

*Responding to climate change:  
Wood's place in a global approach to green building*

**UNECE/FAO Workshop, 12 October 2009, Geneva  
Conclusions and Recommendations**

**Conclusions**

- To promote green building, the forest sector does not have the necessary strategic alliance with the environment community, science and Governments
- Some countries have green building rating systems, and other countries are considering establishing them, but existing green building rating systems lack a scientific life cycle assessment (LCA) basis
- Architects do not want to be pushed into a single material agenda
- We cannot only claim that wood is better from a carbon standpoint – we need to mind the gaps with science
- Once we have fully developed LCA frameworks and results, we need to develop tools to transfer and communicate them plainly and simply to industry, to builders, and to the general public
- Disposal of wood is a key issue. At the end of products life, who should take responsibility for it? Policymakers (for example to forbid wood in landfills)? Or forest products companies (retro-logistics of wood)
- LCA-carbon-centric building rating systems are “material neutral” but current green building assessment schemes tend to underestimate the carbon intensity issue

**Recommendations**

- Build strategic alliances with all stakeholders to acknowledge the contribution of wood products in buildings to fight climate change. The strategic alliances should be formed at least of forest industry, environmental NGOs, Government and the scientific community.
- The UNECE Timber Committee urges COP 15 to consider carbon sequestration in harvested wood products as a contribution in the mitigation of climate change
- Promote life cycle analysis in green building rating systems, as separate from local credits
- Pursue the work between the UNECE's Timber Committee, Committee on Sustainable Energy and Committee on Housing and Land Management, towards a roadmap on green building
- Contribute to training and communication, in a plain and easy way, the architects, civil engineers and builders about the use of wood in green buildings, including via distance learning and continuing education
- Support innovation in technology platforms to improve wood products and building systems
- Forest products industries should support the R&D in developing life cycle inventory datasets for their products to support green building and green design
- Continuously update the knowledge on the contribution of wood in LCA of buildings in order to keep up with evolution in other construction materials and in an energy consumption context.