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Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry

European Forestry Commission

**Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest
Statistics, Economics and Management****Thirty-eighth session**

Geneva, 23-24 March 2016

**Report of the joint thirty-eighth session of
the ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics,
Economics and Management****Introduction**

1. The Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management held its thirty-eighth session in Geneva from 23 to 24 March 2016.

Attendance

2. The session was attended by delegates from the following countries: Afghanistan, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America.

3. The following UN agencies and intergovernmental organizations attended the session: the European Environment Agency (EEA), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

4. Representatives of the Liaison Unit Bratislava of Forest Europe attended the session.

5. Representatives of the non-governmental organization, the European Organisation of the Sawmill Industry, attended the session.

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I. Adoption of the agenda (item 1 of the agenda)

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6. The meeting was opened by Mr. Johannes Hangler of Austria, Chair of the Working Party. The secretary of the Joint Working Party, Mr. Florian Steierer, welcomed the delegates.

7. Mr. Marco Keiner, Acting Director of the UNECE Division on Forests, Land and Housing, and Ms. Thais Linhares-Juvenal, Head of the FAO's Forest Economics and Statistics Team, welcomed participants to the meeting.

8. After the opening remarks, the Chair introduced the meeting agenda (ECE/TIM/EFC/WP.2/2016/1). The delegate of France expressed concerns that meeting documents were not available in French, and that three topics (COP21, UNFF, Forest Europe) that are highly political in nature were included in the agenda. The secretariat said that these points are only for information. If the discussion becomes too political, delegates are invited to raise their flags. The United Kingdom requested that the report of the session be as concise as possible. The delegate from Hungary made a request to hold the roundtable discussion in the afternoon of the first day of the meeting. The secretariat addressed the topics to the satisfaction of these speakers, and the agenda was adopted without amendments.

9. Mr. Christoph Dürr, Chair of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI), reported on the outcomes of Silva2015, the joint seventy-third session of the ECE COFFI and thirty-eighth session of the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC), and the Third European Forest Week, which took place in Engelberg, Switzerland, from 2 to 6 November 2015.

10. He highlighted the many issues presented and reviewed in Engelberg, including, among others, progress related to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030), and other regional and global forest-related processes. Other topics discussed included forest reporting, forest products markets and trends, forest ecosystem services, and financing sustainable forest management, including: disaster risk reduction and watershed management; biodiversity maintenance; climate change mitigation, substitution and adaptation; and forest and landscape restoration.

11. The Working Party congratulated and thanked Switzerland for the organization of such a successful event, and thanked the secretariat for the preparatory work.

II. Report from the International Day of Forests “Forests and Water” (item 3 of the agenda)

12. Mr. Marco Keiner informed the delegates about the celebration for the International Day of Forests 2016. The UNECE and the FAO held it on 21 March 2016 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. It was dedicated to the theme of “Forests and Water”, as decided by the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

13. The celebration included a half-day event, which was organized by the ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section jointly with: the UNECE Secretariat of the Water Convention and its Protocol on Water and Health, the UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit, and the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Support for the event was provided by the Swiss Confederation and the Government of Finland. The event aimed at raising awareness of the multiple links between forests and water sources.

14. Forest ecosystem services experts and senior government officials from the forest sector, international organizations, academia and NGOs presented the links between forests and the quality of water, and the impact of land management on the mitigation of water-related disaster risk. About 120 people participated in the event, including: Working Party delegates, representatives from permanent missions to UNOG, students from the Bern University of Applied Sciences, and other stakeholders working with forest, environment and water topics in Geneva.

15. The workshop was followed by a reception, which was hosted by the Swiss Confederation and Finland. In addition, a two-week exhibition of forest-inspired photos by Jean-Jacques Kissling was organized at the Palais des Nations.

III. Update on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international policy processes with an impact on forests (item 4 of the agenda)

16. Ms. Tiina Luige, Chief, Environment and Multi-domain Section, UNECE Statistical Division, updated the Working Party on the latest developments related to the Agenda 2030, with a focus on the monitoring and review system of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the SDG indicators, as relevant to forests and the forest sector.

17. She informed the delegates that the UN Statistical Commission agreed upon a final list of SDG indicators on 8 March 2016. This list will be presented for the approval of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in June 2016, and that of the General Assembly in September 2016.

