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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 FAO activities of interest to the Committee are set out in document FO:EFC/98/4, which will be made available to delegations at the Committee's session.

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) called 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 FAO European Forestry Commission will hold its twenty-ninth session at a short interval after the Committee's session. A note on "Review of FAO regular and field programmes in Europe" (FO:EFC/98/4) has been prepared by the FAO secretariat for the EFC session. This note will be made available to delegations at the Committee's session and can also be found at the Committee's Internet site (<http://www.unece/trade/timber>).

3. The activities of FAO of interest to countries of the region, are set out under the following headings:

- Forest resources Assessment;
- UNCED follow-up and promotion of the international policy agenda, partnerships;
- Policy, institutions and capacity building in national forest programmes in countries in transition;
- Sustainable forest management;
- Management of genetic resources and protection of biological diversity
Agroforestry, urban forestry, watershed management, conservation and combatting desertification;
- Research and education;
- Wood and non-wood forest products utilization;
- Harvesting, trade and marketing.

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.

4. 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

5. 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. A report on progress

in the implementation of the Programme was submitted to the fourth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe", Århus (Denmark), June 1998. To this end the Committee will ask contributions from other ECE PSBs, including the Timber Committee. The EEA is a partner for TBFRA 2000. In the context of the pan European process the secretariat contributed to the action programme for the conservation of forest biodiversity approved by the forest ministers in Lisbon and the environmental ministers in Århus.

Regional promotion of the implementation of Agenda 21

6. 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. A consultative meeting among the regional institutions (e.g. United Nations regional commissions, regional offices of some United Nations global institutions, European Community, etc.) took place in New York in February 1998. The meeting agreed that ECE would organize a pilot workshop for sharing national experiences in implementing Agenda 21 and assessing it in a regional context. 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

7. 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

8. 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

9. 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

10. 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

11. The UN/ECE trade division is currently implementing 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

12. 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.

Proposal for activity on trade and environmental issues in the forest sector

13. One of the 6 proposals prepared by the secretariat on new activities in support of the global and regional processes for sustainable forest management (see (TIM/1998/4) concerns trade and environment issues in the forest sector. Clearly if this idea is approved it would be carried out in close cooperation with the relevant ECE PSBs and divisions.