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TIMBER COMMITTEE

Sixty-seventh session
Geneva, 13-16 October 2009

REPORT OF THE TIMBER COMMITTEE ON ITS SIXTY-SEVENTH SESSION

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Timber Committee held its sixty-seventh session in Geneva from 13 to 16 October 2009. The session was attended by representatives of Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. A representative from China also attended the session.

2. A representative of the European Commission attended the session. The Liaison Unit Oslo of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) was also represented.

3. Representatives from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) attended the session. The European Forest Institute (EFI) and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) were also represented.

4. The following international non-governmental organizations were represented: Building and Woodworkers' International (BWI), Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF), Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI), European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-BOIS), European Network of Forest Entrepreneurs (ENFE), European Organisation of the Sawmill Industry (EOS), European Panel Federation (EPF), European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR), International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), Society of Wood Science and Technology (SWST), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and The Forest Trust (TFT).

5. Mr. B. Glavonjic (Serbia), Chairman, opened the session. Ms. V. Cram-Martos, Director, Trade and Timber Division, UNECE, as well as Mr. M. Lobovikov, Chief, Forest Products and Industries Division, FAO, welcomed the delegations and addressed the session.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)

Documentation: ECE/TIM/2009/1

6. The provisional agenda was adopted.

III. GREEN BUILDING WORKSHOP (Agenda item 2)

Documentation: ECE/TIM/2009/2

7. In cooperation with the relevant UNECE divisions, the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Forest Products Markets and Marketing organized a second green building workshop in conjunction with the Timber Committee session. Dr. R. Vlosky (United States),

Chairman of the workshop, and Leader of the Team of Specialists, summarized the workshop and presented its conclusions and recommendations. Following discussion the Committee endorsed the conclusions and recommendations, and requested they become the basis of a press release and be distributed widely, including to Conference of the Parties (COP) 15 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for consideration in the negotiations. Annex I includes the conclusions and recommendations from the workshop which can also be found on the UNECE/FAO website¹.

IV. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE SESSION (Agenda item 3)

Documentation: ECE/TIM/2009/3

8. Ms. V. Cram-Martos briefed delegates on the outcomes of the sixty-third session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The Committee took note that the Commission had reviewed the UNECE reform and welcomed the fact that the Timber and Forestry programme had continuously strengthened its activities on monitoring and analyzing policies and institutions.

9. The Committee considered the outcome of the UNECE Commission session, notably its discussion of climate change, and the way in which the Committee addresses this as an integral element of its Strategic Plan 2008-2013. The Committee was informed that the Commission considered important that the UNECE Timber and Forestry sub-programme had assigned *“the highest priority to climate change issues for the next 4 years and was developing a supporting programme based on improved information, policy forums and analysis of the long-term outlook”*. (E/ECE/1448, paragraph 45). The Committee noted that the programme of work already addresses climate change issues, as reflected in the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan for the Joint Integrated Programme of Work of the Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission.

10. The Committee reviewed the programme's cooperation with other organizations. It welcomed the ever closer cooperation with the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), which it considered crucial, and the contribution of UNECE/FAO to implementing the MCPFE resolutions and a significant part of the work programme of the MCPFE Liaison Unit Oslo.

11. The Committee was briefed on the development of cooperation with other UNECE programmes and welcomed the strengthening of the cross-sectoral dimension of its work. It thanked Mr. O. Dziubinski, UNECE Sustainable Energy Division, and Mr. T. Juszczak, UNECE Environment, Housing and Land Management Division, for their presentations. It affirmed the necessity for the forestry sector to keep abreast of relevant developments and urged the secretariat to develop further the linkages with other sectors such as energy, environment, and water.

¹ <http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=125>.

12. The Committee was informed of and welcomed the project proposal on “Modern and sustainable heat and power from woody biomass in south-eastern Europe”. The Committee requested countries to consider funding opportunities for the project.

13. The Committee was informed of the intersectoral cooperation between the water and forestry sector by the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (“Water Convention”). The Committee took note of “payment for environmental services” as an environmentally effective, economically efficient and socially equitable tool to integrate sustainable forest management (SFM) in international water resources management. The Committee was informed about a joint Workshop on Forests and Water held in Antalya, Turkey, in May 2009. The Committee was further informed that the European Forestry Commission will address “Forests and Water” during its next session, to be held in Lisbon, Portugal, on 27-30 April 2010.

V. UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE AND THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN A CHANGING INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT: BRIEFING AND DISCUSSION OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS (Agenda item 4)

Documentation: ECE/TIM/2009/4

14. The Committee considered its role and strategic direction in the light of the changing international environment. Mr. M. Lobovikov, FAO, emphasized the close collaboration with UNECE. He presented the outcomes of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) held in March 2009, all of which have relevance for the Timber Committee, especially collaboration on SFM as the forest sector’s response to climate change. He also described the activities of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, chaired by FAO. Of particular interest to the Committee were their “Strategic framework for forests and climate change” and other preparations for COP15.

15. The Committee was informed by Mr. A. I. Sletnes (MCPFE) of the implementation of the Warsaw ministerial commitments and the strategic direction of the MCPFE process. Strengthened cooperation between UNECE, FAO and MCPFE in the implementation of the MCPFE programme of work contributed to the promotion of SFM. Examples of this collaboration are the elaboration of guidelines for sustainable wood mobilisation and the preparation of a new report on the *State of Europe’s Forests*.

16. Mr. Sletnes briefed the Committee on discussions regarding the strategic direction of the MCPFE. The basis for future decisions are set by the results of the external review of the process and proposals induced by a Working Group on exploring the possibility for a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe. The Committee noted the crucial involvement of all interested partners and regarded an inclusive character of these negotiations as a prerequisite for the success of a new agreement. The next Ministerial Conference is intended to be held in 2011, probably in June.

17. Addressing the invitation to the preparatory process for the next Ministerial Conference, the Committee welcomed the ongoing MCPFE developments as an important opportunity for strengthening the role and visibility of forest sector. The Committee encouraged close

cooperation both in implementing MCPFE work programme and in exploring potential solutions for new agreements on forests.

18. Ms. B. Tavora-Jainchill (UNFF) presented the latest developments in the UNFF, including the conclusion of its eighth session in April/May 2009, as well as the ongoing UNFF9 process. The Timber Committee took note of the adoption of a resolution on “forests in a changing environment” and welcomed the recent agreement on how to address the means of implementation for sustainable forest management, in particular in regard to financing, to be adopted by the Special Session of UNFF9.

19. The Committee noted positively the recognition given to the role of regional and sub-regional dialogues and cooperation on forests, including through country-led and region-led initiatives, and encouraged the secretariat to continue its involvement in the relevant regional initiatives. Responding to the invitation to consider further supporting UNFF’s decisions on the implementation of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (NLBI) and the global objectives on forests, the Committee reaffirmed its willingness to play an active role in the region, and encouraged the secretariat to continue close cooperation with the partners at the regional level in supporting the UNFF activities.

VI. MARKET DEVELOPMENTS IN 2009 AND PROSPECTS FOR 2010 (Agenda item 5)

Documentation: (ECE/TIM/2009/5)

20. The Committee reviewed developments in forest products markets as reported in the *Forest Products Annual Market Review, 2008-2009*, as well as experts’ presentations, country market statements and forecasts. The theme of the discussions was “The UNECE region’s forest products markets in a global economic crisis.” The Committee appreciated the schedule of the discussions in the secretariat note and requested it be included annually. The Committee thanked all the speakers².

21. The session approved a market statement for subsequent publication in a UNECE press release for wide distribution via its website³.

VII. UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE AND THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS POLICY FORUM: THE FOREST SECTOR IN THE GREEN ECONOMY (Agenda item 6)

Documentation: ECE/TIM/2007/6

22. A policy forum on the above subject took place on 15 October. It addressed challenges faced by the forest sector in the context of the current global economic crisis and identified opportunities for its contribution to a greener economy. More than fifteen speakers from national administrations, international organizations, private sector and non governmental organisations and research institutes briefed the Committee on their organization’s viewpoints and

² Names of the speakers and their presentations, see at <http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=251>.

³ See at <http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=15>.

experiences. The following themes were addressed: the impact of the current economic crisis on the forest sector, challenges and opportunities for the forest sector in the green economy, green jobs in the forest sector, the development of the energy potential of the forestry sector in a sustainable way, the importance of communication and promoting the rational use of wood, cases studies involving different private players for short term survival and long term development, and visions from various stakeholders on how they would see the way forward. Participants discussed medium- and long-term development strategies, including governments' role and policy options. The Committee welcomed the policy forum and thanked speakers⁴. It took note of the Chairman's summary of the Forum's conclusions (Annex II).

