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**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS**

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Information Note on

Joint UNECE/FAO Roundtable on Trade, Environment and Forests – Working Together for Sustainable Development Palais des Nations, 9 July 2003

Background

The need to obtain synergies between trade and environment policies is recognised as one of the most urgent, sensitive and complex policy questions of the day. The forest and forest products sector exemplifies many of these issues, as (i) forests are vital to the environment, (ii) there is a very significant trade in forest products, (iii) there are many externalities and market distorting features arising notably from the multiple functions of forests, (iv) there are some innovative developments, notably the certification of that products entering international trade come from sustainably managed forest, and (v) there is a broad public interest in sustainable forest management and conservation as well as an intense international dialogue on forests. The ongoing multi-polar discussions relevant to sustainable forestry development and to trade call for exchanges of ideas and information between the various policy communities. Together, FAO and UNECE have therefore taken the initiative to organise an open-ended roundtable on trade and sustainable forest management in order to facilitate the exchange of views between the different constituencies with an interest in the issue of trade and sustainable forestry development.

This roundtable is based on ongoing work in the organisations:

- The FAO Forest Products Division has carried out extended research and analysis on various trade-related issues impacting on the forestry sector and interlinking forest products trade and forest management is through its regular programme. Additionally, FAO is currently implementing a project entitled *Impact Assessment of Forest Products Trade in the Promotion of Sustainable Forest Management* financed by the Government of Japan.
- UNECE has organised several special topic discussions at the Timber Committee aiming to bring together representatives of trade and environment sectors as well as forest sector specialists. It also monitors markets for certified forest products on a continuing basis, in the context of its continuing monitoring and analysis of forest products markets and trade.
- The FAO Liaison Office in Geneva has held a series of roundtable briefings for WTO delegations from developing countries on a wide range of topics.

Objective

The objective of this Roundtable is to engage trade policy makers and trade negotiators at the international level, particularly those in WTO negotiations, in exchanging information and views on outcomes and key issues of the current discussion process on trade and sustainable forest management in order to enhance the potential of trade for sustainable forest management.

Key Issues and Key-Note Speakers

Recent Trends and Policy Development

- (i) Trade Liberalisation and Forest Products Trade – David Brooks, Office of the US Trade Representative
- (ii) Forest-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and Current Policy Debates in WTO – Rupert Schlegelmilch, European Commission
- (iii) Forest and Forest Products Certification - NN Malaysia

Impacts of Trade in Forest Products and Services

- (i) Trade, Rural Poverty and the Environment - Owen Cylke, WWF US
- (ii) Markets for Forest Environmental Services – Markku Simula, INDUFOR Finland
- (iii) Private Sector Perspectives on Developments of Trade in Forest Products and Services – Ivan Tomaselli, STCP Brazil

Expected Results

Based on the presentation of key issues, the Roundtable should provide a neutral forum for discussion on obstacles and limitations, potentials and steps to be taken to achieve the overall objective to encourage sustainable forest management. The Roundtable is expected to constitute an opportunity for trade policy makers and trade negotiators to address the concerns of the forestry community that trade liberalization processes are unaware of the certain imperatives for sustainable forest management, both for producer and consumer countries alike.

Conduct of the Roundtable

The Roundtable will be chaired by a FAO staff member inviting a keynote speaker to address key issues of concern and moderating the discussion during the following sessions. The one-day meeting is organized to serve as a neutral forum, in an informal set-up, for an open exchange of views and policy positions and participants are invited in their personal capacity.

Invitees

The Roundtable is intended to bring together some 100 trade policy makers and trade negotiators from governments and inter-governmental organizations like WTO, UNCTAD and others, along with forest sector experts.

Collaboration

The Roundtable is organized by the FAO Forest Products Division (FOP), the FAO Liaison Office in Geneva and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

Date and Venue

The Roundtable will take place in Geneva at the Palais des Nations, Salle V, on 9 July 2003 from 9.30 –12.30 and 14.30-17.30. There will be simultaneous interpretation in English, French, Russian and Spanish. The Roundtable will be held adjacent to the Regular and Special Sessions of the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Roundtable Focal Points

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