70th anniversary of ECE COFFI and FAO EFC
Celebrating 70 years of fruitful cooperation on forests

29-31 March 2017, Geneva
European forests and timber trade after WWI

- WWI resulted in overcutting and physical damage to forests.
- 1920s-1930s: forests started to recover, the consumption and trade of wood increased.
- 1932: creation of the Comité International du Bois (CIB), to promote data collection and cooperation between wood exporters and importers.

After WWII: mobilizing timber to rebuild Europe

- WWII: tremendous damages to both forests and infrastructures for wood production.
- After the war, wood was needed to reconstruct the devastated cities and produce coal.
- The challenge of mobilizing timber was first addressed by the Timber Sub-Committee of the Emergency Economic Committee for Europe (EECE), established by the Allies and precursor of UNECE.
- The Timber Sub-Committee cooperated with the newly founded FAO.

Egon Glesinger, founder and leader of the CIB, and first leader of the TC Secretariat.
May 1947: The International Timber Conference was held in Marianske Lazne (former Czechoslovakia) to address the issue of timber mobilization.

- The Conference laid out the guiding lines for the next decades, including already many elements of SFM (except biodiversity and non-wood functions).

The newly established ECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission started to work jointly and promote cooperation and mobilisation of wood on a sustainable basis.

- The European Forestry Commission with the task of urgently halting the overcutting of forests.
- The Timber Committee with the task of helping forest industries to re-equip themselves and increase production.
The first decades of ECE TC and FAO EFC
Focusing on timber market issues

- From 1947, regular sessions once or twice a year
- ECE was providing timber statistics and market information
- FAO was collecting data on forests

- In 1953, publication of the study *European timber trends* (ETTS I), which identified long term trends and builds a vision for the future
- ETTS I called for a “dynamic forest policy”: improve information, efficiency and production of wood; increase the forest area through afforestation and reforestation
- ETTS II in 1964 confirmed the increase in wood production and consumption in the context of *economic expansion*
- During Cold War, TC and EFC provided a unique and privileged international forum for discussing timber issues, including with USA and USSR
1970s-1980s: Raising environmental awareness

- 1972: “The limits to growth”
- 1973: Oil shock
  ... Raising concerns for energy supply as well as biodiversity
- 1975: Symposium on “Forests, wood and their role in the environment”
- 1976: ETTS III highlights the multi-functional nature of forests
- 1978: Seminar on “The energy aspects of the forest industries”
- 1979: Symposia on tropical timber and on the effects of air-borne pollution on vegetation
- 1986: ETTS IV on forest damage, its causes and impacts on wood markets
- The approach of TC and EFC becomes more holistic, with a focus on policy and sustainability
1990s-2000s: Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)

- Forests become a public concern, with a focus on biodiversity and tropical deforestation
- **1992 Rio Earth Summit**: the UN Conference on Environment and Development adopts the “Forest principles” (no “Convention”)
- **UN Forum on Forests** (UNFF) is established in 2000, adopts the four Global Objectives on Forests in 2006, and the UN Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests in 2007
- Certification schemes are created to label wood from sustainably managed forests: FSC, PEFC
- Two regional processes draw up sets of Criteria and Indicators (C&I) for reporting on SFM: the Montreal Process and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests (MCPFE, now Forest Europe)
- MCPFE adopts high level commitments on SFM
1990s-2000s: Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)

- The **State of Europe’s Forests** integrates new policy relevant topics, e.g. climate change and carbon flow, biodiversity and environmental protection, socio-economic functions...

- ECE/FAO **Outlook studies** for Europe (2011) & North America (2012) address climate change, renewable energy, biodiversity conservation...

- ECE/FAO broadens its approach to include all dimensions of SFM, and enhances **cross-sectoral cooperation** (e.g. Joint Wood Energy Enquiry)
21st century: The forest sector and the green economy

- **Green economy:** improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities (UNEP)
  
  - 2013: **Rovaniemi Action Plan on the Forest Sector in a Green Economy** with 5 pillars:
    - Sustainable and consumption of forest products
    - The low carbon forest sector
    - Decent green jobs in the forest sector
    - Long-term provision of forest ecosystem services
    - Policy development and monitoring

- 2015: UN adopts the **2030 Agenda** for Sustainable Development and 17 **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) including Goal 15 which specifically targets the forest sector

- 2015: ECE/FAO publication “**Forests in the ECE Region: Trends and Challenges in Achieving the Global Objectives on Forests**”
The next 7 months...

- **May-September 2017**
  
  International Conference “Marianske Lazne +70 – Celebrating 70 years of UNECE/FAO cooperation on forests” in Marianske Lazne, Czech Republic
  
  - Expert workshop on forest certification
  - High-Level Roundtable on the past and future of the forest sector in the region

- **9-13 October 2017**
  
  Las2017 - joint session of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry and the FAO European Forestry Commission in Warsaw, Poland, and celebration of the 4th European Forest Week
1947-2017: 70 years of ECE/FAO cooperation on forests

... What about the next 70 years?

- Climate and human societies change faster than forests!
- ECE/FAO successful approach to remain...
  - open, pragmatic, flexible and evidence-based
  - addressing the multifunctionality of forests and the complexity of SFM
  - based on partnerships and cross-sectoral
Thank you!

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