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

(Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda)

Note by the secretariat

This note reviews the activities of other Principal Subsidiary Bodies that are relevant to the work of the Timber Committee.

The annex to this document sets out the activities of FAO of interest to the Committee.

The Committee should take this information into account when approving its programme of work. It may also wish to consider whether further cooperation with FAO or other parts of ECE should be developed.

Introduction

1. This document provides information on those projects contained in the programme of work of other principal subsidiary bodies (PSBs) of the Commission which are related to the work of the Timber Committee. The ECE Plan of Action (see document TIM/1997/5) calls for cooperation and coordination among PSBs and secretariat divisions in view of fostering intersectoral linkages and cross-sectoral concerns. The strengthening of intersectoral activities contributes to enlarging the bearing of ECE work and increasing its impact.

2. The activities of FAO of interest to the Committee are set out in the annex to this document. Delegations wishing further information on specific topics are invited to contact the Timber Committee secretariat, which would be happy to provide the name of the appropriate contact person at the FAO headquarters in Rome.

3. The Committee may wish to consider in the light of the present document, whether any modifications are necessary in its draft programme of work (to be discussed under item 6 of the provisional agenda) and whether cooperation with other ECE Principal Subsidiary Bodies should be further enhanced.

Programme elements in the work programme of the ECE of concern to the Timber Committee

Environment

Implementation of Environmental Programme for Europe

4. The Sofia Conference in October 1995 endorsed the Environmental Programme for Europe (EPE) and entrusted the Committee on Environmental Policy to oversee this process, and report on its implementation. The Committee on Environmental Policy, in cooperation with the European Environment Agency (EEA), will assess the implementation of EPE from the policy point of view. To this end the Committee will ask contributions from other ECE PSBs, including the Timber Committee. The EEA is a partner for TBFRA 2000.

Regional promotion of the implementation of Agenda 21

5. All the activities of the Committee on Environmental Policy promote the regional implementation of Agenda 21. The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) monitors at the global level the implementation of the follow-up to UNCED. The General Assembly at its special session in 1997 recognized the need to decentralize the implementation of Agenda 21 and to entrust larger responsibilities to regional Economic Commissions. The Committee on Environmental Policy will discuss at its next session concrete proposals on its role in reviewing, assessing and reporting on regional progress in the implementation of Agenda 21, which will be carried out in cooperation with the UNEP Regional Office for Europe. The Timber Section participates in the ECE interdivisional Task Force on sustainable development and will contribute to ECE activities, providing input for the timber and forest sectors.

Environmental performance reviews

6. The Committee on Environmental Policy reviews the performance of ECE countries which are not members of OECD, on how they meet domestic environmental policy objectives and relevant international commitments. The environmental performance reviews also support the Environmental Programme for Europe and monitor national progress in the implementation of Agenda 21. The Timber Section advises the Environment Division on forestry and timber aspects of these reviews.

Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution

7. The Convention's International cooperative programme on the assessment and monitoring of air pollution effects on forests, collects comprehensive and comparable information on changes in forests under actual environmental conditions (in particular air pollution, as well as other stresses) with the view of determining cause-effect relationships. National and transnational surveys are carried out in cooperation with the European Commission using harmonized methodology. The task force programme is led by Germany and the Hamburg Federal Research Centre for Forestry and Forest Products. This EU/ICP programme will provide and analyse data on forest condition for TBFRA 2000.

Environmental data base development and dissemination

8. The environmental data base is being developed into an International Environmental Data Service (IEDS). IEDS will have a forestry and timber component to which the Timber Section will contribute.

Economic Analysis

Review of economic developments, problems and prospects in the ECE region

9. The ECE Plan of Action agreed that the Economic Survey of Europe would further concentrate on the analysis of economic developments and problems in the transition economies and on their economic and financial relations with other countries of ECE and the rest of the world. These will be reflected in the new form of the survey which will be composed of three issues a year. The Economic Survey of Europe constitutes an important input to the introductory chapter on the economic situation of countries of the ECE region of the *Forest Products Annual Market Review*, which enables the Timber Section to provide high quality macroeconomic analysis as background to the specialized analysis in the *Review* at minimal cost.

