



## Economic and Social Council

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## Food and Agriculture Organization

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### Economic Commission for Europe

#### Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry

Seventy-first session

Rovaniemi, 9-13 December 2013

Item 7(d) of the provisional agenda

**FAO global activities**

### Food and Agriculture Organization

#### European Forestry Commission

Thirty-seventh session

Rovaniemi, 9-13 December 2013

## The Global Timber Forum

### Global Timber Forum called for better coordination in new timber trade instruments

1. Better coordination and sharing of experiences among nations in implementing anti-illegal timber legislation is needed to ensure a move to responsible trade in timber products, according to participants at the first Global Timber Forum (GTF), which was co-organized by FAO, the European Timber Trade Federation and the Forest Trust/Timber Trade Action Plan, held at FAO headquarters in May 2013.
2. Forum participants also agreed that responsible timber trade plays a key role in sustainable forest management by providing a commercial incentive to retain and increase tree cover and intensify forest productivity.
3. Over 80 delegates from 40 countries, including representatives of industry organizations and private-sector companies, attended the two-day meeting to increase understanding of sustainable sourcing and use of timber in green building; share market expertise; and develop solutions to ensure inclusive and legal trade in timber and timber products. Importantly, this first GTF provided a platform for sharing experiences on applying new trade instruments to curb illegal trade, such as those in the European Union, the United States of America and Australia.
4. The meeting in Rome was followed up by drafting a Commitment Charter and a work plan with a revolving secretariat and an advisory board. Regional focal points were nominated for that end, from all six continents and from China.

Signatories agree to support the GTF network by:

- Exchanging ideas and best practices in order to give the sector a more coherent voice worldwide and improve collaboration.
- Contributing to a communication strategy by sharing and exchanging information.
- Working together through joint projects and tasks to build capacity and long-term solutions.
- Contributing to advocacy efforts to promote long-term growth and market development of the timber and wood products industry.

5. The GTF agenda was built on breakout sessions and group work. The focus on day 1 was on securing future forest resources and exploring better ways to work together to implement anti-illegal logging regulations now impacting trade worldwide. On day 2, groups elaborated on wood promotion, green building and the future role of the GTF. The key recommendations for the GTF to consider as areas of focus and future activities were as follows:

#### **Sustaining the resource base, managing and investing in future of forests**

- Involve and engage NGOs, forest users, governments and financial institutions to demonstrate the benefits of forest investment projects.
- Instigate the establishment of a platform for collaborative projects, information sharing and discussion of issues, such as legality definitions.
- Show case best practices and company and project case studies.
- Improve the image of tropical timber.

#### **Intensify collaboration between producers and buyers**

- Address fragmentation of due diligence systems by encouraging harmonization of requirements.
- Create an information database accessible to producers, buyers and consumers so that the trade and industry voice is better heard, and involve all countries.
- Collaborate to showcase collaborative projects to show how their experience can be applied elsewhere.
- Develop a forum for sharing specific experience and practical guidance throughout the trade: looking, for example, at areas of overlap between the Australian Illegal Logging Prohibition, the European Timber Regulation, and the Lacey Act.
- Provide better trade information to producers and buyers in producer countries, following outreach to the latter to assess their requirements.
- Develop a lobbying group to agree on simple and efficient requirements for the FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement legality grid to ensure that market share is not lost.
- Secure agreement from producer countries on essential documents to prove timber legality, in order to maintain market access.

### **Supporting collaboration in wood promotion**

- Support better understanding of timber markets among key audiences: governments and policymakers, technical wood users and specifiers, as well as consumers.
- Share campaigns via its website and ensure quality data to support claims.
- Share market research and measure success.
- Encourage self-posting on the website.
- Encourage a change of perception so that certified wood is not seen as the only “good wood”.

### **Support the realization of green building opportunities**

- Create “pull” for wood in green building:
  - Engage in and draw on international processes, e.g. UNEP matrix for national carbon accounting.
  - Agree on a common goal: e.g. establish energy use and/or carbon consumption per square meter of building, as a rallying point for timber in construction.
  - Establish strategy to promote uptake by national governments, identify information needs, develop an action plan, establish a task group and allocate roles.
- Create “push” for wood in green building:
  - Facilitate development of a harmonized system for provision of Life-cycle assessment data.
  - Agree on a common goal: e.g. support the creation of an international framework for Environmental Product Declarations.