VIII. REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES SINCE THE SIXTY-SIXTH SESSION AND PROGRAMME OF WORK (Agenda item 7)

Documentation: ECE/TIM/2009/7

23. The Committee reviewed and approved the list of planned outputs for the period October 2009-December 2010 (Annex III). The Committee took note of the fact that, despite shortages of staff within the Timber Section, activities were carried out under practically all work areas and the programme elements of the Strategic Plan.

24. The Committee approved that forest sector country profiles as they had been produced in the last years should not be continued, in particular taking into account the lack of availability of resources and the criticism related to their quality and consistency voiced through the Strategic Review of the Programme of Work of the Timber Committee and European Forestry Commission. The Committee encouraged the secretariat to continue exploring alternative options, including the improvement of online data available at the FAO forest sector country profiles.

25. Furthermore, the Committee approved the discontinuation of the separate collection and dissemination of forest fire statistics, as overall national forest fire statistics are being collected and analysed through the Forest Resources Assessment 2010 and the quantitative indicators of Sustainable Forest Management for the next State of Europe's Forests report.

26. The Committee reviewed and approved the lines of activities on forests and climate change under the joint UNECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work on Timber and Forestry, based on a proposal by the secretariat, developed upon the Committee's request at its sixty sixth session. The proposal has also been reviewed and approved by the Bureaux of the Timber Committee and European Forestry Commission at its meeting in April. It welcomed the fact that these activities addressed crucial forest and climate change aspects for the European forest sector.

⁴

List of speakers and presentations may be found at <http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=201>.

IX. PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS (Agenda item 8)

Documentation: ECE/TIM/2009/8

27. The Committee was presented with a proposal by the secretariat regarding the procedure to conduct the UNECE biennial evaluations 2008-2009 by the Bureaux of the Timber Committee and European Forestry Commission, as these results have not become available in time for review by the Timber Committee, and taking into account the experiences of other UNECE sectoral committees. The Committee approved the proposal that this biennial evaluation for each of the four clusters of activities will be done by the Bureaux at its first meeting in 2010. The results of the review will be communicated to the Timber Committee prior to its next session, together with the proposed cluster-level framework for the biennial evaluations 2010-2011.

28. The Timber Committee was also briefed on the progress of the 2008-2009 self-evaluation, notably the review of the production, content, dissemination and use of the MCPFE/UNECE/FAO *State of Europe's Forests*, which has been undertaken within the framework of United Nation system-wide assessment. The results of this evaluation will be presented to and discussed by the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Sustainable Forest Management, the FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics and the Bureaux. It is foreseen that conclusions of this ongoing evaluation process will be utilised for the elaboration of the report for the sixth MCPFE conference in 2011.

X. ELECTION OF OFFICERS (Agenda item 9)

29. The Committee re-elected the current officers, elected at its sixty-sixth session, Mr. Branko Glavonjic (Serbia), Chairman, and Mr. Johann Dengg (Germany) and Ms. Linda Langner (USA), Vice-Chairpersons, to hold office until the end of the sixty-eighth session. It thanked the officers for their contribution to the Committee's work.

XI. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 10)

30. The Committee was informed that the Bureaux, at its meeting in October 2009, reviewed the possibility of organizing another European Forest Week, taking into account other events such as the International Year of Forests and the sixth MCPFE in 2011. More concrete proposals will be presented to the European Forestry Commission at its meeting in Portugal, 27-30 April 2010.

XII. DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda item 11)

31. The sixty-eight session of the Timber Committee will be held in conjunction with the International Conference of the Society of Wood Science and Technology in Geneva during the week of 11 October 2010.

XIII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT (Agenda item 12)

32. The Committee adopted its report on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.

ANNEX I

UNECE/FAO WORKSHOP RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE: WOOD'S PLACE IN A GLOBAL APPROACH TO GREEN BUILDING 12 OCTOBER 2009

I. Conclusions

1. To promote green building, the forest sector does not have the necessary strategic alliance with the environment community, science and Governments.
2. 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.
3. Architects do not want to be pushed into a single material agenda.
4. We cannot only claim that wood is better from a carbon standpoint – we need to mind the gaps with science.
5. 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.
6. Disposal of wood is a key issue. At the end of a product's life, who should take responsibility for it? Policymakers (for example to forbid wood in landfills)? Or forest products companies (retro-logistics of wood)?
7. LCA-carbon-centric building rating systems are “material neutral” but current green building assessment schemes tend to underestimate the carbon intensity issue.

