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of the United Nations****Economic Commission for Europe**

Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry

**Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics,
Economics and Management****Forty-third session**

Geneva, 1-3 June 2022

Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda

Guidance on Work Areas**Food and Agriculture Organization**

European Forestry Commission

Work Area 2: Policy dialogue and advice**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 2: Policy dialogue and advice. 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 2 for the year 2023 will be made available in document ECE/TIM/EFC/WP.2/2022/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. Forest Policy Advice

A. Implementation by the Secretariat

1. The joint session of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) (at its seventy-ninth session) and the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC) (at its forty-first session) – Foresta2021 – was held in Rome, Italy, and online from 22 to 25 November 2021. The 6th European Forest Week was celebrated in conjunction with the joint session and focused on the Future of Forests.

2. The joint session discussed and assessed policy and technical issues relevant to forestry in the region, in particular, global and regional policy developments and their implications, progress with the Global Forest Resources Assessment, forest economics, forest landscape restoration, and the contribution of forests and forest products to a circular bioeconomy. The joint session also reviewed and approved the Integrated Programme of Work 2022-2025 of COFFI and EFC.

1. Sustainable Forest Management – Forest Landscape Restoration

3. During the past year, the Joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section (Joint Section) has been supporting the countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia (CCA) in their efforts to restore 3 million hectares of forests by 2030. The CCA countries announced this commitment at the Ministerial Roundtable in Astana, Kazakhstan, in 2018. To advance this process, the Joint Section developed National Policy Guiding Principles which provide an enabling framework for the development of national policy tools for the implementation and monitoring of successful and sustainable forest landscape restoration activities.

4. The principles were developed in close cooperation with national experts and with the contribution from all countries of the CCA region. During two meetings, member States and national experts from the region discussed guiding principles on effective forest restoration. The discussions focused on:

(a) Achievements, challenges, and aspirations for forest landscape restoration in the Caucasus and Central Asia, at a side event on 22 November 2021, during the European Forest Week 2021; and

(b) Regional policy dialogue on forest landscape restoration, which took place on 9 February 2022.

5. The development of pilot strategies in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan contributed greatly to the development of the principles.

2. Green jobs in the forest sector

6. In 2021, the Joint Section, in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and FAO, drafted a study on “Transformations in the future of work and their implications on occupational safety and health in forestry” which will be published in 2022.

7. The Joint Section, in partnership with ILO and FAO Headquarters, is also co-organizing the FAO’s World Forestry Congress session on “Building a Green, Healthy and Resilient Future with Forests” which will be held on 3 May 2022. The session will address opportunities and challenges of sectoral stakeholders, including employers’ and workers’ organizations, in promoting green jobs and decent work as a cornerstone of forest sector growth and sustainability. For the session, the Joint Section contributed to a poster on “Supporting forests, people, growth and sustainability: A dynamic opportunity for rural youth” and will present the Joint ECE/FAO/Forest Europe Guidelines for the promotion of green jobs in forestry.

3. The role of the forest sector in a circular economy

8. The information about the Joint Section’s work on circular economy will be presented in ECE/TIM/EFC/WP.2/2022/Inf.2 and discussed under Agenda Item 4.

4. Boreal forests

9. For the first time, the boreal biome was a focus of discussion at the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development 2021. The event “Snapshot on Boreal forests' contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals” took place virtually on 15 March 2021. It highlighted the comparatively little attention given to these vastly intact forest and wetland ecosystems for their important contribution to stabilizing the global climate, storing large amounts of terrestrial carbon, and providing livelihoods to millions of people in remote and rural communities.

10. The Joint Section also published material on boreal forests, including an information brochure on “Why boreal forests matter – the role of boreal forests in sustainable development” ([https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/Why Boreal Forests Matter.pdf](https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/Why%20Boreal%20Forests%20Matter.pdf)) and an 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%20Forests%20and%20Climate%20Change_Infographic_Updated03.pdf)).

B. Meetings/Events (excluding capacity-building¹)

1. Forest Landscape Restoration

11. The Ministerial Meeting on Forest Landscape Restoration and the ECCA30/Bonn Challenge in Eastern and South-East Europe was held online- on 12 October 2021. It was chaired by the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations Office at Geneva. The Meeting provided a platform for the Eastern and South-East European countries to contribute to the global efforts under the Bonn Challenge and the ECCA30. The meeting brought together Ministers and Deputy-Ministers from 14 countries of Eastern and South-East Europe who confirmed their commitment to accelerate work on identifying deforested and degraded land and intensifying efforts to restore and afforest them. The 14 countries of Eastern and South-East Europe committed to the restoration of more than 4 million ha of land by 2030 and adopted the “ECCA 30 Ministerial Declaration” (<https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/Ministerial%20Meeting%20Declaration.pdf>).

12. In addition:

(a) A study, “Forest Landscape Restoration in Eastern and South-East Europe”, (<https://unece.org/info/Forests/pub/358659>), was published as evidence-based support to the preparations and discussions at the Ministerial Meeting.

(b) A detailed briefing and preparatory session on the Ministerial Meeting was held for the ministerial focal points in member States and the diplomatic missions in Geneva in May 2021.

