2012/9 and ECE/TIM/2012/11. The Committee recommendations on the name would be forwarded by the Chair to the Executive Committee for a final decision.

VIII. Strategic review of the ECE/FAO Joint Programme of Work

Documentation: ECE/TIM/2012/6; 7; 8 and 9

52. Presentations were made on the 2013 strategic review process. The first focused on the results of the self-assessments by the teams of specialists, which was conducted from November 2011 to April 2012 (ECE/TIM/2012/6).

53. Delegations were briefed on the results of the general survey, which was launched in early 2012 (see document ECE/TIM/2012/7). The Committee took note of these results. Ireland pointed out that in view of the relatively small number of completed answers to the questionnaire (64), the survey results should be interpreted accordingly.

54. A briefing on the results of the secretariat’s assessment of outputs followed (see document ECE/TIM/2012/8). A representative of EUROSTAT asked for clarification on the proposal to establish a new Team of Specialists on Forest Products Statistics. He further indicated the need to improve the website of the Forestry and Timber Section and suggested that attention should be paid to access to the UNECE/FAO statistical databases.

55. The secretariat clarified that since the mandate of the Working Party had been expanded much beyond forest products statistics to include oversight of all teams of specialists, there might be a need to provide a new platform to ensure adequate support to forest products statistics.

56. Sweden stressed the importance of holding joint sessions of the Committee and the European Forestry Commission as that would make the two bodies work as one. Sweden also emphasized that the Commission offered a unique opportunity for the Committee and the Commission to provide inputs to the global programme of FAO through its governing bodies, especially as the new reform of FAO emphasized the role of work at the regional level.

57. Mr. Rob Busink, EFC vice-chair and member of the joint bureaux, briefed the delegations on the bureaux’ inputs to the review (see document ECE/TIM/2012/9). Norway emphasized the role of the Forestry and Timber Section as a knowledge platform and called for more commitment and ownership by member States. It further requested more information on the policy advice that the Section could provide according to the proposal of the joint bureaux.

58. The bureaux indicated that good and reliable information was required for policy making and that it was precisely the role of the Section to provide member States with

expert insights based on the information it collected. The provision of policy advice should not be taken for policymaking, which was undertaken elsewhere. On the same issue, Finland indicated that policy dialogues were meant to raise the profile of the forestry sector as a whole.

59. Germany also welcomed the recommendations made by the joint bureaux and emphasized their importance in making the work of ECE/FAO relevant to all stakeholders. Although the recommendation to develop a programme of work that would be more appealing to member States was not new, the task to develop it was complicated as priorities differed among subregions.

60. Germany requested additional information on the process for a name change for the Committee and the Section. The secretariat made reference to the discussion on the ECE review with regard to the process, explaining that the change of name of the Committee was the prerogative of the UNECE Executive Committee, whereas the name of the Section was decided by UNECE and FAO.

61. In response to the proposal from the joint bureaux, Norway requested additional clarification on the organization of high-level segments during ECE/FAO joint meetings. Finland clarified that high-level segments were meant to raise the profile of the work of the ECE/FAO, as had been the case during Rio+20, where ministers engaged in a dialogue on forests in a green economy.

62. The secretariat concluded the item by providing information on the process that would lead to the formulation of a programme of work based on the strategic review.

IX. Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy

Documentation: ECE/TIM/2012/10

63. A presentation on the Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy was provided by the secretariat, followed by a presentation by Ms. Lyubov Polyakova, Senior Officer of Science, International Cooperation and Public Relations Division of the State Forest Resource Agency of Ukraine. The presentation concerned the main outcomes of the Lviv Forum on Forest in a Green Economy held from 11 to 14 September 2012 in Ukraine, covering Eastern Europe and North and Central Asia.

64. This Forum contributed to raising awareness and promoting the concept of the green economy in the forest sector in the region. As a result of the participatory nature of the meeting, forest-related issues and challenges of the region could be addressed in an effective way within and outside the region.

65. General comments on the Action Plan were then provided by delegations. It was recalled that the mandate to further develop the document had been given to the secretariat at the last joint TC/EFC meeting “Orman2011” (Antalya, Turkey, 10 to 14 October 2011).

66. Norway was concerned with the political nature of the document, which seemed too prescriptive for governments and other stakeholders and suggested that the related sections be reformulated.

67. Finland recalled the positive feedback on the Action Plan already received on different occasions, including at the Rio+20 conference and COFO.

