

# Report from the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Forest Policy Network, 14 February 2018, Geneva, Switzerland

## Introduction

The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the UNECE/FAO Forest Policy Network was held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 14 February 2018, back- to-back with the workshop on the “Mid-term Review of the Rovaniemi Action Plan” (Geneva,13-14 February 2018).

Fourteen participants, including eight country delegates, one expert representing an international organisation and five secretariat members, attended the meeting.

## 1. Opening Session

### 1.1 Opening of the meeting

Ms. Marta Gaworska, Leader of the Network, welcomed the participants and introduced the meeting agenda. She noted that the Warsaw Integrated Program of Work (WIPoW) provides a new mandate and guidance to the work over the next four years that should be considered while planning activities of the Network. She thanked all Network’s members and secretariat for their contributions to the WIPoW strategic review process.

### 1.2 Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as proposed.

## 2. Update on the ToS activities and adoption of the Warsaw Integrated Program of Work (WIPoW) of COFFI/EFC

### 2.1 Update on the ToS activities

Ms Gaworska provided an update of the Team’s activities since the last meeting in Geneva (28 March 2017), highlighting the important role of the Team in exchanging experiences, information and for dissemination of policy-related work at the regional and national levels. In particular she noted the:

- (i) Organisation of the 3rd meeting of ToS on Forest Policy meeting on 28 March 2017 in Geneva just before the 39th session of Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management (JWP);
- (ii) Contributions to the strategic review of the Integrated Program of Work of COFFI/EFC, specifically inputs to the forest policy work area, and the revision of Terms of Reference of ToS (which was renamed Forest Policy Network, FPN);
- (iii) Provision of inputs to regional and global forest policy process including the United Nation Forum on Forests (UNFF 12), Forest Europe, and the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development HLPF);

- (iv) Contribution to the mid-term review of the Rovaniemi Action Plan (RAP), including inputs to the RAP review survey and regional workshop;
- (v) Contributions to the work of ToS on Sustainable Forest Management Monitoring, specifically, on the review of the qualitative indicators questionnaire;
- (vi) Reporting and policy relevant inputs to the 39th session of JWP in March 2017 and the Joint Session of Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and European Forestry Commission (EFC) (Las2017) in Warsaw in October 2018;

Ms Gaworska stressed that the EU forest-related process, specifically proposals on Renewable Energy Directive and LULUCF Regulation, will have important impacts on the sector and therefore close monitoring of the process is important for the ToS work. She further underlined the need for regular update and information sharing on global and forest-related regional processes, including UNFF, HLPF, Forest Europe, and EU processes to provide support at regional and national levels.

## 2.2 Introduction of the Warsaw Integrated Program of Work (WIPoW) of COFFI/EFC

The secretariat presented the Warsaw Integrated Program of Work (WIPoW) to FPN members. The presentation included the overall goal, objective and work areas of the WIPoW, scope and main outputs of the “policy dialogue and advice” work area, revised guidelines for UNECE/FAO Teams of Specialists, and revised Terms of Reference of the FPN. It was noted that the WIPoW is a result-based document.

Some members in the ToS were concerned with the low number of participants in the meeting. The secretariat was requested to enhance early planning and communication about meetings of the FPN, stimulate sharing of experiences and best practices among the FPN members rather than the development of policy recommendations, although they see the FPN as a mechanism to facilitate the development of recommendations for policy makers to influence political decisions.

They further mentioned that they would provide case studies on policy implementation and recommended to introduce case studies (such an option) when planning the next FPN meeting.

The Team Leader reminded and encouraged FPN members to host FPN meetings in the future.

## 3. Mapping the latest global and regional policy developments with a view of information sharing and input setting possibilities.

### 3.1 Information about forest-related processes of Forest Europe, the European Union, UNFF, and the HLPF

The secretariat presented developments within global and regional processes.

The Secretariat recalled Forest Europe policy relevant meetings and the important contribution that the FPN members, in their capacity as national delegates, can make to them.

The meeting discussed the “Renewable Energy Directive proposal (2021-2030)” and the “LULUCF Regulation proposal for the 2030 climate and energy framework” and stressed the possible impacts of these development on the forest sector and forest products market.

Moreover, the FPN members discussed possible impacts that criteria on biomass could have on sustainable forest management as well as long-term consequences for the market. It was noted that most solid biomass used for energy comes from outside the region, thus it was considered useful for UNECE to continue monitoring the flows of timber and the impacts on the market globally.

On the UNFF process, the secretariat presented the main developments and expected contribution of UNECE/FAO work to the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) 2017-2030, the 12th session of UNFF, the Expert Meeting on Regional and Sub-Regional Input to the UNFF in Nairobi, and the forthcoming 13th session of UNFF.