18. The Agenda 2030 foresees three levels in the follow-up and review system for the implementation of SDGs: global, regional and national. The High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development will have a central role in the review processes at the global level. The modalities of such a review system at national, regional and global levels have not yet been defined, and a number of important questions remain.

19. Ms. Luige explained that the indicators to measure the implementation of SDGs were classified according to a tier system: 1) those with an agreed methodology and existing data; 2) those with an agreed methodology and missing data; 3) those with no data or methodology. The tier system will be further discussed at the end of March by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs). She stressed that capacity-building efforts to improve data availability and analysis will be an important factor for making the review process effective.¹

20. Mr. Christopher Prins elaborated on the fast moving nature of this process and the complexity of developing the indicators. Ukraine asked whether reporting on the indicators would be obligatory or not. It appears that it will be obligatory, but what is less clear, and has to be further clarified, is who will be obligated (member States or other entities). Finland noticed that the suggested indicators 15.a.1 and 15.b.1 were the same. The delegate suggested that 15.b.1. should read “official development assistance and public expenditure on sustainable forest management”. The Working Party concluded that the secretariat should communicate this concern to the attention of the UN Statistical Commission.

¹ SDG indicators can be found at <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/>

21. Mr. Christoph Dürr, Switzerland, briefed the participants about the outcomes of the UNFF Expert Panel Meeting in Tokyo, Japan on 7-11 March 2016. This informal meeting was held to gather expert input for the Strategic Plan and the first Programme of Work (in accordance with the mandate of the UNFF). He outlined the work to be done in developing the Plan before UNFF12 (tentatively to be held in mid-2017), where the Plan and the four-year Programme of Work would be adopted.

22. During the meeting in Tokyo, experts agreed that the Plan should serve as a guide for the implementation of sustainable forest management (SFM) at global, regional and national levels. They recognized the need to reflect on it, as well as on the objectives of the Agenda 2030 and of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

23. Mr. Dürr also presented an illustrative structure of the Plan, and a possible matrix of goals, targets, actions, actors, means of implementation and indicators to be included in it, and emphasized the role of regional organizations.

24. Ms. Ludmila Marusakova, Forest Europe, Liaison Unit Bratislava (LUB), reviewed Forest Europe's mission, its 25-year political process, and the outcomes of the last Ministerial Conference. Slovakia took over the leading role in that process and inaugurated the LUB in January 2016. The first Expert Level Meeting organized by the LUB will be held on 11-12 May 2016. She also informed the delegates about the priorities of work under the Slovakian Presidency.

IV. Guidance on Work Area 1: Data, monitoring and assessment (item 5 (a) of the agenda)

Global and regional reporting

25. Mr. Florian Steierer reported on Work Area 1: Data, Monitoring and Assessment – Forest Resources. He highlighted the role of the Joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, the Team of Specialists, and national correspondents in providing key information to global and regional forestry processes and publications in 2015. The secretariat underlined the role of the financial and in-kind contributions of member States and the very helpful cooperation of many other organizations and international processes.

26. Mr. Stein Tomter gave a summary of the activities of the ToS on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management. Regarding future work and plans for FRA 2020, some countries mentioned that more frequent updates on key variables would be desirable, and encouraged cost-effective linkages with other reporting processes. The Working Party expressed its support for the inquiry on forest ownership, and noted the cooperation with academia and the science community; COST Action (FACESMAP) was highlighted as a constructive example. Regarding the forest ownership inquiry, there were some comments that the level of detail in the questionnaire could have been reduced. Member States appreciated the forest ownership study and felt that the questionnaire, while ambitious, may stimulate further progress in this area.

System for the Evaluation of the Management of Forests (SEMAFOR)

27. Mr. Christopher Prins gave an introduction to SEMAFOR and the background on other initiatives to assess SFM. The pilot project was a learning experience and proved that the methodology was feasible. The major question remains as to whether thresholds should be ambitious, the same for all countries, or moveable depending on the specifics of a country. The pros and cons of each approach were discussed, and the next steps regarding the method were presented. The delegate of Sweden said their experience is that the assessment of SFM was based on “rough” statistics. It misses the issues internally with the country discussed/challenged and the “area of concern” identified for Sweden depended

more on data for technical reasons than they actually pointed in areas where sustainable forest management could be questioned.

