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Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry

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

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Item 5 (c) of the provisional agenda

Guidance on Work Areas

Food and Agriculture Organization

European Forestry Commission

Work Area 3: Communication and outreach

Note by the secretariat

Summary

In accordance with its mandate, the Joint United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management (Joint 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 session in March 2021, as well as plans for 2022, drawing the Working Party's attention to any specific issues where guidance is needed.

An initial list of activities in Work Area 3 for the year 2023 will be made available in document ECE/TIM/EFC/WP.2/2021/Inf.4 and discussed under Agenda Item 6.

This document is submitted in accordance with ECE/TIM/2021/2-FO:EFC/2021/2, annex II, section III.

I. Implementation by the Joint Section

A. Integrated Communications Strategy

1. The Joint Section developed a secretariat-internal multi-channel, integrated communications strategy to advance the goals and maximize the impact of the Integrated Programme of Work 2022 – 2025. The communications strategy (available upon demand) supports effective and timely communication with stakeholder groups and leverages the opportunities of digital communications to grow new audiences and expand public engagement with the Joint Section’s work.

B. Major events organized by the Joint Section

2. The Joint Section organized numerous, mostly online, meetings, workshops and conferences since the last Working Party session, including:

- “Second online Meeting of the Team of Specialists on Boreal Forests”, 3 February 2021;
- “ECE and FAO Forest Product Statistics Workshop”, 9-11 February 2021;
- “42nd Session of the Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management”, 22-24 March 2021 (Geneva, hybrid);
- “Launch of the INForest – data and knowledge platform for forests and forest sector in the ECE region”, 23 March 2021;
- “Eighth Meeting of the ECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Forest Products Statistics”, 13 April 2021;
- “Relevance, challenges and expectations from the global and regional reporting on forests and sustainable forest management”, a webinar organized by the ECE/FAO Team of Specialists on monitoring sustainable forest management, 21 April 2021;
- Second part of the fourth (29th) Meeting of the “ECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management”, 21 April 2021;
- Informal virtual policy dialogue on fashion in Moldova, 19 May 2021;
- Third Meeting of the ECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Boreal Forests, 23 June 2021;
- “The science and policy of wildfires in the boreal biome”, virtual side event organized in collaboration with the Team of Specialists on Boreal Forests during the International Boreal Forest Research Association (IBFRA) Conference, 16-20 August 2021;
- “Roundtable on advancing the sustainable management of urban trees and forests”, 4 October 2021;
- “Ministerial Meeting on Forest Landscape Restoration and the ECCA30/Bonn Challenge in Eastern and South-East Europe”, 12 October 2021;
- “Fourth Meeting of the ECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Boreal Forests”, 13 October 2021;
- “First Meeting of the Informal Network of Experts on Sustainable Urban Forestry”, 19 October 2021;
- “ECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Green Jobs in the Forest Sector (Joint ILO/ECE/FAO Experts Network)”, 11 November 2021;

- “Foresta2021 - the Joint Session of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry and the FAO European Forestry Commission”, 22-25 November 2021 (Rome, hybrid);
- “Urban and Peri-urban Forest Ecosystems for Green Recovery – Linking National Policies and Local Action”, Foresta2021 Side Event, 22 November 2021;
- “Achievements – Challenges – Aspirations for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Caucasus and Central Asia”, Foresta2021 Side Event, 22 November 2021;
- “Meeting of the Team of Specialists on Sustainable Forest Products”, 24 November 2021;
- “Second Meeting of the Informal Network of Experts on Sustainable Urban Forestry”, 8 December 2021;
- “Technical Meeting on the Development of Knowledge Exchange Platform on Forest Landscape Restoration in the Caucasus and Central Asia”, 3 December 2021;
- “Meeting of the Team of Specialists on Sustainable Forest Products”, 9 December 2021;
- “Regional Policy Dialogue on Forest Landscape Restoration”, 9 February 2022.

