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REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES SINCE THE FIFTY-EIGHTH SESSION

(Item 8 of the provisional agenda)

Note by the secretariat

INTRODUCTION

1. This document has been prepared in accordance with the recommendations of the strategic review process, as a summary overview of activities between October 2000 and October 2001. It is in two parts:

- A succinct overview of all activities, arranged according to the work areas of the integrated programme
- Reports on a number of activities which have not been reported elsewhere, but of which the Committee should be aware. These will be issued as addenda to the present document

2. A separate document (TIM/2001/8) will contain the draft programme for 2001 to 2004, for the Committee's formal approval, and any questions on which the Committee is invited to take a decision.

3. The main activity over the past year has been the strategic review of the whole integrated work programme. This process will be described in document TIM/2001/2, and the Committee invited to review the process under item 3 of the provisional agenda. It is not therefore reported on here.

4. During the year, the Joint FAO/ECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics held its twenty third session (report TIM/EFC/WP.2/2001/8), and the Steering Committee of the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee also met (report TIM/EFC/WP.1/AC.1/2001/2). These bodies reviewed work in their respective areas of responsibility and provided guidance to teams of specialists and the secretariat. Their views are reported under the appropriate work area.

5. *The Committee is invited to take note of the activities described in the present document and to express its thanks to all those governments, institutions and individuals who have contributed to the implementation of the programme over the last year.*

A. OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES BETWEEN OCTOBER 2000 AND SEPTEMBER 2001

Work Area 1: MARKETS AND STATISTICS

6. **Analyses of forest products markets** have included annual publications of the *Timber Bulletin*, "Forest products annual market review, 2000-2001" and "Forest products markets in 2000 and prospects for 2001." *Geneva Timber and Forest Study Papers* provide another avenue for publishing market analyses and "Markets for secondary processed wood products, 1990-2000" and "Forest certification update for the ECE region, Summer 2000" were published. In addition special market analyses were presented by the secretariat at various conferences.

7. A project has been initiated to improve the **Market Information Service (MIS)** on the TC website. The MIS groups all the TC market-related information into one site. The secretariat believes the site could be more user-friendly, and thus as an initial step, a survey is being conducted through the Finnish Forest Industries Federation to look at user's needs in the MIS.

8. An **"International Workshop On Sustainable Development Of The Marketing Of Non-Wood Forest Products In Countries In Transition To Market Economies"** took place in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, from 23-27 October 2000. The purpose of the workshop was to sensitise participants to the marketing of forest products, specifically non-wood forest products. The workshop provided an invaluable opportunity for participants to exchange information and to receive an introduction to marketing. In addition it provided an opportunity to make contacts for

current and future collaboration. The workshop was one of a continuing series of forest products marketing workshops for central and eastern European and Asian countries organised under the auspices of the UNECE Timber Committee in collaboration with FAO Forest Products Marketing Programme and international and national sponsors. A report is available (TIM/2001/7/Add.1) and the proceedings are being prepared by the organizers.

9. An informal network of country correspondents was set up by the TC and EFC in 2001 to collect information on **certified forest products markets and certification of sustainable forest management**. Some 30 countries nominated correspondents and of those approximately 25 responded to a survey. This valuable insight into the dynamic certification issue has been incorporated into the chapter on the “Certified forest products marketplace” in the *Forest Products Annual Market Review, 2000-2001* and in an update of the *Geneva Timber and Forest Study Paper* on “Forest certification update for the ECE region.”

10. A new **Team of Specialists on Forest Products Markets and Marketing** has been established by the TC and EFC and will meet immediately before the TC session on 1-3 October 2001. The mandate of the team is included in document TIM/2001/8. This new team will serve 2 main purposes: 1) To provide a horizontal forum for exchange of information on the forest products markets in the ECE region, and 2) To report on market-related topics to the ECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission and to provide input to the secretariat in this field.

11. Work continues to improve the quality of the **data base** held by the secretariat and the efficiency of its functioning, notably through ever closer cooperation with partners in the Intersecretariat Working Group, for instance on data validation and exchange procedures. A meeting of national correspondents was held in conjunction with the meeting of the Joint FAO/ECE Working Party, to improve communication with them and benefit from their experience. The data collected are published in the Timber Bulletin, on the Timber Committee website and by Eurostat, FAO and ITTO.

