



Forests

Asia offers beacon of hope for US and European forest-products traders

With the general malaise in the European and North American economy, forest-products manufacturers have been on the lookout for sales opportunities further afield. Today, Asia has become a major market for products from the UNECE region—China being the largest importer. China's needs are driven both by internal demand and by remanufacture for export back to the UNECE region.

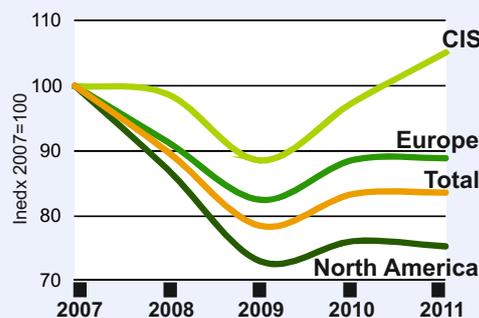
China and Asia's share of selected major UNECE-region forest products exporters (Canada, Finland, Russian Federation and United States)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
China's share of exports to Asia	40%	39%	44%	46%	50%
Asia's share of total exports	25%	26%	29%	31%	35%

Exports from Canada, Finland, Russian Federation and United States
HS 44, 47, 48, by value

Source: UN COMTRADE, 2012.

The UNECE/FAO **Forest Products Annual Market Review 2011-2012**, presented at a press conference in Geneva on 19 September, shows that despite the 2010 recovery, consumption of forest products in 2011 remained flat in most of the UNECE region, 10% lower than before the global financial crisis. But in the Russian Federation, consumption grew by 9%.



Notes: Based on roundwood equivalent for sawnwood, panels and paper and paperboard.

CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States.

Source: UNECE/FAO TIMBER database, 2012.

The 56 countries of the UNECE region have 42% of the global forest area, produce 59% and consume 56% of the world's forest products, and are responsible for 60% of the imports and 75% of the exports of these products.

The UNECE/FAO **Forest Products Annual Market Review 2011-2012**, presents a detailed analysis of the various components of forest products markets, including the housing sector, industrial roundwood, sawn hardwood, wood-based panels, paper and paperboard and wood energy. It also looks at carbon markets and policy and regulatory implications for forest products markets. □

The publication is available at:

<http://www.unece.org/fpamr2012.html>.

Water Resources

Priorities for the National Policy Dialogue on water in Kazakhstan

An intergovernmental meeting on 14 September 2012 in Astana brought together representatives of key ministries and agencies involved in various aspects of water resources management. The meeting focused on the main issues for the agenda of the National Policy Dialogue (NPD) which starts this year in Kazakhstan to contribute to the improvement of integrated water resources management (IWRM) and water supply and sanitation in the country.

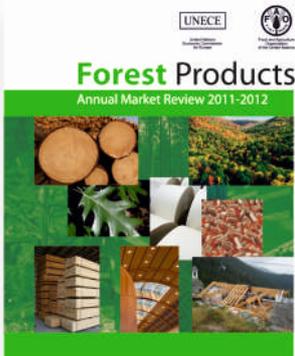
At the meeting, Deputy Chair of the Committee of Water Resources of the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan Ondasyn Zhiyenkulov stressed that the start of the NPD was very timely. Kazakhstan currently faces challenges with ensuring its population and economy with water in sufficient quantities and of good quality. Almost half of Kazakhstan's water resources come from the territories of neighbouring States, prompting its desire to strengthen transboundary cooperation. Moreover, water deficits and deterioration of water quality are increasing and called for a strong policy response.

Participants said priorities for the NPD in Kazakhstan were governance for IWRM, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)/World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe Protocol on Water and Health and sustainable business models for rural water supply and sanitation. Additionally, contributions of the NPD process to the development of Kazakhstan's cooperation with the Russian Federation on the transboundary Ural River may be further explored.

The meeting was organized by UNECE, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Committee of Water Resources of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the framework of the European Union Water Initiative. □

For further information please visit: <http://www.unece.org/env/water/npd> or contact: julia.trombitcaia@unece.org.

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Central Asian civil society networks agree to cooperate on water issues in the framework of the UNECE Water Convention

Thirty-five representatives of civil society organizations from Germany, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Switzerland, Ukraine and Uzbekistan created the network of Central Asian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on "Climate. Water. Energy. Health", during the Central Asian Water Meeting held on 12 September in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Public participation is essential to raise awareness about good governance and encourage it in the areas of water management and climate protection. The NGO participants shared experiences of local legislation and practices with representatives of UNECE, the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the Ministries of Health and Environment of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The meeting focused on the benefits of transboundary cooperation for climate protection and better water management within the framework of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) and its Protocol on Water and Health.

The civil society representatives developed a resolution with recommendations, which were presented to Central Asian Government representatives at the second workshop of the European Union-Central Asia Strategy Partnership, held in Almaty on 13 and 14 September. The recommendations will also be presented to the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention at their sixth session in November 2012.

Civil society participants recommended to refocus on the Aral Sea; even if the sea could not be restored, as a minimum the bottom should be kept moist, to retain the salt dust. It was felt that transboundary cooperation on the river basins also needed to be developed further and participants recommended the establishment of Inter-State Basin Councils for the Chu-Talas and other basins. Many such basin councils work successfully in other parts of the region. Participants also recommended the creation of an independent Public Council of the Aral Sea Basin. Furthermore, NGOs called for increased transparency and accountability of the existing Inter-State Commissions.

Participants also called for sharing best practices on climate and water, such as, for example, the progressive legislation on Energy Performance of Buildings in Kyrgyzstan. Renewable energy was singled out as an area where regional cooperation could benefit all countries as Central Asia has a vast potential for wind, solar and hydro power. The creation of a common Central Asian energy market would create a strong incentive for private and international investments in renewable energy.

On water sanitation, participants recommended the establishment of several resource centres throughout the region on efficient energy, water and sanitation for households and small enterprises. Finally, the participants all agreed that to resolve such complex issues as soil degradation, water contamination, unstable and uneven water supply and inefficient use, national Governments together with civil society should adopt a water-food-energy nexus approach and link mitigation efforts to water security, energy security and food security. □

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Tbilisi+35: Educating today for a sustainable future

On 6 and 7 September, the intergovernmental conference "**Tbilisi+35: Environmental Education for Sustainable Development**" was held in Tbilisi, Georgia, commemorating the 1977 Tbilisi Declaration and 35 years of global educational efforts towards a sustainable world. The Government of Georgia organized the conference in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development provided support to the preparatory process of the conference.

At Tbilisi+35, representatives of Governments of 104 countries, among them more than 60 ministers and vice-ministers, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations convened and participated in a series of high-level plenary and working group sessions. At the end of the meeting, conference participants adopted the outcome document, the "Tbilisi Communiqué: Educate Today for a Sustainable Future".

The Tbilisi Communiqué takes note of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference) outcome document, "The Future We Want", and commends the decision of the Rio+20 Conference, which stressed the importance of promoting education for sustainable development (ESD) and more active integration of sustainable development into all levels and phases of the education and training systems.

Moreover, the Communiqué provides recommendations to Governments and other relevant stakeholders on the effective implementation of ESD, including strengthening partnerships for ESD, addressing the issue of green economies in ESD and advocating for investment in ESD to be considered as integral part of development financing.

Importantly, the Tbilisi Communiqué outlines a new global ESD agenda beyond 2015, addressing current needs and future challenges. □

For more information on Tbilisi+35, please visit: <http://www.tbilisiplus35.ge/index.php>.
For more information on the UNECE Strategy for ESD, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/env/esd>.