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REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES SINCE THE FIFTY-NINTH SESSION

(Item 7 of the provisional agenda)

Note by the secretariat

The present document presents an account of work carried out since the Committee's fifty-ninth session and draws the Committee's attention to a number of specific points which it may consider discussing.

INTRODUCTION

1. Under this item, the Committee and the Commission are expected to review implementation of the ECE/FAO integrated programme over the last year, and approve the programme for the period 2003 to 2004. According to the modalities agreed at the strategic review, the whole programme need not be reviewed and approved in detail by the Committee and the Commission, as the strategic direction has been agreed for the period to 2004, the work areas 1- 3 are guided by the Working Party and work area 4 by the Joint Committee, and the bureaux are responsible for overseeing implementation within the broad lines agreed. Under this agenda item the Committee and Commission should therefore:

- Take note of the activities under the integrated programme of work between September 2001 and November 2002, and provide more detailed guidance for the activities in work area 5 (for which no subsidiary body provides guidance);
- Discuss those policy relevant issues which need to be discussed at the intergovernmental level;
- Take note of the programme of work for 2002-2004 presented by the secretariat with the endorsement of the bureaux (see bureaux report, posted on the website).

2. The programme of work discussion of both the Committee and the Commission will be based on two separate documents:

- An account of work carried out over the year, which also draws the attention of the Committee and the Commission to items which they may consider discussing (the present document); some addenda will be prepared to address certain issues for which documentation is not available elsewhere, and prepare the discussion as necessary;
- A presentation of the integrated programme of work for the period 2002-2004, as of July 2002 (i.e. taking account of all developments up to then), including the broad programme overview, the detailed plans for each work area, the allocation of secretariat resources between programme elements, and the mandates of teams of specialists (TIM/2002/7).

3. As the integrated programme is the responsibility of both the Committee and the Commission, and their sessions are within 6 weeks of each other, the same documents are submitted to both bodies.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER 2001-NOVEMBER 2002, AND POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

Work Area 1: Markets and Statistics

Achievements in 2001/2002

- *Forest Products Annual Market Review, 2000-2001* (ECE/TIM/BULL/54/3) published in electronic and print. Version 2001-2002 scheduled for August 2002.
- *Forest Products Markets in 2001 and Prospects for 2002* (ECE/TIM/BULL/54/6) published in electronic and print. Version 2002-2003 scheduled for October 2002.

- *Status of Forest Certification in the UNECE Region: Summer 2001* (ECE/TIM/DP/23) published in electronic and print. Update 2002 scheduled for August 2002. The study is based on a survey of a new, informal network of officially-nominated country correspondents.
- Timber Committee Market Discussions expanded to 1½ days in October 2001, documented through Timber Committee Market Statement and press release. Scheduled for repeat in September 2002.
- Team of Specialists on Forest Products Markets and Marketing created and inaugural meeting held in October 2001. Meeting scheduled at Timber Committee Session in 2002.
- Timber Committee Market Information Service (MIS) development continued with expansion of the website to include additional statistics, including entire TIMBER database, and new market-related publications (<http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/mis/mis.htm>). Development continuing.
- Market presentations given at: Wood Visions conference in Berlin; American Hardwood Export Council's "European-American Hardwood Convention" in Dublin; Timber Committee market discussions in Geneva; Wood Marketing Day in Lahti (Finland), Carrefour du Bois in Nantes (France) and Forexpo in Bordeaux (France).
- Article on international forest products market statistics published in the *Forest Products Journal*, May 2002 issue.
- Statistical issues of *Timber Bulletin* issued, including forest products statistics, forest products prices, trade flow data, and forest fire statistics.
- Data were collected and validated in an integrated system with FAO, Eurostat and ITTO, coordinated through regular meetings of the Intersecretariat Working Group.

Work Area 2: Forest Resource Assessment

Achievements in 2001/2002

4. The key data for the region were supplied to FAO and included in the recently published FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment 2000, and in the FAO flagship publication "State of the World Forests 2001" (SOFO). SOFO-2001 was officially launched in October 2001 in Geneva. The close co-operation with the global FRA Programme, and a proper co-ordination of the global FRA activities, will be reinforced with the elaboration of the common global platform for the next round of the assessment. In particular, Geneva staff are participating actively in the global FRA Expert Consultation on "Global Forest Resources Assessments – linking national and international efforts" (Kotka-IV) which was held from 1 to 5 July 2002 in Kotka (Finland).

