



Timber Committee
Economic Commission for Europe



European Forestry Commission
Food and Agriculture Organization

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Information Note

Joint UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission Policy Forum

Opportunities and Impacts of Bioenergy Policies and Targets on the Forest and Other Sectors

What is the future contribution of wood to meeting UNECE region's energy needs?

Palais des Nations, Geneva, 10 October 2007

Background

Concerns about climate change and energy security have led policy and decision makers to expect wood to make a significant larger contribution to energy supply, and put policies in place to promote this. Relevant policies along with rising energy prices have increased the demand for wood for energy. At the same time, Europe's wood processing industries (for sawnwood, paper, panels) continue to expand, with the result that competition for raw material is increasing in many regions. UNECE/FAO statistics show that the volume of wood that is harvested from forests throughout the UNECE region at present is less than the volume increase. The challenge is how to bring enough wood to the market without compromising the sustainable management of the forest and without undesirable impacts on other sectors and geographical regions. Another challenge is to define what is a sustainable level in the new circumstances.

The present forum will build on open questions and recommendations from the UNECE/FAO Wood Mobilization Workshop in January 2007 in Geneva, and **focus on possible impacts and consequences** of increased wood utilization on and by other sectors and, other geographical regions.

Objectives

This policy forum aims to:

- **inform policy and decision makers** on wood energy policies and their impacts;
- **discuss** the increasing demands of both the bioenergy sector and the wood-processing industry, and the mobilization of wood to satisfy both.

Outcome

The main messages of the presentations and the discussion of policy forum will be summarized in the policy forum's conclusions. These conclusions will build on the conclusions and recommendations of the Wood Mobilization Workshop.

Venue and format

The forum will be held on 10 October 2007 during the UNECE Timber Committee Session at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. It will have simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Russian. Approximately one-third of the time is allocated to discussion following expert presentations.

Key questions

- Which policies have led and might lead in the future to a stimulus for wood energy and an increasing demand for wood? What are their past and future impacts?
(Analysis of EU, North American and Russian policies and their effects)
- How much wood can the UNECE region supply to satisfy the increasing demand for wood raw material on a sustainable level, considering existing patterns and new opportunities for improved wood mobilization? How much wood is available outside forests, for example in hedgerows, or as by-products or recovered wood and fibre?
(Presentation of studies arising from the January workshop.)
- How can wood resources be efficiently mobilized? (Building on the January workshop recommendations.) Examples of successful mobilization e.g., empowering forest owners, coherent policies, improved infrastructure)
- What are possible cross-sectoral links, and contributions to other sectors, such as environment, agriculture, energy and transport?
- What are possible impacts of higher wood energy demand and import in UNECE region on other regions in the world, in particular on developing countries?
- How to ensure a level playing field for bioenergy generation from agriculture crops and forest-based biomass, and imported vs. domestic sources?

Target audience

Participation is open to policy and decision makers in relevant fields (forestry, energy, environment, agriculture), as well as experts from NGOs, scientific bodies, industry and trade organizations, national and international certification schemes, private forest owners' organizations and international organizations. Representation will be global.

For updates and further information visit our website:

www.unece.org/trade/timber/docs/tc-sessions/tc-65/policyforum/

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