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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR EUROPE**

Timber Committee

Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party
on Forest Economics and Statistics

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Agenda item 6 of the provisional agenda

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION**

European Forestry Commission

Guidance on Work Area 1: Markets and Statistics

AGENDA ITEM 6.2 – REVIEW AND PLANS - STATISTICS

Note by the secretariat

Summary

According to its mandate, the Working Party is expected to provide guidance to Work Area 1: Markets and Statistics. This document discusses the activities in forest products statistics during the last year. The Working Party is invited to note and comment on any developments in the work area and also respond to the specific questions posed within this note.

I. Outputs

A. Forecasts

1. In 2009 the secretariat produced the Timber Committee Forecasts as well as data tables in support of the *Forest Products Annual Market Review, 2008-2009* (FPAMR) based on the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JFSQ). Presentations made at the annual Timber Committee Market Discussions were based on the forecasts supplied by countries prior to the meeting as well as the preliminary JFSQ data.

2. The secretariat received forecasts from 30 countries in 2009, the same as in 2008.

B. Forest Products Markets

3. At the time of writing, work is proceeding on the final Forest Products Statistics, 2004-2008. All forest products data were uploaded to the FAOSTAT interactive database, the primary distribution site for forest products data, in July and December. Unfortunately it was not possible for FAO to provide the preliminary 2008 data in August. Data were available on the UNECE Timber Committee (TC) and FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC). Final 2008 data are now available at FAOSTAT. The price database continues to be updated.

4. *We would ask countries that are not currently supplying price statistics and that would be in a position to supply them to please consult with the secretariat on the feasibility, usefulness and modalities of providing current and representative price information of forest products.*

C. Online Data (including prices)

5. All data are provided in electronic-only form on the TC/EFC website (<http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=84>). This year that includes

- The chapter and annex tables (apparent consumption) of the FPAMR;
- A complete data set of product tables by country for the FPAMR;
- The preliminary 2004-2008 dataset accessible through HTML pages linked to PDF and Excel format. Final data are being prepared now for dissemination.
- A complete file of all forest products data (1964-2008);
- The graphs and associated information presented to the Timber Committee;
- The complete set of forecast tables for 2009-2010 for products and subregions;
- On-going price statistics as these data are updated.

D. Data Availability

6. The secretariat received about the same level of replies as in previous years although the overall amount of information on each reply seems to have declined again. The Moscow Workshop on Forest Products Statistics for CIS-region National Statistical Correspondents in 2009 did indeed result in a significant increase of data despite the many difficulties some countries in the CIS have in collecting information. For a detailed listing of data availability please see the annex.

E. Indicators of Achievement

7. In terms of the "indicators of achievement" used by the UN to evaluate performance, the table in the annex shows the results for the last 17 years. The "% satisfactory" is the number of countries supplying more than 80% of the 209 possible responses to JQ1 and JQ2, divided by the total number of countries in the UNECE region. This reached 76% in 2007 (the fall to 60% for 2008 is normal as the full data cycle is not yet completed). This marks the first time we have reached the pre-1990 rate of reply. This significant improvement can be attributed to the

data collected at the Moscow workshop in February 2009. While unlikely to remain so high, some continuing benefit from the workshop is expected. The target approved by the UN General Assembly for 2009-2010 is 68% which has been attained.

F. Secondary Products, Trade by Species and Fire Statistics

8. Regrettably the data on secondary products and trade in species have not been published for the last four years due to lack of resources. It had been hoped to find some extra-budgetary resources for the work but this has so far not been possible. The secretariat apologizes for the difficulties that have impeded production of these already-collected data and continues to aim to produce these.

9. *The Working Party is invited to provide its opinion on the issue of whether we should continue to collect these data, bearing in mind that when these statistics have been published there appeared to be a demand for them. A temporary in-kind loan of staff expertise from a country or organization would enable updating the statistics on secondary products and trade by species.*

10. Data collection on fire statistics by UNECE/FAO has been discontinued with the agreement of the Bureaux of the TC and EFC. The secretariat continues to consult with partners on possible joint work in this area.

II. Inter-organizational cooperation

11. Cooperation between the four organizations collecting data through the JFSQ continues through the Inter-secretariat Working Group on Forest Sector Statistics (IWG). The IWG met in January 2010 in Rome. Information on the IWG meetings can be found at <http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=278>. The main issues were a review of activities in 2009, with an emphasis on clarifying problems in data exchange, and preparations for the JFSQ 2009. An oral report on the January meeting will be supplied to the Working Party.

12. The two principles of the IWG are to ask countries for data only one time and for the same data to be used by all organizations sharing the information. Although the first principle is working quite well, efforts in recent years have focused on improving the ability to exchange and keep data consistent between the organizations. Due to varying deadlines, database structures and technical limitations it continues to be quite difficult to share information smoothly and consistently. This remains a major preoccupation of the IWG.