5. The ECE/FAO forest resource assessment programme is contributing in a number of areas to the preparation of the forthcoming (fourth) Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe to be held in Vienna in April 2003:

- The report to the next Ministerial Conference on the state of European forests will be based to a large extent on data provided by ECE/FAO in the context of an updating of the data published in TBFRA. National correspondents and partners in other organisations are working closely together to provide the best possible set of recent validated and comparable data.
- The MCPFE Indicators for SFM are being reviewed in the light of experience, and ECE/FAO staff have devoted significant time and resources to the work through participation in four workshops and membership of the Advisory Group. The revised indicators were submitted for approval to the Expert

Level Meeting in June 2002, but they have not yet been formally approved. When approved, it is expected they will provide guidance for future FRA work as a clear indication of the information needs identified by the regional policy process.

6. The FRA network has worked closely with the EFSOS network in two areas:
 - About 30 countries have supplied forest resources data for the forest resource model used in the EFSOS baseline study. These data were provided on the basis of the up-dated TBFRA dataset and current definitions, but with a more detailed break down of the data by age classes, regions, ownership, etc.
 - “Historical Analysis of Trends of Forest Resources in Europe”, which is based on making comparable over time the key parameters of successive forest resource assessments.
7. The UN-ECE/FAO FRA team of specialists held its most meeting in Krakow (Poland) in May 2002, and reviewed and guided the forest resource assessment activities.

Points for discussion

- *The Committee is invited to discuss the cooperation with MCPFE in the area of forest resource assessment and to endorse the approach being applied.*

Work area 3: European Forest Sector Outlook Studies (EFSOS)

Achievements in 2001/2002

8. The EFSOS work continued along the lines agreed at earlier meetings of the team of specialists, and endorsed by the strategic review. The Joint FAO/ECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics reviewed the work during its twenty-fourth session in April 2002, putting an emphasis on quality of the baseline study, namely the policy scenario analysis and its timely presentation to the Ministerial Conference in 2003. During the period under review detailed analysis was conducted and preliminary results obtained. The first outputs are appearing at present. The detail of outputs and plans are available at the dedicated EFSOS website (<http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/efsos>)

9. The ToS and the Working Party recognise that combining the knowledge, skills and capacities of a large group of forest sector outlook study experts is essential for the success of EFSOS both in terms of quality and of keeping deadlines. The secretariat has therefore undertaken various steps in order to build up an EFSOS information network and to enlarge resources. The main components of this network are the officially nominated national correspondents (22 countries have nominated so far their national correspondents). Further, many specialists come to the various EFSOS meetings and contribute their knowledge and skills without getting paid for this effort.

10. The first step in the EFSOS programme is a baseline study report, consisting of historical analysis of driving forces, base line scenarios (assuming “business as usual”) on forest resources and forest products markets as well as alternative policy scenarios. The secretariat has put a special emphasis on the policy orientation of the EFSOS project. Further, a first complementary case study was launched under the title “Outlook Study on the

Forest Sector of the Russian Federation”. The first draft outcomes of all these activities were discussed during the EFSOS meeting 27-29 May 2002 in Geneva.

11. Additional funds have been raised since 2000. The main donations have so far come from governments. FAO increased the contributions for EFSOS at the end of 2001. In 2001, these extra-budgetary sources accounted for about 50 % of the overall EFSOS manpower and about 80 % of the EFSOS “non-staff” resources (travel, consultants etc.)

12. European Forest Sector Outlook Studies constitute an analytical work about future possible developments of the forest and forest industry sector in Europe, including CIS, considering the challenges and uncertainties of varying policies, market developments and the influence of exogenous factors (e.g. climate change). A special policy study provides scenarios, with differing policy assumptions, which are useful for a further discussion about policy options. The study shows, among other things, that future developments in the forest and forestry industry sector depend significantly on the policy and economic progress in Eastern European countries. At the same time, the study shows the importance of “external” policy areas (agriculture, energy, rural development, environment, etc.).

13. The secretariat is considering how EFSOS could best be used to strengthen the European forest sector policy dialogue, and possibly contribute to the preparation of the Ministerial Conference of MCPFE in April 2003. The outcomes of the policy scenario analysis were generated based mainly on (1) a broad research of literature sources and policy documents, (2) an inquiry as well as (3) a meeting among European forest sector stakeholders. Yet the secretariat considers that it could provide a powerful and transparent analytical tool for the sector, if improved and well understood by policy makers. (The second draft version of the study, taking account of the comments received at the team of specialists meeting will be posted on the website by mid August). One idea is to hold a workshop to discuss how the outcomes of the policy study, in context with the cross-sectoral opportunities within UNECE, could be used. A few countries support the idea and the Czech Republic has offered to host the meeting in Prague. Further progress on this idea depends on support of the policy study by policy decision makers and additional budgets for inviting participants from Eastern European countries, often unable to participate in such meeting because of lack in resources.

14. EFSOS has already identified developments in eastern Europe as one of the key issues needing further study, and consideration of the policy implications. This area is of course one where ECE as an organisation has a comparative advantage. At present, it is not possible to carry out in depth analysis of the issues, chiefly because of lack of resources. Therefore the secretariat elaborated a project proposal to carry out analysis of developments in eastern Europe, which countries and other stakeholders are invited to fund.