Trade

Capacity building to improve trade finance and investment prospects for the Russian timber sector

10. The UN/ECE trade division is currently developing the project "Capacity building to improve trade finance and investment for the Russian timber sector". The project aims at improving the ability of participating enterprises to obtain trade finance and to attract investment. The long-term objective is to improve the trade performance of the Russian forest sector by contributing specific trade facilitation, export finance and investment components for the development of the sector. The Timber Section is advising the project coordinator on timber issues.

Human Settlements

Development of human settlements statistics

11. Together with the Conference of European Statisticians, the Committee on Human Settlements develops and improves international human settlements statistics, which are published in the *Annual Bulletin of Housing and Building Statistics for Europe and North America*. The Committee on Human Settlements will prepare with the Conference of European Statisticians and EUROSTAT, recommendations for housing censuses to implement the ECE programme of indicators for the sustainable development of human settlements. This work should improve the quality of the data available to the Timber Section for analysis of trends for housing, the major user of sawnwood and panels.

ANNEX

FAO ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST TO THE ECE TIMBER COMMITTEE

Forest Management

1. FAO's Forestry Department has been involved in, or instrumental in catalyzing and helping pursue, a number of international, regional and eco-regional initiatives on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management in accordance with its mandate and priorities. These include collaboration with European countries within the framework of the "Helsinki Process" (the "Pan-European Process"), which focuses on the development of criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of forests in 37 countries in Europe.

Forest Resources Assessment

2. Activities have, since finalization and publication of information related to the Global Forest Resources Assessment 1990 (FRA 1990), concentrated on development of common, internationally accepted strategies and methodologies for FRA 2000, including common definitions and classifications; and the publication of interim information in the 1997 State of the World's Forests- report. FAO collaborates closely with the Economic Commission for Europe in this programme, in which ECE, within the overall framework of the global programme, is responsible for the assembly, analysis and dissemination of data from developed countries, including Europe. FRA 2000 will rely essentially on the two data acquisition tools:

- analysis of existing reliable country data (for developed countries collected by the ECE/FAO Liaison Office in Geneva, using a questionnaire approach); and
- a study based on a sample of high resolution satellite data. Country capacity building is a simultaneous activity which, among others, will facilitate data acquisition. The FRA programme includes maintenance and updating of the Forest Resources Information System (FORIS) and development of guidelines, computerized tools and commonly agreed upon definitions and classifications for forest inventory. In the execution of the latter task ECE has played a lead role. FRA 2000 has to meet demands from the international community to broaden the scientific knowledge and the statistical database available in order to better understand the ecological, economic, cultural and social functions performed by all types of forests. External funding supplements RP funding of the programme. Within the framework of the FRA programme, FAO published, in 1997, Forestry Paper 134, entitled "Estimating biomass and biomass change of tropical forests - a primer."

Forest Protection

3. Activities have concentrated on direct support to member countries in the development of integrated pest strategies in forestry, and to counteract pest and disease attacks in natural forests and plantations. In Europe, activities include assistance in the development of integrated strategies for the combat of the Nun Moth (*Lymantria monaca*) in Lithuania; support to similar activities

in Poland; and assistance to Bulgaria in the combat of the Gypsy Moth (*Lymantria dispar*). A workshop organized in collaboration with the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute, IPGRI, resulted in the joint publication of the booklet, "Guidelines for the Safe Movement of Pine Germplasm", elaborated in the course of a workshop on the subject held in Czechoslovakia in 1996. Assistance was given to Turkey in the development of modern forest fire strategies.