12. **Forest fire statistics** up to 1998 have been published (ECE/TIM/BULL/52/4) and an enquiry circulated requesting data to 2000, which it is hoped to publish in the course of 2001.

Work Area 2: FOREST RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

13. After the publication in mid 2000 of the Main TBFRA-2000 Report “*Forest Resources of Europe, CIS, North America, Australia, Japan and New Zealand*”, the follow-up work concentrated on the supply of data and information to the global FRA, co-operation with the MCPFE on sustainable forest management, preparation of accompanying papers, design and production of an

electronic database, publication of the main TBFRA products on CD-Rom, public relations and dissemination of the information.

14. The joint session of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission in October 2000 reviewed the results of TBFRA-2000, and noted that the implementation of this project, as well as the global FRA 2000, “provides a significant improvement in knowledge of the world forest resources”, and a “solid information basis for the on-going international forest policy dialogue”.

15. The joint session agreed that follow-up work should take into account the needs of current and future international forestry related processes, including policy implications. To respond to this, the secretariat elaborated a use and policy implications survey, which has been widely distributed to current and potential users of TBFRA information. The report with preliminary analysis and findings of the survey is issued separately as Timber Committee document TIM/2001/7/Add.3

16. Two TBFRA accompanying papers were prepared in the year 2001:

- “*Structural, compositional and functional aspects of forest biodiversity in Europe*” by Dr. Janna Puumalainen (EU/JRC, Ispra, Italy),
- A forestry country profile of the Russian Federation by Dr. Andrey Filipchuk (Russia), which included the most recent information, also on the forest protected areas.

The positive responses from users confirmed that these products were also an important source of information on the temperate/boreal forest resource, and a useful tool for scientists, researchers, additional to the main report.

17. The TBFRA process has already contributed to the evaluation of the current set of the European criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management (SFM), particularly during the MCPFE workshop on the matter held in Liechtenstein in March 2001. Experience with TBFRA reporting on these indicators is an essential input to their revision. There is close cooperation with the MCPFE Liaison Unit Vienna, and a number of countries, including Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Canada, Russia, USA, during the recent meeting of the team of specialists in Victoria, expressed the interest of the Montreal process in co-operation with UNECE/FAO FRA as well.

18. The UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Forest Resource Assessment held its recent meeting in Victoria, Canada in June 2001(its report is issued as *TIM/2001/7/Add.2*). The team reviewed all the activities, which are being accomplished within Work Area 2, and concluded that after the production of the CD-Rom with the TBFRA Main Report and electronic database, and the publication of accompanying papers, the initial terms of reference and mandate of the ToS on the Temperate and Boreal Forest Resources Assessment had been fully implemented. The team took

note of the decision of the Joint FAO/ECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics in May 2001 to prolong the activities of the team until the year 2004.

19. The Team accepted its new main tasks which were defined in the revised Terms of Reference and Mandate as follows: to advise on the concept, classifications and methods of the implementation of the future forest resources assessments, taking into account current developments concerning criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management (SFM), to contribute together within the Global FRA to relevant international processes, and to help activities being done within the UNECE/FAO outlook studies. The potential of the UNECE/FAO Forest Resources Assessment programme will be fully realised in the process of the preparation for the next round, and first of all, when preparing for the Expert Consultation on Global FRA, which is tentatively planned for the year 2002.

Work Area 3: EUROPEAN FOREST SECTOR OUTLOOK STUDIES

20. The outlook study activities of the ECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission have evolved over time to reflect changes in the relationship between the forest sector and the society. The first studies, which were published in the early 50s, were focused on analyses of possible roundwood supply and outlook for forest products demand. Since then the study subjects have significantly changed, reflecting for example the optimism in future economic growth during the 60s or the consequences from pollution to forest stands during late 80s. The most recent study was published in 1996 under the title: "European Timber Trends and Prospects: into the 21st century", where an emphasis was put on the analysis of policy scenarios.

