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**FAO FORESTRY ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION – REVIEW OF FAO REGULAR AND FIELD  
PROGRAMMES IN EUROPE, INCLUDING FOLLOW-UP TO REQUESTS AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TWENTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN  
FORESTRY COMMISSION**

(Item 8(a) of the Provisional Agenda)

Secretariat Note

This note informs the Commission about FAO forestry activities of interest to the region, funded under the Regular Programme budget and FAO-executed projects funded through UNDP and donor trust funds.

## FOREST RESOURCES DIVISION

### *Forest Management*

1. FAO has been closely involved in preparations and follow-up to the Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe (1990, 1993, and 1998). Special efforts have been placed on supporting the development of Pan-European Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, being tested and implemented by European countries at national and forest unit levels. An Expert Consultation on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management is currently being organized, which will be held in Rome in November 2000. This Consultation will bring together representatives from all ongoing processes and initiatives to: take stock of the present situation concerning the development and implementation of international criteria and indicators processes supporting sustainable forest management; discuss needs and methods for better cooperation, coordination and harmonization among the on-going processes; and discuss the desirability of a larger meeting which would involve representatives from countries and organizations involved or interested in collaborating.

### *Forest Resources Assessment*

2. Activities concentrated on the development of common terminology and methodologies underpinning the global Forest Resources Assessment 2000 (FRA 2000). Interim information on status and trends of forests in the world, including developed countries, was published in the 1999 State of the World's Forests report. FAO continued to collaborate closely with the Economic Commission of Europe in the FRA programme, in which ECE, within the overall framework of the global programme, was responsible for the assembly and analysis of data and information from developed temperate and boreal zone countries, including former USSR and Europe. FRA 2000 relies on two data acquisition tools: (i) analysis of existing reliable country information; and (ii) samples of high-resolution satellite data. FRA 2000 data, including information from special studies on, *inter alia*, protected areas, biomass, resources providing non-wood products, is being cumulatively made available on the Internet Homepage of the Organization.

### *Forest Plantations*

3. Activities concentrated on the assembly of information on plantation areas and yields, and the aggregation of information at regional and global levels within the framework of the Forest Resources Assessment Programme. A publication documenting current plantation statistics and discussing key trends and issues relating to tree planting activities has been drafted for publication. Following the 39<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Committee of the International Poplar Commission (IPC), held in Rome in 1999, the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the IPC and the 40th session of its Executive Committee will be held in Portland, Oregon, USA in September 2000, with the participation of a number of European countries.

### *Forest Protection*

4. Activities concentrated on direct support to member countries in the development of integrated forest pest management and control strategies. Activities included assistance through TCP for control of Gypsy Moth (*Lymantria dispar*) in Bulgaria and Romania, and insect pests affecting the forests in the Republic of

Moldova. An expert meeting on Public Policies Affecting Forest Fires was held in Rome, in October 1998, including case studies from Europe. Assistance was provided to Turkey in the development of modern forest fire strategies through TCP.

#### *Forest Genetic Resources, Tree Improvement*

5. Activities in the management of forest genetic resources, including their conservation, enhancement and sustainable utilization, were continued in line with recommendations of the 11<sup>th</sup> session of the FAO Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources (1999), through support to national institutes, and through networking and twinning.

6. Following recommendations of the 13<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO), FAO supported the organization of a series of sub-regional workshops on forest genetic resources and the elaboration of coordinated regional action plans. Workshops in developing countries were in part modelled on the IPGRI/FAO workshop on European forests in 1995, and were held in the Sahel in 1998, in the South Pacific in 1999, and in Southern and Eastern Africa in 2000. Similar initiatives are on the way for countries in other regions.

7. FAO supported activities carried out within the framework of the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN), coordinated by the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI) in collaboration with FAO.

8. The world-wide Information System on Forest Genetic Resources (REFORGEN) was further developed with the aim of providing policy and technical level support at national, regional and international levels. A user-friendly interface was developed, to allow information retrieval through the Internet. The annual newsletter, *Forest Genetic Resources*, is being published in hard copy and on the Internet through the FAO Home Page on forest genetic resources at the following address: (<http://www.fao.org/forestry/FOR/FOR/FOGENRES/homepage/fogene-e.stm>).

#### *Sustainable Mountain Development and Watershed Management*

9. In November 1998, the UN General Assembly declared 2002 as the International Year of Mountains (IYM) and assigned FAO with the lead agency role. Within this framework, interaction and contacts with Europe have been strengthened in terms of watershed management and sustainable mountain development. In a number of countries such as Italy, Switzerland and Germany, national committees or similar structures for the preparations of the IYM have been created and FAO has established strong links with these national bodies. These contacts and collaboration will be intensified and expanded in the course of the preparations for and the observance of IYM.