Forest Genetic Resources, Tree Improvement

4. Activities are based on the collaboration with national institutes in the collection, exchange, evaluation, conservation and enhancement of genetic resources of tree species of social, economic and environmental value. One of three international workshops on forest genetic resources were held in 1995 in collaboration with the EUFORGEN Network coordinated by the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), concerned European Forest Genetic Resources. The workshop provided early information on forest genetic resources activities and priorities in the region, and can serve as a possible "model" for similar discussion in other ecological regions, as requested by the 13th Session of the Committee on Forestry (Rome March 1997). FAO publishes an annual news bulletin, *Forest Genetic Resources*. The bulletin, and other relevant information, has recently been made available on the Internet, supported by the development of an FAO Home Page on forest genetic resources. A number of major articles, with focus on harmonising genetic conservation and utilisation of forest resources, have been provided over the past years by European institutes and scientists. The FAO Global Information System on Forest Genetic Resources (REFORGEN), being developed in close collaboration with national institutes in member countries and international organisations includes information on genetic resources of most European countries, provided by member countries in response to a questionnaire on forest genetic resources, complemented by other sources. FAO, in collaboration with national and international collaborators (including the DANIDA Forest Seed Centre in Denmark), is currently developing a practical guide to the *in situ* conservation of forest genetic resources.

5. The International Poplar Commission (IPC), established 50 years ago in France, brings together all who are involved in the growing and utilisation of poplars and willows, including managers, academics, researchers, industrialists, conservationists and tree breeders- and governmental and non-governmental organisations, universities, research institutes and the private sector. Representation of European countries in the IPC is traditionally very strong. The two last meetings of the IPC and its Executive Committee, were held in Europe (Turkey 1994; and Hungary 1996).

6. The FAO Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources, helps review work carried out in the field of forest genetic resources, world-wide, including the state of forest genetic resources in Europe and priorities for action. In this regard, the Panel regularly compiles and updates regional lists of priority tree species, specifying their main uses and ranking the corresponding priorities for action in exploration, collection, conservation, enhancement and use of their genetic resources. The ninth Session of the Panel was held in Rome in 1995.

South-East Asia regional outlook study

7. At its sixteenth session, the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission took several steps towards becoming more active between sessions and thereby strengthening its roles. Among other things, it endorsed a proposal to carry out a regional outlook study, the report of which is to be considered at its next session in early 1998. Given the rapidly growing importance of the Asia-Pacific region in consumption and trade of forest products and its role in global environmental services of forests, the outcome of this study is expected to be of interest to Europe. The Commission also established an ad hoc group to promote sustainable forest management and, specifically, to work towards a possible regional code of harvesting practice."

Environmentally Sound Forest Harvesting

(a) The FAO Model Code of Forest Harvesting Practice

8. FAO has recently published the FAO Model Code in English, French and Spanish. Its primary objective is to promote forest harvesting practices that improve standards of utilisation and reduce environmental impacts, thereby contributing to the conservation of forests through their wise use. The information provided in the Code has been compiled with the intent of highlighting the wide range of environmentally sound harvesting practices that are available to forest managers. This will permit policy-makers to develop national, regional or local codes of practice which will best serve the particular needs of government agencies, the private sector, non-governmental organisations and other constituents.

(b) Case Studies on Environmentally Sound Forest Operations

9. FAO collaborates with government agencies, private companies and institutions to field test environmentally sound forest harvesting techniques and systems highlighted in the FAO Model Code. Efforts are devoted to identifying systems which require only a modest level of investment in training and technology. The following case studies have been finalised and are being published:

- Forest Harvesting in Natural Forests of the Congo;
- Environmentally Sound Forest Harvesting, Testing the Applicability of the FAO Model Code in the Amazon, Brazil;
- Reduced Impact Wood Harvesting in Tropical Natural Forest in Indonesia.

(c) The FAO Forest Harvesting Bulletin

10. The FAO Forest Harvesting Bulletin reports on FAO's programmes and activities, highlights emerging issues and conflicts and particularly new advances in reducing the environmental impact of forest harvesting, in improving timber utilisation, generating employment and income, preventing forest workers accident and limiting health risks in forest operations. It is published once per year.

(d) **Harvesting Seminars and Workshops**

11. An International Research Training Seminar on Reduced Timber Harvesting and Natural Forest Management was held from 29 June to 12 July in Bolivia, sponsored by BOLFOR, CIFOR, FAO and USA. A IUFRO/FAO Seminar on Forest Operations in Himalayan Forest, with Special Consideration of Ergonomic and Socio-economic Problems will be held in October 1997 in Bhutan. Proceedings of the following Seminars are available:

- Economic and Management of Forest Operations for Countries in Transition to Market Economies, Ort/Gmunden;
- Forest Codes of Practice Contributing to Environmentally Sound Forest operations, Feldafing, Germany;
- Research on Environmentally Sound Forest Practices to Sustain Tropical Forests, Tampere, Finland.