II. Recommendations

1. 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.
2. The UNECE Timber Committee urges COP 15 to consider carbon sequestration in harvested wood products as a contribution in the mitigation of climate change.
3. Promote life cycle analysis in green building rating systems, as separate from local credits.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Support innovation in technology platforms to improve wood products and building systems.
7. Forest products industries should support the R&D in developing life cycle inventory datasets for their products to support green building and green design.
8. 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.

ANNEX II

UNECE/FAO POLICY FORUM: THE FOREST SECTOR IN THE GREEN ECONOMY 15 OCTOBER 2009

Chairman's Summary

I. Opportunities for developing the forest sector

1. The forest sector can play a major role in the transition towards a green economy, with environmental, economic and social (employment) benefits for society.
2. There is a growing awareness and understanding by policy makers of the forest sector's potential for development in and contribution to a green economy.
3. Climate change mitigation: The role of the forest sector arguably has been underestimated when achieving a political agreement in Kyoto in 1997. There is an urgent need to promote and maximize the sector's contribution to reducing GHG emissions and to reflect this in post-Kyoto climate change agreements.
4. Promoting sustainable management of forests would enhance their role as carbon sinks and contribute to offsetting global greenhouse gas emissions.
5. Carbon markets could provide a flow of revenues to forest owners, depending on the scope of the successor to the Kyoto Protocol as well as carbon cap-and-trade schemes.
6. Green building: the forest sector can significantly contribute to green building, with wood as a renewable, ecofriendly material in certain circumstances.
7. Wood energy: was the only market sector which did not experience decreasing demand during the past year, in large part due to governments' policies to promote renewable energies.
8. Current policies and continuing high fossil fuel prices should further encourage wood use for power, heat and liquid fuels.
9. Green jobs: A green economy should generate more green and decent jobs. Whereas the total number of jobs in the forest sector is expected to further decrease, the share of green jobs in the sector should increase with the transition towards a green economy.
10. Other environmental services from forests: beyond timber, many values and services provided by forests (biodiversity, protection against erosion, watershed protection...) should be better recognized and compensated for.

II. Challenges and strategies for developing the forest sector

1. Economic stimulus efforts can only provide short-term benefits to the forest sector. Governments' long-term visions are needed to enable a real shift towards a green economy. Energy and climate change policies will likely have longer term effects on the forest sector.
2. Ensure intra- and inter-sectoral coherency between policies that promote green economy.
3. Adapt to climate change: ensure the adaptation of forests' and forest management to climate change, the effects of which are already noticeable. This is a prerequisite for a long-term contribution of the forest sector to climate change mitigation.
4. There are also opportunities for the forest sector to contribute to adaptation of societies to climate change.

ANNEX III

**FAO EUROPEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION AND UNECE TIMBER COMMITTEE
INTEGRATED PROGRAMME OF WORK ON FORESTS AND TIMBER**

List of Outputs 2009-2010, by programme element of the Strategic Plan 2008-2013
Elements marked with an asterisk (*) require extra budgetary funding to be implemented.

1. Work area 1 - Markets and Statistics
Programme elements
1.1 Collecting, validating and disseminating statistics on production, trade, consumption and prices of forest products
1.1.1 Statistics on production, trade, consumption and prices of forest products, including certified products, for 2009 (collection, validation, publication)
1.2 Analysis of markets for forest products, notably topical and policy relevant aspects, including <i>Forest Products Annual Market Review</i> and annual Timber Committee Market Discussions
1.2.1 UNECE/FAO <i>Forest Products Annual Market Review, 2009-2010</i>
1.2.2 UNECE Timber Committee Market Discussions, October 2010
1.2.3 Proceedings of Joint UNECE/FAO Policy Forum
1.2.3 Meeting of Team of Specialists on Forest Products Markets and Marketing
1.3 Implementing sustainable forest management through capacity building for forest products marketing
1.3.1 Workshop on forest products marketing, Slovenia, 2010*
1.4 Monitoring and analysis of markets and policies for certified wood products, including public procurement and green building
1.4.1 UNECE conference on “Green building and climate change: From science to policies,” Canada, April 2010
1.5 Collecting and disseminating forest fire statistics
2. Work area 2 - Forest resources assessment
Programme elements
2.1 Collecting, validating and disseminating information according to criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management
2.2 Regional contribution to FAO Forest Resource Assessment 2010
2.2.1 National data collection and validation for the <i>Global FAO Forest Resources Assessment 2010</i>
2.3 Implementing sustainable forest management through support to developing national systems for forest monitoring*
2.3.1 Workshop for Forest Resources Assessment national correspondents, 2010
2.4 Improving information on forest types
2.4.1 Report on forest types
2.5 Reporting on and analysis of the state of forests in the UNECE region
2.5.1 Meetings of the Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management, and the Advisory Group on the report on the <i>State of Europe's Forests 2011</i>
2.5.2 Conference on “Future forest monitoring in the European Union”, Sweden, November 2009
2.6 Monitoring and analyzing forest ownership and tenure
2.6.1 Publication on private forest ownership in Europe

