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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR EUROPE**

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION**

Timber Committee

European Forestry Commission

Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party
on Forest Economics and Statistics

Twenty-ninth session
Geneva, 20-22 March 2007
Agenda item 7 of the provisional agenda

**SPECIAL TOPIC: OVERVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL REPORTING ON
FOREST AND FOREST PRODUCTS**

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

This document presents an overview of known recurring data and information collection efforts by international organizations in Europe. The Working Party is invited to review the information and comment on the questions raised in the document. Additional information provided by delegates from their own experiences is welcome.

1. Forest information at the international level is becoming increasingly complex, with growing needs and expectations at the policy level, limited resources, new techniques and multiple players. In particular, “pure” forest sector agencies can no longer function in isolation: other sectors, notably environment, energy and rural development require information on forests, and forest institutions need information on other sectors to do their job of promoting sustainable forest management. Various processes, notably, in Europe, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), have attempted to coordinate and prioritise information needs by drawing up lists of criteria and indicators, but in themselves, these do not resolve the issue of who should collect what information and how. There is a clear potential for confusion and duplication of effort as well as to find synergies between agencies, at the national and international level. This has been widely recognised and many forums have called for a limit to the “reporting burden” and for more comprehensive and reliable information. International agencies are increasingly working together: examples in the UNECE region are the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JFSQ) and the work to report to the Warsaw Ministerial Conference, in both of which UNECE/FAO plays a major role.

2. It is appropriate from time to time to review the arrangements in place and ask whether improvements are necessary. Given the nature of the issues, this should be a flexible and multi-stakeholder effort. It is also necessary to address the issue at several levels: global, regional and national. At the global level the Collaborative Partnership on Forest (CPF) has a working group on monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR), which has produced excellent results, as well as periodic meetings between agencies on harmonisation of terminology. Their website is located at <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/cpf-mar/en/>. However, there are specific circumstances in the UNECE region, notably the multiplicity of agencies and the complexity of the information demands, which justify an examination of these issues at the regional level.

3. It is part of the Working Party's mandate to provide guidance to UNECE/FAO in its information gathering and analysis. It has no mandate to coordinate the work of other agencies or to generate broader recommendations. However, given the extent of the UNECE/FAO information collection activities, the multiple interactions with other agencies (forest and non-forest), and the efforts to improve cooperation with other agencies, it seemed appropriate to the secretariat to explore the situation at the regional level, from the viewpoint of national correspondents, who bear most of the reporting burden, providing relevant information and staging an informal discussion.

4. The secretariat has prepared a preliminary and informal list of regular enquiries and requests for information at the regional level (or where global agencies and processes make information requests to ECE region countries), as a basis for discussion. It focuses on requests for information and data, rather than on more political reporting, such as national reports on implementation of international agreements (although the distinction between the two is difficult in practice).

5. It is suggested that each Working Party delegation quickly review the international enquiries to which it has contributed information in recent years, and consider whether, from the national point of view, the reporting burden could be reduced by better cooperation between international organisations.

6. *On the basis of the information provided above about international information collection and sharing for the forest and forest products sector, Working Party delegates are invited to address the following questions:*

- a. *Is the information provided in the annex table reasonably complete? If not, what should be added?***
- b. *Are the identified international information needs (as identified notably by regional lists of criteria and indicators) being addressed in a satisfactory way? Are any areas/criteria being unduly neglected?***
- c. *Is cooperation between international organisations properly organised? Is there a potential for improvement, and if so, where/which organisations? (At global, regional and subregional level)***
- d. *Do national experts, notably those participating in the Working Party sessions, receive requests for information from organisations who are not coordinating their work with others? If so, which organisations, and how could their requests be better coordinated?***

- e. Is there scope for more cross sectoral cooperation, along the lines of the cooperation with IEA to improve wood energy data?*
- f. Is the information once collected, used properly by all relevant organisations? For instance, do studies prepared for organisations outside the forest sector make full use of the data collected and published by forest sector organisations? And if not, what action should be taken?*

7. It is recognised that the Working Party has no formal mandate or decision-making power for other organisations than UNECE/FAO. However if useful proposals or analysis emerges from the discussion, the secretariat will consult the bureaux of the parent bodies, who meet immediately after the Working Party session, and follow up, taking contact or transmitting messages to appropriate organisations. This analysis may also be relevant to the discussion during the ECE/FAO strategic review which will take place in 2007-2008.

ANNEX: OVERVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL REPORTING ON FOREST AND FOREST PRODUCTS**Cross-table of instruments and organizations**

Data and information being regularly requested from governments on forests and forest products (excludes studies)

Cells are filled with instruments used to gather this information

		Aspect / subaspect							
Organization	Subunit	Resource	Forest	Energy	Fires	Products	Trade	Policies	Legislation
						Production			
IEA	Renewables		Renewables / JWEE						
OECD	Environment	SoE							
UNECE	Timber	FRA / SFM	JWEE		Inquiry	JFSQ	JFSQ	SFM	SFM
						TCQ	TCQ		
	ICP-Forests	NS							
MCPFE		<----- Sustainable Forest Management Europe ----->							
EU	Eurostat	SoE				JFSQ	JFSQ		
	JRC	CLC			EFFIS				
	Enterprise				no data collection activities				
	Agriculture				no data collection activities				
	Environment	Forest Focus							
		Natura 2000							
FAO		FRA				JFSQ	JFSQ		FAOLEX
						Recovered Paper			
						Pulp & Paper			
EEA		CLC							
		Natura 2000							
		Data Flow							
CBD		NR1						NR1	
CITES		no information at time of writing							
ITTO		C&I-ITTO				JFSQ	JFSQ	C&I	C&I
UNFCCC		NC						NC	
EFI		no data collection activities							
UNCCD		NR2						NR2	

List of instruments

Short Name	Full Name	Lead Organizations	Periodicity
NR1	National Report	CBD	4 years
Inquiry	Forest Fire Inquiry	ECE	annual
TCQ	Timber Committee Questionnaire	ECE	annual
JFSQ	Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire	ECE/FAO/ITTO/Eurostat	annual
Data Flow	Data Flow on Protected Areas	EEA	annual
CLC	Corine Land Cover	EU	10 year
Natura2000	Nature 2000 programme on habitat protection	EU	continuous
FRA	Forest Resource Assessment	FAO	5 years
Pulp & Paper	Capacity Survey for Pulp and Paper	FAO	biannual
Recovered Paper	Survey on Recovered Paper	FAO	biannual
NS	National Survey	ICP-Forest	annual
C&I-ITTO	Criteria and Indicators for Tropical Countries	ITTO	2-3 years
EFFIS	European Forest Fire Information System	JRC	annual
SFME	Report on Sustainable Forest Management in Europe for MCPFE	MCPFE	4-5 year
SoE	State of Environment	OECD/Eurostat	biannual
Renewables	Renewables Questionnaire	OECD/Eurostat/UN	annual
NR2	National Report	UNCCD	4 years
GHG	Greenhouse gas inventory	UNFCCC	annual
NC	National communication	UNFCCC	3-5 years

List of organizations

CBD	Convention on Bio-diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
EEA	European Environment Agency
EFI	European Forest Institute
ICP-Forest	International Co-operative Programme on the Assessment and Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Forests
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
JRC	Joint Research Center
MCPFE	Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change