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**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
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TIMBER COMMITTEE

EUROPEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Sixty-sixth session

Thirty-fourth session

Rome, 21-24 October 2008

Rome, 21-24 October 2008

Item 8 of the provisional agenda

**STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE UNECE/FAO INTEGRATED PROGRAMME OF WORK
ON TIMBER AND FORESTRY 2008-2013**

**ADDENDUM
Future Work on Forests and Climate Change**

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

During the strategic review of the UNECE/FAO integrated programme, countries identified climate change as a priority. The Special Session did not reach full consensus on how to address the issue and referred the matter to the Bureaux, which recommended that climate change be mainstreamed within the integrated programme, without adding a new team of specialists.

This note is being circulated in advance of the joint session of the Timber Committee and European Forestry Commission taking place on 23 October 2008 to suggest how, in the secretariat's opinion, climate change might be mainstreamed in the programme.¹ Delegations are invited to submit comments to the secretariat in advance of the joint meeting, and to take account of the discussions at the plenary session on forest and climate change. **The joint session is invited to decide, on the basis of these suggestions, how climate change should be addressed by the UNECE/FAO integrated programme.**

¹ The Special Session of the Timber Committee in April 2008 decided that the Strategic Plan with all its elements should be submitted to the joint session of the Timber Committee and European Forestry Commission at the European Forest Week (ECE/TIM/S/2008/6). Forests and climate change forms an integral part of the Strategic Plan.

I. PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this note is to inform delegates to the UNECE Timber Committee (TC) and FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC) of the discussions on forests and climate change held during the Special Session on the Strategic Review and Plan, 28-30 April 2008, and the subsequent meeting of the joint TC/EFC Bureaux on 3 July 2008.

2. The note outlines proposals for possible activities on forests and climate change under the joint TC/EFC Integrated Programme of Work on Timber and Forestry. Delegations are invited to review the proposals and send comments to UNECE/FAO prior to European Forest Week in order to facilitate their consideration.

II. BACKGROUND

3. During the Strategic Review, climate change was identified by two-thirds of the responding countries as a priority area of concern; other priorities were bioenergy and wood mobilization. Three countries suggested that a new Team of Specialists might consider climate change aspects including the negative impacts of climate change on forests and timber markets; adaptation to climate change, including the development of regional guidelines; accounting for harvested wood products; and linkages with climate change processes including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

4. During the Timber Committee's Special Session on the Strategic Review and Plan, 28-30 April 2008, the formation of several new Teams of Specialists was considered, but no consensus was achieved on a team on climate change. Subsequently the joint bureaux of the TC and EFC, charged with oversight of programme activities and decision-taking between sessions, decided in July 2008 not to create a new Team on Forests and Climate Change. The Bureaux cited a number of practical considerations including: (i) difficulties in fielding a team that would effectively address such a broad range of issues; (ii) the fact that climate change is already being addressed in many other fora; (iii) doubts about the ability to mobilize resources to support a new Team of Specialists; and (iv) questions about the mandate and value-added of such a team.

III. MAINSTREAMING CLIMATE CHANGE IN SECRETARIAT ACTIVITIES

5. Under the future TC/EFC work programme, climate change is reflected as a separate programme element under work area 3: *Analysing climate change issues relevant to the forest sector*. In addition, climate change related activities are already being undertaken under work areas 1, 2 and 5. Activities described under each work area could be reflected in future biennial programme plans as sub-items, without changing the programme elements contained in the Strategic Plan. The activities will be carried out in close collaboration with the FAO senior forestry officer on climate change, and the FAO Interdepartmental Working Group on Climate Change.

A. Work Area 1: Markets and Statistics

Collecting and analysing information on carbon markets

6. Carbon in forests and wood could be regarded as an “intangible” forests product and their market developments could be monitored and analysed in future *Forest Products Annual Market Reviews*, if ever sufficient statistical information and secretariat resources permitted.

