



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
7 January 2011

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Timber Committee

Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics

Thirty-third session

Geneva, 22-24 March 2011

Item 1 of the Provisional Agenda

Adoption of the Agenda

Food and Agriculture Organization

European Forestry Commission

Annotated provisional agenda for the thirty-third session¹

Session to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday 23 March 2011,
starting at 10 a.m.

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Consideration of the outcome of the “zero meeting” and implications for the Working Party
3. Guidance of work areas:
 - (a) Markets and Statistics (Work Area 1)
 - (b) Forest Resources Assessment (Work Area 2)
 - (c) Forest Sector Outlook Studies (Work Area 3)
 - (d) Social and Cultural (Work Area 4)
 - (e) Policy and Cross-Sectoral (Work Area 5)
4. Status of the Joint Wood Energy Enquiry (JWEE) 2009
5. Roundtable on Forest Information Challenges
6. Other business
7. Election of officers

¹ Documents available for all sessions, and more information, including the registration form, at www.unece.org/timber

8. Adoption of the report

II. Background information

1. At the Timber Committee session in 2008, as part of the discussions on the UNECE/FAO integrated programme of work in the field of forest and timber (see ECE/TIM/2008/7), it was agreed that the Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics should provide guidance for work areas 1, 2, 3 and elements of monitoring and analysis of policies and institutions of the integrated programme, and act as an interface between the technical and the intergovernmental levels. The Working Party should continue to meet annually.

2. The mandate of the Working Party, as provided for in the Working Party's terms of reference as approved in the Strategic Plan (ECE/TIM/2008/7, annex III) by the UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Committee is to:

- “(a) Keep under review the needs at the international level for statistics and other information relating to the forestry, wood-processing and forest products sector; as well as wood energy, and develop programmes to meet these needs. Particular attention shall be paid to improving quality, concepts, definitions and methodologies in order to increase the international comparability of statistics; and other information;

- (b) Develop, upon request from the parent bodies, methodologies for use in economic analysis of the sector as well as techniques for the collection, validation, analysis and dissemination of information and statistics;

- (c) Undertake, upon request from the parent bodies, ad hoc projects in the field of economics and statistics relating to forestry and forest products; and forest policies and institutions;

- (d) Work together with other international bodies, including MCPFE, Eurostat and the Conference of European Statisticians with a view to achieving coordination of activities and avoiding any unnecessary duplication of effort”.

3. The thirty-third session will be preceded by:

- (a) A one-day workshop on the State of Forests in the UNECE region (see related programme)

- (b) A ‘zero meeting’ to consider the establishment of a working party to facilitate exchange of expert advice based on the work of Team of Specialists (ToS) .

4. This provisional agenda has been drawn up to allow the Working Party to concentrate on the guidance function and discussion of major topics. This year, on an experimental basis, the Working Party meeting will include guidance and review also of work areas 4 and 5. This is to foster exchanges and cooperation amongst Teams of Specialists, in particular those that do not have an opportunity to report to the Working Party and benefit from discussions held there. This is also in line with ongoing discussion on the establishment of a working party to facilitate exchange of expert advice based on the work of ToS. Participation of all ToS in this WPFES session will allow delegates to fully appreciate the type of reporting and exchanges that could be obtained if all ToS reported to the same body.

5. Documents will be issued in advance to the regular mailing list, and will also be available for downloading from the Timber website (<http://timber.unece.org/>). Members of the Working Party will be alerted when documents become available. These documents will be issued in English only. This follows a decision of 32nd session of the Working Party to avoid delays related to official documents procedures and have information in the documents as up-to-date as possible.

6. Kindly note that delegates are requested to be prepared to speak on the substantive. Views of all delegates will be sought by the Chair.

III. Annotations to the Provisional Agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda (Item 1)

7. In accordance with the Commission's rules of procedure and established practice, the first item on the agenda is the adoption of the agenda.

2. Consideration of the outcome of the "zero meeting" and implications for the Working Party (Item 2)

8. At its sixty-eighth session, the ECE Timber Committee discussed the possibility of establishing a joint UNECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Policy and Management as a subsidiary body, on the basis of a proposal developed by the members of the TC/EFC bureaux and the leaders of the Teams of Specialists. The proposal was to link the expert, the technical and policy levels and provide a means for technical discussion of the outcome of the work of Teams of Specialists, thus bringing knowledge to the policy level through a technical body. The proposed joint UNECE/FAO Working Party could identify emerging issues and provide technical advice to the Timber Committee and the European Forestry Commission.