10. In the new framework of the implementation of Agenda 21 Chapter 13 (Sustainable Mountain Development), co-operation continued with the Inter-Agency Group on Mountains, and the regional nodes of the Mountain Forum in particular. In this context, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) is a key partner in Europe. IUCN participated in the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> meetings of the Inter-Agency Group on Mountains, respectively held in Rome in March 1999 and in Cusco, Peru in October 1999. During these

meetings start-up of and progress in the global preparation of the IYM were noted. In November 2000, IUCN will host an important operational strategy meeting for the preparations of the IYM.

11. A Task Manager Report on the implementation of Chapter 13 was published. This document includes information on important mountain-related activities in Europe carried out in the five years after the Rio Earth Summit, 1992-1997. As a follow up to the co-operation with the Institute of Geography of the University of Bern and the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation, FAO provided major input for two publications which were presented at the 6<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-6) ("Mountains of the World: Water Towers for the 21st Century") and CSD-7 ("Mountains of the World: Tourism and Sustainable Mountain Development"). These brochures include important case studies and success stories from mountain areas in Europe.

12. The EFC Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds will hold its 22<sup>nd</sup> session in Toulouse, France, from 12 to 14 September 2000. The theme of this meeting is "Integrated Land Use Planning in Mountain Areas". The progress in the preparations for the IYM, the identification of the activities of the Working Party in the IYM context as well as the discussion and adoption of the revised mandate of the Working Party will be additional important agenda items during the meeting.

13. FAO has provided input to a number of important mountain-related meetings in Europe:

- *IIèmes Assises Européennes de la Montagne: la qualité, avantage comparatif du futur. Les régions de montagne, pionnières du développement durable* (Euromontana, 17-18 March 2000, Trento, Italy).
- 3<sup>rd</sup> International Workshop on the Sustainable Future of Mountain Forests in Europe (2-5 May 2000, Igls, Austria).
- International Mountain Research Workshop (4-7 June 2000, Grenoble, France)
- World Mountain Forum (5-10 June 2000, Chambéry, France)
- Forum Alpin 2000 (11-15 September 2000, Bergamo, Italy)

#### *Dryland Forestry and Trees Outside Forests*

#### Silva Mediterranea

14. The main achievement in support to the EFC/NEFC/AFWC Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions *Silva Mediterranea* and its research networks has been the implementation of a regional trust fund project on *Co-operative information on prevention and control of forest fires in the Mediterranean Region* funded by France. Computerized databases on forest fires have been established or improved in participating countries. Several research activities were undertaken and training material distributed. The research network on "Silviculture of species: *Quercus suber*" has searched for ways and means to support the sustainability of the cork oak agro-silvo-pastoral systems through promoting the trade and the use of cork. These activities were supported by the private sector. Genetic resources of cork oak were studied in co-ordination with the "Mediterranean Oak Group" of the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN).

15. An external review of *Silva Mediterranea* and of its research networks has been implemented, following the recommendation made by the Committee in its last session (Antalya, Turkey, October 1997). This review was motivated by the perceived lack of interest of the member countries in the activities of their committee. This external review recommended that a structural reform and/or a change of the statutes of the Committee be implemented with the support of the member countries. These proposals were already presented to the Near East Forestry Commission in its 14<sup>th</sup> session (Tehran, July 2000) which recommended that the 18<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee, originally planned for November 2000 in Egypt, be postponed until next year in order to allow a deeper reflection on the relevance and necessary reform of the research networks (see document FO:EFC/00/8).

16. Regarding the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), and particularly regarding its Annex IV, FAO has actively supported the regional process and country initiatives. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Secretariat of the Convention and FAO which is also involved in the Global Mechanism which has been established to support the implementation of the CCD.

#### Trees Outside Forests

17. Based on preliminary works undertaken during the previous biennium (1998-1999) and other current studies, a report on Trees-outside-forests (TOF) will be annexed to the Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) 2000 report. It will contain case studies from all regions of the world, including Europe. The report aims to highlight the importance to improve the knowledge on the status and changes of TOF resources, in order to systematically take these resources into consideration in the policy/decision process related to sustainable land use, sustainable forest management and food security.

18. An international workshop for the development of practical methodologies for TOF assessment will be held in Rome (2001). In follow-up of this workshop and according to the priority identified for the countries, support will be given to the development and the use of practical planning tools and methodologies.

### **FORESTRY POLICY AND PLANNING DIVISION**

#### *Forest Institutions*

19. A Seminar on Recent Developments in the Forestry Sector in Central and Eastern Europe countries was held in Banska Stiavnica, Slovakia (2-5 December 1999). Its purpose was to exchange information on and experiences in institutional reform in the forestry sector; to identify issues and problems encountered in the reform process; and to identify a possible programme of action to deal with them. Participants from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Poland and Slovenia attended the Seminar.