13. The World Customs Organization was requested by UNECE/FAO, on behalf of the IWG and the Working Party, to consider the inclusion of wood pellets under the Harmonised System (HS). This proposal has been accepted and will appear in the HS 2012 to be available starting in January 2012. In the meantime the EU's Combined Nomenclature now includes this item, so for EU trade this information is available.

14. An issue that continues to arise is that of data confidentiality. Despite every effort by country correspondents to provide data and to use alternative sources of data, some figures are being supplied as confidential. This creates a number of problems for data exchange. In order to hide the confidential data (but to make use of the figure in totals) it becomes necessary to hide data from countries that were able to report. This means a net loss of real data to protect regional totals or product aggregates. In addition the data systems currently employed are not able to automatically suppress confidential information which means that the data manipulation must be done manually. Because the aggregation procedures work differently in different data systems it is not always the same data points that need to be hidden. Finally the time pressures to meet deadlines mean that confidential data will be treated with a low priority given that the vast majority of data are not confidential.

15. A solution that has been discussed, both at the Working Party and at the IWG, is a

common database. However this seems to be a quite difficult idea to implement. For the time being we seek to minimize the necessity for confidential data and to improve data flow within countries to reduce the need for confidentiality.

16. *The Working Party is invited to comment on the loss of statistical information due to confidentiality.*

III. Dissemination of Data

17. The data collected are disseminated through three channels, FAOSTAT, the FPAMR and the TC/EFC online database. The FAOSTAT website (<http://faostat.fao.org/site/626/default.aspx>) has widespread name recognition and interactive data selection mechanism but is not updated as rapidly and does not show all data collected by UNECE/FAO. The FPAMR gets widespread distribution including a significant number of newspaper and trade journal articles each year. The website of the TC/EFC runs about 9,000 page views per month and the page “data and statistics” is the second most visited page on the site (after the welcome homepage). The FPAMR data page (used for HTML viewing) was the 12th most visited page.

Summary Statistics (1 March 2009 – 28 February, 2010)

Visits*	30,637
Unique visitors	18,367
Page views	102,156
Average time on site (minutes)	03:23
Top 5 pages viewed	Homepage (21.2% of total page views) Data and Statistics (7.6%) Work Area 1-Markets (4.7%) 67 th Timber Committee (4.4%) Meetings and Documentation (3.6%)
Top 5 countries visiting	United States (8.3% of total visits) Germany (7.2%) UK (7.1%) Finland (5.5%) Switzerland (5.3%)

IV. Cooperation with Countries

18. Although no action (other than emails) have occurred following the Moscow Workshop in February 2009 we intend to pursue, with the Conference of European Statisticians, another workshop aimed at bringing together the national statistical agencies in the CIS with the forest sector institutions.

19. FAO has discussed a forest products statistics workshop aimed at users of the statistics which would have the objective of reviewing the outputs we produce and aligning them better with user demand.

20. *The Working Party is invited to review the activities carried out this year and planned for the coming year*

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* Note that visits from the United Nations Office at Geneva are excluded.

Annex**Replies to the Questionnaires**

	Questionnaire	Year Questionnaire Sent			
		2006	2007	2008	2009
JFSQ	JQ1 (production) - replies	42	39	40	41
	% of cells filled (of 66)	65.3	83.4	65.5	67.4
	JQ2 (trade) - replies	40	38	40	39
	% of cells filled (of 216)	90.6	94.8	94.4	92.9
TCQ	JQ3 (sec. prod. trade) - replies	15+20(EU)	12+21(EU)	10+25	9+25
	% of cells filled (of 44)	75.7	72.9	83.3	90.3
	EU/ECE1 (species trade) - replies	11+23(EU)	13+23(EU)	9+24 (EU)	9+24
	% of cells filled (of 88)	91.8	90.0	76.7	67.1
TCQ	TC1 (roundwood forecast) - replies	31	31	30	30
	% of cells filled (of 21)	94.3	87.2	93.9	89.8
	TC2 (product forecast) - replies	31	30	30	29
	% of cells filled (of 45)	95.1	87.1	94.6	94.3

Starting in 2008 the total number of JQ3 cells was 48. The number of cells on ECE1 was 84. "% of cells filled" applies only to non-EU/EFTA replies. There were a total of 55 member countries for the period 2006 and 56 for the period 2007-2009.

Indicators of Achievement

Data for Year	% Satisfactory
1992	62.2
1993	60.8
1994	61.5
1995	59.6
1996	55.8
1997	55.8
1998	51.9
1999	59.6
2000	63.5
2001	69.2
2002	71.2
2003	65.4
2004	69.2
2005	69.2
2006	71.7
2007	75.5
2008	60.4

Note that results for 2008 are preliminary and will likely be revised upward. See paragraph 7 for explanation of calculation.