Points for discussion

- ***The Committee is invited to discuss how EFSOS analysis could be used to strengthen the European (and, to a lesser extent, global) forest policy dialogue, perhaps by means of a workshop on policy options, and extra budgetary funding for more in-depth work on the outlook for eastern Europe and***

the consequences (for all countries) of these developments. An addendum to the present document will be prepared with further information and proposals to stimulate this discussion.

Work area 4: Technology, management and training

15. Activities under this work area are guided by the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training.

Achievements in 2001/2002

- Seminar on forestry meets the public, Rütthubelbad, Switzerland, 8-11 October 2001;
- Seminar on partnerships in forestry, Brussels, Belgium, 3-7 June 2002;
- Seminar on afforestation in the context of sustainable forest management, Ennis, Co. Clare, Ireland, 15-19 September 2002;
- Proceedings, Seminar on the role of women in the forestry sector in Europe and North America, Viseu, Portugal 2001;
- Proceedings, Workshop on new trends in wood harvesting with cable systems for sustainable forest management in the mountains, Ossiach, Austria, June 2001;
- International Forest Fire News (IFFN) No. 25, July-December 2001;
- International Forest Fire News (IFFN) No. 26, January-June 2002 (in press).

Points for discussion

- *The Committee and the Commission will be informed orally of the results of the Joint Committee session, which will take place just before the Committee session, and invited to respond.*
- *The Joint Committee documents, including the draft programme of work and the review of the three subject areas are all on the website <http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/docs/jc-sessions/jc-24/jc-24.htm>*

Work area 5: Policy and cross-sectoral issues

Achievements in 2001/2002

16. The European Forestry Commission will carry out its regular review of recent developments in forest policy, laws and institutions at its session in Barcelona. It will identify and articulate regional policy issues for the use of the FAO Committee on Forestry, and other bodies.

17. The team of specialists on countries in transition held a workshop at Debe (Poland) in September 2001, jointly with MCPFE and other bodies, to review the situation and needs of these countries in the forest/timber field. The proceeding of this workshop have been issued, and the recommendations are reproduced in an addendum to the present document.

18. The data base on forestry assistance to countries in transition, under the mandate of Helsinki resolution H3 is being maintained, despite resource shortages. A new update is being prepared for end 2002.

19. A report will be prepared for MCPFE on implementation of resolution H3: forestry assistance to countries in transition, for which ECE/FAO is international coordinator.

20. Work has started to prepare the seminar on “strategies to promote and stimulate the sound use of wood as renewable and environmentally friendly raw material” (provisional title), March 2003, Poiana Brasov, Romania. A first announcement has been issued and consultations undertaken with interested countries, organisations and experts. Possible speakers are being contacted. The plans for the seminar are summarised in the addendum.

21. Close contact was maintained with MCPFE and other forums for the global and regional dialogue and work coordinated in several areas (reported in TIM/2002/4).

22. The Forest Communicators Network met in Riga (workshop on training the trainers), and cooperated actively with Joint Committee work in related areas, notably “Forestry meets the public” and “Participation”. The report of the FCN meeting is available on the website.

(<<http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/pr/meetings/meetings.htm>>).

23. Exploratory work has continued to develop the trade/environment/timber cross-sectoral work, although results so far have been limited, due essentially to resource limitations, in the Timber Section and its partners. A project proposal for a workshop on certification systems to certify sustainable forest management in countries in transition has been prepared jointly with the Working Party on Technical Harmonisation and Standardisation Policy of the Committee on Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development. These issues are discussed in the Timber Committee document on cross sectoral issues (TIM/2002/ 5).

24. A very successful “technical excursion” (formerly “study tour”) took place on the theme of managing the transition in the forest/timber sector, in Germany, in May 2002. The bureaux provided guidance for future workshops/technical excursions (see addendum)

Points for discussion

- *The Committee and Commission are invited to discuss the recommendations of the Debe workshop on countries in transition (see addendum).*
- *The Committee and Commission are invited to review and provide guidance for the plans for the seminar in Romania on strategies to promote the sound use of wood (see addendum).*
- *The Committee and Commission are invited to discuss, modify if necessary and endorse the bureaux guidelines for future workshops/technical excursions (see addendum).*

25. The addenda to the present document provide further information on the following topics:

- Recommendations of the Debe workshop on countries in transition;
- Programme of seminar on strategies to promote the sound use of wood;
- EFSOS analysis of policy options;
- Project proposal for EFSOS analysis of outlook for transition countries;
- Guidelines for workshops/technical excursions.

Conclusion

The Committee and Commission are invited to:

- *Discuss those points identified above, as well as any others they consider appropriate, and give guidance as necessary.*
 - *Take note of the achievements for 2001/2002.*
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