28. In the discussion that followed, delegates supported the continuation of the work on the project, and provided several comments and suggestions in this regard, e.g. clarification on the possible modification and future use of the method, including for State of Europe's Forests (SoEF) reporting, and the way it could be applied (a top down approach vs. country driven assessments and improvements). Delegates gratefully acknowledged the support of Finland for this project. Several countries requested that they be given an opportunity to review the manuscript and provide further guidance. There was consensus that the pilot project was a great learning experience for countries and the secretariat, and that the results, after compilation and a short review, should be published as soon as possible and presented at the next session of COFFI. In addition, there was some discussion as to whether this approach would be applicable to other processes, e.g. the Montreal Process, and there was some reflection on what is being assessed: "sustainable forests" or "sustainable forest management".

29. In conclusion, the Joint Working Party appreciated the work that has been done so far and the results of the project. The latter should be published and presented to the relevant fora in preparation for discussion at the joint session of COFFI and the EFC in 2017.

Forest products statistics

30. The secretariat presented its activities in forest products statistics since the last meeting of the Working Party, and its plans for 2016. These plans include the dissemination of data based upon the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JFSQ) and the Timber Forecast Questionnaire (TFQ). Additional work plans include updating price statistics, and issuing surveys on game meat and conversion factors. A schematic showing data collection plans for the next four years was presented and welcomed by the Working Party, who suggested it could be made part of the pre-meeting documents in the future.

31. The secretariat drew attention to the improved response rate to the JFSQ (from 42 to 45 countries) and the TFQ (from 32 to 35 countries), the second year of significant improvement. The replies provided to the JFSQ arrived in time for use in the Forest Products Annual Market Review (FPAMR) (41 replies by 2 July 2015, the cutoff date). Delegates expressed their satisfaction with these results.

32. The secretariat highlighted that, after a gap of several years, the Forest Products Statistics publication was now available, and that work on the Secondary Products and Species Trade publications was underway. Price statistics continued to be of significant interest (as shown by downloads) with a minimal investment of resources.

33. The secretariat also presented the results of the meeting of the Inter-secretariat Working Group (IWG) on Forest Sector Statistics. At that meeting in February 2016, the ITTO, Eurostat, the FAO and the UNECE Inter-secretariat Working Group reviewed activities in 2015, discussed plans for 2016, made a number of small revisions to the definitions of the JFSQ, and prepared an initial list of possible changes to the Harmonized System (HS) of trade classification for implementation in 2022².

34. The Working Party was updated on the proposal for making revisions to HS 2022, which had been presented to the ToS on Forest Products Statistics. It was proposed by the secretariat that this list be circulated to the member States for review and comment. This

² The Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System is maintained by the World Customs Organization (WCO).

work should include the results of the joint FAO corporate submission to the World Customs Organization (WCO) in September 2016. The Working Party strongly encouraged this activity and looks forward to continuing the successful work of revising the HS.

35. The Deputy Leader of the ToS, Ms. Sheila Ward, presented the results of the ToS meeting on 22 March 2016. The ToS had decided to continue reviewing the fibreboard classification; seek to improve the definition of chips and particles; reduce the pulp and paper categories; and keep under consideration the calculation of the roundwood and sawnwood equivalent for summing total wood consumption. The ToS had endorsed the list of changes for HS 2022, particularly supporting the engineered wood products and briquettes. It had approved the use of pulp analysis in basic validation. A representative of industry had described the increasing difficulty of separating plywood by coniferous and non-coniferous wood. The ToS had accepted the game meat and conversion factor surveys for issuance, with some suggestions to revise the game meat definitions and the deadline for the conversion factor questionnaire. It had suggested more frequent virtual meetings during the coming year, particularly on the topics of over/underreporting and technical standards.

36. The Working Party delegates expressed their appreciation for the work of the ToS, and encouraged continued efforts to improve forest products statistics. In reply to a proposal to estimate missing data rather than simply repeating older data, the secretariat explained that this was complicated to do, and had not been successfully implemented in earlier attempts.

37. Some delegations expressed their concern that Eurostat was decreasing the data validation of the JFSQ, weakening cooperation within the IWG, and widening discrepancies in the databases. The secretariat indicated that it was up to Eurostat and the governments to decide on their priorities, and that the IWG would continue to encourage cooperation to minimize the reporting burden.