9. Delegates acknowledged the role that the proposed joint UNECE/FAO Working Party could have in achieving a better understanding of sustainable forest management within the sector, in cooperation with other sectors, and, at the same time, in strengthening other policy processes. The Committee agreed to further elaborate the proposal and submit it for consideration at the next session of the Timber Committee and the European Forestry Commission to be held from 10 to 14 October 2011. In order to do so, it decided to hold a "zero meeting" of the proposed joint UNECE/FAO Working Party back-to-back with the next meeting of the Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics, in the first quarter of 2011. It was requested that this meeting:

- (a) Consider the name of the proposed working party;
- (b) Develop the terms of reference; and
- (c) Discuss resource implications and reporting lines for the teams of specialists.

10. The "zero meeting" is to be held one day prior to this session of the WPFES. As the meeting will consider issues that might affect the mandate and modus operandi of the WPFES, the outcome and recommendations of the "zero meeting" will also be discussed at the WPFES.

11. WPFES delegates will be requested to consider those outcomes and recommendations, assess the implications they have on the WPFES work and decide whether to endorse them.

3. Guidance of work areas (Item 3)

12. For each of the work areas, the Working Party will be informed of activities and results of the past year and plans for the next year, and will be invited to review and comment on these activities and plans. Results of the meetings of the respective Teams of Specialists will also be reviewed. As mentioned above, for the first time, this agenda item

will also include the review of activities and results of Work Area 4 and 5, on Social and Cultural Work and Policy and Cross Sectoral Issues respectively.

4. Status of the Joint Wood Energy Enquiry (JWEE) 2009 (Item 4)

13. In November 2010 the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section launched the Joint Wood Energy Enquiry for the UNECE region for the reference year 2009. The third of its kind, the Enquiry has become a reference source of information on wood energy. The Working Party will be presented with the preliminary findings from an initial analysis of responses to the Enquiry. Delegates are invited to review the procedures and results and provide direction on future activities in this area.

5. Roundtable on Forest Information Challenges (Item 5)

14. Environmental reporting remains a challenge for many international processes and organizations, at the global as well as the regional and sub-regional levels, including the UNECE region. Harmonization and streamlining of reporting is an ongoing exercise at the global level (see CPF) and the regional approach should benefit and be in line with those efforts. There are several processes dealing with international reporting on forests and forest management, acting according to their own programmes. The differences among processes include their formal status and goals of reporting, scope of collected information and periodicity of data collection and analysis. Those processes may also apply different terms, definitions, classifications and data format for reporting similar or the same variables.

15. A lesson from history is that building well coordinated, harmonized regional reporting systems is not readily achieved, perhaps not always reasonable. Nevertheless better communication among the main organizations involved in reporting could improve the efficiency of activities of individual organizations and, most importantly, reduce the current burden on national reporting.

16. The UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section in Geneva proposes to open a dialogue to identify practical ways in which this might be achieved through organizing a roundtable discussion on the issue during the UNECE/FAO Working Party. The roundtable on forest information challenges could initiate discussion on present reporting arrangements at the UNECE level, starting from the shortcomings of harmonization activities undertaken so far. Furthermore, the roundtable will discuss the need for additional or alternative measures. They might include setting up a regional forest reporting-related network that would primarily aim at ensuring exchange of information on existing ongoing and planned activities by member organizations.

6. Other business (Item 6)

17. At the time of this document's submission, the secretariat has no matters for discussion under this item. Delegates should feel free to raise issues that are of concern to them prior to the meeting to facilitate discussion.

7. Election of officers (Item 7)

18. The Working Party is expected to elect a Chair and two Vice-Chairs. At its thirty-second session, the Working Party elected Mr. A. Mariano (Italy) as Chair and Ms. E. Maki-Simola (Finland) and Mr. M. Valgepea (Estonia) as Vice-Chairs to hold office until the end of the thirty-third session.

19. It is however usual practice that elected officers hold office for two consecutive terms. Delegates might wish to endorse this practice and confirm the elected officers above until the end of the thirty-fourth session.

8. Adoption of the report (Item 8)

20. The Working Party will be invited to adopt the report of its session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.

III. Tentative timetable

21. The secretariat proposes the following tentative timetable:

Joint FAO/UNECE EFC/TC Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics, Thirty-third session

Monday, 21 March 2011

10:00 – 18:00 Seminar on ECE state of forests

Tuesday, 22 March 2011

10:00 – 18:00 “Zero meeting” to consider the establishment of a working party to facilitate exchange of expert advice

Wednesday, 23 March 2011

10:00 – 13:00 Items 1-2 and 3a

15:00 – 18:00 Items 4 and 3c

Thursday, 24 March 2011

10:00 – 13:00 Items 3b and 5

15:00 – 18:00 Items 3d, 3e, 6, 7 and 8
