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**UNECE/FAO POLICY FORUM: OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPACTS OF BIO-ENERGY
POLICIES AND TARGETS ON THE FOREST AND OTHER SECTORS**

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This document provides information on the joint UNECE/FAO Policy Forum on “Opportunities and impacts of bio-energy policies and targets on the forest and other sectors”, which will be held on 10 October 2007.

The first part of the Forum will be presentations and discussion. During the second part of the Forum, there will be a panel discussion wherein stakeholders from different sectors will discuss the role of wood in meeting the region's energy requirements.

The Forum aims to provide information about recent developments and policies in the bio-energy sector in the UNECE region. A report on wood availability and potential demand will be presented as background information and input to the discussion. Discussion will focus on possible impacts and consequences of increased wood demand and utilization on and by other sectors (forestry, wood industry, energy, agriculture, environment) and, other geographical regions.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission will jointly hold a policy forum devoted to the topic "Opportunities and impacts of bio-energy policies and targets on the forest and other sectors". The expert presentations and discussions will take place on Wednesday, 10 October 2007 as a one-day, in-session forum during the 65th Timber Committee Session at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. It will have simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Russian.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Wood energy in the UNECE region

2. Concerns about climate change and energy security have led policy and decision makers to expect wood to make a significantly larger contribution to energy supply, and put policies in place to promote this. Relevant policies along with rising energy prices have increased the demand for wood for energy. At the same time, Europe's wood processing industries (for sawnwood, paper and panels) continue to expand, with the result that competition for raw material is expected to increase in many regions. UNECE/FAO statistics indicate that the volume of wood that is harvested from forests throughout the UNECE region at present is less than the volume increase. The challenge is how to bring enough wood to the market without compromising the sustainable management of the forest and without undesirable impacts on other sectors and geographical regions. Another challenge is to define what is a sustainable level in the new circumstances.

B. Mobilization of wood resources

3. In order to tackle the challenges related to the increasing demand for wood, the UNECE/FAO Timber Section organized a workshop on "mobilizing wood resources" in cooperation with FAO, CEPI, MCPFE, the UNECE/FAO/ILO Joint Expert network and EFI in January 2007. The workshop focused on finding recommendations to policy and decision makers to how to mobilize additional resources from the forest within framework of sustainable forest management. Recommendations and conclusions can be found online: <http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/workshops/2007/wmw/mobilisingwood.htm>

C. Assessment of wood availability and demand

4. One specific recommendation to the Timber Section and other international organizations concerned the need to supply reliable information on the realistic potential for and consequences of increased wood mobilization. As key areas existing and future wood resources (forest, woody biomass outside forests, short-rotation plantation on agricultural land, residues and post-consumer material) were considered.

5. Therefore, the UNECE/FAO Timber Section is preparing a report on wood availability and demand in cooperation with the University of Hamburg, Germany, the European Commission, Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI), European Confederation of woodworking industries (CEI-bois) and FAO. For this report current data on wood supply and demand is assessed and in particular data for wood energy is incorporated. Furthermore future

wood demand is estimated, based on existing scenarios (European Forest Sector Outlook study, EFSOS) and on the latest targets for bio-energy as set by individual countries.

6. The report will be presented at the Policy Forum and serve as input to the discussion.

II. PURPOSE OF POLICY FORUM

7. This Policy Forum aims to:
 - (a) Provide policy and decision makers up-to-date information about recent developments and policies in the bio-energy sector in the different UNECE regions;
 - (b) Present and discuss scenarios on wood availability and demand of both the bio-energy sector and the wood-processing industry;
 - (c) Discuss possible impacts and consequences of increased wood demand and utilization on and by other sectors and, other geographical regions.

III. QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

8. The UNECE Timber Committee and FAO propose to focus on the following questions during the policy forum:
 - (a) Which policies have led and might lead in the future to a stimulus for wood energy and an increasing demand for wood? What are their past and future impacts? Analysis of European, North American and Russian policies and their effects
 - (b) How much wood can the UNECE region supply to satisfy the increasing demand for wood raw material on a sustainable level, considering existing patterns and new opportunities for improved wood mobilization? (Presentation of studies arising from the January workshop.)
 - (c) How can wood resources be efficiently mobilized? (Building on the January workshop recommendations.)
 - (d) What are possible cross-sectoral links, and contributions to other sectors, such as environment, agriculture, energy and transport?
 - (e) What are possible impacts of higher wood energy demand and import in UNECE region on other regions in the world, in particular on developing countries?

IV. FORMAT

9. The Policy Forum will be a one-day event. The morning session will be presentations and discussions; the afternoon session will be a panel discussion about the future role of wood in meeting the UNECE region's energy need.

10. During lunch break, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will organize a side event on climate change and forest (impacts and its role in mitigation).

11. Tentative time schedule:

Morning session

Topic		Time
Registration and Coffee		9:30 - 10:00
Opening	UNECE welcome	10:00 - 10:15
	FAO welcome	
Wood energy policies and developments in North America		10:20 -10:40
Wood energy in Russia - Policies and interaction with the forest sector		10:40 -11:00
Recent developments in bio-energy policies in the EU		11:00 -11:10
Discussion		11:10 -11:40
Current and potential future wood availability in the UNECE region		11:45 -12:05
Mobilization of wood resources		12:05 -12:25
Discussion		12:25 -13:00
LUNCH		13:00 -14:00
Side event by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)		14:00 -15:00

Afternoon session

Topic	Time
Wood energy - Interactions between UNECE and tropical countries	15:00 -15:20
Impact of bio-energy policies on wood processing industries in Europe	15:20 -15:40
Discussion	15:40 -16:00
<u>Panel discussion</u> What is the future contribution of wood to meeting UNECE region's energy needs?	16:10 - 17:45
- The role of bio-energy and wood in the Energy Sector	
- Forest Industry point of view on bio-energy	
- Contribution of Agriculture to biomass supply	
- Certification of biomass and environmental impacts	
- Forest owners' contribution to energy supply	
Chairman's summary	17:45 -18:00
Closing remarks	

V. OUTPUTS OF FORUM

12. Possible outcome of the meeting:

- (a) The main messages of the presentations and the discussion of policy forum will be summarized in the Policy Forum's conclusions.
 - (b) Press release will be issued about the Forum's conclusions.
 - (c) Proceedings will be published and the presentations on further information will be made publicly available on the UNECE/FAO Timber Section webpage:
www.unece.org/trade/timber/docs/tc-sessions/tc-65/policyforum/
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