68. The format of the documents was also addressed. Norway indicated that a tabular layout of the activities, as in the document, might not be appropriate, as it could appear as a

“to do” list for external actors. However, Sweden and Finland emphasized that the layout provided a good overview of the Action Plan, which would be useful when reaching out to other sectors. Norway requested the secretariat to ensure consistency between the Action Plan and the next joint programme of work for actions that are directed to ECE/FAO. The secretariat explained that the relevant actions would be reflected in the revised version of the joint programme of work.

69. Having discussed the Action Plan section by section, the Committee made the following recommendations:

- (1) The mandate should be better clarified under section A.
- (2) The non-binding and non-prescriptive character should be stressed under section B.
- (3) The definition of the forest sector should be better elaborated.
- (4) Sustainable forest management should be properly addressed.
- (5) The overall vision should make reference to political commitments agreed under other processes in the ECE region.
- (6) How activities conducted by other organizations could be monitored should be clarified.
- (7) Actions A.2.2 and B.0.2 should be revised, as they appear too difficult to implement.
- (8) Action A.3.1 should be reformulated as it seems too prescriptive.
- (9) The importance of public awareness should be included under D.2.
- (10) Forest Europe should be added as an actor under E.5.2.

70. Germany pointed out that the recommendations from the workshop on “The Green Life of Wood” should also be reflected in pillar A.

71. UNEP said it would like to remain involved in developing the Action Plan and continue the partnership with ECE/FAO. It also indicated that it might participate in other activities listed under pillar C in the light of its follow-up to Rio+20.

72. Following a proposal from Norway, the Committee asked the secretariat to organize a consultation process with member States to further develop the Action Plan. Sweden and Finland suggested including all stakeholders in this process.

73. The Committee decided to organize a special session with the European Forestry Commission, to be held in the first or second quarter of 2013 to complete the Action Plan and the joint programme of work. The amendments and other editorial changes requested would be reflected in the next version of the Action Plan to be distributed for this meeting.

X. Outcomes of Rio+20 and FAO Committee on Forestry

74. The secretariat briefed delegates on the outcomes of the Rio+20 conference that were relevant to the forestry sector and the green economy. It also reported on the 22 June event organized with the support of the Governments of Finland and Sweden, “What is your priority action for the forest sector in a green economy?”.

75. It briefed delegations on outcomes relevant to the Committee that resulted from the FAO 21st Committee on Forestry (COFO) which took place in Rome from 24 to 28 September 2012 and reported on two events, “Taking action: the forest sector in a green economy in the ECE” organized by the secretariat and “Wood and the green economy: forest grow solutions to global challenges” organized by the World Bank and to which the secretariat had contributed.

76. Based on the COFO recommendation for FAO to consider establishing regional bodies similar to the Advisory Committee on Paper and Wood Products (ACPWP), delegations endorsed a recommendation for the secretariat to explore the possibility of establishing one for the ECE region, to ascertain the interest of potential participants and to draft terms of reference for such a committee for further discussion and approval by the Committee and the Commission at their next session.

XI. Draft ECE/FAO Joint Programme of Work 2014-2017

Documentation: ECE/TIM/2012/11

77. Mr. Heikki Granholm, member of the Timber Committee bureau and the joint bureaux, introduced document ECE/TIM/2012/11, containing draft elements of the joint programme of work of the Committee and the Commission for 2014-2017, as prepared by the joint bureaux.

78. Norway indicated that the draft elements offered a good overview of the proposed work areas and stressed the importance of Work Area 1 on Monitoring and Assessment and the need to secure funding for this activity.

79. Austria asked for clarification on how the actions contained in the Action Plan and attributed to ECE/FAO would be reflected in the new joint programme of work. The secretariat replied that relevant activities currently in the Action Plan and attributed to ECE/FAO would be included in the next version of the joint programme of work, for the consideration of member States.

80. Austria also referred to the JFSQ questionnaire and requested that, since next year’s Committee session was being held in December and that the Forest Products Annual Market Review would therefore not need to be produced by October, the deadline for replies from countries could be moved forward.

81. During the discussion of the joint programme of work, several proposals and amendments were made by member States. The secretariat duly recorded interventions, and specific suggestions would be reflected in the next version of the joint programme of work. In particular:

- (1) The overall goal should be reformulated.
- (2) The issue of cross-sectoral cooperation should be included under work area 2.
- (3) When referring to “forest products”, “services” should be added.
- (4) Biodiversity, energy and water should be added as relevant sectors under outreach (para. 23) under E, “Principles guiding implementation”.
- (5) It should be clarified how the annual list of activities based on the joint programme of work would be approved by parent bodies on an annual basis.