Forest product markets

38. The Working Party was briefed on the publication of the FPAMR 2014-2015. It was uploaded on the website in August 2014, and printed in advance of the Committee session in Engelberg. The secretariat thanked the Russian Federation for its financial support, and other countries for their in-kind contributions. The Working Party was informed that the special chapter of the FPAMR, which was on institutional forestland ownership in 2015, would be on the wood pallet and wood packaging industry in the UNECE region in the 2016 edition.

39. The secretariat shared the results of the recent FPAMR reader's survey. Mr. Christopher Gaston, member of the ToS on Sustainable Forest Products, who led the survey, was also responsible for the previous one, which was done in 2011.

40. The secretariat presented the outcome of the last market discussion, held during Silva2015. The market discussion has been organized in such a way that it incorporated the suggestion by member States to include a focus on one specific topic or product group in addition to the regional market presentations. This focus in Engelberg was on wooden construction, with the views of several experts on the use of hardwood and cross-laminated timber.

41. Mr. Eoin O'Driscoll, Team Leader of the ToS on Sustainable Forest Products, presented the achievements and activities in 2015. Team members reviewed the FPAMR. The ToS held a meeting in Engelberg (November 2015) which was attended by 20 participants, and another meeting in Geneva just prior to the thirty-eighth session of the Working Party, which was also well attended. The Capacity-Building Workshop in Podgorica, Montenegro, on forest products markets and the forest sector workforce (December 2015) was successfully conducted in cooperation with the ToS on Green Jobs, and the ToS expressed its thanks to Finland for its financial support. The collaborative approach between the two teams worked well, and the ToS on Sustainable Forest Products

is open to collaboration with other teams in the future. The focus would likely be on a workshop in the Western Balkans, or possibly Bulgaria; and in assisting in a cross-sectoral event with the housing sector on measures to improve the carbon footprint of house construction. The need for funds to carry out this work was highlighted. It is important to dedicate an entire day to market discussion during the next Forest Week.

Wood energy

42. The secretariat presented the results of the October workshop “More Heat with Less Wood”, and thanked the German Government for their financial contribution. A video showing some of the outcomes of the workshop was presented to the Working Party, and is now available on UNECE’s Youtube account. The secretariat further highlighted its efforts to improve cross-sectoral cooperation with other international organizations. In addition, a summary analysis of the UNECE/FAO Joint Wood Energy Enquiry (JWEE) was presented, as was the ongoing work to outline a forthcoming publication on wood energy. Some of the challenges encountered in the data collection were discussed, along with areas where efficiency could be improved, e.g., by working together with the International Energy Agency (IEA) to collect data. Some of the delegates see the JWEE as being very detailed. They recommended keeping the two-year cycle. There was also a proposal to have the deadline for the next JWEE at the end of April 2017. The Working Party welcomed the concept of a publication. There was a recommendation to include a detailed list of definitions, as the terminology varies substantially from one subregion to another. The Working Party approved the next round of the JWEE, with the caveat that any efforts to simplify the questionnaire would be most appreciated.

43. Mr. Kasimir Nemestothy, Team Leader of the ToS on Wood Energy, presented the work of the Team. The sizeable drop in oil prices impeded the advancement of wood energy. On the other hand, the agreement from the UNFCCC COP21 may lead to a significant increase in demand for wood energy. The forthcoming wood energy publication was discussed in terms of its relevance, given the current developments in energy, and as a showcase for the significant data available from the JWEE, which can provide more insights with some analysis. The forthcoming meeting of the ToS in Croatia (14-16 June 2016) was discussed in terms of expected outcomes. A delegate pointed out that other organizations also produce data and information on wood energy, and suggested that it might be useful to compare results and see why these differences occur. Mr. Nemestothy mentioned that this work is ongoing, and that every effort to streamline and reach out to other organizations is being made. The good cooperation with the European Commission and Eurostat as members of the Team was highlighted in this regard. Mr. Nemestothy also indicated the joint work done on wood energy conversion factors, which are now available in Excel format in ten languages (www.bioenergy4business.eu/services/fuel_parameters_tool).

44. The secretariat launched a short film on proper heating with wood, which was developed within the context of the workshop on “More heat with less wood” (www.youtube.com/watch?v=9z-EGVeKTrc).

