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Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry

European Forestry Commission

**Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics,
Economics and Management**

Forty-second session

Geneva, 22-24 March 2021

Item 5 (c) of the Provisional Agenda

Guidance on Work Areas

Work Area 3: Communication and Outreach

Note by the secretariat

Summary

In accordance with its mandate, the Working Party is expected to provide guidance on Work Area 3: Communication and Outreach. This document provides information about activities in this Work Area since the Working Party's last scheduled session in March 2020, as well as plans for 2021, drawing the Working Party's attention to any specific issues where guidance is needed. The 2020 meeting of the Working Party was postponed for one year, as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions on meetings in place at that time. For specific information on activities and topics covered between the March 2019 Working Party meeting and the scheduled but postponed meeting of March 2020, please refer to ECE/TIM/EFC/WP.2/2020/4.

An initial list of activities in Work Area 3 for the year 2022 will be made available in document ECE/TIM/EFC/WP.2/2021/inf.2 and discussed under Agenda Item 7.

I. Implementation by the Joint Section

A. Major events organized by the Joint Section

1. Events planned to celebrate the International Day of Forests (IDF) on 21 March 2020 were cancelled this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, under the IDF theme “Forests and Biodiversity” the Joint Section, in collaboration with the Russian Geographical Society and the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations in Geneva, organized an exhibition titled “Forest biodiversity: too precious to lose” which was finally displayed from 2 to 12 November 2020 in the Passerelle of the Palais of Nations. Due to the restrictions on attendance caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, the exhibition is also available in **virtual format** (<https://unitednations.rgo.ru/>). The next IDF will take place on 21 March 2021 under the theme “Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being”.

2. In line with restrictions on public events, the Joint Section organized several webinars and online events to promote its work and activities. These include the following online events:

- The webinar on financing Forest Landscape Restoration was held on 16 July 2020. In the run up to the Ministerial Roundtable on forest landscape restoration and the ECCA30/Bonn Challenge for Eastern and South-East Europe planned for autumn 2021, this online event presented available sources of financing to countries interested in making a pledge to the Bonn Challenge/ECCA30.
- The webinar on forest sector workforce was held on 14 October 2020 to promote the newly launched study “Forest Sector Workforce in the ECE region”, which underlines the need for a shift in the public perception of the forest sector as of one that offers modern career paths and opportunities for women, young people, and minorities.
- As part of the “Forest Week 2020”, a webinar “SDG 15 Day: Focus on forests in the ‘super year’ for nature and beyond” featured a roundtable moderated by member State representatives and provided an opportunity for UN agencies and partner organizations to discuss progress on achieving forest related targets of SDG15 in the ECE region.
- A capacity-building workshop was held on 17 and 18 November 2020 to promote the Forest Sector Outlook and give participants from the Russian Federation an overview of different forest sector modelling experiences and the use of results with a focus on climate change.
- The webinar “Building and renovation solutions to meet 21st century climate change and sustainability criteria” to raise the awareness of forest-based products as they relate to reducing greenhouse gas emissions was held on 23 November 2020.
- The fourth meeting of the Team of Specialists on Monitoring SFM took place online on 2 December 2020. The meeting introduced the Team to the objectives and planned activities of the recently established project on assessing forest damage/disturbances in the ECE region (planned for 2020-2022).
- The workshop on Forest Monitoring and Restoration in the Caucasus and Central Asia was held on 9 December 2020. The meeting provided an overview of national monitoring systems in countries of the ECE region and application of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. Further, the second half of the meeting focused on forest landscape restoration efforts in the region, regional restoration initiatives (Latin 20x20, AFR100, ECCA30), as well as possible sources of financing.
- The inaugural meeting of the Team of Specialists on Boreal Forests took place online on 21 October 2020.

B. Major events co-organized with other organizations and other meetings

3. The Joint Section participated in numerous meetings, workshops and conferences since the last Working Party session, delivering presentations and speeches (see Annex C) all of them online given the COVID-19 outbreak.

