



Timber Committee

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe



European Forestry Commission

Food and Agricultural Organization

UNECE / FAO Team of Specialists on
“Monitoring sustainable forest management”

REPORT

of the Inaugural meeting of the Team of Specialists

Palais de Nations, United Nations Geneva, Switzerland, 25-27 February 2009

Room VIII

Item 1: Opening and welcome (UNECE/FAO Timber Section, FAO, MCPFE Liaison Unit Oslo), arrangements for conducting the meeting, adoption of the Provisional Agenda.

Christopher Prins opened the Inaugural meeting of the Team of Specialists, presenting the main objectives of the meeting. Meeting participants were welcomed by Mette Løyche Wilkie and Berit Hauger Lindstad who informed them about the relevance the ToS work, global (FAO) and regional activities (MCPFE LUO) have on SFM.

Ewald Rametsteiner, the Team leader of the previous ToS on monitoring forest resources for SFM, was invited and unanimously accepted by the ToS members as a chairman of the inaugural meeting of the ToS.

After a brief self-introduction from the meeting participants, Roman Michalak presented the mandate (Appendix 1) and the context of the ToS. He explained how the work of the ToS is structured according to the strategic plan endorsed by the UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission during the European Forest Week in Rome on 23-24 October 2008. Roman Michalak addressed the need for strengthening communications primarily amongst the ToS but also amongst other Teams. A meeting of the ToS leaders will be organized on 2nd April in Geneva with the aim of improving communications within and outside the forestry sector.

Ewald Rametsteiner presented the agenda to the meeting participants. All items were adopted as in the Provisional Agenda (Appendix 2).

Item 2: Forest resources assessment and criteria and indicators related developments since the last meeting of the ToS on monitoring forest resources for SFM

For this item, experts from several international organizations and various programmes informed the ToS participants on developments which took place since the last meeting of the

ToS on Monitoring Forest Resources for SFM (Vienna, 26-28 May 2008). The following presentations were delivered during this session:

1. UNECE/FAO European Forest Week – priorities laid down by the joint session of the UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission – Christopher Prins (UNECE/FAO);
2. MCPFE Expert Level Meeting – priorities, tasks and progress of work – Berit Hauger Lindstad (MCPFE LUO);
3. Montreal Process C&I (MP) – recent developments – Mark Gillis (Canada) and Brad Smith (USA),
4. Update on activities of the European Commission Joint Research Centre - Jesus San-Miguel-Ayanz (DG JRC),
5. Presentation of the DG EUROSTAT Unit E3 - Environmental Statistics and Accounts - Csaba Mózes (DG Eurostat),
6. EU COST Action E 43 – Overview, Achievements, Output and Impact – Andrius Kuliešis (Lithuania)
7. ICP Forests - recent developments – Michael Koehl (ICP Forests)
8. Update on Streamlining Environmental Biodiversity Indicators 2010 process and other forest related activities by the European Environment Agency – Josef Herkendell (EEA).

In response to the request by Csaba Mózes, who included in his presentation information of the new Eurostat website, members of the team were invited to review the proposed data dissemination structure and send their views and observations to Csaba and the secretariat.

Item 2 concluded with presentations by Marlen Jigitekov (UNECE Statistics Division) and Roman Michalak, who presented a recently launched interactive forestry database (available at <http://w3.unece.org/pxweb/DATABASE/STAT/Timber.stat.asp>). The database, which is part of the UNECE data dissemination system, comprises all country information collected during the elaboration of MCPFE/UNECE/FAO State of Europe's Forests (SoEF) 2007 report. Roman Michalak showed participants the different functions of the database and gave a brief summary (using monthly statistics) of how users responded to this new tool.

The FAO gave additional information on databases currently being developed, including one based on data taken from top FRA tables and available by eco regions. The latter provides data for United States, Canada and Mexico.

Copies of all documents prepared for and presentations that were given during the ToS meeting are available at <http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=130>.

Item 3: FAO global Forest Resources Assessment programme

Mette Løyche Wilkie and Örjan Jonsson presented the following topics:

1. Overview of the FAO global Forest Resources Assessment programme, informing the participants of the latest developments.
2. Status report on the FRA 2010 country reporting process, focusing on the UNECE region. The participants were informed on the status of the country reporting process both in terms of scope, current status and planned activities.