(c) Member States held three virtual consultation sessions in September 2021. These helped to build capacity, define the objectives of the ministerial meeting and develop the final text of the Ministerial Declaration.

13. The Ministerial Meeting and its results were widely disseminated in a secretariat-led communication campaign. The results were also highlighted in speeches by ECE and FAO senior management. In addition, a documentary video on the results of the ministerial meeting was produced. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, its release had to be postponed to Spring 2022. More information on the Ministerial meeting is available at: <https://unece.org/info/Forests/events/349092>.

2. Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

14. The Joint Section organized a peer-learning round table on Boreal forests during the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development 2021, on 15 March 2021 and another on urban forests for future-proof cities on 7 April 2021. The latter highlighted the role of sustainable urban forestry as an integrative and cost-effective nature-based solution to the development

¹ Capacity-building events are reported in ECE/TIM/EFC/WP.2/2022/6.

of greener, healthier, and more resilient cities, with contributions towards many of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

3. National Forest Policy Dialogue

15. Together with the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan, the Joint Section organized a National Forest Policy Dialogue (NFPD) Workshop in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 3 December 2021. The workshop discussed and evaluated the current structure of the forest service of Azerbaijan and its possible reorganization to allow for restoration of degraded forest lands and other challenges using a forest landscape restoration approach.

16. For 2022, the Joint Section is considering the continuation of the National Forest Policy Dialogue in Azerbaijan, as well as undertaking a National Forest Policy Dialogue in Uzbekistan.

4. United Nations Forum on Forests

17. The Joint Section participated in the discussion panel on thematic priorities for 2021-2022 in support of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Forests and cooperation with partners on achieving the thematic priorities during the sixteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) (27 April 2021).

18. The study on “COVID-19 impacts on the forest sector in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia” as well as country market statements submitted by member States to the secretariat in the preparation for Foresta2021 provided significant input to the UNFF regional study on “Initial Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Sustainable Forest Management Eastern European States”.

19. The Joint Section participated in the Expert Group Meeting on the Assessment of the Impacts of COVID-19 on Forests and Forest Sector (virtual) from 2-4 February 2022.

5. Boreal Forests

20. The Joint Section organized a virtual side event on “The science and policy of wildfires in the boreal biome” in collaboration with the Team of Specialists on Boreal Forests and scientists from the International Boreal Forest Research Association (19 August 2021, online).

C. Team of Specialists on Boreal Forests

21. The Team of Specialists on Boreal Forests held two online meetings, on 23 June 2021 and on 13 October 2021. During these meetings, ToS members discussed two scientific briefs on “The Definition of Boreal Forests” and “Boreal Forests and Climate Change” presented by scientists from the Russian Federation. These briefs will serve as backgrounds to produce policy-facing outreach documents in 2022.

D. Key point on forest policy advice for guidance and discussion

22. The Working Party is invited to provide guidance to the secretariat on how it could support the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda, accelerated action and delivery of the scope of the Integrated Programme of Work 2022-2025 and implementation of the UNFF Strategic Plan.

II. Forest Sector Outlook

A. Implementation by the Joint Section

23. The secretariat successfully completed the Forest Sector Outlook 2020–2040 which was launched during a panel discussion on “The Future of Forests” on 22 November 2021,

the first day of Foresta2021. The main report of the study contains a detailed summary of the work by the experts of the Team of Specialists on Forest Sector Outlook. The study is available at <https://unece.org/info/Forests/pub/362308>. In 2022, it will be complemented by a set of technical study papers with more detailed scientific information including the “Methodology report of the forest products model”, a report on possible “Future impact of climate change on forests and forest products markets” as well as the “Possible impact of structural changes on the forest sector”.

24. The Outlook study provides information for the ECE region to support decision making by analysing the possible medium- and long-term consequences of specific policy choices and structural changes, using scenario analyses whenever possible. The study is the first to cover the entire region and provides results for the main ECE subregions of Europe, North America, and the Russian Federation.

25. The study provides insight on six priority questions which were identified through a transparent and participatory process: (i) How would different demand changes affect the ECE forest products market? (ii) How would different supply changes affect the ECE region forest products markets? (iii) How would significant trade restrictions affect the ECE region forest product markets? (iv) How will ECE forests be affected by climate change? (v) How could ECE region forests and the forest sector contribute to climate change mitigation? (vi) How could ECE forests adapt to climate change?

B. Team of Specialists on Forest Sector Outlook

26. The Team of Specialists did not meet during the reporting period. The annual report of the Team will be made available on the website of the Joint Working Party meeting.

27. The ECE COFFI and FAO EFC decided to suspend the ToS on Forest Sector Outlook for the duration of the Integrated Programme of Work 2022-2025, given the completion of the Forest Sector Outlook Study 2021 (ECE/TIM/2021/2 FO:EFC/2021/2). Work on dissemination of the results of the outlook study and related capacity-building activities will be continued by the Joint Section.

C. Key points on forest sector outlook for guidance and discussion

28. The Working Party is invited to:

- (a) Provide feedback on the Forest Sector Outlook Study 2020–2040;
 - (b) Inform the secretariat how the current outlook study will be used at national level, including any national activities currently under way by member States;
 - (c) Consider offering support to the secretariat in dissemination of the results of the outlook study.
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