C. Publications

4. Publications are an important instrument for reaching out to more technical and specialized audiences, as well as for providing tailored support to policymakers in ECE member States. They are also an excellent communication tool to raise awareness on the work of the Joint Section and collaborate with partners. In 2020, the following publications were released, in both hardcopy and PDF:
 - “Trends in green jobs in the forest sector in the ECE region”;
 - “Who owns our forests? Forest ownership in the ECE region”;
 - “Forest product conversion factors” (printed and published by FAO);
 - “Overview of the state of forests and forest management in Armenia”;
 - “Overview of the state of forests and forest management in Azerbaijan”;
 - “Overview of the state of forests and forest management in Uzbekistan”;
 - “Overview of the state of forests and forest management in Turkmenistan”;
 - “Overview of the state of forests and forest management in Tajikistan”;
 - “Overview of the state of forests and forest management in Kyrgyzstan”;
 - “Overview of the state of forests and forest management in Kazakhstan”;
 - “Overview of the state of forests and forest management in Georgia”;
 - “Forest sector workforce in the ECE region”;
 - “Forest products annual market review 2019-2020”;
 - “Guidelines on the promotion of green jobs in forestry”.
5. There is a number of other publications currently nearing completion. For a complete list of past and forthcoming publications, please see Annex B. All publications are available on the ECE/FAO website at: www.unece.org/forests/publications.

D. Press and news releases on the ECE/FAO website

6. The ECE/FAO issued eight press releases in 2020:
 - “Nature Unlocked: ECE launched global photo contest showing flora and fauna during lockdown to celebrate World Environment Day”;
 - “Forest area in ECE region continues to increase, says FAO report, but greater efforts needed to protect these fragile ecosystems”;
 - “ECE/FAO studies contribute to sustainable management of precious forests of the Caucasus and Central Asia”;
 - “Improving diversity and public perception of forest sector workforce for green recovery”;
 - “ECE supports five countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia to develop national sets of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management”;
 - “Massive ad-hoc removals dominate Forest Products Markets in 2019 and 2020”;

- “By-products and residues form an increasing part of wood energy consumed in the ECE region, says ECE/FAO”;
 - “Urban trees and forests in the spotlight as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration commences”.
7. The ECE Communications Unit encourages the use of news releases which are less weighty than press releases and intended more as direct communication rather than being dependent on external news media. The Joint Section publishes several news releases in 2020:
- ECE and FAO support for the development of Kazakhstan’s forest sector Master plan;
 - Exploring financing opportunities for forest landscape restoration;
 - ECE, FAO and the Russian Geographical Society launch a virtual exhibition on forest biodiversity.
8. The Joint Section’s press releases and news releases have been picked up and shared by other international and regional organizations, and published worldwide (newspapers, reports, online news). The communication channel of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) was also regularly used to distribute outcomes and information. All press releases can be found on the Section’s website <http://www.unece.org/forests/press-releases>; all news releases are accessible at the ECE website <http://www.unece.org/info/media/news>.

E. Other media

9. The Joint Section prepared a new data and knowledge platform for forests in the ECE region, called “INForest”. The platform aims at providing selected forest and forest sector-related statistics (including all forest-related SDG indicators) outside the traditional groups of users and reaching beyond the forest sector community. It is available at <https://forest-data.unece.org/>
10. The Joint Section launched a global photography contest “Humans Locked Down, Nature Unlocked”, inviting for submissions of best photographs of flora and fauna taken during the lockdown period. Over 3000 photographs were received worldwide, with the best 13 photographs used to illustrate a 2021 calendar and for exhibition that will be showcased in early 2021.
11. The Trees in Cities Challenge, a voluntary initiative aimed at mayors and corresponding urban authorities in cities across the world to locally take action to combat climate change and foster urban sustainability and resilience, has seen an increase of commitments by cities around the world from just half a million to over 11 million trees in 2020.
12. The ECE Facebook (www.facebook.com/UNECEpage), Twitter account (<https://twitter.com/unece>) and the ECE/FAO Flickr account (www.flickr.com/photos/121632478@N08) were used to promote exhibitions, workshops, press/news releases and publications.

F. Billboard

13. The Forest Information Billboard was first launched in 2013 as an open forum to share developments on forest information (data and statistics) and forest reporting (global, regional and national processes), including advances in reporting as well as forest-related projects, publications and events.
14. Four issues were published in 2019, following the quarterly schedule of previous years (March, June, September and December).

G. Team of Specialists on Forest Communication (Forest Communicators' Network - FCN)

15. The annual report of the Team is in the Annex A to this document. The mandate of the Team has been extended to 2021 by the ECE Executive Committee at the request of the joint COFFI/EFC session which took place in November 2019.