21. The outlook study process was re-launched in 1999. Based on the increasing importance of environmental demands on the European forest sector, the EFSOS Team of Specialists recommended emphasising the environmental advantages of forestry and the use of wood products and renaming these activities "European Forest Sector Outlook Studies" (EFSOS)

22. The objective of EFSOS activities are to analyse the development of the forest and forest industry sector, considering challenges and uncertainties due to varying policies, market developments and the influence of exogenous factors, encompassing the use of forestry land and forest products. The aim is to assist policy and investment decision-making. The main target groups of EFSOS are policy makers, entrepreneurs and the academic community of the forest and forest products sector as well as the public.

23. The work is now focussed on the preparation of a base line study, along the lines of the last study round. It is planned to publish the study by end 2002. The study will consist of the following main elements:

- Historical analysis of the forest sector,
- Outlook for forest resources and for forest product markets,
- Policy scenario analysis.

24. The elements are at different stages of development:

- For the “*Historical analysis of the forest sector*” the secretariat work has so far been limited to a search for literature to be included in the mentioned base line study. Further, the secretariat is drafting a project proposal in order to find necessary resources to start more detailed analysis.
- For the “*Outlooks for forest resources and for forest products markets*” specialists have drafted methodology reports, which will now be published in an ECE/FAO discussion paper. The Team of specialists and the national correspondents recommended using the EFISCEN model (<http://www.efi.fi/projects/forsce/>) to analyse the consequences for the forest of a particular level of roundwood demand. The input data will be updated, using the TBFRA 2000 terminology and definitions. For the outlook for forest products markets the team suggested to stay, at this stage, with the accepted ETTS V econometric analysis, updating the input data and improving the methods as resources allow. Now data collection is in progress and should be finished autumn 2001.
- As for the “*Policy Scenario Analysis*” a first survey about the importance of scenario fields has been carried out. The report could be a contribution to the Vienna Ministerial Conference. The report should have an impact to the promotion of environmental advantages of forestry and the use of wood products in competition with other sectors in the global market.

25. The EFSOS programme also includes complementary studies on special policy topics and case studies for particular regions or countries. As a first step in this direction an “*Outlook Study on the Forest Sector of the Russian Federation*” has been launched in close cooperation with the Russian government and the relevant statistical and research institutions. First results could be expected beginning 2002.

26. In view of the ECE request to intensify cross-sectoral, timber, trade and environmental tasks, the secretariat is working together with specialists on some further project proposals as a base for fund raising for complementary studies:

- Impact from global tariff liberalisation on European Forest Resources
- The Development of the Forest Product End-use Sector
- Stabilisation of the forest sector in CEEC countries

27. An EFSOS web site (<http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/efsos>) has been created to improve the PR impact of EFSOS, to receive responses on EFSOS activities from the public, to establish a platform for a specific outlook study information exchange and to use the site in the framework of fund raising activities.

28. At present, the programme is being carried out mainly based on the resources of the secretariat. During the last two years the secretariat has made efforts to enlarge resources, requesting the ECE member countries for support. So far Finland, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the UK have responded positively, providing money or manpower resources, in addition to the participation by a large number of countries in EFSOS activities, notably the core group meeting. Beside the work, which is carried out by specialists from various countries (so called "core" group) 18 countries have so far nominated their national correspondents for the work in the EFSOS programme. The secretariat is also active in enlarging EFSOS resources by internships and JPOs (Junior Professional Officers).

Work Area 4: TECHNOLOGY, MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING

The Steering Committee of the Joint Committee met in Lisbon, Portugal, from 30 – 31 March 2001. The main role of the Steering Committee is to guide the work of the Committee between sessions. The whole work programme was reviewed as is usual practice for the Steering Committee. Additions, amendments and recommendations were made for each programme element. The results have been included in the tabular presentation of the Joint Committee's programme.

One main item of the agenda was the Strategic review of the integrated programme of work. The Steering Committee was deeply concerned about the low priority and the tremendous reduction of the resources of the secretariat assigned to the work of the Joint Committee though all activities of the Committee are fully in line with the priorities of the parent bodies and contribute decisively to the issues of the MCPFE. The comments by the Steering Committee are set out in annex I of the report (TIM/EFC/WP.1/AC.1/2001/2).

