

TIMBER BRANCH

Trade Development and Timber Division

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

In this issue...

- 27th Session of the Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics ...
- Inaugural Meeting of the Team of Specialists on Monitoring Forest Resources ...
- Regional workshop for Capacity Building, in Forest and Forest Products Marketing...
- New publications
- Follow up workshop on the European Forest Sector Outlook Study
- FAO Committee on Forestry, 17th Session
- Current and upcoming Events

Comments and suggestions from the timber and forestry community are most welcome, please write to us at:
info.timber@unece.org

UNECE/FAO
 Timber Branch
 Trade Development
 and Timber Division

Palais des Nations
 CH - 1211 Geneva 10
 Switzerland
 Tel. 4122 917 32 54
 Fax 4122 917 00 41
 e-mail: info.timber@unece.org
www.unece.org/trade/timber



United Nations

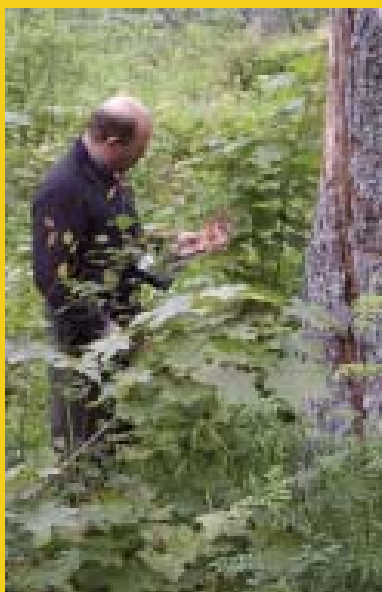
27th Session of the Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics

The Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics held its 27th session in Geneva from 22-24 March 2005. The session was attended by delegates from the following countries: Austria, Canada, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. Representatives from the European Commission, European Environment Agency, the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan, and European Forest Institute also attended.

The special topic on wood energy during the session produced a lively discussion with all countries contributing views. The meeting in 2004 identified the difficulties of finding reliable and consistent data that could provide a comprehensive view of wood energy across the UNECE region. This led to a request for the secretariat to undertake a review of the sources of data, and to report back to the Working Party, identifying as well what might be done to improve the coverage and quality of data.

While the difficulties are well known, the solutions are less clear. Unlike other forms of energy there is no simple standard measure for wood energy. It enters the market in different ways, directly from the forest to individual households, through the
(continued on page 2)

Did you know...



- The tree was one of the earliest forms of life to appear on our planet...
- Hospital patients recover faster from operations if they have a view of trees from their room according to research...
- Tree substances are used in medicine to provide treatment for illnesses from colds to cancer...
- One 24 meter tree releases enough oxygen to support 10 people a day...
- It was estimated that some 80 % to 90 % of Europe's land was forested during the early post-glacial era (ten thousand years ago) and there has been extensive loss of forest cover since then...
- Deforestation was due partly to changing climatic conditions, but was caused primarily by human activities such as land clearance for farming and harvesting of forests for fuelwood, and wood for building, shipping and mining material...



Inaugural Meeting of the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Monitoring Forest Resources for Sustainable Forest Management in UNECE Region

The inaugural meeting will be held in Geneva from 25 to 27 April 2005. During the meeting, the Team of Specialists will address aspects of the regional contribution to the implementation of the global Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) 2005, preparation for Criteria and Indicators (C&I) reporting to the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) 2007-2008 by countries of the region, aspects of reviewing indicators for sustainable forest management (SFM) within the Montreal Process, and issues of monitoring and assessment of the social and economic aspects in forestry.

The team's objectives are:

- to advise the UNECE/FAO and FAO secretariats on the implementation of activities in Work Area 2 "Forest Resources Assessment and Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management in the Region";
- to contribute to the coordination of reporting on C&I for SFM by MCPFE and Montreal process countries;
- to support the regional contribution to the global FRA;
- to support development of national systems of forest monitoring;
- to contribute to the institutional cooperation on monitoring of forests (EU, MCPFE, ENFIN, et al).

The team's future/expected outputs are:

- elaboration of the "Enquiry for Country reporting on the pan-European Criteria and Indicators for SFM";
- advice on the ongoing "Process of reviewing the Montreal Process Indicators for SFM";
- reviewing requirements for forest-related information, as well as ways of reducing the countries' reporting burden within the UNECE region.

More information about the meeting is available on the UNECE/FAO Timber Branch website: <http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/FRA%20ToS%20Web/meetings/Geneva%20Apr2005/meetApr2005.htm>.