3. Work area 3 – Forest sector outlook
Programme elements
3.1 Preparing European Forest Sector Outlook Studies
3.1.1 Meetings of Team of Specialists on Forest Sector Outlook and Core Group to prepare for next <i>European Forest Outlook Study</i>
3.2 Contribution to FAO <i>State of the World's Forests</i> report
3.2.1 European regional contribution in 2010
3.3 Analysing climate change issues relevant to the forest sector
3.3.1 New section on website on forests and climate change, with links to relevant activities
3.4 Analysing energy-related issues, including demand and supply for wood energy
3.4.1 Publication “Results of the Joint Wood Energy Enquiry 2007”
3.4.2 Workshop “Policy options for wood energy”, November 2009, Croatia
3.5 Collecting, validating, and disseminating information and analysis of wood availability and potential wood supply
3.5.1 Publication on wood resource balance 2005
3.5.2 Publication “Good practice guidance on sustainable wood mobilization”
4. Work area 4 - Social and cultural issues
Programme elements
4.1 Implementing sustainable forest management through promoting occupational safety and health
4.1.1 Meeting of the Joint UNECE/FAO/ILO Expert Network on Implementing Sustainable Forest Management
4.2 Implementing sustainable forest management through promoting best practice in forest education and training
4.2.1 Meeting of the Joint UNECE/FAO/ILO Expert Network on Implementing Sustainable Forest Management
4.3 Monitoring trends as regards gender and forestry
4.3.1 Follow-up to Conference on Gender and Forestry, Umea, Sweden, June 2009
4.4 Implementing sustainable forest management through promoting best practice for forest contractors
4.4.1 Dissemination and Implementation of Guidelines on Good Practices in Contract Labour in Forestry
5. Work area 5 - Policy and cross sectoral issues
Programme elements
5.1 Contribution to the global dialogue on forests
5.1.1 Contribution to COFO 2010
5.2 Monitoring recent developments in forest sector policies, legislation and institutions, including national forest programmes
5.2.1 National data collection for the next <i>State of Europe's Forests</i> report: qualitative indicators of sustainable forest management
5.2.2 National data collection and validation for the <i>Global FAO Forest Resources Assessment 2010</i> (policies, legislation, institutions)
5.2.3 Information repository on policies and institutions in Europe, comprising the pan-European qualitative indicators for sustainable forest management (pilot version)
5.3 Analysing developments in forest sector policies, legislation and institutions, including interactions with other sectors

5.3.1 Update discussion paper “International Forest Sector Institutions and Policy Instruments: A sourcebook,” online reference source
5.4 Implementing sustainable forest management through capacity building for forest policies and institutions*
5.4.1 Meeting of Team of Specialists on Forest Policy in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, possibly workshop on “country experiences and needs”*
5.5 Organizing policy forums on major topical issues
5.5.1 Joint UNECE/FAO Policy Forum 2010
5.6 Exchanging information on improving management of wildland fires
5.6.1 Publication of two issues per year of “UNECE/FAO International Forest Fire News”
5.6.2 Meeting of Team of Specialists on Forest Fire
5.7 Improving sectoral and cross-sectoral exchange and communication
5.7.1 Meeting of Forest Communicators Network
6. Sessions of intergovernmental bodies
Programme elements
6.1 FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics, Thirty-second session, Geneva, 23-25 March 2010
6.2 European Forestry Commission, Thirty-fourth session, Portugal, 27-30 April 2010
6.3 UNECE Timber Committee, Sixty-eighth session, Geneva, 11-15 October 2010