It is common practice for the Joint Committee to continuously review its methods of work and see where improvements are possible or required. As a result, the Committee already applies a set of very effective methods in an efficient manner. In spite of this, the Steering Committee used its last session to review the work methods once again and to make recommendations regarding contacts with member countries, efficiency gains in the work of teams of specialists (which more or less correspond with the proposals made by the side meeting at COFO, see Document TIM/2001/2, last two pages), more participants from countries in transition in its activities, roles of members of the Steering Committee, follow-up of conclusions and recommendations of seminars and improving the Committee's public relations.

29. The following activities have taken place since the last session of the Timber Committee:

- Seminar on women in forestry, Viseu, Portugal, 2-6 April 2001 (see report TIM/EFC/WP.1/SEM.50/2)
- Workshop on new trends in wood harvesting with cable cranes, Ossiach, Austria, 18-24 June.

- Work has been carried out to prepare another seminar which will take place this year the week following the Timber Committee's session, on forestry meets the public, in Walkringen, Switzerland.
- Work started to convene the first meeting of the team of specialists on disaster preparedness (contingency planning) in forestry

Work Area 5: POLICY AND CROSS-SECTORAL ISSUES

30. Over the year, work continued on monitoring of developments in forest policies and institutions, monitoring forestry assistance to countries in transition, supporting the work of the Forest Communicators Network, and exchanging experience on the changing role of state forest services. Work started on developing concepts for work on trade and environment issues relevant to the sector and for work on promoting sustainable use of wood and other forest products and services. There was close cooperation with the MCPFE and direct input to some of its work, notably on protected and protective forests.

31. The activities are very briefly summarised below:

- The synthesis of country reports to the EFC session in 2000 on recent policy developments was revised in the light of comments and new information and published as *Forest policies and institutions in Europe, 1998-2000* (ECE/TIM/SP/19). The national reports are available for reference on the website.
- The data base on forestry assistance to countries in transition was maintained and made available. The team of specialists on this topic will meet in September 2001 in Poland and consider, in close cooperation with MCPFE the direction of future work in this area. The Committee will be informed of the results of this meeting in TIM/2001/8/Add.2.
- The Forest Communicators Network met in Slovakia, and exchanged experience and information on a wide range of topics. They also considered how they were fulfilling their mandate: the Committee will be informed of their activities and invited to comment in more detail (TIM/2001/8/Add.1).
- The second workshop on the changing role of state forest services took place in Austria at the invitation of the Austrian forest service, ÖBF AG. Senior executives from 23 forest services participated in a stimulating discussion and received training on managing change. Further workshops are planned in Ireland (2002), France (2003) and Finland (2004) (all subject to confirmation).
- Consultations were held within the UNECE secretariat to explore possible inter-sectoral activities as recommended by the Commission (see items 2 and 6 of the provisional agenda)
- Discussions started with the Romanian authorities on the planned seminar on promoting sustainable use of wood and other forest products and services, which is now scheduled for September 2002. It is hoped to present proposals on this seminar to the Committee.

- Direct inputs to MCPFE activities were the report of the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee team on participation in forestry decision making, the use of the TBFRA data and network to further work on the definition of “protected and protective forests”, participation in the work on improving the MCPFE indicators of sustainable forest management, and the above-mentioned cooperation on forestry assistance to countries in transition. The work on protected and protective forests resulted in a new MCPFE classification, with cross references to classifications by IUCN and EEA. On a more general level, the UNECE/FAO secretariat has participated in MCPFE preparatory work for the Vienna Ministerial Conference in 2003. (See also TIM/2001/4)

B. OTHER MATTERS FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COMMITTEE

32. The secretariat considers there are a few items which merit a rather more detailed presentation either because of their interest and topicality, or because they have not been reported to subsidiary bodies such as the Joint Working Party or the Joint Committee. These are presented below, for the information of the Committee. For practical reasons (timing, length), they are contained in addenda to the present document:

- Workshop on marketing of non-wood forest products, Moldova (TIM/2001/7/Add.1)
 - Meeting of the team of specialists on forest resource assessment, Victoria BC Canada, (TIM/2001/7/Add.2)
 - Survey of users of TBFRA (TIM/2001/7/Add.3)
 - Report on study tour in Poland (TIM/2001/7/Add.4) (to be issued after the tour in late September)
-