C. Major co-organized events and other meetings

3. The Joint Section participated in numerous meetings, workshops and conferences since the last Working Party session, most of them online, given the COVID-19 outbreak, including:

- Participation in the Eighth Forest Europe Ministerial Conference, 14-16 April 2021;
- Participation in the Eurostat/FAO/ECE/ITTO Intersecretariat Working Group on Forest Sector Statistics meetings (26-28 January 2021, 29 June 2021, 1-2 March 2022);
- Presentation of the key findings of the study on “Circularity concepts in forest-based industries” at the Annual Conference of the United States Forest Products Society, 15-17 June 2021;
- Presentation at Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) webinar “Fashions change, Forests stay: How sustainable forest management can help the fashion industry reduce its carbon footprint”, 30 September 2021;
- Presentation at Rencontres Romandes du Bois’21. Lausanne, Switzerland, 7 October 2021;
- Presentation of the forest assessment related work and participation in/cooperation with relevant organizations and processes (e.g., EEA-Eionet Thematic Working Group on Forests, EFINET – European Forest Information Network, Forest Europe Forest Risk Facility, Forest Europe SFM Think Tank);
- Presentation at Columbia Global Centers, Paris webinar, 14 December 2021;
- Participation in the 16th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests – UNFF, 9-13 May 2022;
- Forum International Bois Construction 2022 à Epinal/Nancy, France – 6-8 April 2022.

D. Publications

4. Publications are not only an important outreach to more technical and specialized audiences. They raise awareness of the work of the Joint Section and its collaboration with

outside partners. They provide tailored support to policymakers in ECE member States and are also an excellent communication tool. In 2021, the following publications were released, in print and/or electronic copy (PDF):

- *Forecast of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry: Forest Products Production and Trade 2020-2022* (electronic, English only);
 - COVID-19 impacts on the forest sector in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (electronic, English only);
 - *Forest Sector Outlook Study, 2020-2040* (hardcopy and electronic, English, French and Russian);
 - *Forest Products Annual Market Review 2020-2021* (hardcopy and electronic, English only);
 - *Forest Landscape Restoration in Eastern and South-East Europe* (hardcopy and electronic, English only);
 - *COVID-19 Impacts on The Forest Sector in Countries in the Western Balkans* (electronic, English only);
 - *Guidelines on the Promotion of Green Jobs in Forestry* (hardcopy and electronic, English).
5. In addition, the following publications (tentative titles) will be available in 2022:
- “Forest Sector Outlook Study 2020-2040 Methodology Report” (electronic, English only);
 - “Structural changes and their long-term consequences for the forest sector: a contribution to the Forest Sector Outlook Study 2020-2040” (electronic, English only);
 - “Climate change and the forest sector in the ECE region: a contribution to the Forest Sector Outlook Study 2020-2040” (electronic, English only);
 - “Circularity concepts in forest-based industries” (electronic, English only);
 - “Catalogue of wood waste classifications in the ECE region” (electronic, English only);
 - “Reporting on Forests and Sustainable Forest Management in the Caucasus and Central Asia” (hardcopy and electronic, English and Russian);
 - “National Policy Guiding Principles for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Caucasus and Central Asia” (hardcopy and electronic, English, French and Russian).
6. All publications are available at: www.unece.org/forests/publications. Delegations are invited to contact the secretariat for print copies (if printed).

E. Outreach material and visualizations

7. Between March 2021 and March 2022, the Joint Section developed the following six policy briefs to support the dissemination of key messages to policymakers. They are available in electronic format only on the website of the secretariat (<https://unece.org/forests/policy-briefs>):

- “Sustainable Urban and Peri-urban Forestry - An Integrative and Inclusive Nature-Based Solution for Green Recovery and Sustainable, Healthy and Resilient Cities”;
- “Criteria and Indicators - A Universal Policy Tool for Sustainable Forest Management”;
- “National Forest Inventory - Tool for Decision Making”;
- “Information Systems - Tool for Better Forest Policy and Management”;