3. Advancement of the Global Remote Sensing Survey. The members of the Team of Specialists were informed about the forthcoming technical meeting of the remote sensing task force (March 30 – April 03, 2009).
4. Status of the proposed thematic studies for FRA 2010, in particular the thematic study on forest degradation.
5. Presentation on how countries in the UNECE region had reported on the new special designation and management categories "Permanent forest estate" and "Area under sustainable forest management". The presentation was followed by group work aiming at further clarifying the reporting on these variables.

Recommendations/actions

- Participants were reminded that the deadline for submission of the complete draft country report to FRA 2010 is March 31, 2009 (at the time of the ToS meeting 29 draft country reports from the UNECE region had not been seen by FAO). All FRA National Correspondents were requested to submit their draft country reports before the deadline.
- The early results from the Global Remote Sensing Survey could be fed into the next State of Europe's Forest report.
- Participating NCs were encouraged to complete the questionnaire on forest degradation and return it as soon as possible.
- For the reporting on "Permanent forest estate" and "Area under sustainable forest management" there is a wide variation in how countries in the region interpret the reporting and it will be a challenge to achieve consistency and comparability in reported figures at global and regional levels. The outcomes of the group work indicated that a number of issues can be resolved and suggestions to do so were put forward. Further analysis and discussions are needed on some aspects once all countries have reported.

Item 4a: Possibilities for increasing consistency between the regional and global FRA systems in the context of current and planned developments in the C&I related regional processes: Recommendations for harmonisation aspects in pan-European C&I reporting.

Mette Løyche Wilkie introduced this agenda item by presenting the general aspects of consistency among global and regional reporting on forests and SFM. The 3 main issues to be considered for the next reporting are:

- reporting schedule,
- scope,
- content.

The organisation of informal consultations on harmonization between the reporting systems of the FAO, ITTO, MCPFE and Montreal Process should help simplify reporting requirements and address inconsistency problems.

Stein Tomter presented the possibilities for increasing consistency between the regional and global systems in the context of current and planned developments in the C&I related regional processes. Proposals included examples of recommendations for implementation during reporting for the next MCPFE conference. Basic information on the issue is available in the explanatory note, jointly prepared by the FAO, MCPFE and UNECE experts (Appendix 3).

In a break-out session four groups considered different sets of indicators, each focusing on providing proposals for the pan-European reporting that would help increase consistency with FRA system.

Recommendations/actions

The ToS members provided a set of recommendations on increasing the consistency of global FRA and related regional indicators systems, in particular MCPFE. The recommendations included two types of proposals; whenever a proposed modification does not interfere with the officially endorsed name of the indicator, a proposed amendment is suggested for the next reporting cycle. In other cases, the proposals are recommended to be considered when the MCPFE indicators are next reviewed.

Below are general recommendations mentioned by the groups. A detailed list of recommendations is attached as Appendix 4 of this report.

- it is desirable to separate the timing of data collection from reporting for MCPFE meeting, and harmonise SoEF data collection with the FRA,
- reference years for data collection should be consistent with FRA 2010 (e.g. 1990, 2000, 2005 and 2010), furthermore whenever possible SoEF variables should be reported according to the same approach as applied for FRA 2010,
- forest damage and other relevant indicators should be reported on a five-year average basis,
- SoEF should include a “comments” field to allow correspondents to indicate the accuracy of reported data, to improve understanding of reported data and to give further analysis of data should be developed in a form consistent with the FRA 2010 comment fields,
- particular attention should be paid to increasing consistency of reporting on variables relevant to wood balance (felling vs. removal);
- a consistent system that provides better information for different uses (forestry, industry, carbon balance, biodiversity) should be elaborated,
- data on some indicators (e.g. trade) is more frequently collected by IDPs (e.g. annual), and can be added at other times,
- many of the draft reporting forms need clarification and refinement of classifications and terms (damage, regeneration/reforestation, expenditures/revenues) before use for the next SoEF,
- MCPFE questionnaire should be pre-filled with data from FRA 2010 wherever possible.

Item 4b: Information on C&I development and country reporting for the Montreal Process,

Information on the general arrangements for the Montreal Process and developments and planned activities were presented by Maria Palenova (Russian Federation). The Process groups 12 countries that account for 60 percent of all forests in the world, and 90 percent of the world's temperate and boreal forests.

The Montreal Process is finalizing a three-year review process of 67 indicators based on experiences gained during the preparation of the 2003 Country Forest Reports. The set of indicators will be used by member countries in the MP second reporting period (2009/2010) in time for the next World Forest Congress and the 2011 International Year of Forests.

