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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

TIMBER COMMITTEE
Fifty-fifth session

MARKET DEVELOPMENTS IN 1997 AND PROSPECTS FOR 1998

(Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda)

Note by the secretariat

This document contains the schedule for the forest products markets discussions and their follow-up market statement preparation. The document requests timely submission of national market statements and forest products forecasts.

The Committee is invited to:

- discuss forest products markets;
- draft a market statement for issue after the session;
- comment on the Forest Products Annual Market Review.

Timetable and organization of the market discussions

1. The market discussions at the fifty-fifth session of the Timber Committee are scheduled for Tuesday 7 October 1997.

2. Following is a proposed timetable, which could be adjusted according to length of discussions on individual market segments. Each forest products market segment will be introduced by a secretariat analysis of responses to the Timber Committee forecasting questionnaire for 1996-1998 and followed by expert presentations for the sector on which the Committee will be invited to discuss.

- (a) 1000 hours General economic developments in the ECE region and general developments in forest products markets by the secretariat;
- (b) 1030 hours Roundwood markets, including briefly woodpulp and paper;
- (c) 1130 hours Softwoods: markets for coniferous sawnwood and logs;
- (d) 1500 hours Hardwoods: markets for temperate and tropical non-coniferous sawnwood and logs;
- (e) 1600 hours Wood-based panels markets (particle board, plywood and fibreboard including MDF).

3. The following timetable for preparing and approving the Committee's market statement and press release is proposed:

<u>Tuesday</u>	- morning and afternoon	Market discussions;
<u>Thursday</u>	- morning 0900 hours	Drafting Committee prepares statement, on the basis of a secretariat draft (the secretariat proposes that the Drafting Committee be conducted in English);
	- afternoon	The draft statement (in English, French and Russian) is submitted for approval by the Timber Committee;
<u>Friday</u>		Text of statement issued as press release with a summary table.

The Committee's market statement will be published in the *Timber Bulletin* No.6 "Forest products markets in 1997 and prospects for 1998", with national forecasts.

4. In previous years the following countries have been represented at the Drafting Committee: Austria, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States of America. However, every country is welcome to participate.

5. Delegations' attention is drawn to the explanatory notes for the Provisional Agenda (ECE/TIM/88) in relation to item 4. In particular, delegations are reminded to send 120 copies of their written statements on developments in their forest products markets to Geneva for arrival by 15 September 1997. At its fifty-fourth session the Timber Committee requested the inclusion of a special section

in the statements on "markets for certified forest products". It would greatly assist the secretariat in its preparation of the market discussions if delegations would fax a copy of the same statement to the secretariat, by the end of August, at:

Timber Section	E-Mail info.timber@unece.org
Trade Division	
Palais des Nations	Tel. + 41 22 917 2868
CH-1211 GENEVA 10 (Switzerland)	Fax + 41 22 917 0041

6. The Timber Committee places high priority on "review of short-term forest products market developments and prospects" 09(B).1.3, priority 2 of programme of work) and "collection of forest products statistics and publication of *Timber Bulletin*", priority 4 of the programme of work). This second activity is shared with the European Forestry Commission. The secretariat feels that the ability to fulfil these most important mandates is directly contingent on prompt and complete replies to the questionnaires, as refined and endorsed by member countries. Delegations are reminded that the deadline for replies to the Timber Committee questionnaire is **8 September 1997** and are requested to ensure that this deadline is adhered to.

Forest Products Annual Market Review

7. The "Forest Products Annual Market Review", *Timber Bulletin*, Volume L (1997), Number 3, will be published ahead of the session. It is intended to serve as a background document for the session's market discussions. Comments on the Review are welcomed by the secretariat.