(e) **Environmentally Friendly Forest Engineering**

12. Presently the Proceedings Report of the FAO/ECE/ILO meeting in Romania on Environmentally Sound Forest Roads and Wood Transport is under preparation. Initiatives have been taken to carry out two case studies on reduced impact forest road construction techniques, preparation of a manual on forest road surveying in difficult terrain and a filmstrip and road surveying and construction.

Trade analysis of forest products

13. Although there is little work in the trade area that is specific to Europe, all issues being addressed have either direct or indirect relationship to that region. For example work of note is that concerning the assessment of forestry trade policy issues such as trends in trade restrictions, certification and labelling schemes as a means of encouraging sustainable forest management, and the factors affecting changing global and regional trade flows. The interrelationships between trade and the environment is an issue receiving increasing focus.

14. Two trade reports were published during the period: one covering Trade Barriers Affecting Non-Wood Forest Products was produced as assistance to those involved with trade in these products; and a second titled Impact of the Uruguay Round on International Trade in Forest Products as an input to policy development for wood products trade. Emphasis continued to be placed on the issue of using certification and labelling as a means of encouraging the sustainable management of forests. FAO is monitoring the various activities and providing guidance and assistance on the subject. A position paper was prepared indicating FAO's opposition to unilateral forms of import trade restrictions such as bans and boycotts; and another covered the current situation regarding certification and FAO's views on the subject.

15. Contact and co-operation with the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) continued at its meetings held in Japan in November 1996 and in Bolivia in May 1997. Information on FAO and ECE/FAO activities was provided to member countries attending.

Forest Products Marketing Programme

16. The Forest Products Marketing Programme which is implemented under a sub-programme element of the FAO Regular Programme emphasises the importance of forest products marketing as a vital part of sustainable utilisation of forest resources and contributes to strengthening forest products marketing practices and related institutional capacities through improved information and human resource capabilities.

17. Forest products marketing issues were highlighted through papers prepared and presented at several international meetings dealing with the development of the wood and non-wood forest products sectors. These included the XX World Congress of IUFRO (Tampere, Finland), Conference on Domestication, Production and Utilisation of New Crops (Southampton, UK), IUFRO International Conference for Working Group on Forest Products Marketing (Tofino, Canada) and others. A document on Marketing Forestry and Agroforestry by Rural People was prepared and published as a joint effort with other programmes to sensitise the rural development initiatives to the importance of marketing and to assist in introducing marketing function in local-level operations. In order to improve access to marketing information a Compendium of Computer-Based Databases of Relevance to Forest Products Marketing was prepared and disseminated for testing purposes and work plan developed for its updating, expansion and conversion into an electronic format. A number of case studies on forest products marketing practices were prepared. Some of the case studies and other reports were used as material for training in two Workshops on the Development of Marketing of Sawwood Products in Countries in Transition to Market Economies organised under the auspices of the ECE Timber Committee by the host governments of Hungary and Estonia, respectively, in co-operation with the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the FAO Forestry Department. The material prepared for the Workshops also included "An Assessment of Needs for Marketing Training in Sawmilling Industry in North-western Russia". With emphasis on the countries in transition Guidelines for Strengthening and Establishment of Log Auction Systems were prepared. Technical backstopping was given to the field programme of FAO of which one TCP project in Latvia provided assistance in an improvement of sawn softwood grading and contract forms.

Medium-Term Programme:

18. Several major trends both on the supply and the demand side of forest products markets are having an increasing and significant impact on forest products marketing. Trends towards sustainable forest management practices, increasing use of plantation grown raw materials and residues are affecting the quantity and type of wood and non-wood forest products and consequently the ways in which they are to be marketed. The trend toward production of value-added products is drastically changing the marketing practices from relatively simple commodity marketing to sophisticated consumer marketing of high-value goods. Rapid population growth, urbanisation and changing age structure of population are increasing and changing the demand for forest products and the ways in which the consumers want them to be supplied. The changes taking place in countries in transition are placing their forest products industries in a dramatically different marketing environment. FAO will continue, through its Forest Products Marketing Programme, to respond to the emerging issues by increasing awareness of the importance of marketing, improving access to marketing information and strengthening institutional capacities in forest products marketing.