V. Guidance on Work Area 2: Policy dialogue and advice (item 5 (b) of the agenda)

Forest sector outlook

45. The secretariat provided an overview of the work on the forest sector outlook. The next set of outlook studies is planned for 2018. Funding for the European study is still a challenge. Some modelling has already been carried out in North America, including the incorporation of data adjustments proposed by some country delegates, but comprehensive modelling has not yet

been initiated in Europe or the Russian Federation. There is ongoing work to harmonize the future outlook study regarding policy issues, modelling and scenarios between the three subregions of the UNECE. There is a plan to have a workshop in the Russian Federation by the end of 2016 to discuss how to better harmonize the three subregions.

46. Mr. Jeff Prestemon, Deputy Leader of the ToS on Forest Sector Outlook, presented the work of the Team. There was one team meeting last year in Brussels, and numerous discussions among the core group of the team. The plan is that the new outlook study will have a global context by virtue of using a global trade model.

47. The Russian Federation welcomed the process on harmonizing outlook studies between the three UNECE subregions. It confirmed it would host a workshop on outlook studies on 24-25 November 2016 (to be confirmed) in Moscow or the Moscow region. The workshop is to be held jointly with the UNECE/FAO ToS on Outlook Studies. The Russian Federation highlighted the importance of including the effects of climate change in the next set of outlooks, particularly emphasizing the effects of climate change on rates of natural disturbances. The US also emphasized the essential nature of including climate change in the outlook studies. Mr. Prestemon said that the plan is to analyse the possibility of inclusion of these elements in the modelling and scenarios of the forthcoming study.

Forest policy

48. The secretariat presented activities and accomplishments in Work Area 2 (Policy Dialogue and Advice), which covered the following topics: 1) the preparation of substantive documentation for Silva2015, giving information on the policymaking process; 2) the follow-up on the implementation and dissemination of information about the Rovaniemi Action Plan (RAP) for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy; 3) the monitoring of global policy developments which have an impact on forests and the forest industry, including the Agenda 2030, the SDGs, and the UNFF work; and 4) the organization of National Forest Policy Dialogues. The work on the outlook studies had been presented separately the day before.

49. Ms. Marta Gaworska, Team Leader of the ToS on Forest Policy, presented the work of the ToS. She informed the delegates about the current scope of work for the Team, referring to the mandate, which was extended in 2013. She said that the second meeting of the ToS on Forest Policy was held in October 2015 in Prague, Czech Republic, at the invitation of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic and the Czech State Forest Enterprise. She addressed the complexity of the international forest policy landscape in view of the most recent global and regional policy developments and informed that the ToS continued to exchange experiences on the implementation of the RAP.

50. Participants of the ToS meeting discussed how the global forest-related SDGs and targets could be translated to the regional and national levels, and how the UNECE and the FAO could support member States in their implementation. They also reflected on the role of the team in this process. They also discussed how the UNECE and the FAO could support member States in the implementation of the Forest Instrument and the four Global Objectives on Forests, and how to contribute to the development of the UNFF Strategic Plan.

51. She also mentioned that the third meeting of the ToS was planned for autumn 2016. The location has not yet been confirmed, and suggestions from member States to host it were welcomed. The ToS would continue to support the implementation of the RAP through the exchange of experiences and information, paying special attention to: the collection of reliable data and the elaboration of benchmarking studies; detailed discussions on emerging forest policy issues; the exploration of tailored tools for communication within and outside the forest sector; and the support for capacity-building in the countries.

52. She further mentioned that the ToS appreciated the presentation from the ToS on Forest Sector Outlook, and looked forward to further cooperation and engagement in the review process of the development of EFSOS III, including the organization of a joint meeting.

53. The secretariat asked for guidance and advice on how it could support the country implementation of the Agenda 2030 and the development of forest-related SDG indicators. It also asked the Working Party for guidance on how to support the development of the UNFF Strategic Plan and its quadrennial Programme of Work. The Leader of the ToS on Forest Policy asked for advice on the priorities of its proposed work. She requested the Working Party and the secretariat to encourage further support and assistance from interested bodies and from member States to advance the ToS activities and strengthen the network and its capacity.