(6) General support for the list of teams of specialists was expressed by delegates, including the suppression of the Team of Specialists on Forest Fire, given the existence of other organizations/groups with similar mandates.

(7) A new section on the Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watershed should be added, including updates on the review of this body.

82. During discussion of the outlook studies, the secretariat informed the meeting about the results of the recent informal meeting of interested organizations on the future outlook studies. It recalled that current issues under discussion were: the timing of the next outlook studies and ways to find common methodologies for future studies.

83. The Committee agreed to organize an extraordinary meeting together with the European Forestry Commission in the first or second quarter of 2013 to consider the revised joint programme of work and the revised Action Plan.

XII. Biennial evaluation report for 2010-2012 and the draft Strategic Framework for the period 2014-2015

Documentation: ECE/TIM/2012/12 and ECE/TIM/2012/13

84. The Committee reviewed the outcome of the UNECE biennial evaluations 2010-2011, which were based on the framework of clusters of activities, according to the procedure approved by the joint bureaux.

85. The Committee was also informed about the draft strategic framework for 2014-2015.

86. Norway asked why in some cases the baseline was higher than the target. The secretariat explained that the baseline achievement has been reached through supporting workshops, which were not foreseen for the coming biennium.

87. The Committee endorsed both documents.

XIII. Election of officers

88. The Committee elected Mr. Heikki Granholm (Finland) as Chair and Ms. Langner (United States), Ms. Anna Zornaczuk-Luba (Poland) and Mr. Christoph Dürr as vice-chairs, to hold office from the end of the current session until the end of the seventy-first session. It thanked Mr. Branko Glavonjic (Serbia) for his invaluable contribution to the Committee's work during his tenure.

XIV. Any other business

89. In response to a request from the ECE Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, the secretariat presented a list of proposed publications for 2013 and 2014-2015. The following list for 2013 was approved:

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| (1) Forests in the Green Economy: Lviv Forum | ECE/TIM/SP/31 |
| (2) Forest and economic development | ECE/TIM/SP/32 |
| (3) Green Life of Wood, LCA | ECE/TIM/SP/33 |
| (4) European Forest Types | ECE/TIM/SP/34 |
| (5) Finding Forests: Organizational Source Book | ECE/TIM/SP/35 |

(6) Payment for Ecosystem Services ECE/TIM/SP/36

(7) Forest Products Annual Market Review ECE/TIM/SP/37

90. The following tentative list for 2014-2015 was approved:

(1) Forest Products Annual Market Review (2014)

(2) Forest Products Annual Market Review (2015)

(3) Action Plan for Forests in the Green Economy (2014)

(4) Forestry and Timber Section Programme of Work (2014)

(5) Outlook for Forest Products Markets (2015 or later-already in existing list)

(6) Other discussion and study papers (at least four per year). Subjects will be decided by the next joint TC/EFC meeting, to be held in Finland in 2013.

91. The Committee regretted ECE restrictions on the number of publications, which limited its ability to carry out its work.

92. Finland asked why the next FOREST EUROPE/UNECE/FAO State of Europe's Forests (SoEF) was not included in the list for 2014-2015. Switzerland enquired about the absence of the Russian translation of SoEF 2011. The secretariat clarified that because the United Nations did not have the copyright for the publication, it could neither print nor translate it.

93. Finland enquired about the copyright of data that member States had provided for processing by the United Nations for the compilation of that report. It also sought clarification about how data submitted to and processed by the United Nations could be provided for a publication for which the United Nations did not hold the copyright.

94. The Russian Federation supported this statement, stressing that the notion of copyright was crucial for this as well as other publications. The Russian Federation also requested to have this issue included in the report of the current session and to have it discussed at the next session of the Committee.

95. The representative of the Liaison Unit Madrid (LUM) said that the date of the publication has not been decided yet. She further added that the copyright issue had already been discussed and it has been decided that FOREST EUROPE would keep the copyright. The copyright issue could be discussed at the next Expert Level Meeting. The representative of LUM indicated that that meeting was expected to take place in March 2013.