(Working Party, 27th Session, continued from page 1)

manufacture of new fuels such as pellets and briquettes, often using the residues that are co-products of sawmilling or board manufacture. Pulp producers in many countries use the black liquor from the pulping process as an important source of fuel, directly on-site. In several cities wood from urban trees and gardens provides an important contribution to meeting energy needs. These different flows of wood fuel, the different forms of fuel and the different measurement units add to the difficulty of producing data that can be readily aggregated and compared.

Russia's decision to adopt the Kyoto Protocol and the current record high prices for oil have perhaps given added impetus to this task. If governments are to be able to assess whether policies to encourage wood energy are proving effective and to understand the impacts of a growth in demand for wood for energy on other users of wood, it is essential to have harmonised reliable data.

In an attempt, therefore, to improve the information on wood energy, the Working Party agreed to the setting up of a smaller 'ad hoc' group drawn from countries, data providers and international organizations. Among other tasks the group will consider if it might be possible to identify a common standard for data collection across the UNECE, based on a 'lowest common denominator' approach. The group will be asked to present recommendations for permanent arrangements in time for the next Working Party, in March 2006.

The draft meeting report, all presentations and other working documents on the 27th session are available on the UNECE/FAO Timber Branch website (<http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/docs/stats-sessions/stats-27/stats-27.htm>).

Regional workshop for Capacity Building in Forest and Forest Products Marketing Information Exchange Czech Republic, 24-28 October 2005

The Czech Ministry of Agriculture and Czech Forests with support from FAO/SEUR and UNECE /FAOTimber Branch propose to hold a workshop on "Capacity Building for Forest and Forest Products Marketing Information Exchange in Caucasus and Central Asia", 24-28 October 2005, based in Krtiny, Czech Republic.

The goals are to integrate country experts into the existing international networks on forest resources and forest products markets as well as to build capacities for the collection and dissemination of data and information in the field of forest land use policy. Please note that the funding is not yet approved.

For further information please contact: douglas.clark@unece.org.

New UNECE/FAO Publications

Forests, Wood and Energy: Policy Interactions Geneva Timber and Forest Discussion Paper 42

The publication presented the proceedings and summary of the discussions from the policy forum on forests, wood and energy held during the 2003 UNECE Timber Committee and the market discussions on the theme "Market effects of wood energy policies. This discussion paper captures the essence of the discussions, and incorporates all available expert papers and presentations.

Forest Certification Update for the UNECE Region, 2003

Geneva Timber and Forest Discussion Paper 39

This is the sixth in a series of *Geneva Timber and Forest Discussion Papers* to present developments in certification of sustainable forest management in the UNECE region of Europe, North America and the Commonwealth of Independent States. This update for 2003 has chapters on developments in the major international certification systems, mutual recognition between systems, status of forest certification, status of the marketplace for certified forest products, consumer behaviour and forest certification, government policies and forest certification, future developments and a list of references.

Forest and Forest Products Country Profile: Republic of Bulgaria

Geneva Timber and Forest Discussion Paper 38

This discussion paper, prepared by well-known national experts, contains information concerning the forest resources of Bulgaria and a description of the status, trends and developments taking place in the forest sector, including the areas in which the most important forestry activities have taken place over the past decade. For the forest sector, as for other branches of the Bulgarian economy, the period has been marked by the implementation of radical reforms necessitated by the changeover from a centrally planned to a market economy, efforts to achieve sustainable development in forest management, and a large scale return of confiscated forest lands back to the rightful owners. The country profile contains tables, statistical data, diagrams, graphs and a brief analysis of the evolution of the forest sector, and data relating to the principal categories and volumes of goods and services in the forestry sector. Most of the figures cited were based on official data drawn from the statistical services of Bulgaria, as well as from research and statistics from NGOs and other sources.

The above-mentioned publications and other publications of the UNECE/FAO Timber Branch are available for downloading on the website (<http://www-dev.unece.org/trade/timber/tc-publ.htm>)

Requests for paper copies of UNECE/FAO Timber Branch publications are available upon request (e-mail: info.timber@unece.org).

Workshop on policy conclusions and options arising from European Forest Sector Outlook Study

In its effort to maximize the impact and usefulness of the European Forest Sector Outlook Study (EFSOS), the UNECE/FAO Secretariat and FAO-SEUR together with the MCPFE and the Swiss Government are organizing the Workshop on the Policy Consequences of the Study which will be held in Budapest, Hungary, from 20-21 June 2005. The workshop aims to stimulate discussion of the implications for policy formulation of the conclusions and recommendations of the study, and to formulate recommendations for follow-up action at the national and pan-European levels.