54. Member States thanked Ms. Gaworska for her presentation, and expressed their support for the work of the ToS and the fact that its activities cover the entire region. There was a suggestion that the ToS could provide input on the Strategic Plan at the next UNFF meeting to be held in April 2016. The Working Party expressed appreciation for the ToS's interest in working with the ToS on Forest Sector Outlook. The importance of concentrating efforts and accommodating SDG forest-related indicators within the existing reporting processes (such as the FRA and the SoEF) was underlined.

55. The importance of exchanging information about the implementation of the RAP, and helping members from countries with economies in transition to participate in that process more actively, was stressed. For instance, the creation of subregional fora for cooperation could help to improve that situation.

56. Support for the work of the ToS, for the importance of focusing on regional policy, for further work on the implementation of the RAP, and for strengthening the linkage with policy developments at the national level was expressed. Capacity-building projects in this area, as well as the monitoring work of the global policy processes, should be supported and encouraged. The ToS was asked to consider how the FAO and the UNECE could contribute to incorporating the SDGs and the UNFF International Arrangement on Forests. It was also mentioned that work on the wood energy policy should be within the scope of the ToS on Forest Policy.

57. The importance of the joint work among the Teams of Specialists was stressed, and it was also mentioned that there are many political developments that directly affect wood energy, for instance at European Union level, and they should be monitored as well.

58. The secretariat and the ToS Leader took note of these comments.

VI. Guidance on Work Area 3: Communication and outreach (item 5 (c) of the agenda)

59. The secretariat informed the Working Party about the Section's contribution to global and regional events organized in 2015, including the UNFF 11, the World Forestry Congress, the Ministerial Conferences of Forest Europe, the European Forest Week and Silva2015. In addition, the secretariat briefed the Working Party on the International Day of Forests 2016 on "Forests and Water", held in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, on 21 March 2016.

60. The secretariat presented the activities completed by the ToS on Forest Communication "Forest Communicators' Network" (FCN) since the last Working Party meeting (based on the ToS report). The next meeting of the Task Force of the FCN will be held on 11-12 April 2016 in Vienna, Austria. A meeting of the FCN ToS (jointly organized

with the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) Communications and Public Relations Working Party) will be held on 29 August–1 September 2016 in Portland, Oregon, US.

61. The Working Party acknowledged the importance of the communication and outreach activities performed by the secretariat, and expressed appreciation for the progress made in this area during the past few years. It suggested possible website improvements for making publications and other outputs more easily available for the broader public. It recommended that the secretariat continue to bring the work of the FCN closer to the Integrated Programme of Work of COFFI and the EFC, and to strengthen the linkage with the work of the ToS. It requested that the FCN consider how the different social media could be evaluated, and the possibility of sharing best practices of utilizing this means of communication.

62. The Working Party discussed the crucial importance of publications translated into French and Russian. Only three publications every two years can be translated with the current quota. There were no conclusions on this matter, and countries were invited to share their views with the secretariat after the meeting.

VII. Guidance on Work Area 4: Capacity-building (item 5 (d) of the agenda)

63. The secretariat informed the Working Party on the final results of the implementation of the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) capacity-building project on SFM for Greener Economies in the Caucasus and Central Asia (2013-2015). The project supported the development of national action plans for the forest sector in a green economy, and related national forest policy processes.

64. The secretariat informed the Working Party about a new UNDA project, planned for 2016-2019, “Accountability Systems for SFM in the Caucasus and Central Asia”. The final approval for the project proposal has been received, and activities will be initiated by June 2016. The first regional workshop is planned to take place on 15-18 November 2016 (to be confirmed).

65. Furthermore, the secretariat briefed the Working Party on a capacity-building workshop in the Western Balkans on Forest Products Markets and the Forest Sector Workforce, which was organized in December 2015 in Podgorica, Montenegro, together with the ToS on Sustainable Forest Products, and the ToS on Green Jobs in the Forest Sector.

66. Mr. Andreas Bernasconi, Deputy Leader of the ILO/UNECE/FAO ToS on Green Jobs in the Forest Sector, presented the activities of the ToS carried out since the last Working Party, as well as the action plan for the ToS for 2014-2016. The main future activities include developing a landscape for forest green jobs with skills mapping, and launching it on the web; supporting a publication on the forest sector workforce and future green jobs; supporting the International Conference of Forestry Training Centres (June 2016, Solsona, Spain); and organizing a workshop on forests and health in autumn 2016 in Ireland.