Item 5a: The ToS input to the future MCPFE/UNECE/FAO reporting on “State of Europe’s Forests”: General arrangements for the next pan-European reporting on quantitative and qualitative indicators;

Stein Tomter presented the preliminary outcomes from the inaugural meeting of the MCPFE /UNECE/FAO Advisory Group to the next SoEF report, which took place in Geneva on Tuesday 24 February. Four issues regarding the process of the next SoEF report were raised:

- the Expert Level Meeting of the MCPFE formally decided to produce the report State of Europe’s Forests for the next MCPFE conference,
- the date of the next MCPFE conference has not been decided; the report would have to be completed by the end of 2010 to be published for the earliest possible MCPFE meeting date in 2011,
- the AG recommended that the questionnaire should be distributed by the end of 2009 - deadlines for country replies – end of March 2010,
- the above mentioned dates might need adjusting once the date of the next MCPFE conference has been decided.

Recommendations/actions

- The ToS will be periodically informed and consulted on all major steps regarding the SoEF elaboration process,
- ToS activities that are related to the next SoEF report should be planned taking into consideration the time schedule of the MCPFE process,
- ToS members are invited to advise the UNECE/FAO and MCPFE of any experts who could contribute to the next report as authors or reviewers.

In the second part of this item Franziska Hirsch and Marion Briens (UNECE/FAO) presented the first draft of the enquiry on qualitative indicators that will serve as a basis for reporting on policies, institutions and financing for the next SoEF report. ToS members were informed on general developments related to information on policies and institutions that are undertaken at regional and global levels, indicating efforts leading to better organisation and harmonisation of data collection and dissemination systems. As few ToS members were directly involved in reporting on these qualitative indicators, it was agreed that, in addition, the MCPFE Focal Points will be consulted on this draft enquiry.

Item 5b. Proposal for a new MCPFE Forest Types classification – expectations, opportunities and realities: implications of implementing the proposed forest types in future pan-European reporting.

Marco Marchetti gave a brief overview of the EEA recently published report, provided the results of the Copenhagen workshop in November 2008, and described the latest modification of the classification after the workshop, related to category 14 (now proposed to be exotic tree species instead of plantations), which also impacts on other categories. Roman Michalak briefed participants on the status of reporting according to the old classification (predominantly coniferous/ mixed/predominantly broadleaved). Participants were also informed of the results of the UNECE/FAO enquiry on the application of a new European Forest Types and provided national views of the new classification (before the modification to category 14) and the abilities for reporting on forests by new types.

Recommendations/actions

The ToS acknowledged work done by Prof. Marchetti, and his collaborators, EEA, MCPFE, UNECE/FAO and other partners on the European Forest Type classification. Following group discussions during the break out sessions (reports from groups available in Appendix 5) and the plenary discussion, the ToS recommended the following:

- data collection for the upcoming SoEF report should be used to test the new forest type classification,
- reporting according to the old classification should be dropped for the next reporting cycle; the ToS recognised that this will result in some gaps in reporting, but considered that it would be an excessive burden to ask for both forest type breakdowns to be reported in parallel,
- reporting according to the new classification will be carried out as a pilot implementation of the new EFT, according to the following rules:
 - all countries will be requested to report on indicators 1.1 (forest area) and 1.2 (growing stock) according to the new forest types (for 1.2, also reporting the total split into coniferous/broadleaves),
 - reporting on indicators 1.3(age structure and/or diameter distribution), 4.1 (tree species composition), 4.3 (naturalness), 4.5 (deadwood) according to the new forest types should be of voluntary character,
 - indicator 2.4 (forest damage) is proposed to be excluded from the reporting according to new forest types, as a methodology for reporting is not yet generally available; a pilot study was proposed to test reporting on forest fires by forest types, by overlaying EFFIS geographic data on NFI plots,
 - indicator 4.2 (regeneration) should not be reported by forest type, because forest type is not part of the agreed indicator,
 - with regards to category 14 (plantations or exotic tree species), the concept adjusted after the Copenhagen workshop was thought to be a feasible basis for reporting, but there had been no in-depth assessment of the extent to which the adjusted categories are present

in each country, or of countries' ability to report on this new basis; there were concerns that if the definition of exotic species refers to those species from outside Europe, rather than those species introduced to a country or location, the relevance of the category could be questioned by some.

