



Report by Mr. Peter Blombäck

Chair of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) to the Executive Committee (EXCOM)

25 March 2024



Focus Areas 2023

1. FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE, POLLUTION AND BIODIVERSITY LOSS AT THE HEART OF OUR WORK

Forests in the ECE region, the Northern forests, play a pivotal role in CLIMATE ACTION, ADAPTATION and MITIGATION:

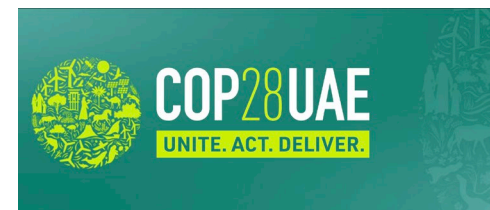
- Focus on the forests and the sustainable availability of the forest's products

Select events and discussions at:

COFFI - Biodiversity - implications of the Global Biodiversity Framework for forests in the region of the Economic Commission for Europe.

COP28 UAE events, e.g.

- Carbon sponge City – Why cities can help solve our climate problems
- Driving the circularity of packaging: a path towards climate resiliency
- Dust Storms in Central Asia: Source Mapping and Mitigation
- **Trees in dry cities: luxury or a fundamental climate and SDG solution**



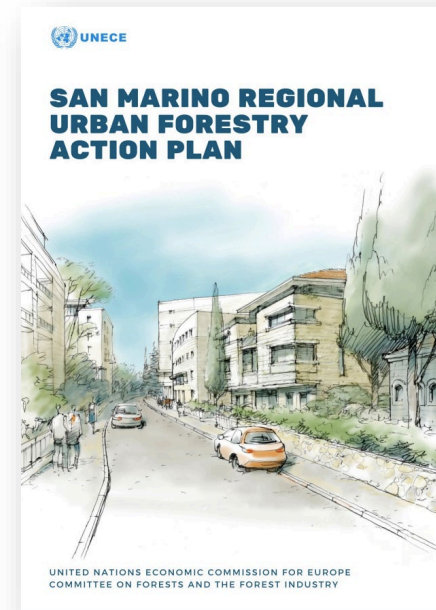
Wood Energy Data webinars

Joint Wood Energy Enquiry – 3 modular webinars (17, 20 & 27 Apr. 2023)

Focus Areas 2023

2. CONNECTION BETWEEN URBAN AREAS AND NATIONAL, AND REGIONAL LEVELS - Committee laid groundwork for afforestation/reforestation measures in countries and explored **the links between local, national and regions**, particularly through **the adoption of the San Marino Regional Urban Forestry Action Plan (Nov. 2023)**.

United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF18) - 8 May 2023, side event on “Rooted in Forests – National and regional action for global impact” (organized with Uzbekistan, World Bank and FAO) - **Spotlight on tools and opportunities for concrete regional and national actions and interventions**



Focus Areas 2023

3. FOLLOW-UP TO ECE DECISIONS AND WORK: TRANSITION TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND LEVERAGING DIGITALIZATION AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (aligned with the 70th session of ECE), the Committee worked and published material on:

- **“Circularity Concepts in Wood Construction”, “Circularity Concepts in the Pulp and Paper Industry”** (forthcoming) **“Sustainable and circular bioeconomy in forest-based industries”** (forthcoming)
- UNECE/FAO Policy Dialogue in Türkiye - Spotlight on the future of the forestry and wood-based industries sector in Türkiye in the transition to a sustainable bioeconomy (21-23 Sept. 2023)
- Expansion of **INForest** and prepared automation of its data collection processes
- Creation of **digital Forest Knowledge Platform** and trained on **Forest Information Systems**

Intersectoral activities

Joint Working Party and Teams of Specialists and informal groups (Informal Network of Experts on Urban Nature) are at the forefront of building interfaces between the science and policy community.