67. The Working Party appreciated the capacity-building work completed by the secretariat and the ToS on Green Jobs, and pointed out the importance of good communication before and after events to activate and engage countries. It cited the workshop in Montenegro as a good example. It recommended incorporating SDGs and links to the global development agenda into the capacity-building work with the UNDA projects. The Working Party supported the current and future work of the ToS on Green Jobs, and stressed its valuable contribution to awareness raising and the social aspects of a green economy.

VIII. Roundtable discussion on the potential implications of the UNFCCC COP21 for forests and the forest sector

68. Based on the outcomes of its self-evaluation during the thirty-fifth session, the Working Party asked the secretariat to organize in-session roundtable discussions. After consulting with the bureau of the Working Party, as well as the joint Bureaux of the EFC and COFFI, the secretariat organized a roundtable discussion on the “potential implications of UNFCCC COP21 for forests and the forest sector”. This issue is highlighted under pillar B of the RAP, “The low carbon forest sector”, with a goal “to improve the capacity of the forest sector to adapt to climate change and manage the risks associated with a changing climate”.

69. Mr. Jeff Prestemon moderated the roundtable. Mr. Dirk Nemitz (Programme Officer, UNFCCC) presented the “Outcomes of UNFCCC COP21 related to forests”. Mr. Heikki Granholm (Director, Natural Resources Department, Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry) presented how the Paris Agreement could affect forest-related policy developments in Finland. Prof. Tomasz Zawila-Niedzwiecki (Deputy Director General, Polish Directorate General of the State Forests) presented the very concrete case of how Poland is prepared for future carbon reporting from forest management. Prof. Gert-Jan Nabuurs (Professor, European Forest Resources, Alterra/Wageningen University and Research) updated delegates on the science perspective, and how the Paris Agreement might influence future forest-related research and science. Mr. Sebastian Rüter (Senior Researcher, Thünen Institute of Wood Research) gave a presentation on potential carbon accounting in harvested wood products. Ms. Thais Linhares-Juvenal (Head, Forest Economics and Statistics, FAO) presented the potential implications of the UNFCCC COP21 on the FAO’s future work on forests.

70. A summary of the roundtable is contained in the Annex.

IX. Report by the secretariat on the implementation of the outcomes of the self-evaluations from the thirty-fifth and thirty-seventh Working Party sessions

71. The secretariat presented the status of the implementation of the guidance received on how to improve the organization of the Working Party. The secretariat has implemented about 50% of all proposed actions and improvements suggested during the thirty-seventh session. More than two-thirds of the guidance received during the thirty-fifth session is reported to have been implemented.

X. Strategic Review of the Integrated Programme of Work

72. The secretariat informed the Working Party on the evaluation and review activities planned for 2016-2017. There will be an internal UNECE evaluation of the relevance of the Integrated Programme of Work carried out in the first half of 2016. The secretariat also presented the timeline of the Strategic Review of the Integrated Programme of Work to be carried out in 2016-2017. The main outcome of the Review will be a proposal for the new Integrated Programme of Work for 2018-2021.

XI. Other business

The Working Party expressed its appreciation to Ms. Elina Mäki-Simola for her dedication and service as chair and vice chair of the Working Party from 2011-2016.

XII. Date and place of next meeting (item 10 of the agenda)

73. The Working Party agreed to hold its next meeting on 3-5 May 2017.

XIII. Election of officers (item 11 of the agenda)

74. At the end of the thirty-eighth session, Mr. Johannes Hangler, Austria, the chair of the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth sessions, was confirmed as vice-chair. Mr. Jeff Prestemon, US, vice-chair of the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth sessions, was elected as the new chair. Mr. Matthias Dieter, Germany, was elected as vice-chair. They will hold office until the end of the thirty-ninth session. The secretariat explained that efforts undertaken to ensure gender representativeness failed this year, due to a lack of nominations by member States. It promised to do its utmost to emphasize the gender aspect in the next round of elections in the future.

XIV. Adoption of the report (item 12 of the agenda)

75. The Working Party adopted the report at the end of the session, based on a draft by the secretariat.

Annex: Round Table Discussion Summary

1. The topic “Potential implications of UNFCCC COP21 for forests and the forests sector” was presented from various perspectives in the roundtable discussion, which took place at the Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management, held on 23-24 March 2016 in Geneva, Switzerland. Invited experts discussed the outcomes of UNFCCC COP21 in relation to forest policy and management developments in countries and discussed the potential implications of COP21 on research, harvested wood products and FAO’s work on forests. The roundtable discussion was moderated by Jeff Prestemon, USDA Forest Service, United States.

