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PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

This document gives an overview of performance evaluations for the 2008-2009 biennium, notably the self-evaluation and the UNECE biennial evaluations.

As the evaluations for the biennium 2008-2009 will not have been completed by the time the Timber Committee meets in October 2009, the secretariat proposes that the Joint Bureaux, charged with overseeing the implementation of the programme of work, conduct this evaluation at its first meeting in 2010. This evaluation will be based on the 2008-2009 cluster-level framework approved by the Committee at its sixty-fifth session.

The Bureaux will also be requested to review and comment on the cluster-level framework for programme performance evaluation in 2010-11, based on a draft prepared by the secretariat. According to the proposed procedure, the new framework for the biennial evaluation 2010-11 would then be approved by the Committee at its next meeting in 2010.

The Timber Committee is invited to consider and approve this proposed procedure.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. As every year, the Timber Committee is being informed about the different evaluations that have been undertaken and/or will take place to assess the performance of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) subprogramme on timber and forestry. As mandated by the Committee at its sixty-sixth session (ECE/TIM/2008/9), this background document outlines upcoming performance assessments and related procedure.

II. PROGRAMME SELF-EVALUATIONS

2. In the United Nations system-wide assessment, self-evaluations are conducted in each biennium to ensure that the activities carried out under the subprogramme correspond adequately to the objectives set and to the needs of member States, stakeholders and clients. For the biennium 2008-2009, it has been decided to review the production, contents, dissemination and use of the MCPFE/UNECE/FAO Report on the State of Europe's Forests 2007.

3. The report on the State of Europe's Forests 2007 is the most recent publication in the series of European forest resources assessments which has been prepared under the auspices of UNECE/FAO and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE). The report is considered to be the most comprehensive and up-to-date assessment of European forests and forest management produced so far. For the first time, all data collected for the needs of the report preparation have been made available for public access through a web-based database. The preparatory process for the elaboration of the new edition of the report, which will be presented at the next Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe has already begun. Analyzing the most recent preparatory process and learning about the report's users, their opinions as well as the use of collected data is thus of critical importance for the preparation of the next report.

4. The self-evaluation entails collecting opinions with regard to the report's quality and appropriateness by national correspondents, authors of the report, researchers and other end users. The methodologies applied for this self-evaluation range from discussions at meetings to questionnaires and interviews. The UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management and the FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics provided comments on the preparatory process as well as the report itself during their meetings in 2008 and 2009. Statistics on the dissemination of the publication and downloads of the source data from the website of the Timber Committee/European Forestry Commission will complement the review process.

5. The final report of this self-evaluation, to be completed in December 2009, is expected to serve as basic source of information for the organization of the reporting process for the next Ministerial Conference, including the production of the report, its contents, dissemination and database. The report will be shared with the Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management, the Advisory Group on the Elaboration of the State of Europe's Forests report, and the Joint Bureaux of the Timber Committee and European Forestry Commission. Despite the focus of the review on pan-European reporting, the outcome of the exercise will be of broader usefulness. The information collected will contribute to an improvement of the quality and the outreach of other outputs prepared by the Timber Section as well as other, national and

international reports on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

III. UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE BIENNIAL EVALUATIONS

6. At its sixty-fifth session, the Timber Committee approved the 2008-2009 framework for biennial evaluations, containing five clusters of activities with expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement for each. The agreed clusters have been designed on the basis of the programme's work areas: "markets and statistics", "forests resources assessment", "policy and cross-sectoral issues" and "forest sector outlook," in addition to its capacity building activities to implement sustainable forest management. Work Area 4 "social and cultural issues" which is mainly implemented by partner organizations such as the Joint Expert Network for Implementing Sustainable Forest Management is not included.

7. Based on the experience with the other Sectoral Committees, the secretariat proposes that the Joint Bureaux of the Timber Committee and European Forestry Commission, which is charged with overseeing of implementation of the work programme, be requested to review, at its first meeting in 2010, the achievements under each activity cluster. In its review, the Bureaux should address the key evaluation elements, namely, relevance, effectiveness, impact and efficiency. This review will take place on the basis of accomplishment accounts prepared by the secretariat for each cluster at the end of 2009, based on the framework approved by the Committee at its sixty-fifth session. The Bureaux will also be requested to review and comment on the cluster-level framework for programme performance evaluation in 2010-2011, on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.

8. **The secretariat proposes that the results of this review by the Bureaux and the proposed cluster-level framework for the biennial evaluations 2010-2011 be communicated to the Timber Committee in writing in advance of its next session, for formal approval in October 2010. The Committee is invited to consider and approve this proposed procedure.**