Global Fibre Supply Study (GFSS)

19. The general objective of the study is to contribute reliable data, information, forecasts and analysis of industrial fibre sources. The GFSS will include a compilation of the latest available inventory data, including recovered and non-wood fibre. It will also include a projection and analysis of future developments in fibre supply, based on explicit consideration of the major factors affecting supply.

20. The available inventory reports and other literature sources for major fibre-producing countries in Latin America, Asia-Pacific and Africa have now been reviewed for forest inventory data. Information regarding Europe and Siberia have also been reviewed, primarily from *The Outlook for the European Forest Resources and Roundwood Supply 1995* published by the Economic Commission for Europe and from the Russian Forest Study undertaken by the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis. Data on North America are now being compiled to complete the global overview. There will be information on some 110 countries in the database, accounting for a high proportion of global industrial roundwood supply. Data on additional countries will be added later as resources permit.

21. Supply forecasting methods have also been developed for the major industrial fibre sources - natural and semi-natural forests, industrial plantations, recovered fibre and non-wood fibre. The purpose of these forecasts is to examine the rate of change in industrial fibre supply sources and the critical times when abrupt changes might occur. Three scenarios will be developed to describe different futures. Preliminary results will be used as input to the upcoming FAO Asia-Pacific Forestry Sector Outlook Study.

22. The major products of the GFSS will include:

- A database accessible on-line through the Internet providing estimates of commercial wood volumes from natural, semi-natural and plantation forests;
- A statistical and descriptive report on the data and three fibre-supply scenarios which are based on factors deemed to be the most critical;
- A working paper describing in detail the methods for data compilation, gap filling, data validation, forecasting and definitions, survey forms and country list;
- A series of additional working papers on sustainable forest management, improved productivity from industrial forest plantations, fibre supply modelling, and recovered and non-wood fibre;
- An issue of *Unasylva* dedicated to the theme of global fibre supply.

Non-Wood Forest Products (NWFP)

(a) Gathering, analysis and dissemination of key technical information on NWFP of relevance to the ECE

23. Specific categories of NWFP and relevant issues in relation to their development are highlighted in the publication series, 'Non-Wood Forest Products'. Nine volumes have been published to date including: Flavours and Fragrances of Plant Origin; Natural Colorants and dyestuffs; Edible Nuts; Non-Wood Forest Products for Rural Income and Sustainable Forestry; Trade

restrictions affecting international trade in non-wood forest products; and Domestication and Commercialisation of NWFP through Agroforestry Systems.

24. In line with the recommendations of the World Food Summit (Rome 1996), special attention has been given to focus on non-wood forest resources that are (or have the potential to be) used as food, food additives, or for medicinal purposes. In this regard, the Non-wood Forest Products series will publish volumes on Tropical Palms, and Medicinal Plants in 1997. Volumes on 'Harvesting of NWFP', and 'The Contribution of NWFP to food security' (working titles only) are presently being studied or are under development.

25. Of Particular relevance to the ECE is the following issue, which is now in the process of proof reading and editing: "NON-WOOD FOREST PRODUCTS FROM CONIFERS". This publication documents the many important NWFPs which are obtained from conifer forests and has many references on European examples.

(b) **Appraisal of the socio-economic contribution of NWFP in the ECE countries**

26. Comprehensive statistical data on production and trade of NWFP is essential for accurate appraisal of their true socio-economic contribution to sustainable development. This, in turn, will facilitate the elaboration (and acceptance by policy and senior decision makers) of appropriate policies leading to a more equitable access to non-wood forest resources and to a fair distribution of benefits obtained from NWFP. Although FAO has already assembled a wealth of information on the socio-economic role of many NWFP, the information base is still far from being comprehensive or global in scope.

