

Distr.
GENERAL

TIM/EFC/WP.2/1999/7
9 April 1999

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
Timber Committee

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
European Forestry Commission

JOINT FAO/ECE WORKING PARTY ON FOREST ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS
Twenty-second session, 26-28 May 1999

**Interorganisation co-operation on forest and forest
products statistics (activities of Intersecretariat
working group on forest sector statistics)**

(Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda)

Note by the secretariat

This document briefly describes interorganisation cooperation in its field, notably through the Intersecretariat Working Group. The Working Party is invited to review this cooperation, and indicate how it might be improved.

1. The absolute necessity of close and efficient cooperation between organisations in collecting and disseminating information, in the interests of national data providers, all data users and the organisations themselves, is now widely recognised. This position has been endorsed by such bodies as the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, the pan-European process and the Working Party's parent bodies. The present document provides some background information on this aspect of ECE/FAO work, although it must be said that interorganisation cooperation has now become so ubiquitous that almost all work carried out under the Working Party's auspices involves some degree of interorganisation cooperation. The Working Party is invited to review this cooperation, make suggestions as to how it could be improved and to identify areas where there is a potential for further interorganisation cooperation.

2. The **Intersecretariat Working Group on Forest and Forest Products Sector Statistics**¹ (IWG) is the main channel for interorganisation cooperation. The IWG met just before the last Working Party session in 1997, again in September 1998 in Yokohama, in January 1999 in Geneva and will meet again just before the Working Party session in May 1999. The main focus of its activity has been the joint FAO/ECE/Eurostat/ITTO questionnaire, which is fully reported in document TIM/EFC/WP.2/1999/3. The IWG meeting in May 1999 will review the first stages of implementation of the joint questionnaire: the Working Party will be informed orally of its discussions.

3. The IWG has also looked into cooperation between OECD, ECE and FAO as regards data on the forest resource. In this context, at the January 1999 IWG meeting, "Ms. Linster (OECD) informed the IWG about the "forest" part of the OECD environmental indicators. Earlier versions had used ECE/FAO definitions but had collected data separately, from different (environment) ministries, at a faster (biennial) rhythm. The 1998 enquiry had been circulated and replies were being received. A process of consultation was under way for the 2000 enquiry, to bring the concepts into line with the most recent TBFRA. It had been agreed for this enquiry that the forest sheets (i.e. of the general environmental indicator enquiry) should be pre-filled with TBFRA data, provided by Geneva, and sent to OECD correspondents for approval. These correspondents would be urged not to make any changes without the active participation of the TBFRA correspondent, thus ensuring consistency between the two data sets. The forest questionnaire would have the three logos (OECD, Eurostat, UN). As FAO (FRA) would provide data for OECD non-TBFRA countries (Mexico and Korea), it would be decided later whether the questionnaire should also have the FAO logo. The question of the periodicity of enquiries and updating would be addressed at the follow-up stage of TBFRA." The Working Party is invited to review this arrangement, and suggest modifications if necessary.

4. There has been intense interorganisation cooperation in the context of the **Temperate and Boreal Forest Resource Assessment 2000** (TBFRA). TBFRA itself is based on interorganisation cooperation as it is an ECE/FAO project and an integral part of the global FRA, led by FAO, but there are many other partners,

¹The members are ECE, EEA, EU (DG III, DGVI, Eurostat), FAO, ITTO and OECD, all permanent intergovernmental agencies with significant and regular activities in the field of forest and forest product statistics.

from a wide range of organisations, including intergovernmental (EU, EEA, ICP Forest), NGO (WCMC, WWF), and scientific/research (IUFRO, JRC Ispra, IPCC). Indeed, the exploration by the TBFRA of fields new to international forest resource assessment work would not have been possible without these partners, who have enriched the work considerably.

5. The ECE/FAO and FAO secretariats have participated in preparatory discussions, led by a IUFRO task force, of a *Global Forest Information Service*. As plans stand at present, it is intended to design a "gateway" with "metadata" enabling users to find data maintained by organisations such as ECE/FAO, which would be expected not only to make data available on the Internet, but also to describe clearly data sources and quality. Further information on this project is available from its website (at <http://iufro.boku.ac.at/iufro/taskforce/hptgfis.htm>). The GFIS task force is expected to meet in Geneva in May, and the Working Party will be informed of developments. The Working Party is invited to comment on this work and advise the secretariat on how it should contribute.

6. The Working Party is invited to review the interorganisation cooperation briefly described above, and indicate how it might be improved.