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Report of the meeting of the Team of Specialist on Green Jobs in the Forest Sector (Joint ILO/UNECE/FAO Expert Network)

14 September 2016, International Environment House, Geneva, Switzerland

Present:

Andreas Bernasconi, Switzerland (Deputy leader)
Anna-Katharina Coker, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section
Josef Herkendell, Germany
Gerda Jimmy, Switzerland
Alicja Kacprzak, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section
Edgar Kastenholz, Germany
Diarmuid McAree, Ireland (Deputy leader)
Hakan Nystrand, Finland
Christian Salvignol, France (Team leader)
Kelly Sharp, ILO
Elina Warsta, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section
Edmundo Werna, ILO

Summary of the meeting

Christian Salvignol, team leader, opened the meeting and expressed wish that the chief of UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section would participate in the team meetings. He briefed the participants about the International Conference of Forestry Training Centres in Solsona, Spain, which took place in June 2016. The meeting gathered 90 participants from 22 countries. The next international conference will take place in June 2018.

Andreas Bernasconi presented the objectives and main tasks of the team referring to the terms of reference for 2014-2017 to inform new participants about the content and focus of the work. The meeting discussed shortly the Landscape of Green Jobs, a paper the team of specialists has been working on.

Andreas Bernasconi informed the team about an upcoming meeting in Vienna: May 17-19, 2017; International Conference on Landscape and Human Health: Forests, Parks and Green Care; diplomatic Academy of Vienna, Austria. More information available at: <http://bfw.ac.at/internationalconference>

Diarmuid MacAree informed the participants about Nature, Health and Wellbeing group that has been established in Ireland, and that is working on for example with guided walks in the forest (forest eco-therapy). In addition, an association for eco-therapy has been established, and initiative to include the concept of green jobs in the university curricula has been established (implementation targeted within one year).

Hakan Nystrand shared information on recent important developments in Finland: the state sector related to forestry is struggling, but the forest industry is booming, with potential big investments coming in for a biofuel production by Chinese investor Kaidi. As a result, the discussion on wood use and sustainability has increased again.

At the “Tour de Table” the participants shared information of recent developments and relevant activities to the team linked to green jobs in the forest sector.

Elina Warsta presented the first part of the study on green jobs in the forest sector, which had been prepared by an independent consultant. The presentation was followed by a discussion on the content of the first part. The comprehensive character of the study and the comprehensive data analysis was generally acknowledged.

Josef Herkendell gave an overview of the planned content for the second part of the study (including study curricula, communication campaigns, policies to support employment and other ideas based on the first part of the study). It was suggested to include an executive summary and clear recommendations based on the findings. Furthermore, the importance of forest jobs to rural development and a trends barometer (to be combined with the landscape approach) was mentioned.

Edmundo Werna from ILO let the participants know that the ILO is working on a general study about the future of employment (including all sectors) which might be an asset to gain information on the general situation of the job market. Edmundo will share information on this.

Diarmuid McAree shared information about the planned workshop “Forests and Health” in Ireland 2017.

Andreas Bernasconi introduced the Open Book on green jobs in the forest sector and asked Elina to share it with the entire team.

Elina Warsta collected ideas for the session on forest sector workforce during UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (October 2016 in Geneva). The participants suggested to give an introduction by the ToS on green jobs and to give a presentation on the study on green jobs in the forest sector, which had been prepared by an independent consultant.

Andreas Bernasconi gave an overview of the next steps and milestones of the ToS work for 2017. On October 18 the ToS will present its work at the COFFI session in Geneva. The study on green jobs in the forest sector is supposed to be finished by end of March 2017. In May there might be a workshop together with Forest Europe in Vienna. For the time period of 2018 to 2020 the publication of good practice and prevention (work safety) is considered which potentially could be combined with Forest Europe guidelines.