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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION
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**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION**

Timber Committee

European Forestry Commission

Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party
on Forest Economics and Statistics

Twenty-ninth session
Geneva, 20-22 March 2007
Agenda item 2

MATTERS REFERRED TO THE WORKING PARTY BY ITS PARENT BODIES

Note by the Secretariat

This document aims to inform the Working Party of issues of relevance to its work considered by its parent bodies (the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission) and to report briefly on requests made and how the Working Party is responding to these requests. The document is for information only, as the substance of the matters is covered under other agenda items.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At each session, the Working Party is invited to provide guidance to activities under work areas 1, 2 and 3. However, it is also expected, when necessary, to respond, to requests from its parent bodies, the UNECE Timber Committee (TC) or the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC). The EFC held its 33rd session from 23 to 26 May 2006 in Zvolen, Slovakia and the TC its 64th session from 3 to 6 October 2006 in Geneva. This document aims to report briefly on any requests made by the parent bodies and how the Working Party is responding. The document is for information only, as the substance of the matters is covered under other agenda items.

II. SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN EUROPE

2. The EFC discussed the implementation of sustainable forest management (SFM) in Europe, identifying major issues and possible policy directions, and ways to transmit ideas from the regional to the global levels. Amongst the main opportunities and challenges identified at the national level was the need to improve support and guidance for private forest owners, while respecting their individual property rights. A joint enquiry on private forest ownership in Europe elaborated by UNECE/FAO, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) and partners is underway. Further information on private forest ownership will be provided under agenda item 4.

3. The EFC and the TC welcomed increased collaboration between UNECE, FAO and MCPFE and encouraged coordinated information gathering and reporting on SFM in Europe. Together with MCPFE Liaison Unit Warsaw (LUW), a quantitative and qualitative enquiry on improved indicators on SFM was elaborated and addressed to national correspondents in the course of 2006. Further information on reporting on the indicators for SFM in Europe will be provided under agenda item 4.

4. The EFC also considered the results of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005 and welcomed its expansion of FRA 2005 to include new data on six of the seven thematic elements as a framework for monitoring, assessing and reporting on progress towards SFM. FRA 2010 will include data on the seventh element and a first draft of the policy, legal and institutional framework has been elaborated by the FAO monitoring and reporting (MAR) group and shared with the newly set up Intersecretariat Coordination Group on Monitoring Forest Policies and Institutions.

III. WOOD ENERGY

5. The EFC requested UNECE and FAO to continue to collect data and information on wood energy and to monitor and analyze trends. It suggested that FAO should explore the possibility of undertaking a study on the outlook for wood energy within the context of the outlook for the sector as a whole. Such a study could focus on bioenergy targets and the likely demand from the wood-processing industries and, if considered necessary, on the potential to increase European wood supply.

6. The EFC endorsed the decision of the FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics to set up a time limited task force to improve the information on wood energy, in cooperation with the International Energy Agency (IEA), the European Commission and other partners, avoiding duplication of reporting. Work in the field of wood energy has progressed significantly; results to an enquiry on the sources and uses of wood energy demonstrating its importance and enormous potential. A seminar on energy and the forest products industry was held in end-October 2006 in Rome and a meeting on mobilizing wood resources under SFM for energy and raw materials, jointly with MCPFE, CEPI and other partners in January 2007 in Geneva. Further information will be provided under agenda item 6.

IV. PROGRAMME OF WORK

7. The EFC and the TC endorsed the UNECE/FAO integrated programme of work and found that it would normally not need major changes between strategic reviews, so the present programme would be valid in its broad lines to 2008, when the third strategic review should be undertaken.

V. STRATEGIC REVIEW 2007-2008

8. The third Strategic Review of the subprogramme is planned to start towards the end of 2007 and to be completed in the course of 2008. During the Strategic Review process, the Working Party will be requested to evaluate its role, and propose changes, if necessary and give guidance on the overall programme of work. Further background on the planning for the Strategic Review will be provided during the meeting and the Working Party is encouraged to share its views.

VI. UPDATED TERMS OF REFERENCE

10. The TC approved the updated Terms of Reference of the FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics (Annex 1), which were submitted to the UNECE Executive Committee, which subsequently approved them. The terms of reference of the Working Party, last approved in 1975, covered all present activities, with the exception of the specific task of providing guidance to work areas 1, 2, and 3, included in the updated version. The Working Party is requested to take note of the updated terms of reference.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

11. The Working Party is invited to take note of the issues outlined and the requests from its parent bodies presented in this document.

Annex 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE FAO/ECE WORKING PARTY ON FOREST ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS

The Working Party is a subsidiary body of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission, and contributes to the implementation of the integrated programme of those two bodies. It meets annually to provide guidance on the implementation of work areas 1, 2 and 3 of the integrated programme:

- Markets and statistics
- Forest resource assessment and indicators of sustainable forest management
- Sector outlook studies

In particular, within the framework of the integrated programme, the Working Party shall:

- (i) keep under review the needs at the international level for statistics and other information relating to the forestry, wood-processing and forest products sector; and develop programmes to meet these needs. Particular attention shall be paid to improving concepts, definitions and methodologies in order to increase the international comparability of statistics;
- (ii) develop, upon request from the parent bodies, methodologies for use in economic analysis of the sector as well as techniques for the collection, validation analysis and dissemination of information and statistics;
- (iii) undertake, upon request from the parent bodies, ad hoc projects in the field of economics and statistics relating to forestry and forest products; and
- (iv) work together with other international bodies, including MCPFE, Eurostat and the Conference of European Statisticians with a view to achieving coordination of activities and avoiding any unnecessary duplication of effort.