27. Based on responses to a questionnaire used to identify all those agencies, companies and individuals who are involved in one way or another with the promotion and development of NWFP, and may have socio-economic data on NWFP, a database is under developed to store and retrieve data on: organisations, agencies and companies; the location and kind of products which are the focus of their work; the socio-economic contribution of NWFP; critical gaps in thematic issues or geographic coverage. A directory of organisations involved in NWFP (including those from the ECE countries) will be published under the Non-Wood Forest Products series and will also be available on the Internet by 1998.

(c) **Improved networking on NWFP development activities in ECE countries**

28. To improve networking, an annual bulletin, 'Non-Wood News', compiled from voluntary contributions links more than 1,400 relevant individuals and organisations world-wide (with close to one third of all references from ECE countries). Recent issues of this bulletin are available on the Internet (<http://www.fao.org/waicent/faoinfo/forestry/nwnews>).

29. To increase awareness on NWFP and strengthen national collaboration at the regional level, FAO's Wood and Non-wood Products Utilisation Branch (FOPW) has organised three regional expert consultations: Asia and Pacific Region, Bangkok, Thailand, 1991; Anglophone African Countries, Arusha, Tanzania, 1993; Latin America and Caribbean, Santiago, Chile, 1994). Two global expert consultations have also been organised: 'Social, Economic and Cultural Dimensions of NWFP', Bangkok, Thailand, 1994; and the 'Inter-regional Expert Consultation on NWFP', Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 1995. During 1997, two workshops were co-organized by FOPW: 'Medicinal, Culinary and Aromatic Plants in the Near East', Cairo, Egypt,

19-21 May; and 'Expert Consultation on NWFP from Boreal forests', in Finland, from 29 September till 2 October. In addition, preparation has started for an expert consultation on 'NWFP from North American forests', to be held in conjunction with the NAFC meeting in autumn 1998.

30. The heterogeneous nature of NWFP and the multitude of their end-uses calls for multi-disciplinary involvement and coordinated efforts. A number of activities have been started recently in collaboration with other agencies and NGOs, dealing with specific aspects of NWFP, including: UNIDO (processing), ICRAF (domestication), Gifts of Health (a UK-based NGO on medicinal plants).

Wood energy

31. Within the framework of WETT, Wood Energy Today for Tomorrow, the Wood energy programme has prepared a technical document divided in 2 parts:

PART A: Analysis of the role of wood energy in Europe and OECD countries. This report provide a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the use of wood for energy in the countries involved in this region. In brief, it can be said that; in all the groups examined, about 30 -50% of the total wood removed from forests is ultimately used for energy purposes. However, only a small amount is directly derived from the forests with a great amount of wood fuels derived from other sources such as forest industry by-products, black liquor (from pulp and paper industries) and recovered wood. It also clearly shows that although wood energy accounts for about only 3 % of total primary energy supplies in the 15 EU countries in countries like Sweden and Finland the contribution of forest energy have reach higher than 16%.

PART B: An overview of data available on wood energy in Europe and OECD countries. It gives an overview and comparison of available data on wood energy from 5 main international sources: FAO, UNECE, EUROSTAT, IEA and Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory. The main results of these analysis is compiled in 8 tables for each organisation analysed (a total of 40 tables) in order to facilitate mutual comparison of data available for 42 countries grouped as follows: European Union, OECD non-Europe and Europe non-EU. One clear lesson learnt from this study is that there are tremendous differences among the statistical data provided by the agencies analysed. Another lesson is the large variety of definitions, units and conversion factors used by the different agencies involved. This has led to the preparation of an Unified Wood Energy Terminology in which the Wood Energy Programme is now involved with other relevant organisations such as ECE timber committee, IEA, EUROSTAT and many other important regional organisations.