XV. Date and place of the next session

96. The secretariat recalled that, at the last joint session held in Antalya, Turkey, in October 2011, the Government of Finland had offered to host the next Committee/Commission session. The representative of Finland then provided information on Rovaniemi, the meeting venue including meeting facilities and accessibility. He also presented the logo of the European Forest Week to be held during the same week of the Metsä2013 meeting (9-13 December 2013). He reminded delegations that as December was high season in Rovaniemi, hotel bookings would need to be made sufficiently in advance.

XVI. Adoption of the report

97. The report was adopted through item 11, paragraph 82. Items 12 to 16 were subsequently approved by the bureaux.

98. The meeting was closed at 12.05 p.m. on Friday, 19 October 2012.

Annex

Recommendations from the Workshop “The Green Life of Wood”

Introduction

1. After the presentations and joint discussion, the workshop participants gathered in working groups that drew up recommendations for the continuation of the work. It was generally recognized that Life-Cycle Analysis (LCA) as a tool is well suited to measuring the environmental sustainability of wood, but that further development of the methodology, communication efforts and education were needed so as to share the information related to LCA with relevant stakeholders.

Background

2. While informed opinion on forestry and environmental matters acknowledges the role of wood as a “green material” and as a vital factor in the fight to mitigate the effects of climate change, wood has yet to truly gain that image with the general public, most policymakers and the construction industry. Instead, it tends to have an image as being “traditional” and even “old fashioned”.

3. The Section needs to cast off this image of wood as a ‘traditional’ material, with no relevance to modern technologies, circumstances and concerns. Changing the public and investor perception of forest products is one of the many challenges facing the Section now, i.e. how to move wood from a well-established niche market to being the first and most obvious material of choice for a number of uses.

4. When it comes to building choices, other materials are often preferred over wood, despite their higher environmental impact. This choice is often to the detriment of sustainability, as forest products can be carbon neutral, sustainably harvested and used in an environmentally friendly manner. LCA can be applied to evaluate the overall environmental impacts of a material or a product throughout its life from cradle to grave, and it can help actors to understand which parts of a production chain are most harmful to the environment, as well as to compare different materials and products.

5. LCA is a comprehensive environmental accounting tool with well-established procedures and methods that are governed by rules and standards, primarily developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). It is an approach that covers the whole life cycle of a product or a service, looking at environmental impact from raw material extraction to manufacturing, to packaging, distribution, use and end of life.

6. The “cradle to cradle” approach refers to the possibility of further recycling a material. In LCA, process steps are identified for each stage, and inputs such as material and energy, as well as outputs such as emissions and pollutants, are determined. The inputs and outputs are grouped into impact categories according to environmental problems. Typical impact indicators include abiotic depletion, acidification, climate change, human toxicity, ecological toxicity, fossil fuel depletion, photo-oxidant smog formation and stratospheric ozone depletion.

7. With the help of LCA, informed decisions can be made regarding a product or a service in order to avoid transferring pollution from one life stage to another or from one medium (e.g. air/water/soil) to another. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that although carbon emissions and carbon footprinting represent an important part of life-cycle studies, carbon is only one of the many elements in LCA.

8. Customers and consumers are increasingly interested in environmentally sound consumption and greener procurement practices. Thus LCAs that follow an internationally recognized methodology, and which are certified by a panel of independent experts, can provide credible information for marketing communications.

9. Furthermore, companies, policymakers and NGOs are promoting life-cycle thinking because it provides a holistic view of the environmental performance of products. Additionally, investors benefit from using environmental performance indicators to support their valuations and evaluate company risk.

Conclusions of the Workshop

Life-cycle assessment (LCA) is a comprehensive environmental accounting tool for evaluating the overall environmental impact of a material or product throughout its life from cradle to grave, as well as from cradle to cradle.

- (1) LCA procedures and methods are governed by established rules and standards e.g. developed by ISO. However, further methodological development and information sharing is required.
- (2) We have sufficient evidence through LCA and other tools (e.g. forest data, certification) to demonstrate the environmental performance of wood and other forest-based products.
- (3) LCA provides a basis for making informed decisions along the whole value chain (from policy to production and consumption), thus improving resource efficiency.
- (4) The forest sector has not yet made full use of LCA in its work, including in its communications.

General recommendations on possible work on Life-Cycle Analysis (LCA)

Additional, possible actors identified by the Workshop are shown in italics.