B. Work Area 2: Forest Resources Assessment

Collecting and analysing information on carbon stock dynamics and analysing influence of climate change on forest ecosystems

7. The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) quantitative indicators on Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2010 contain information on carbon stock dynamics along with a broad range of data indirectly related to climate change issues. The development of reporting methods for carbon stock in forest resources can be given emphasis. The Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management could discuss and advise on the reliability of information collected for the climate change debate. Based on the scope of currently collected information, the Team of Specialists could also examine possibilities of assessment of climate change impacts on forests ecosystems.

C. Work Area 3: Forest Sector Outlook

8. Future forest sector outlook studies will reflect important developments related to forests and climate change, as well as forests and energy and their present and future implications. The Team of Specialists on Forest Sector Outlook is expected to play a key role.

Collecting and analysing information on carbon storage in harvested wood products

9. The secretariat has already embarked, together with the Swiss government and other partners, on collecting and analysing information on harvested wood products, in the context of planning for a workshop on harvested wood products, 9-10 September 2008 in Geneva.

D. Work area 5: Policy and Cross-sectoral Issues

10. All elements of this work area contain aspects related to climate change, which figures prominently in the global dialogue on forests led by the FAO Committee on Forestry and the United Nations Forum on Forests. Relevant international developments are continuously monitored and analysed by the UNECE/FAO secretariat.

11. The 2007 UNECE/FAO policy forum “*Bioenergy policies: Opportunities and impacts for the forest and other sectors*” featured climate change relevant presentations, including by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Climate change, as a major cross-sectoral issue, is relevant to the maintenance and development of cross-sectoral exchange with other units of UNECE, such as Sustainable Energy and other partner organization. Forest and forest sector country profiles have, as appropriate, also referred to the impacts of climate change on the forest sector.

Policy briefs on forests and climate change

12. It is proposed that policy briefs on forest and climate change be issued when new information is available. A first policy brief could be issued for the European Forest Week.

IV. ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE THROUGH TEAMS OF SPECIALISTS

13. In addition to the work carried out by the secretariat, the relevant teams of specialists could address climate change related matters through their work, and coordinate with each other. These would include the Teams on Forest Products Markets and Marketing (work area 1), Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management (work areas 2 and 5), Forest Sector Outlook (work

area 3), Forest Policy in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (work area 5), and Forest Fire (wWork area 5).

14. The Bureaux decided that a meeting of all team leaders take place jointly with the next meeting of the joint TC/EFC bureaux in April 2009, to enhance cooperation between teams and with the Bureaux. Such a meeting would be an opportunity to discuss coordination mechanisms between the climate change work of the various teams.

V. LIST OF FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE EXPERTS

15. To be able to effectively distribute information on climate change related issues, it is proposed to retain lists of experts on particular climate change related matters. The secretariat thus proposes to address to countries, together with the nominations to the Teams of Specialists 2008-2013, requests for the coordinates of experts on:

- (a) Forest and climate change policy
- (b) Harvested wood products
- (c) Carbon monitoring in forest resources
- (d) Analysis of climate and forestry in sector outlook

16. Lists of experts would be managed as part of the Timber Section contact database, and used to distribute information such as policy briefs; to consult on the organization of meetings and seminars; and to consult on specific matters in each area of expertise.

VI. DECISION BY THE JOINT TC/EFC SESSION AT THE EUROPEAN FOREST WEEK

17. The joint TC/EFC session at the European Forest Week will be requested to review and agree on the activities on forests and climate change to be carried out under the integrated programme, as outlined above. The secretariat proposes the following draft paragraph for inclusion within the report of the joint session:

"The session agreed that climate change is of great importance to the forest sector and that the UNECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work on Timber and Forestry can play a catalytic role in addressing climate change related matters, notably through its work programme under programme elements in work areas 1, 2, 3 and 5, and the Teams of Specialists, notably on Forest Products Markets and Marketing, Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management, Forest Sector Outlook and Forest Policy in Eastern Europe. It was agreed not to set up a Team of Specialists on Forests and Climate Change, but rather to mainstream climate issues within the existing activities."

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