



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
General

TIM/2003/5
22 July 2003

Original: English

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

TIMBER COMMITTEE
Sixty-first session
7 - 10 October 2003

**INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON FORESTS,
SUPPORT TO THE GLOBAL AND REGIONAL PROCESSES**

(Item 6 of the provisional agenda)

Note by the secretariat

This document presents actions taken in support of the global and regional dialogues on forests. The Committee is invited to take note of the actions undertaken and agree on future support to these processes that will be provided by ECE/FAO.

INTRODUCTION

1. In the mid 1990s, the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission decided to give over-riding priority to supporting the international dialogue on forests. This report is the most recent of the annual reports on this topic presented for the Timber Committee's attention and decision. This document does not repeat some of the background information presented to the Committee in 2002 (see TIM/2002/4)
2. *The Committee is invited to take note of the actions undertaken in support of the global and regional forest dialogue and agree on future support to these processes to be provided by ECE/FAO.*

GLOBAL PROCESSES

World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)

3. In 2002, the Committee reviewed its programme in the light of the section on forests of the WSSD Plan for Implementation (see TIM/2002/4, annex, and ECE/TIM/99 para 19), concluding that "the Timber Committee reviews its programme every year in the light of the IPF/IFF proposals for action and most of its activities address issues identified in it". The Committee's activities with regard to monitoring and assessment, long term outlook, cross-sectoral approaches and its partnerships with FAO and others are particularly relevant. One aspect identified by WSSD but where the Committee has not so far been active is forest law enforcement and illegal international trade in forest products. However, since then the team of specialists on forest products markets and marketing has carried out an exploratory study of this issue, which will be presented to the Committee. This aspect was also addressed in the ECE/FAO Roundtable on "Forests, trade and environment: working together for sustainable forest management" (July 2003).

4. The secretariat therefore considers that the present programme of the Committee is in full harmony with the intentions of WSSD, taking into consideration the Committee's comparative advantages, and is being adapted to include more items identified as being of priority nature by WSSD. Any further shift in priorities would be an appropriate topic for consideration during the Strategic Review, to be discussed under item 8 of the provisional agenda.

UN Forum on Forests (UNFF)

5. A main focus of UNFF is the implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action. The Committee reviewed its own programme to ensure that it is in conformity with these proposals, making certain additions, notably as regards promotion of the sound use of wood (seminar in Romania, March 2003). During the Strategic Review, it is proposed to carry out a similar review, checking the ECE/FAO activities against the IPF/IFF proposals. It is also likely that ECE/FAO will contribute, through FAO, to the monitoring and assessment exercise to be carried out by UNFF and CPF for 2005.

6. The UNFF is paying increasing attention to the regional dimension. At UNFF3 in Geneva (May-June 2003), a panel discussion was held on regional cooperation on sustainable forest management. The ECE/FAO secretariat, with the MCPFE Liaison Unit and the UNEP secretariat made a presentation on the regional forest dialogue in Europe (available on the Timber Committee website at www.unece.org/trade/timber/). The UNFF also "12.

Invites representatives of various regional institutions, bodies and processes to participate in the Forum's discussions on lessons learned in the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action, and *encourages* further cooperation on sustainable forest management at the sub-regional and regional levels, as appropriate;”.

Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)

7. The CPF is a partnership of global agencies active in the field of forests. It is led by FAO. As a regional body, ECE/FAO does not participate directly in the CPF, but it contributes, through the regional structure of FAO, to the CPF work, notably in the fields of forest resource assessment, statistics and outlook studies.

REGIONAL DIALOGUE

8. From the mid 1990s, ECE/FAO has developed a mutually beneficial partnership with the regional forest dialogue, now known as the Ministerial Conference on Protection of Forests in Europe, with close communication and coordination of activities, joint activities etc. For more detail see TIM/2002/4 paras. 12-14. In 2002, the EFC recommended that FAO continue to support the MCPFE and participate actively in the formulation and implementation of the proposed MCPFE programme of work.

9. For the Fourth Ministerial Conference in Vienna in April 2003, ECE/FAO made a number of contributions including the following:

- data collected through the FRA network and in coordination with the global FRA on indicators of sustainable forest management, the foundation of the joint publication on the *State of Europe's Forests 2003*, which was presented to the ministers;
- linked with the above, cooperation with MCPFE in developing a new set of guidelines for protected and protective forests, and data collection according to the new classification;
- international coordinator of MCPFE resolutions H3 (Forestry assistance to countries in transition) and S3 (decentralised data base on forest fires); and
- a series of workshops and seminars on topics included in the MCPFE work programme such as the seminars on sound use of wood, on partnerships, on countries in transition, etc.

10. The support of ECE/FAO was recognised by MCPFE in the Vienna declaration, where the ministers committed themselves to ‘continue the fruitful pan-European co-operation with all partners, especially with UNECE/FAO and Environment for Europe/PEBLDS, and increase co-operation with other regional forest processes”.

11. As for the future, it is proposed to continue the existing strong partnership, and develop it by close communication between the ECE/FAO Strategic Review and the process of formulating the new MCPFE work programme. These two processes will take place at about the same time, and both secretariats and delegations should seek to find synergies between the two activities, clearly based on comparative advantages of each, as well as of other actual or potential partners. It is hoped to use the results of the EFSOS main report as input to both processes, as it should be able to identify the major long term structural issues facing the sector. It is hoped to organize a workshop to present and discuss the EFSOS results with national and regional policy makers, sometime in late 2003, so that the EFSOS work can be properly taken into account.

CONCLUSIONS

12. ECE/FAO is contributing, to the extent possible within its mandate and resources, to the global and regional dialogues, working in partnership with a wide range of organisations. This cooperation has developed over the last decade, as the regional and global dialogues have themselves developed. The cooperation has been particularly close with MCPFE.

13. The secretariat believes that possible new modes of cooperation could be examined in the context of the Strategic Review of the ECE/FAO programme, although the limitations of resources and mandates should be clearly acknowledged.

14. Delegations are invited to review and comment on the support provided by ECE/FAO to the global and regional forest dialogue. They are also invited to request the secretariat, in the course of preparing the Strategic Review, to devote attention to the possibility of widening and deepening this cooperation. In particular, they may wish to authorise the secretariat to explore, with the MCPFE Liaison Units in Vienna and Warsaw, the possibility of using the EFSOS main report as input to both the ECE/FAO Strategic Review and the preparation of the MCPFE programme of work.