- (1) Complete, accurate, objective national life cycle inventory databases based on internationally recognized standards (eg. ISO 14040)
- (2) Create national wood LCA boards/councils (*member States*)
- (3) Consider economic and social aspects in addition to the environmental aspects provided by LCA
- (4) Promote global rules for EPDs (environmental product declarations), e.g. by national LCA boards- (*key stakeholders such as architects, engineers, designers, building professionals*)

- (5) Recognize and promote LCAs that are fully transparent in terms of the processes for data collection, which data sets are used and how these data are presented (*national forest products associations*).

Recommendations to member States

- (1) Make the best use of existing data and studies (e.g. on LCA, carbon footprint, cascading uses) to develop tailored and rational arguments that are needed in order to support policies in favour of wood and wood products as environmentally friendly and low carbon building materials. Uncertainties and gaps in information about the impacts of wood harvesting and processing must be systematically addressed to ensure credibility of the discourse on wood performance. In certain cases, providing additional and transparent environmental data might be necessary to demonstrate the superior performance of wood. (*Governments but also forest industry, LCA Accountants, etc*).
- (2) Put “pro-wood” or low carbon/low energy policies which encourage/require environmental impact assessments (i.e. that avoid material discrimination while stimulating the use of wood) into action through introducing economic incentives (e.g. carbon credits, tax credits and reduced VAT...) and regulations (e.g. planning and building regulations). (*National and/or Local Governments*).
- (3) Support those policies by enhancing communication (a) with the general public (i.e. consumers) who need to be convinced of the sustainability of forest management (e.g. through certification) and (b) with professionals, who need to be convinced and educated on the technical specificities of wood (e.g. architects, engineers, specifiers). (*Governments, Academia, Forest Industry*).
- (4) Assist in creating conditions for the mobilization of wood from sustainably managed forests in order to meet the induced demand for wood and wood products, including by exploring opportunities for new woodland creation. A specific effort should be made to address the issue of harvesting in small forest holdings (lack of management, very small size, low profitability), which also provide a full range of environmental benefits (*Governments, State Forest Services, woodland consultants, forest owners and industries*).

Recommendations to the forest industry

- (1) Support the development of strong marketing and communication skills (for example: learn from best practices in other sectors)
- (2) Improve cooperation within and beyond the sector at all levels of the value chain: for instance, among sustainability certification schemes, and with a focus on single issues within subsectors of the forest value chain (for example cradle-to-cradle Life-Cycle Assessment for the hardwood sector within the UNECE region).
- (3) Improve investment in innovation and R & D and seek improved public and private funding to promote innovation and build on Forest Technology Platform (FTP) expertise

- (4) Communicate more effectively with key actors in plain language outside the sectors including policymakers, architects, designers and civil engineers. To this end: set up a database with best practice examples and case studies, use social media and promote the use of wood at all levels including schools, colleges and universities (eg. American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) and the Royal College of Art Design Competition (2012)).

Recommendations to the Timber Committee

- (1) Develop a strategy based on an agreed set of topics (LCA, Forest Resources, forest markets) and use the Timber Committee infrastructure/position to promote the credentials of wood and the wood industry as a green competitive material and industry.
 - (2) Make full use of the ECE-FAO Forest Communicators Network and the FAO Advisory Group on paper and wood to enhance communication on the sustainability and suitability of wood, also from an LCA perspective.
 - (3) Produce summary papers for policymakers on targeted topics. If we want policymakers to act on this issue, its strategic importance should be properly communicated to them. In particular, develop a policy paper on LCA based on the “Green life of wood” workshop and related recommendations to be shared with policymakers.
 - (4) Use the content of existing publications (e.g. Forest Products Annual Market Review, EFSOS) to produce more focused, synthesized outputs (e.g. policy briefs, fact sheets) that are tailored to wider audiences. Use ISO-LCA to communicate a consistent and compatible message to the outside world (notably policymakers and industry).
 - (5) Share information and promote the sustainable use of wood within other communities, inside and outside of the UNECE region, as well as in other sectors. This would include participation in meetings, but also outreach via publications, press releases, announcements and the involvement of other sectors in UNECE/FAO meetings.
 - (6) Make sure that the messages to be delivered in the context of the European Forest Week in 2013 include reference to the sustainability of wood.
 - (7) Integrate relevant recommendations from the above into the ECE/FAO Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy.
10. The secretariat took note of one comment from the Timber Committee on the recommendation for pro-wood policies, which indicated that it would be better if the recommendations on the use of LCA were presented as material-neutral policies. While studies have shown that wood is often, but not always, the most environmentally friendly choice, to have credibility it is important to acknowledge this.