



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

TIM/2004/6



**Food and Agriculture  
Organization**

27 July 2004

Original: ENGLISH

---

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

TIMBER COMMITTEE  
Sixty-second session

EUROPEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION  
Thirty-second session

**JOINT SESSION**

Geneva, Switzerland, 5 - 9 October 2004

**TIMBER COMMITTEE MATTERS**

(Item 9 of the provisional agenda)

Note by the secretariat

This document presents:

- (a) The results of the fifty-ninth session of UNECE, which are relevant to the Committee's activities. The Committee is invited to take note of the Commission's conclusions and requests and respond to them as appropriate; and
- (b) Directions for the UN Programme budget, 2006-2007 biennium.

## **A. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE FIFTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

### **The UNECE reform**

1. The Commission decided to commission a comprehensive report on the state of the UNECE with the aim of developing recommendations to determine what changes to the role, mandate and functions of the UNECE are necessary in light of the changes in the European institutional architecture since the UNECE was created almost 60 years ago. The report will be guided by the will of member States to avoid duplication, and ensure cooperation, complementarity and efficiencies among intergovernmental organizations. All stakeholders will be consulted by the authors, which means that Principal Subsidiary Bodies, including the Timber Committee will be consulted.

2. The Commission endorsed actions proposed by the secretariat, and recommendations proposed by the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work, including recommendations calling for the Principal Subsidiary Bodies (PSBs) of UNECE to:

- Review biennially their intergovernmental structure, including related advisory groups, and report to the Commission at its Annual Session.
- Evaluate on a biennial basis their subsidiary bodies and their programme of work/activities. The results of these evaluations will be presented to the Commission.

3. In addition, decisions were made to further involve the Principal Subsidiary Bodies in the programme planning process and the setting of priorities in technical cooperation. The basic content of these measures is set out in Annexes I and II of document E/ECE/1411 (which are also set out in the annexes to this document), however, the exact procedures for implementing these measures will be agreed between the secretariat and the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work later this year.

## **B: DIRECTIONS FOR THE UN PROGRAMME BUDGET, 2006-2007 BIENNIUM**

4. With 2004 being the year for drafting the UN programme budget proposal for the 2006-2007 biennium, the Committee is invited to discuss the following issues in relation to the next biennium: any possible changes in work directions; new priority areas to be taken up; activities to be cancelled or discontinued; new activities to be introduced; and any streamlining in terms of documentation, publications, number and length of meetings etc. This should be summarized in a short note annexed to the meeting report and subsequently transmitted to the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work to facilitate their review of the draft ECE programme budget for 2006-2007.

5. As a basis for this discussion, the following conference room papers will be made available that provide excerpts relating to the Timber sub-programme from the Programme performance report 2002-2003; Strategic framework 2006-2007 (as adopted by CPC in June 2004).

6. Under item 10 of the provisional agenda the Committee will discuss and agree on its programme of work for 2005-2008 as a result of the strategic review. As the strategic review process has already dealt with the issues under consideration for the next biennium, it is proposed that the Committee agrees on a text along the following lines to be transmitted to the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work:

***“The UNECE Timber Committee, with its partner the FAO European Forestry Commission have carried out in 2004 a strategic review of their integrated programme of work on forests and timber***

*inviting input from all countries and stakeholders and reviewing the whole programme in detail. They created a vision, strategy and work programme, taking into account country priorities, resource availability and partnerships. The Committee and the Commission adopted a detailed programme of activities and outputs to be implemented in 2005-2008.*

*The major changes from the previous programme in work directions; new priority areas to be taken up; activities to be cancelled or discontinued; new activities to be introduced; and any streamlining in terms of documentation, publications, number and length of meetings are the following:*

- *Changes in work directions*

*The main objective remains substantially unchanged compared to earlier years, as the strategic review considered that the present division of labour between organisations working for sustainable forest management was effective and need not be changed: "To contribute to achieving sustainable forest management, including the sound and legal use of wood, other forest products and services, throughout the UNECE region, and to ensure measurement of that progress."*

*In addition, the strategic review believes that "The main contribution of the programme is through developing and applying tools to analyse and monitor both policy and developments on the ground, collecting, validating and disseminating information and analysis, as well as stimulating the exchange of experience, and joint efforts to measure progress.*

*While all countries benefit from international cooperation, the programme recognizes the special needs of the countries of the CIS and south east Europe, where forest sector problems tend to be more acute and national capacity weaker.*

- *New priority areas to be taken up*

*The programme maintained five work areas as before (Markets and Statistics, Forest resource assessment and indicators of sustainable forest management in the region, Sector outlook studies: analysis and follow-up, Social and cultural aspects of forestry, Policy and cross sectoral issues), but two significant changes were made:*