This includes also:

- Since November 2023, cross-sectoral cooperation with the ECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management
- Nexus work:
 - Energy-forest nexus and cross-divisional cooperation
 - Water-forest nexus and cooperation with the Water Convention, particularly in dry cities
 - Food-water-energy nexus (in cities) via a project and cross-divisional cooperation

Cooperation with other organizations (examples)

European Forest Alliance

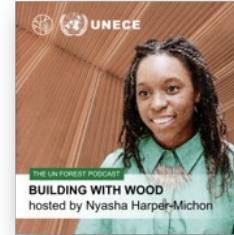
- Established at 2022 COFFI session
- ECE, FAO, European Forest Institute Integrate Network (EFI Integrate Network), European Environment Agency (EEA), and Forest Europe)
- Chaired by UNECE

Cooperation with the secretariats of the three Rio Conventions

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCC)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Communicating our work 2023

- **4 new episodes of The UN Forest Podcast:** *Urban forests* hosted by Stefano Boeri, *Climate change and forests* hosted by Michelle Yeoh, *Building with wood* hosted by Nyasha Harper-Michon, and *Wildfires and Forests* hosted by Jodi-Ann Wang, *Forests 4 Fashion* hosted by Samata Pattinson (forthcoming March 2024)



- **Planting of the second UNECE petite forest in San Marino**
- Quarterly UNECE/FAO **Forest Information Billboard**
- **Short film** on human connection with trees around us: *Why Trees?*
- The **Trees in Cities Challenge** grew to 83 participating cities from 32 countries
- **International Day of Forests 21 March 2024:** "FOREST TALK: Innovation 4 Climate"
- **Growing social media community: more than 400.000 accounts reached**

Our work in 2023 in numbers

- 26 capacity-building events, meetings and webinars
- 6 meetings of Teams of Specialists
- 2 intergovernmental meetings:
 - 30 May – 2 June 2023: 44th session of the joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management (in-person, Geneva, 72 participants)
 - 20-23 November 2023: 81st session of the ECE Committee on Forests and the forest industry and 42nd session of the FAO European Forestry Commission (in-person, San Marino, 107 participants)
- 6 publications, 1 policy brief, 3 data briefs and 1 action plan



Joint Session of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry and the FAO European Forestry Commission – 20-23 November 2023



18th session of the UN Forum on Forests – 8-12 May 2023



Regional workshop on Forest Information Systems – 10-11 October 2023

Select activities 2024:

21 March 2024,
International Day of
Forests 2024 – forests
and innovation

*Forests Talks –
Innovation for Climate
(organized with the
support of Finland)*

Spotlight on forests as
an invaluable source of
renewable, raw material
to address the pressing
need for immediate
climate action.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL 2024:

- May 2024: **Joint ECE/FAO Working Party session**. Thematic focus: Forests4Climate and review of the Integrated Programme of Work
- November 2024: **Committee on Forest and the Forests Industry session**. Thematic focus: Deforestation-free trade

PLANNED CAPACITY-BUILDING, TECHNICAL COOPERATION, THEMATIC FOCUSES

Urban action

- 26 February 2024 – Water and Drought: The UNECE Convention on Transboundary water and the Trees in Dry Cities Alliance
- May 2024 UNFF, Trees in Dry Cities incl. presentation of the Dry Cities Alliance
- April 2023, Nature-based solutions for Cities and tree-based food supply chains project

Future-proofing sustainable forest management trainings

- June 2024, Training on preventing and controlling forest fires

Data for evidence-based policy-making

- April 2024, Webinar on Engineered Wood Products Statistical Definitions and Classifications

Decisions for EXCOM

The Executive Committee is invited to approve:

- (a) The programme of work of the Forests and the Forest Industry Subprogramme for 2024, as contained in document ECE/TIM/2023/10, FAO:EFC/2023/10;
- (b) The extension, for the period 2024 – 2025, of the mandates of the:
 - (i) Team of specialists on boreal forests;
 - (ii) Team of specialists on forest products and wood energy statistics;
 - (iii) Team of specialists on monitoring sustainable forest management;
 - (iv) Team of specialists on sustainable forest products;
 - (v) Team of specialists on forest communication (Forest Communicators' Network),

as contained in document ECE/TIM/2021/2-FO:EFC/2021/2, Annex II.



Thank you

Mr. Peter Blombäck,
Chair, UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry

25 March 2024