2. Dirk Nemitz, UNFCCC, presented “Outcomes of UNFCCC COP21 related to forests”. In the presentation the stand alone Article 5 of the Paris Agreement was highlighted. This agreement sends a strong political signal on the importance of ecosystems, in particular forests. Mr Nemitz stated that without proper forest management, the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C will not be achieved. Further important outcomes of COP21 are the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), climate finance to ensure shifts in and scale of investments and the action agenda for the encouragement of greater ambition by parties, subnational authorities, private sector and civil society.

3. Heikki Granholm, Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, presented “Forest related policy developments in member states after UNFCCC COP21 – Finland”. Carbon storage in forests is an important aspect and the usage of produced materials from sustainably managed forests is an important aspect. The COP21 target to balance CO₂ sequestration and emissions by the second half of this century is more important for the forest sector than the target to limit global warming to 1.5° or 2°C. The possibility to offset CO₂ emissions through sequestration in forests is a unique opportunity for the forest sector.

4. Tomasz Zawila-Niedźwiecki, Polish Directorate General of the State Forests presented “Forest management strategies for climate change mitigation after UNFCCC COP21 – Poland”. He stated that responsible forest management has the potential to make a meaningful contribution to the achievement of goals of GHG emission reduction targets. Poland is experimenting with forest carbon farms to promote additional forestry-related activities that contribute to the enhancement of mitigation efforts. Additional forest-related activities support the rebuilding of diverse multi-storey forest stands, enhance biodiversity, water retention and improve forestry techniques to reduce emissions. The project aims at both introducing forest management practices to enhance sequestration capacity and the implementation of a national system to enable appropriate accounting and marketing of removal units generated in result of additional measures in forestry.

5. Gert-Jan Nabuurs, Wageningen University and Research, presented the “Potential implications of UNFCCC COP21 on forest related research and science”. The presentation focused mainly on the European Union (EU), where forests sequester a significant amount of CO₂ emissions (in the magnitude of 10% of total EU emissions). Mr Nabuurs highlighted examples where countries’ forest sectors contribute positively to the GDP and at the same time serve as a carbon sink. Research plays an invaluable role to optimize sequestration and productive functions of the forest. In addition, research can help deliver reliable independent monitoring data and developing assessment tools for national carbon mitigation potentials.

6. Sebastian Rüter, Thünen Institute of Wood Research, presented the “Potential implications of UNFCCC COP21 on harvested wood products”. The emissions’ sequestration from harvested wood products are based on country-specific production data (including exports). Mr Rüter contextualized the historical development of the accounting

framework for harvested wood products. It was pointed out that the legal framework from the Kyoto Protocol was used in the EU legislation, which will be used to ensure the implementation. The success of calculating emissions and sequestration is highly dependent on the quality of the data submitted by countries.

7. Thais Linhares-Juvenal, FAO, presented the “Potential implications of UNFCCC COP21 on FAO’s future work on forests”. Several FAO initiatives on climate change activities in the agricultural, forestry and fishery sector were presented, such as publications, data collection, improvement and analysis activities, project development and resource mobilisation strategies. FAO is committed to supporting countries in achieving their mitigation and adaptation targets within their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs).

8. The six presentations stimulated active discussion. Countries raised the apparent dichotomy of increasing carbon storage and at the same time increasing stand resilience to disease, fire and weather events. Increasing stand resilience can mean application of measures (shift from coniferous to mixed stands, thinning, etc.), which may lead to a decrease in carbon storage of the stand. It was emphasized that each country needs to develop its own solutions and approaches to address the internationally set targets and this is exactly the freedom that the Paris Agreement provides. Participants mentioned that some positive carbon storage effects are not derived from forest management activities. Some of the UNECE region forests are not accessible, or profitable, for active management, and, while these forests currently accumulate carbon, future rates of carbon sequestration are not guaranteed or fully controllable through management action.

9. The recording of the presentations are available in English, French and Russian on the website of the Joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section: www.unece.org/index.php?id=41852.