- “Criteria and Indicator-Based International Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting”;
 - “Criteria and Indicators for Forest-Related Communication”.
8. In addition, during the same period, the Joint Section developed the following visual communication materials to disseminate key messages:
- Infographic on Boreal Forests and Climate Change ([https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/Boreal Forests and Climate Change_Infographic_Updated03.pdf](https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/Boreal_Forests_and_Climate_Change_Infographic_Updated03.pdf));
 - Infographic on key questions addressed by the Forest Sector Outlook Study (<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6873915026223316992>);
 - Infographic on the benefits of urban forests (<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6902221901389807616>);
9. The Joint Section also produced three videos to disseminate key messages on:
- “Forests for Food: From Food Deserts to Food Forests” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3Q2GSyBiIE>);
 - Polish language version of “More heat for less wood” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1zkQRVOvHc>);
 - “Forests in a nutshell” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ukshFP0Ddg>);

F. Press and news releases by the Joint Section on the Economic Commission for Europe website

10. The Joint Section issued 23 news and press releases between March 2021 and March 2022. These are available at (<https://unece.org/media/forestry/press>; <https://unece.org/media/news?f%5B0%5D=program%3A342>):
- “ECE supports Sustainable Urban and Peri-Urban Forestry for public health, climate resilience and green recovery”;
 - “Joint ECE-FAO sessions focus on future of European forests”; (published jointly with FAO);
 - “ECE/FAO Forest Sector Outlook Study calls for a holistic policy approach to achieve climate goals”;
 - “Eastern and South-Eastern European countries commit to restore more than 4 million hectares of land by 2030”;
 - “From food deserts to food forests: how cities can shape more sustainable food systems”;
 - “Discover the stories behind the best photographs of ECE global photo contest ‘Humans locked down: Nature unlocked’”;
 - “Moscow joins the Trees in Cities Challenge, bringing planting pledges to around 11 million trees”;
 - “‘People-smart’ and ‘cities-based’ approach to sustainable development is key, urges ECE report”;
 - “UNECE calls for integrated and sustainable natural resource use through a ‘nexus’ approach”;
 - “More ‘joined-up’ approaches to measure and monitor sustainability are needed to sharpen policies in ECE region”;
 - “ECE launches new data platform for forests in the region”;

- “Forests in a nutshell: discover the lesser-known story behind some of your favourite dishes on International Day of Forests!”;
- “ECE, FAO and Forest Europe join forces to promote green jobs in the forest sector”;
- “ECE and FAO support countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia to advance forest landscape restoration”;
- “After COP26, we need less talk and more action”;
- “Foresta2021 and the European Forest Week to discuss the future of forests”; (published jointly with FAO);
- “Let’s grow trees in our cities!”;
- “ECE launches the Forests4Fashion Sports Challenge”;
- “Time to reform our food systems”;
- “Forest restoration is key to prevent the multiplication of wildfires and strengthen climate action”;
- “Living with fire in the boreal biome”;
- “UN Alliance supports Moldova’s efforts to turn its fashion industry into a driver of sustainable development”;
- “Experts highlight the boreal biome’s contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals”.

G. Other media and communications outreach

11. In line with the Joint Section’s internal communications strategy, dedicated social media accounts were established on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/UNECEForests>) and LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/unece-forests>) to engage directly with stakeholders and new audiences. These accounts are supported by an ongoing weekly content plan of posts aligned with the objectives of educating and advocating for sustainable forest management, increasing awareness of ECE/FAO initiatives, supporting best practice work, sharing news, data, statistics and other relevant updates and seeking new fundraising opportunities. The dedicated social media platforms are in the process of growing their audiences and currently have over 600 followers between them. A dedicated forestry playlist is also available on the ECE YouTube account, with 59 videos and 2,713 views as of December 2021 (<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLC18B48BBE23D5313>).