H. Key questions for guidance and discussion

16. The Working Party is invited to take note of the information provided and provide guidance on additional communication and outreach opportunities.

Annex

A. Report by the Forest Communicators Network

1. Name:	
Team of Specialists on Forest Communication – Forest Communicators’ Network (FCN) Team website https://unece.org/forests/team-specialists-forest-communication	
2. Period covered:	
April 2020 – March 2021	
3. Leader/Deputies and Secretary:	
Leader:	Mr Kai Lintunen
Deputies:	Ms Jennifer Hayes; Mr Tomass Kotovics, Ms Gerda Wolfrum, Ms Lourdes Lázaro Marín
Secretary:	Ms Maria De Cristofaro
4. Members:	
230	
5. Countries:	
<p>Countries: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Central African Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan</p> <p>Organizations: EFIMED, ‘Environmental culture and education’ newspaper, Agri and Forest Enterprises, Albert-Ludwigs-University Freiburg, Association Elkana, Austrian Federal Forests, Biostrategia, BOKU Vienna, Bund Deutscher Forstleute, CEI-Bois, Center for International Forest Research, Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (MTK), Chamber of Forest Engineers of Turkey, Coillte, Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF), Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI), Confederation of Forest Industries, CPF, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Deutscher Forstverein E.V., Ecosystems Services and Management (ESM), International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), EFI FLEGT & REDD Unit, EFIATLANTIC, Environment Project, European Commission, European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN), European Forest Institute, European Forest Institute, European Forest Institute(EFI) - Barcelona, European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR), FCN Africa, FCN Asia/Pacific, FCN Mediterranean/Near East, FCN South America, FERN, FHP Kooperationsplattform Forst Holz Papier, Finnish Forest Association, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Forest Aerial Protection Centre "Avialesookhrana", FOREST EUROPE, Liaison Unit Bratislava, Forest Management Institute, Forest Owners Association, Forest Research, Forest Research Institute of National Agricultural Research and Innovation centre, Forest research, Forestry commission, Forest Sciences Centre of Catalonia (CTFC), Forest Service - Pacific Northwest Research Station, Forest Training Center of Lyss, Forestis - Associação Florestal de Portugal, FSC International, General Directorate of the State Forests, German Forest Society, Giny Comunicació, Global Forest Information Service and IUFRO, Global Forest Program, World Wide Fund for Nature, Iceland Forest Service, ICTA-UAB, International Forestry Students Association, International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), IUFRO, Kobzina Consulting, Kompetenzzentrum Holz GmbH, Kyrgyz Association of Forest and Land Users (KAFLU), Magazine Forestry and Hunting Management, MEDfOR Erasmus Mundus Secretariat, METO - Forestry Experts’ Association, Finland, Minerva Communications, Mountain Partnership CA, MSc Forestry Professional Board in Spain (COIM), NARIC Forest Research Institute, North-West region forestry programs, Oregon Forest Resources Institute, Partnerships for Forests - DFID-funded forestry and land use</p>	

programme - UK, PEFC Council asbl, Press service of State Forest Resources Agency, Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), ProHolz Austria, Responsible Asia Forestry&Trade Program RAFT, Steindlegger ISS - Integrated Sustainability Solutions, Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Inc, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, SYLVA NOVA, The Low Emission and Climate Resilient Development (LECRD) Project, The Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center, The University of British Columbia, The World Conservation Union (IUCN), UEF, UNDP Turkey, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, Union de Selvicultores del Sur de Europe, AEIE (USSE), United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, Université catholique de Louvain Belgium, Université De Lorraine, University of British Columbia, University of Shiga Prefecture, University of Suceva, Faculty of Forestry, Walloon Economic Office for Wood, WBCSD, Werkstatt Natur, World Bank, World Bank Russia Country Office, World Forestry Center, World Forestry Institute.

6. Meetings held:

Due to the unforeseen COVID-19 pandemic, most of the meetings were postponed or were organized virtually and/or in a hybrid mode.

- Yearly FCN Meeting in Slovenia September 2020 (postponed to 2021);
- FCN Task Force meeting: collaboration on sw4sw communications 25.11.2020;
- FCN Task Force on comparison of tools on remote working & best practices 11/2020;
- FCN Task Force meeting on FCN activities 2021 12/2020;
- FCN Task Force meeting on input & messaging on IDF 2021 spot 12/2020;
- Preparatory meeting on World Forestry Congress.