Dryland Forestry and Desertification

32. The forestry Department is following and supporting the efforts being developed in Southern Europe to develop the European annex to the UN Convention to combat Desertification. Spain and Portugal have been support both the processes at regional and world-wide levels. The Forest resources division participated in and supported the Regional Conference on Desertification in the Northern Mediterranean organized by Spain in June 1995. It also supported the meeting organized by Portugal in June 1996, in cooperation with two African countries (Cape Verde and Senegal) in support to the IPF process (Programme element 1.4 Fragile Ecosystems affected by drought and desertification) focusing

on the issue of Rehabilitation of degraded forest Ecosystems. The meeting was held in cooperation with FAO and was attended by 124 participants from 58 countries including Europe. One of the working groups of the meeting focused on Southern Europe and issued a number of recommendations addressing both domestic approaches to desertification and dryland development in Southern Europe and international technical cooperation. The Economic role of tree formations in Southern Europe were included in the concerns of the Group.

Activities of Silva Mediterranea

33. After the Committee On Mediterranean Forestry Questions held its sixteenth session in Larnaca, Cyprus, its functions were reaffirmed as a body specialized in Mediterranean forest questions linking all nations sharing the Mediterranean rim; activities have continued within the cooperative research networks, but there is a real need for an upsurge of interest in the work and cooperative approach championed by it; there were mixed feelings during last COFO on the future of the Committee. The major aspects of its activities during the period are the following:

- publication of a Directory of Seed Sources of the Mediterranean Conifers for the Production of Seeds to be used in reforestation programs with support from Turkey, namely the Forest Tree and Seeds Improvement Research Directorate with which a contract was established;
- support to the data collection and data base establishment relating to forest fires and training activities in the region through a project supported by a French trust Fund;
- support to the process of forest sector planning through a trust fund project funded by Italy ("Support to Sustainable Forest Conservation, Management and Development in Selected Mediterranean Countries");
- support to and participation in, the First International Forest Fire Management Forum organized jointly by European Union, the French Ministries of Agriculture and of the Interior in June 1997 in Marseilles, France.

34. Within the Committee's secretariat FAO participated in the first general Assembly of the International Association for Mediterranean Forests" (IAMF) after previously exploring with its present management areas of potential cooperation in their major immediate projects including namely i) the promotion of decentralised cooperative programmes; ii) their active participation and contribution to the 11th World Forestry Congress and iii) the preparation of a Mediterranean Forestry Congress; iv) the establishment of an international information exchange network including the use of the Internet.

Watershed Management and Sustainable mountain Development

35. FAO as task manager of chapter 13 Sustainable Mountain Development supported and participated in the following activities pertinent to Europe and of some interest to the Timber committee.

36. The first session of the European Intergovernmental Consultation on Sustainable Mountain Development took place in Aviemore, Scotland from 23-26 April 1996. 12 national delegations and several observer delegations attended; the Consultation laid the base of the European cooperative mountain programme that will have to be finalized at the following Session in Trento;

37. The second session took place in Trento, Italy from 7-11 October 1996. 21 national delegations, including the EC, and a dozen observer organizations participated. The result was a document entitled "Toward sustainable mountain development in Europe", which takes into consideration both sessions of the intergovernmental consultation as well as the results of the NGO conference on European mountains held in Toulouse in July:

- (i) The holding of the European NGO Conference on Sustainable Mountain Development was in Toulouse, France on 4-7 July 1996 and involved participants from 24 European countries; it was an integral part of the overall European process on follow-up to Chapter 13 and provided important inputs to the final document of the European Intergovernmental Consultation on Sustainable Mountain Development;
- (ii) The holding of the 19th Session of the European Working Party on Mountain Watershed Management, which took place on 1-5 July 1996 in Lillehammer (Norway). The meeting was considered a success and was attended by 64 delegates and observers from 14 EFC member countries and 11 non-European countries. Among the major recommendations produced by the session are:
 - continue and finalize the development of the mission of the Working party;
 - continuation in participation in the follow up to resolution 4 of the Strasbourg Ministerial Conference on Forest protection in Europe;
 - heightened attention on silviculture and sustainable management of mountain forests and environmental and social aspects;
 - restoration of degraded lands in mountain regions involving technical, environmental and social aspects; effects of forest fires on soil degradation in watersheds;
 - indicators concerning sustainable mountain forest management, including indicators for the conservation of biological diversity;
 - follow up and new arrangements regarding the implementation of UNCED chapter 13.