- *"social and cultural aspects of forestry" replaced "forest technology, management and training" which appeared less important than before from the policy point of view*
- *there was a shift in resources between work areas, with ECE/FAO resources being concentrated on markets and statistics, forest resource assessment and policy and cross-sectoral aspects, while fresh resources from FAO Rome have been allocated to sector outlook studies and social and cultural aspects of forestry*

- *Activities to be cancelled or discontinued and new activities to be introduced*

*Few activities have been discontinued, but secretariat workloads have been adjusted between secretariats and over time. With the completion of the forest sector outlook study expected for autumn 2004, work in this area will shift to follow up of conclusions rather than analysis. FAO is strengthening its commitment to certain actions, notably as regards countries in transition. Discussion is continuing on the future status of the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Technology Management and Training. The proposal as of July 2004 is that the Joint Committee be discontinued as permanent statutory body, and replaced by an informal network.*

- *Any streamlining in terms of documentation, publications, number and length of meetings*

*The major change, if agreed by the joint session, would be the discontinuation of the Joint Committee and as a consequence less meetings and documentation. The whole publication programme was considered and prioritised by the strategic review. The result will be fewer publications, notably on statistics, and a more intense use of the website to disseminate data”*

*The Committee is invited to discuss and agree on its response to the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work on the basis of the above text.*

#### **Election of officers**

7. In accordance with its Rules of Procedure and established practice, the Committee is expected to elect a Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen, who will hold office until the end of the sixty-third session. At the sixty-first session, Mr. Gheorghe Florian Borlea (Romania), Chairman, and Messrs. Jeff Serveau (Canada) and Heikki Pajuoja (Finland) Vice-Chairmen, were reelected to hold office until the end of the sixty-second session.

*The Committee is expected to elect its bureau until the end the sixty-third session.*

#### **Date and place of next session**

8. Provided that conference services are available, the week of 26-30 September 2005 has been provisionally reserved for the sixty-third session of the Committee to be held in Geneva.

*The Committee is invited to take note of the dates for its sixty-third session.*

## ANNEX I

### (Document E/ECE/1411: The UNECE Reform, note by the Executive Secretary)

#### **Proposal relating to Adjustments to the Programme of work planning process**

It is proposed that the involvement of the different actors in the preparation of the programme budget narratives during a budget submission year be accomplished through the following framework:

- (i) The **Principal Subsidiary Bodies (PSBs)** would each prepare a note outlining: their directions and priority areas; proposals on what activities to continue, terminate or introduce; and possible streamlining of their meetings, documents and publications.
- (ii) At its annual session in the budget submission year, the **Commission** would, under a specific agenda item, provide guidance on the overall direction of the work of UNECE for the forthcoming biennium.
- (iii) The **Steering Group** would provide its advice, particularly in terms of cross-sectoral approaches and intersectoral activities.
- (iv) The inputs provided by the above three groups of actors would be taken into account in the draft programme narratives prepared by the **secretariat**.
- (v) The draft programme narratives would be reviewed by the **Group of Experts on the Programme of Work**, on the basis of which it would submit its recommendations for endorsement by the Commission.
- (vi) The **Executive Secretary** would take these recommendations into consideration in the finalization of the programme narratives prior to its submission to United Nations Headquarters.

\* \* \* \* \*

## ANNEX II

### **(Document E/ECE/1411: The UNECE Reform, note by the Executive Secretary)**

#### **Mechanism proposed by the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work to facilitate the implementation of technical cooperation priority setting**

- each PSB, at its annual session, should inform the GEPW [Group of Experts on the Programme of Work] through the secretariat on the priority areas currently under-funded;
  - on this basis, the role of the GEPW may be to: (a) prioritise those under-funded areas identified by the PSBs, if necessary; (b) to consider, in consultation with the Bureaux of PSBs concerned when necessary, areas to which any un-earmarked funds should be deployed, and to provide recommendations to the Executive Secretary accordingly; (c) ask the secretariat to submit project proposals in consultation with countries in the areas that the GEPW thinks are appropriate for funding;
  - the secretariat would regularly inform the GEPW about project proposals, in particular those related to areas which are under-financed, in order to promote and facilitate their funding;
  - the discussion at the GEPW may be used by its members to raise awareness in the capitals on under-funded technical cooperation activities;
  - the GEPW will report to the Commission at the annual session on the results;
  - the mechanism should not prevent countries or other relevant institutions from suggesting or funding specific projects related to UNECE core activities.
-