7. Outputs and impacts achieved during last year:

- Promoting the revision of the Strategic Framework for Forest Communication in Europe;
- Promoting the making of a survey among European Communicators on common messages within forest communication in the UNECE region;
- Promoting work on updating public perception research;
- EFI Think Forest EU conference on Public Perceptions on Forests and Bioeconomy 27.10.2020 – moderator Kai Lintunen;
- Promoting the revision of the Strategic Framework for Forest Communication in Europe;
- Promoting the making of a survey among European Communicators on common messages within forest communication in the UNECE region;
- Input to the International Day of Forests video spot;
- Promoting work on updating public perception research.

8. Outputs and impacts expected for coming year:

- FCN members to organize communications session and a workshop at IUCN World Congress; France 2020 (postponed to 2021);
- Organizing a communication workshop on SW4SW in North America 2020 (postponed);
- Contributing to the World Forestry Congress (postponed to 2021 new date tbd);
- Communication advice on the International Day of Forests 2020 and 2021;
- Request from EU Commission to work on updating the EU Forest Communication Strategy;
- Analyzing the need for further surveys on the results of the EFI -made meta-study on European consumer perceptions on forests and the possibilities of FCN to contribute to it.

9. Issues for the attention of the Working Party:

- Train the trainers session on the use of online tools for communication and networking;
- Communication opportunities related to UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

10. Other comments:

B. List of past and forthcoming publications (internal)

1. Publications made available in 2020

- ECE/TIM/DP/74: Trends in green jobs in the forest sector in the ECE region
- ECE/TIM/DP/76: Forest sector workforce in the ECE region
- ECE/TIM/DP/77: Guidelines on the promotion of green jobs in forestry
- ECE/TIM/DP/78: Overview of the state of forests and forest management in Armenia
- ECE/TIM/DP/79: Overview of the state of forests and forest management in Azerbaijan
- ECE/TIM/DP/80: Overview of the state of forests and forest management in Georgia
- ECE/TIM/DP/81: Overview of the state of forests and forest management in Kazakhstan
- ECE/TIM/DP/82: Overview of the state of forests and forest management in Kyrgyzstan
- ECE/TIM/DP/83: Overview of the state of forests and forest management in Tajikistan
- ECE/TIM/DP/84: Overview of the state of forests and forest management in Turkmenistan
- ECE/TIM/DP/85: Overview of the state of forests and forest management in Uzbekistan
- ECE/TIM/SP/43: Who owns our forests? Forest ownership in the ECE region
- ECE/TIM/NONE: Forest product conversion factors” (printed and published by FAO)
- ECE/TIM/SP/50: Forest products annual market review 2019-2020”

2. Publications currently in press and soon to be made available

- ECE/TIM/DP/86: National Reporting of Sustainable Forest Management in Central Asia
- ECE/TIM/SP/45: Forest Sector Outlook Study
- ECE/TIM/SP/49: Forest Landscape Restoration in Eastern and South-East Europe
- ECE/TIM/DP/87: The Forest Sector in a Circular Economy
- ECE/TIM/DP/88: Implications of COVID on the Forest Sector in the EECCA
- ECE/TIM/DP/89: Implications of COVID-19 pandemic on the Forest Sector in Southeast Europe
- ECE/TIM/DP/90: Forest Sector Outlook Study: Methodology Report
- ECE/TIM/SP/52: Forest Products Annual Market Review 2020-2021

C. External meetings where ECE/FAO staff provided input (March 2020 – February 2021, partial list)

- Presentation about Forests for Fashion initiative, UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion talks, 1 October 2020 (online)
- Presentation of the cooperation on the forest data collection in the UNECE region, and participation in the panel “Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 and the way forward” at the World Forest Week 2020, 2 October 2020 (online)
- Presentation about Trees in Cities Challenge, thematic workshop on “Improving Urban Resilience in Informal Settlements”, 24 November 2020 (online)
- Presentation of the work on forest monitoring in the ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section at the meeting of International Forest Policy Network / Finland, 24 November 2020 (online)
- Moderation of panel session “Innovative by Nature”, Discover the SDGs event, 1 December 2020 (online)
- UNFF Expert Group Meeting on the Assessment of the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on SFM, 19-21 January 2021 (online)
- Presentation “The Joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section - focus on forest assessment” for the University of Hamburg on 1 February 2020 (online)
