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**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE SIXTY-SECOND SESSION
OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This document gives an overview of the matters arising from the sixty second session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, held from 25 to 27 April 2007, in particular the decisions adopted by the Commission, which have a bearing on the work of the Committee.

The Committee is invited to take these decisions into account when adopting its programme of work under agenda item 7.

I. SIXTY SECOND SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

1. The UN Economic Commission for Europe held its sixty second session from 25 to 27 April 2007, marking the sixtieth anniversary of the UNECE.
2. The session of UNECE defines the overall direction of work of the organization. As decided in the context of the UNECE reform, Commission sessions are as of 2007, held biennially, while the UNECE Executive Committee meets several times annually to more closely monitor and guide the implementation of the UNECE programme of work.
3. In the “Declaration of the sixtieth anniversary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe”, adopted on 26 April 2007, member States “acknowledge achievements (...) in fostering cooperation and integration and reaffirm their commitment to support and strengthen the effective implementation of the organization’s mandate and to ensure its continued substantive relevance, greater visibility and improved transparency.”
4. The Declaration recognizes that the UNECE is well positioned to contribute to addressing challenges the region is faced with, in terms of economic and institutional development, and environmental protection, through “further exercising its role as a multilateral platform which facilitates greater economic integration and cooperation among its fifty-six member States and which promotes sustainable development and economic prosperity”.
5. The Commission reaffirmed UNECE’s role in continuing to address the developmental and environmental goals laid down by the international community at the regional level. The work of the Sectoral Committees in this regard was recognized as forming “the major asset of the organization and constituting the basis for its intergovernmental work”, assisting countries through sectoral activities and technical cooperation, “thereby serving as a bridge and shaping experiences and best practices among member States”.¹
6. The UNECE member States, at their sixty second session, welcomed the report of the Executive Secretary on the Implementation of the Reform and invited the Executive Committee to develop further any issues which can contribute to the well functioning of the secretariat and the Sectoral Committees. The issues which have a direct bearing on the work of the Sectoral Committees include:
 - (a) The consideration of a mechanism to facilitate the identification of which intersectoral issues ECE should address:
 - (b) A more systematic review of technical cooperation in the Sectoral Committees:
and
 - (c) Further strengthening relations with other organizations.

¹ Declaration of the sixtieth anniversary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe, Annex I to the Annual Report of the Commission.

7. The Commission also encouraged the Sectoral Committees, with the support of the secretariat, to pay particular attention to the planned biennial performance evaluations.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNECE REFORM

8. During its sixty second session, the Economic Commission for Europe undertook an interim review of the UNECE reform, which will be formally reviewed at its next session in 2009, as stipulated by the Work Plan in UNECE reform.

9. It was recognized that implementation of the reform moved forward at a rapid pace. A new governance structure became fully operational with the institution of the Executive Committee, which meets regularly to oversee the activities of the Sectoral Committees and the secretariat and monitor the implementation of the UNECE reform.

10. Through the reform, UNECE refocused its programme of work, with well-defined priority areas, thus demonstrating that it has the capacity to respond to the evolving needs of member States and provide them with highly-specialized services in recognized areas of expertise.

(a) Sub-programme on Timber and Forestry – Revised Terms of Reference

11. As set out by the reform, the timber sub-programme was renamed to “sub-programme on timber and forestry”, reflected in the Strategic Framework 2008-2009.

12. The Commission at its sixty second session approved the Terms of Reference of the Timber Committee, as adopted during the sixty fourth session of the Timber Committee and endorsed by the Executive Committee in October 2006 (ECE/EX/2006/L.17).

(b) Cooperation with MCPFE

13. As encouraged by the work plan on UNECE reform, the Timber Committee is increasingly developing the cooperation with the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), and is exploring possibilities for the formalization of this cooperation.

14. During a first meeting of the joint bureaux of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission with the MCPFE General Coordinating Committee (GCC) in May 2007, this item was discussed. The value-added of the well-functioning ongoing cooperation, reflected in the respective programme of work of the partners UNECE/FAO and MCPFE, was reaffirmed and the intention to further explore options for its formalization expressed. The item will be taken up by a next meeting of the GCC and further explored with the operation of the new MCPFE Liaison Unit Oslo, as of 1 January 2008.

(c) Monitoring and Analysis of Forest Policies and Institutions

15. As stipulated by the UNECE reform, proposals for the activities to strengthen the monitoring and analysis of forest policies and institutions were submitted to and approved by the Timber Committee at its sixty fourth session, as well as the Executive Committee.

16. With the strengthening of the sub-programme with an additional junior professional post, taken up since end-August 2006, these activities are being developed, to improve the monitoring and analysis capacities with regard to policies and institutions in the pan-European region and at the global level, together with partners such as FAO and MCPFE.