Delegations to the workshop are expected to submit in advance a national report intended to ascertain whether and how the study is contributing to national policy formulation. Country reports will also lay the basis for the workshop discussions. In preparing the national reports, delegations were requested to supply answers to the following questions:

1. In what way are the EFSOS 'Conclusions and Policy Recommendations' relevant for your country?
2. Which of the policy scenario assumptions made in EFSOS fits best to the situation in your country?
3. What kind of changes are you expecting with regard to your country's forest sector policy in the next 3-5 years as a result of the EFSOS analysis, conclusions and recommendations?
4. Who uses the information, conclusions and recommendations presented in EFSOS in your country? Who else could potentially benefit from EFSOS?
5. What process is used to make EFSOS known and review it at the national level?
6. What are the significant information/analysis/ideas to national policy debate (inside and outside the sector) added by the study?
7. Do you have any comments on the EFSOS country profile for your country?
8. What are your suggestions and comments with regard to further UNECE/FAO Forest Sector Outlook activities?

More information about the meeting is available on the websites of UNECE/FAO Timber Branch (<http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/tc-docs.htm>) and FAO-SEUR (http://www.fao.org/regional/seur/events/efsos/efsos_en.htm).

FAO Committee on Forestry, 17th session Rome, Italy, 14-18 March 2005

International cooperation on forest fires, combating deforestation and the role of the forest sector in post-tsunami rehabilitation and in achieving the Millennium Development Goals were among the key issues discussed at the FAO Ministerial Meeting on Forests and the Committee on Forestry in Rome.

International cooperation on forest fires

Countries from around the world concerned with the future of forests pledged at the third Ministerial Meeting on Forests on 14 March to continued pursuit of the development of international cooperation on forest fires in order to address uncontrolled forest fires and their root causes.

"While fire is an important land management tool, severe wildland fires have catastrophic effects. Lives are lost, livelihoods imperiled, local economies devastated, and the environment seriously degraded," Dr. Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO said.

Globally, an average of 400 to 500 million hectares burn each year from forest fires. As a response, bilateral and multilateral cooperation in forest fire management has increased over the past few years. Until now, however, cooperation on forest fire management has focused on fire suppression rather than prevention.

Post-tsunami rehabilitation

The ministers discussed, among other things, the role of forestry in the rehabilitation of Asian communities following the recent tsunami disaster. They called for comprehensive assessment of forest damage from the tsunami and wood needs for reconstruction in order to better respond to the emerging challenges of post-tsunami rehabilitation. Issues at stake are the rehabilitation of damaged forests; wood salvage; meeting the immediate needs for wood for the reconstruction of piers, bridges, boats, houses and other buildings as well as fuelwood; and the spread of pests and diseases through wood and non-wood products. FAO is currently analyzing available information and assisting affected countries in their reconstruction efforts in order to restore people's livelihoods within an integrated coastal management programme.

Deforestation and Millennium Goals

The ministers decried the state of global forest degradation and reconfirmed their commitment to sustainable forest management and to improved coordination of economic, environmental and social policies for enhanced contribution of forests to development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. More than 9 million hectares of forests are lost globally each year, whereas forests provide multiple economic, environmental, social and cultural functions. They help to conserve biodiversity, mitigate climate change, provide clean water and energy, enhance soil fertility and support livelihoods, among others. Forests contribute directly to achieving two of the Millennium Goals, namely reducing extreme poverty and ensuring environmental sustainability.

Committee on Forestry

Some 600 representatives of member countries, non-governmental organizations and the private sector discussed during the event ways to implement the commitments to which ministers agreed during their meeting on Monday. The State of World's Forests 2005, a biennial FAO publication, was also launched during the committee meeting.

The Committee on Forestry meets every two years in Rome to debate key global forestry issues and give advice to FAO on its work programme on forests. It is one of the committees of the FAO's Council.

Over twenty complementary side events were held, covering topics such as forest law compliance; forests and climate change; forests and biodiversity; invasive species and the links between forested areas and violent conflict.

Kit Prins attended on behalf of UNECE/FAO and participated in meetings on the regional forestry commissions, outlook studies, climate change, wood energy and forest law compliance. He believes this year's COFO was the best ever and an excellent place to test the pulse of global forest issues.

For more information on the COFO session, please consult the FAO website (<http://www.fao.org/forestry/>).

Current and upcoming events

- 25-27 April 2005, Inaugural Meeting of the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on monitoring forest resources for sustainable forest management in the UNECE Region, Geneva, Switzerland
- 28-29 April 2005, Joint UNECE/FAO Bureaux Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland
- 13-15 June 2005, UNECE/FAO/MCPFE Seminar on forestry and cultural heritage, Sunne, Värmland County, Sweden
- 20-21 June 2005, Joint UNECE/FAO Workshop on policy conclusions and options arising from the European Forest Sector Outlook Study, Budapest, Hungary