- there is an overall need for a clear agreement and understanding of all definitions of forest types before sending out the questionnaire,
- using the new forest types classification for this reporting should result in better understanding of the classification its application in countries, which should provide a solid base for a possible future recommendation on endorsement of the new EFT classification.

Item 6: Special topics: a) UNECE/FAO work on Wood and Energy; b) Presentation of results of study on Potential Wood Supply; c) Recent developments of forests and climate change interactions.

This item provided information on the Timber Section's activities that are not covered by the ToS mandate, however relevant to SFM monitoring and to members of the team (for their information and response). Four presentations were given under this agenda item. Alex McCusker briefed meeting's participants on the UNECE/FAO work on data collection for energy from wood. Ed Pepke presented interlinks between "forest resources" and "wood markets", pointing out possibilities for exchange of information and cooperation. Christopher Prins presented the results from the study on Potential Wood Supply, recently elaborated by the UNECE/FAO. In addition, Christopher Prins informed ToS members on UNECE/FAO plans and activities on climate change and asked ToS members for directions on work related to climate change within area of ToS responsibility.

Recommendations/actions

The ToS discussions led to the following recommendations:

- increase exploitation of synergies of different ToS
- make available or more easily accessible the names of national correspondents working for different areas; national experts are asked to make the best use of this information during relevant national activities,
- ask the ToS members and National Correspondents to comment on the assumptions and results of the study on Potential Wood Supply prior to the workshop, being held in Geneva on 30 March 2009,

Regarding future work on climate change, the ToS participants noted that there are lots of activities out there on climate change; and significant sources are dedicated for climate change related programmes and projects. It was recommended that when developing specific activities related to climate change, the ToS should:

- coordinate/cooperate with the institutes/experts involved in this research,
- use existing resources to identify the current status of knowledge on climate change/forest interrelations,
- analyse existing qualitative and quantitative indicators in terms of their relevance for reporting on forests, forest management and climate change,

- increase the presence of adaptation aspects in future activities,
- analyse the present status of the reporting on wood and carbon stocks; examine possibilities for developing system that would enable reporting on flows.

Item 7: Presentations from ToS members.

This item is intended to provide a forum to the ToS members to present important events that took place in the region. It will also help presenting the results of the recent research relevant to ToS activities. It is expected that this item will be maintained in future meetings, the ToS members are invited to contact the Secretariat, if they wish to contribute to this item during the next meetings.

Under this item Aljoscha Requardt, ICP Forests, University of Hamburg presented the results of a pilot study on harmonising National Forest Inventories in Europe.

Item 8: Election of the ToS leader and vice-leaders; future ToS activities in supporting SFM reporting.

Ewald Rametsteiner informed the group that due to impending changes in his job he will not be available as a leader of the team for the upcoming period, despite the pleasure of the role, given the professionalism of the secretariat and the group. The ToS members thanked Ewald Rametsteiner for his work and expressed the gratitude for his successful work period as leader of the ToS. The ToS members then unanimously accepted Simon Gillam (UK) as the new leader of the team while Andrius Kuliešis (Lithuania) and Brad Smith (USA) will serve as deputy leaders.

The heavy programme of activities relevant to forest and forest management reporting in the region was discussed, including among others:

- deadline for national FRA reporting – 31st March 2009,
- reporting for the World Forestry Congress – 18-25 October 2009,
- elaboration of the questionnaires for next MCPFE reporting – by December 2009,
- open-ended process for increasing of consistency among the global and regional reporting.

The ToS will be timely informed on the progress and wherever relevant, requested for comments on and/or contribution to specific activities.

The ToS members recommended that the next meeting of the Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management should be held early 2010 (end of January/ beginning of February). The participants appreciated the tentative proposal made by Jesus San-Miguel-Ayanz, that the meeting will be hosted by the European Commission Joint Research Centre in Ispra, Italy.

Items 9: Other matters.

The ToS are aware that in order to present the meeting report at the Joint Working Party on Forest Statistics and Economics (March, 2009), they will have to adopt it in a timely and effective way.

Items 10: Closing the ToS meeting

Christopher Prins thanked the ToS members for their very active and effective participation, special thanks were directed to speakers, moderators and rapporteurs. Particular gratefulness was addressed to Dr. Ewald Rametsteiner the Inaugural meeting chairman before Christopher Prins officially closed the inaugural meeting of the ToS.
