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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION
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**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION**

Timber Committee

European Forestry Commission

Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party
on Forest Economics and Statistics

Thirty-first session
Geneva, 31 March-1 April 2009
Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda

GUIDANCE OF WORK AREAS

Work area 1: Market and Statistics

Team of Specialists on Forest Products Markets and Marketing

Report by the Team of Specialists

Summary

According to its mandate, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) / Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Team of Specialists is expected to report on its activities to the Working Party. This document provides information about the Team of Specialists activities and on plans for the future. It draws the Working Party's attention to specific issues where guidance is needed.

Introduction

1. This document is produced in accordance with the programme of work as approved by the Timber Committee in ECE/TIM/S/2008/6 and the requirement to report “Once a year to the Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics” as stated in the terms of reference of the Team of Specialists as approved by the Timber Committee in ECE/TIM/S/2008/6/Add 1. This report covers the activities for the period March 2008 to March 2009.

2. The Team officers are: Professor R. Vlosky, Leader (United States), Professor B. Glavonjic, Deputy Leader (Serbia), Professor E. Akim, Deputy Leader (Russian Federation), Mr. C.-E. Guertin, Responsible Trade Subgroup Leader (Canada) and Mr. J. Wall, Emerging Markets Subgroup Leader (European Commission). The secretary is Mr. E. Pepke, UNECE/FAO Timber Section.

I. Team members

3. In March 2008, during their previous mandate, 66 members came from the following 26 countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States.

4. In January 2009, following a call for new nominations of members launched in October 2008, there are 36 officially-nominated members from the following 20 countries: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States. In addition, a member from the European Commission has been reappointed. Reminders have been sent to countries who have not responded to the request for nominations.

5. It should be noted that the Team is mandated to build a network of marketing specialists, and in January 2009 their expert network has 154 people from 33 countries. The network is shared by the IUFRO Forest Products and Business Management Working Group 5.10.00. Professor Vlosky is also the Leader of this Working Group. (Mandate objective 4)

II. Meetings Held

6. The inaugural meeting was held on 20 October 2008 in Rome. It followed the Team’s workshop on “The roles of green building and green building effects on the forest sector in the UNECE region” which was held the same day. The Team’s meeting encompassed the following two days’ Joint Timber Committee and European Forestry Commission Market Discussions.

III. Outputs during the period

7. The main output of the Team was the Green Building Workshop on 20 October 2008. The workshop launched the European Forest Week at FAO Headquarters and was well attended by people representing different sectors of green building. Its presentations were uploaded to the Timber Committee/European Forestry Commission website. The workshop had a steering committee comprised of UNECE/FAO, European Union, private forest and academia from Europe and North

America. Significant private forest sector sponsorship greatly facilitated the event. Its conclusions and recommendations were presented the following day during the Joint Timber Committee and European Forestry Commission Market Discussions. A press release was issued which indicated continued work on green building in conjunction with other UNECE divisions. (See expected outputs.) Both Subgroups worked together to orchestrate the workshop, with the major organisational responsibility led by the Responsible Trade Subgroup and sponsorship raised by the Emerging markets Subgroup. (Mandate objective 1)

8. The Emerging Markets Subgroup also was active in the UNECE/FAO Task Force on Wood Availability and also participated in the Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics as well as the Inter-secretariat Working Group on Forest Sector Statistics, the latter inter alia to add a separate Harmonized System customs code for wood pellets which would allow tracking of international pellet trade.

9. Team members continued to contribute directly the production of the “Forest Products Annual Market Review”. Many were authors and others contributed information and statistics. This support is directly in line with their mandate and is critical to the quality of the publication. Afterwards Team members participated in the Joint Timber Committee and European Forestry Commission Market Discussions. (Mandate objectives 1 and 2)

10. Team members organized and participated in assistance in marketing in southeastern Europe in 2008, through information collection, analysis and dissemination, and capacity building. Two workshops were conducted on wood energy markets in Romania (with preparatory meetings in Geneva (February) and Wels, Austria (March) and Serbia. (Mandate objective 3)

11. The Team’s Current Issues Website had a tremendous increase in visits, rising from 1,250 visits in 2006 to 15,215 in 2007 and 42,000 in the first 9 months of 2008. This Team encourages other UNECE Teams of Specialists to consider creating similar websites. The website currently has five topics: Biofuels, Supply Chains, Global Market Enhancements, Responsible Trade and Certification & Environment. The site is updated as content submissions are received as well as annually on a formal basis by the Team Leader. There are currently over 650 documents, presentations, databases and links on the site. Finally, a link to the site has been established on the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) Forest Products Marketing and Business Development (Research Group 5.10.00) website. (Mandate objective 4)

IV. Expected outputs

12. The Team’s Green Building Workshop was such a success that they intend to conduct a follow-up immediately before the Timber Committee session on 12 October 2009. It is provisionally titled “Responding to Climate Change: wooden building products and systems in the UNECE Region”. An outline programme was submitted to and approved by the Bureaux in November 2008. (Expected output 1)

13. The Team will accomplish other major outputs:

- (a) Advise on market-related publications and products, and provide expertise in the production and technical reviews of the Forest Products Annual Market Review. (Expected output 2)
- (b) Participate in wood energy market study in conjunction with the secretariat's long-term outlook study for wood energy. (Expected output 3)
- (c) Maintain and expand the "Current Issues Website" and the Forest Products Marketing Distance Learning Website. (Expected output 4)
- (d) Maintain and expand the Forest Products Marketing & Business Management Reference List. (Expected output 5)

V. Comments, lessons learned and issues for attention of the Working Party

14. Please review the following issues:

- (a) The departure from the Timber Section of the associate professional officer, Mr. Douglas Clark, Scottish Forestry Commission, has left a considerable gap in the programme of marketing capacity building. Over the four years that he worked in Geneva, he built a valuable network of contacts, especially in southeast Europe. In order to maintain momentum the Team asks the Working Party member countries to consider loaning a professional to the Timber Section to maintain this effort;
- (b) Reforming the Team under the new mandate is currently creating some inefficiency as countries re-nominate members. Some key members have not yet been nominated and the Team asks the Working Party to encourage all countries to consider whether they wish to have members on the Team. (All former members do receive most correspondence when sent to the wider Forest Products Marketing & Business Management Reference List.);
- (c) Contributions of country market statements and forecasts to the annual Timber Committee Market Discussions are not consistently good. Some countries do an excellent job of submitting high quality and timely market statements and comprehensive forecasts for the current and future year. The Team asks the Working Party to request all countries participate equitably in the Market Discussions by providing their reports and forecasts by the deadline. This is especially important now that paper versions are not distributed and delegates must read them from the website in advance.

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