20. Technical assistance continued to be provided through TCP projects to countries in the region (Albania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia) in developing appropriate policy, legal

and institutional instruments to support forestry sector development, harmonizing them with principles and guidelines promoted by the European Union and international fora (UN Commission for Environmental Development (UNCED), the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF), the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF), etc.). Special attention has been given to strengthening the involvement of the private forestry, to promoting the participation of all types of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, and to integrating forestry in rural development programmes.

21. The Forestry Policy and Planning Division has also contributed to the preparation of a TCP to support the elaboration of the national forest programme in Turkey now under consideration for approval, and through the Community Forestry Unit, it has contributed to a TCP in Slovenia to strengthen capacity building in participatory approaches to support forest owners and public participation.

#### *Forest Statistics*

22. In 1999, FAO, UNECE, EUROSTAT and ITTO for the first time issued jointly a questionnaire on forest products production and trade. Working under the auspices of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Forest Statistics (IWGFS), the four organizations developed a single questionnaire that effectively reduced the information requests posed to member countries while simultaneously meeting the information responsibilities of the four organizations in this subject area.

23. The joint questionnaire was well received by member countries as an excellent example of inter-agency cooperation. Reflecting on a successful first year, representatives of ITTO, FAO, UNECE and EUROSTAT have developed subsequently a revised joint forest products questionnaire to make needed adjustments in the joint questionnaire based on the first year's experience. Key changes included:

- expansion in the other fibre pulp category to provide for a separate entry for pulp made from recovered paper;
- a shift from collecting paper production and trade statistics from a historic FAO nomenclature to a more modern set of product classifications accepted commonly by industry;
- provision to seek additional information on the values of secondary wood products traded internationally.

24. While FAO and UNECE have been sharing a joint forest products questionnaire successfully for some time, 1999 was the first year that the joint questionnaire was distributed electronically as well as in traditional paper form. The use of electronic returns and the increasing capabilities of the FAO website and Internet technologies provided new opportunities to manage the incoming data. UNECE and FAO both receive the incoming questionnaires from countries. Historically, these data have been analysed and stored separately in databases located in Geneva and Rome. In principle, the values stored in Rome and Geneva should be identical for production and trade in forest products for a given country in a particular year. In the past, for a number of operational reasons, the numbers stored and tracked have sometimes been different.

25. FAO and UNECE staff is currently implementing a jointly developed operational plan to better co-ordinate processing, evaluation, analysis and electronic storage of the data received from ECE member

countries. Building upon the FAO Forestry Department's investments in internet-based data entry and transfer procedures, the UNECE/FAO Geneva office has become responsible for direct data entry for forest products production and trade in FAOSTAT for the ECE member countries. The purpose of this initiative is to maintain a unified database for forest products production and trade that will meet key information needs of both organizations and ensure consistency in the numbers reported in their respective publications. Similar procedures are being adopted with regard to country-based descriptions of forest resources and their utilization as gathered through the Forest Resources Assessment 2000. Collectively, these are important steps towards unifying Geneva-based and Rome-based information into an integrated and consistent forestry information system.

#### *Forest Economics*

26. FAO participated in the seminar "The role of forests and forestry in rural development: a contribution to the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe", held in Vienna, from 5 to 7 July 2000. For the seminar, FAO contributed a paper titled: "Promoting rural development through forestry policy: some experiences from developing countries". The paper discussed the main differences between forestry and rural development in developed and developing countries and presented a broad review of forestry's contribution to rural development in developing countries. FAO also participated in the Working Groups discussing: "Rural development in forest policy: identifying basic principles and elements for practical application" and "Ways for enhancing the contribution of forestry to rural development – recommendations for European forest policy".

### **FOREST PRODUCTS DIVISION**

#### *Normative activities*

27. The FAO Advisory Committee on Paper and Wood Products held its forty-first session on 2 and 3 May 2000 in Rotorua, New Zealand. Six members (out of 15) and 12 other participants, non-members of the Committee (out of 44), from Europe attended the meeting. Amongst the non-members, the Director-General of the Confederation of European Paper Industry was present. Major topics discussed were issues related to paper and forest industries and climate change and to trade and environment, in particular certification. The Committee issued valuable recommendations for the work of the Forest Products Division in the field of paper and wood products.

28. Within the Improvement of Forest Engineering and Harvesting element, the preparation of Guidelines on Forest Roads was initiated. As a follow up, an expert consultation was held (Germany, 1998) in order to describe best practices for the guidelines.

