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New Director for Environment, Housing and Land Management Division

Mr. Marco Keiner, holding a German passport but considering himself as a global citizen, has been appointed Director of the UNECE Environment, Housing and Land Management Division.

Prior to joining UNECE, Mr. Keiner was for over a year Chief of the Urban Environment Section in UN-HABITAT in Nairobi. He was responsible there for the Sustainable Cities Programme and the programme Localizing Agenda 21 (LA21). He led the establishment of UN-HABITAT's new flagship programme, the global Sustainable Urban Development Network (SUD-Net), and its start-up initiative on Cities in Climate Change (CCCI).

From 2000 to 2007 Mr. Keiner was senior researcher and lecturer for spatial planning at ETH Zurich (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) and the University of Innsbruck. He was also head of the Sustainability Research Group of the Institute for Spatial and Landscape Planning at ETH Zurich. His areas of work were sustainable spatial development, environmental planning, networking, and scenarios. He was also engaged in the e-learning course "Global Issues on Sustainable Development" at Chalmers University (Sweden).



Mr. Keiner is an expert on sustainability-oriented urban and rural development in developing countries and in Europe. From 1994-2000 he collected six years of field experience in African countries as a development aid worker in Mali and Benin and conceptualizing a management plan for a National Park in Ethiopia.

His educational background includes: studies in Physical and Human Geography (1985-89, Masters Degree) in Erlangen-Nurnberg (Germany) and Nice (France), Postgraduate Studies in Spatial Planning (ETH Zurich, 1989-91), and Business Management (CNED Caen, France, 1996-98). In 1999, he acquired his Ph.D. in Geography on sustainable land use in subtropical areas in Africa (University of Eichstaett, Germany), and since 2005 he has been *private docent* (post-doctoral thesis in German-speaking countries) at the University of Innsbruck (Austria).

He is very active in publishing reviewed articles on sustainable urban development, but in fact prefers to write books. His latest edited and co-edited books in English are "Sustainable Urban Development in China – Wishful Thinking or Reality" (2008), "Sustainable Futures for Switzerland, Europe and the World" (2007), "The Future of Sustainability" (2006), "Managing Urban Futures" (2005), "From Understanding to Action – Sustainable Urban Development in Developing Countries" (2004), and "The Real and Virtual Worlds of Spatial Planning" (2003). ❖

UNECE experts advise Russian producers on cultivating healthy seed potatoes

The UNECE secretariat, in partnership with the Russian Ministry of Agriculture and the seed-potato-producing enterprise "Meristime cultures" held an International Workshop on Seed Potatoes in Kislovodsk, in the Northern Caucasus of Russia. Seed potatoes certification experts from Italy, Netherlands, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States came to Russia to present the UNECE Standard for Seed Potatoes and discuss its practical application with their Russian colleagues. A representative of the European Commission presented the European certification system, which is based on the UNECE Standard.

A technical visit to the facilities and the fields of the "Meristime cultures" enterprise complemented the scientific discussions at the workshop. Participants had the possibility of seeing how the recommendations of the UNECE Standard could be implemented in practice: in-vitro maintenance of potato varieties, production of mini-tubers in a hydroponic system, multiplication of seed in the field, and grading, packing and certification of seed potatoes for marketing.

The conclusions and recommendations of the workshop were transmitted to the policymakers in the Ministry of Agriculture to be



Harvested seed potatoes in the field 1200 metres high in the Northern Caucasus





continued

used for improving the national standard on seed potatoes and for the work on a draft law on seed production.

One important recommendation was to start a pilot project in the Stavropol region of Russia, in cooperation with foreign certification services, to modernize the infrastructure for certification of seed potatoes. ❖



Discussion of the UNECE Standard at the workshop

The Workshop made several conclusions and recommendations on standards and certification schemes for seed potatoes

The UNECE Standard is a reference for international trade, and recommends internationally agreed quality requirements for seed potatoes and a harmonized certification scheme. A certification scheme is an official quality control procedure which aims to ensure the production and supply of seed potatoes to conditions and tolerances specified in national regulations. All seed potatoes being marketed should be certified, and exported seed potatoes should be in compliance with the importing country requirements.

From the certification point of view it is advisable to have one set of certification rules both for seed potatoes produced for the internal market and those produced for export. These rules, particularly tolerances, should be realistic, and not damaging to the interests of producers and consumers.

It was also concluded that national rules should be applied at the regional level, taking into consideration specific soil and climate conditions of the regions.

Normal functioning of the certification scheme is impossible without joint work of the appropriate government regulatory authority, the producers (farmers) and traders, research institutes, and consumers. ❖



Growing mini-tubers in a hydroponic system at the "Meristime cultures" enterprise

The UNECE Standard for Seed Potatoes can be found at http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/standard/potatoes/pot_e.htm.

For more information contact Serguei Malanitchev (agristandards@unece.org).

Role of wood products in climate change mitigation



Forests and wood play manifold roles in climate change mitigation. They capture carbon from the atmosphere when they grow, produce wood energy to substitute fossil energy; deliver wood as renewable raw material which reduces greenhouse gas emissions when it substitutes more energy intensive material; and wood products are a store of carbon, keeping it from release

to the atmosphere. Although the capture and storage of carbon in forests is recognized in the Kyoto Protocol, the storage in wood products is not. Stock changes of wood products however influence the carbon balance in short and medium term. The current increasing carbon stock in wood products observed in many countries thus contributes to climate change mitigation.

A UNECE/FAO workshop was organized in Geneva on 9 and 10 September on *Harvested Wood Products in the Context of Climate Change Policies*, to discuss different approaches to accounting for carbon stored in wood products and their economic, social and ecological impacts.



Among the main points of the conclusions were that accounting for carbon stored in Harvested Wood Products has to be connected with accounting for land use, land-use change and forestry, in order to ensure that wood used in these products comes from sustainably managed sources.

Considering the time schedule of the climate negotiations, consensus on Harvested Wood Products accounting has to be reached by mid 2009 if it is to be included in an agreement in Copenhagen in November 2009. ❖

The meeting was jointly organized by the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, the UNECE/FAO Timber Section, and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe Liaison Unit Oslo.

Presentations, as well as the conclusions and recommendations, are available at <http://www.unece.org/timber/workshops/2008/hwp/welcome.htm>.

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