12. The Joint Section launched the INForest data and knowledge platform for forests in the ECE region (<https://forest-data.unece.org/>) in March 2021. Key indicators on forest area; health and protection; wood/carbon; management; consumption; and trade are available the ECE region and at the country level. This information is available in Czech, English, Polish and Russian. In 2021, the platform had 1,986 users and 3,739 views.

13. The Joint Section also continued to promote the use of sustainable textile materials and supported a new campaign launched by the Executive Secretary of ECE, the Forests4Fashion Sports Challenge. It is a call to the world of sports, including sports events’ organizers, committees, athletes, sportswear brands, producers and consumers to help advance circularity and sustainability in sports. It encourages the reuse of sportswear whenever possible and promotes the use of renewable cellulose fibres. As part of this outreach, the Forests4Fashion Sports Challenge was featured by La Tele Vaud Fribourg, highlighting the potential of renewable fibres (<https://latele.ch/emissions/emissions-speciales/rencontres-romandes-du-bois-1-3>).

14. On the occasion of the United Nations Food Systems Summit on 23 September 2021, the Joint Section launched a video entitled “Forests for Food: From Food Deserts to Food Forests”, which introduces the concept of “food forests” – a way of combining agriculture and forestry in an urban environment to create edible landscapes.

15. The Trees in Cities Challenge, which had been launched in 2019 as an advocacy initiative to promote enhanced urban forestry in cities, grew tremendously in 2021/early 2022. The initiative invites mayors and local governments to make a tree-planting pledge to support greener, more sustainable and climate resilient cities. As of 10 March 2022, 46 cities had made pledges to plant 11.4 million trees, and 8.2 million trees have been planted. The initiative is reinforced by a dedicated website (<https://treesincities.unece.org/>), a social media campaign and the Informal Network of Experts on Sustainable Urban Forestry, which was launched in 2021 to act as a forum for peer-to-peer learning and sharing best practices. Five meetings on sustainable urban forestry have supported outreach efforts since the last Joint Working Party, including three meetings of the Informal Network. Posts on ECE social media accounts with a #treesincitieschallenge hashtag had a reach of over 2.6 million views in 2021.

16. On the occasion of the International Mother Earth Day on 23 April 2021, the Joint Section contributed to a podcast by the United Nations Information Service, highlighting the Joint Section's efforts to raise awareness of the importance of forests to safeguard biodiversity (<https://onuinfogeneve.podbean.com/e/journal-23-avril/>).

H. Billboard

17. The Forest Information Billboard was first launched in 2013 as an open forum to share 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.

18. In 2021, four issues were published, following the quarterly schedule of previous years (March, June, September and December). They are available at <https://unece.org/forests/forest-information-billboard>.

I. Team of Specialists on Forest Communication (Forest Communicators' Network)

19. The annual report of the Team of Specialists on Forest Communication can be found on the meeting website of the Joint Working Party. The mandate of the Team has been extended until 2023 by the ECE Executive Committee at the request of the joint 79th session of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and the 41st session of the FAO European Forestry Commission, which took place from 22 to 25 November 2021.

20. In 2021, the Team supported outreach and engagement around the 6th European Forest Week (22-28 November 2021) and the International Day of Forests (21 March 2022), namely through a video on sustainable production and consumption of wood (<https://youtu.be/NJm2jV2CE5E>). In addition, the Team hosted a social media training for young communicators at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress (6-9 September 2021).

J. Key points on communication for guidance and discussion

21. The Working Party is invited to discuss:

a) The possible amplification of the Joint Section's work by actively engaging on its social media channels, and continuing to send inputs to the Forest Information Billboard and other outlets;

b) How the Joint Section could increase its outreach with the help of member States, for example via dedicated national multiplier points to distribute communication and other material produced by the Joint Section through and to national outlets and partners;

c) How the Team of Specialists on Forest Communication could be engaged more frequently, regularly and effectively for communication on the implementation of the Integrated Programme of Work 2022-2025.