29. Within the Forest Products Marketing Programme, "Guidelines for Strengthening and Establishment of Log Auction Systems" were published to assist in the improvement of the efficiency of raw timber marketing practices; a "Review of Studies on Consumer Attitudes towards Forest Products Marketed with Environmental, Social and/or Sustainability Attributes" was published as a contribution to

the discussion on the certification of forest products; and a “Compendium of Forest Products Marketing Databases” was completed and will be published through the FAO website.

30. A study was published on “Trade Restrictions and their Impact on International Trade in Forest Products” to assist with trade policy development.

31. Cooperation with the Confederation of European Paper Industry (CEPI) was initiated with the preparation of joint statistics on recovered paper data. This co-operation will be continued in the future and extension to other statistics is under review.

32. FAO's Non-Wood Forest Products (NWFP) Programme is strengthening its networking role among stakeholders in the European region through its "Database on Agencies dealing with NWFP" (and which is available on the web).

33. Two issues of Non-Wood News and a new updated version of the FAO-NWFP Programme homepage (in English, French and Spanish, including free online access to all FAO-NWFP publications) have contributed to the sharing of knowledge and networking among European countries.

34. The Regional Study on the “Role of Wood Energy in Europe and OECD” has been revised and improved with new woodfuel data for years 1996 and 1997.

#### *Operational Activities*

35. In order to promote environmentally friendly, socially acceptable and economically feasible forest harvesting end engineering practices, a Seminar on Improving Working Conditions and Increasing Productivity in Forestry was held in Slovakia in 1998.

36. The Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training also conducted a workshop on Training of Contractors, Supervisors, Operators of Harvesters and Small Forest Owners (France, 1998).

37. In Austria (1998) a FAO/Austria expert meeting on Environmentally Sound Forest Operations for Countries in Transition to Market Economies was organized. A case study on Environmentally Sound Road Construction in Mountainous Terrain was carried out to describe advanced road construction methods and tools (Austria, 1998). Assistance in the field of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of forest roads has been provided to a forestry project in Albania.

38. A Seminar on Research Approaches to support Non-wood Forest Products Sector Development was held in Arkhangelsk, Russian Federation, organized by the European Forest Institute (EFI) with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, and the Northern Research Institute of Forestry, Russia. As a follow up to the Seminar a project idea was developed jointly by EFI, FAO and local partners to investigate and promote the Sustainable Economic Utilization of Non-wood Forest Resources in CIS Countries in Europe.



39. FAO assisted with an ECE Timber Committee workshop on Certification of Sustainable Forest Management in Countries in Transition, held in Prague, Czech Republic, in 1998, and with the market discussions at the ECE Timber Committee meeting in September 1999.

40. Forestry was part of the FAO training workshop on the Uruguay Round and Future Multilateral Trade Negotiations in Agriculture, held in Prague in October 1999, for countries associated with the European Union.

41. FAO, EFI and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland (MAF) organized an International Expert Workshop on the Sustainable Development of Non-wood Goods and Benefits from Boreal and Cold Temperate Forests, in co-operation with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), which was held at the European Forest Institute, from 18 to 22 January 1998, in Finland.

42. FAO participated in the First International Meeting on Aromatic and Medicinal Mediterranean Plants, organized in April 1998 by the University of Coimbra, Portugal. This activity was part of an ongoing effort of the FAO-NWFP Programme to promote better knowledge and improved utilization of medicinal plants at the global level.

43. In 1999, FAO supported the Tropenbos NWFP Programme in the realization of the Seminar on Research on Non-timber Forest Products in the Tropenbos Programme: Results and Perspectives held in Wageningen, the Netherlands, January 1999.

44. Wood energy activities carried out during 1998-1999 were: (i) preparation of Unified Wood Energy Terminology, Definitions and Conversion Factors in order to harmonize statistical databases on bioenergy and facilitate the exchange of data among institutional and national agencies; and (ii) participation in several meetings and conferences on bioenergy.

## **FOREST PROGRAMMES COORDINATION AND INFORMATION**

### *Forestry Information System*

45. The FAO Forestry website has been substantially improved in layout, content and linkages. Forest Resources Assessment data were placed on the Internet, reflecting data as received on FRA 2000. Major efforts were made to improve dissemination of FAO Forestry Papers, Conservation Guides and Miscellaneous Documents. New periodicals such as Non-wood News and Wood Energy Forum were launched.

### *Support to Initiatives in the Follow-up to UNCED*

46. FAO provided inputs to the Secretariat for IFF in terms of documentation and research and in the intersessional meetings under various Government-led initiatives. Under the partnership for the implementation of the IPF proposals for action, FAO chairs the informal, high level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF) and is the leading agency in four areas: national forest programmes, assessment of multiple benefits of all types of forests, criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management and fragile ecosystems affected by desertification and drought, and impact of airborne pollution on forests.