17. The collective effort to monitor forest policies and institutions and exchange relevant information is being advanced through the newly established UNECE/FAO/MCPFE Inter-Secretariat Coordination Group on Monitoring Forest Policies and Institutions. In addition to this work, comprising the creation of a comprehensive information repository at the pan-European and the global level, capacity-building activities on policies and institutions in Central and East European Countries are being conducted, together with partners in the pan-European region.

III. INTERSECTORAL ACTIVITIES

18. The UNECE at its sixty first session “stressed the importance of intersectoral activities among the Committees so as to promote a more coherent UNECE and requested the Committees to pursue and look to strengthen such activities and approaches.” As reflected in the Work Plan on UNECE reform, relevant Committees, including the Timber Committee, were mandated to foster intersectoral activities and strengthen the links with other UNECE Sectoral Committees.

19. During the sixty second session of the Commission, it was proposed that thought be given to a mechanism which would facilitate the identification of intersectoral issues that could be discussed and agreed upon by the Executive Committee, in close cooperation with the Chairs of the Sectoral Committees.

20. In the following, some of the most important inter- and cross-sectoral activities² under the UNECE/FAO integrated programme of work on timber and forestry are highlighted. The Committee is invited to take note of these and provide guidance and suggestions for future work.

(a) Energy

21. The interaction between developments in the energy sector and forest sector are being monitored by UNECE/FAO on a regular basis, notably in the Forest Products Annual Market Review. Since the sixty fourth session of the Timber Committee, particular efforts have been made to improve the understanding of the main issues, bringing together relevant partners in the forestry, timber and energy sectors, in view of assisting Governments and other international

² Inter-sectoral“ means were two, possibly more „sectors“ interact with each other. “Cross-sectoral” means where major complex issues cut across many “sectors”. Given the general complexity of the issues, and the difficulty of defining clearly the boundaries of any one “sector”, this distinction is hard to apply in practice.

organizations to develop sound policies, based on facts and prevalent realities and taking into account the characteristics of all sectors concerned. These are outlined below.

22. The set-up of a task force by the UNECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Products Economics and Statistics led to the conduct of the Joint Wood Energy Enquiry, together with the IEA and the EU as leading partners. Results of the enquiry confirmed the importance of wood energy's share in the total energy mix, both for energy production and consumption.

23. A workshop on energy and the forest products industry, held in Rome in October 2006, under the auspices of FAO, IEA, UNECE and ICPFE, addressed issues related to increased promotion of bioenergy and relevant impact on and opportunity for the forest products sector.

24. A workshop on "Mobilizing Wood Resources", held in January 2007 by UNECE together with FAO, CEPF, MCPFE as main partners, considered how a sustainable supply of wood raw materials could be secured for meeting the needs of bio-energy producers as well as the wood processing industries. Workshop recommendations were brought to the attention of the MCPFE in the context of the drafting of the resolution on "wood and energy" to be adopted at the Warsaw Ministerial Conference.

25. On the basis of its work in the field of forests and energy, linkages with the UNECE Sustainable Energy Committee were fostered increasingly. Possibilities for enhanced cooperation, in particular in the context of the Sustainable Energy Division's Energy Efficiency 21 (EE21) project, were outlined and explored during the annual session of the Sustainable Energy Committee in November 2006 and the session of the Steering Committee of the EE21 project in May 2007. Proposals developed by the UNECE/FAO Timber Section for financing relevant projects in the Balkan region under the EE21 investment fund "Financing Energy Efficiency Investment for Climate Change Mitigation" are presently being explored.

(b) Trade

26. Trade in forest products is regularly monitored and recorded, notably in the Forest Products Annual Market Review, which is steadily strengthening its coverage of trade policy issues. Relevant policy forums at the Committee's sessions have also benefited from the expertise available in the Trade and Timber Division.

(c) Environment

27. Everything related to sustainable forest management, the overriding objective of the sub-programme's work, takes the environmental dimension as one of the pillars of sustainable development into account. Most of activities of the sub-programme thus have an environmental dimension.

28. Information on environmental indicators is being collected in the context of reporting on the MCPFE quantitative and qualitative indicators of sustainable forest management. This information will be reflected in the UNECE/FAO/MCPFE "Report on the State of Forests and Sustainable Forest Management in Europe", to be presented at the MCPFE Ministerial Conference in November 2007 in Warsaw.

29. Linkages with the UNECE Environment, Housing and Land Management Division and its relevant committees and conventions are being fostered on a continuous basis. The Secretariat of the Aarhus Convention, for example, presented the Almaty Guidelines on public participation in international forums to the Timber Committee at its past session.

(d) Water

30. UNECE/FAO participated actively, with the Warsaw Liaison Unit of the MCPFE, in the drafting of the Code of Conduct on Payments for Ecosystem Services in Integrated Water Resource Management, which include water related services provided by forests. The Code of Conduct, as reviewed by the Working Party on Integrated Water Resources Management, was approved in December 2006. This work along with the cooperation between the Environment Division and Timber Section of UNECE with the MCPFE is reflected in the draft resolution on “forests and water”, for adoption at the MCFPE Warsaw Ministerial Conference in November 2007.