The FPN team provided additional information and added that UNFF12 was quite successful. UNFF will organise special event on SFM on Sunday 8 July 2018 at UNHQ in NYC entitled “Forest-based transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies; lessons learned and success stories” with key objective to stimulate partnerships in accelerating progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It is expected that by including this issue in the HLPF agenda, foresters will be part of the HLPF 2018 delegations. As far as the next session of UNFF is concerned, the adoption of UNFF communication and outreach strategy is expected. This may have implications for the work of the ECE/FAO forest communicators’ network. The meeting was also informed that the UNFF Secretariat is preparing four case studies on SDG 6, 7, 11, and 12 to be presented at UNFF13 and to contribute to the UNFF submission to HLPF 2018.

The secretariat highlighted the importance of the forthcoming HLPF 2018 which will review SDG 6, SDG 7, SDG 11, SDG 12, and SDG 15. The FPN members were also informed that the Joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section will organise a roundtable on SDG 15 (Sustainable Forest Management) during the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development on 1 March 2018 in Geneva. The main outputs of the roundtable will be included in a Chair’s brief to be transmitted to the HLPF 2018.

The FPN members concurred on the fact that the HLPF 2018 is a unique opportunity to enhance the communication on the contributions of the forestry sector to the SDGs and all opportunities, including the UNECE Regional Forum, should be seized to transmit a strong message to the HLPF 2018.

### 3.2 Contribution to the forestry related SDGs within the scope of WIPoW

The secretariat delivered a presentation on the possible contributions of the WIPoW to the forestry related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and relevant targets under each SDGs. Although SDG 15 is the main focus of the forestry sector, the WIPoW will also contribute to the implementation of SDG 12 (sustainable consumption and production, target 12.2 and 12.5) SDG 13 (climate action, targets 13.2 and 13.2), SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy, target 7.2), SDG 11 (sustainable cities, target 11.A), SDG 8 (decent work and

economic growth, target 8.5), SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation, target 6.6), SDG 5 (gender equality), and SDG 17 (partnership).

The FPN members concluded that it would be useful to prepare case studies and policy and communication briefs on the contribution of the forestry sector to the SDGs for dissemination during the HLPF 2018.

It was recommended to encourage proper participation of experts on forests and forest industry in the Regional Fora on Sustainable Development for UNECE region every year, in order to highlight role of the sector in achieving SDGs.

#### 4. Brainstorming on “Creating an European forest partnership on a voluntary basis to improve coordination and cooperation between international organisations in Europe”

The meeting discussed the establishment of an “European forest partnership on a voluntary basis to improve coordination and cooperation between international organisations in Europe”, based on the background document provided by the secretariat to the FPN members before the meeting. The proposed agenda item was an action point under Pillar E (action E.1.3) of the Rovaniemi Action Plan.

The meeting discussed the item and agreed that this action, as currently phrased, is not a priority for implementation and risks to duplicate existing mechanisms or similar initiatives. It is also limited to the European region, while the promotion of forests products and a green economy should be covering the whole UNECE region and beyond.

The FPN however sees some merit in developing an initiative, which would find the support of those who share the same objectives and long-term vision. The initiative could be topic related/oriented e.g. on sustainable forest products, and to be possibly launched in Vancouver in November 2018, and to be extended to all forest products stakeholders, including associations and the private sector. The initiative should take the form of a ‘statement of commitment’ of different stakeholders to the promotion of sustainable forest products as key means for a green economy and the achievement of relevant SDGs (such as SDG12 on production and consumption patterns). This idea will be further discussed at the Working Party meeting in March 2018 so that more guidance can be provided to the Secretariat and how to develop it.

#### 5. Results of a Brainstorming Workshop for the next ECE/FAO Forest Sector Outlook Study

The secretary of the Team of Specialist on Forest Sector Outlook shared the results of the Brainstorming Workshop for the next ECE/FAO Forest Sector Outlook Study, which was organised in Geneva, Switzerland, on 23-24 January 2018. The secretariat also presented the preliminary roadmap for the next Forest Sector Outlook Studies (FSOS) and proposed options for possible cooperation with and contributions from the FPN to the FSOS, as follow:

- a) Sharing of the report of the brainstorming workshop (including the Excel file with possible elements of the outlook and policy options) with the FPN for additional input;
- b) Organisation of a workshop to discuss preliminary results of FSOS, jointly with or with the active participation of the FPN in 2019.
- c) Publication of FSOS, presentation of FSOS preliminary results, possibly through the organization of a workshop in 2020.

It was concluded that outlook studies will provide the opportunity to understand market influences over the forestry sector and forestry policy in the long-term; thus, it is important for the FPN to involve and contribute to the process.

The FPN members agreed with the proposed options above and asked the secretariat to take action accordingly.

## 6. Follow up of mid-term review of the RAP

The secretariat presented the outcomes of the workshop on the mid-term review of the Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy, which was organized as a part of the mid-term review under the guidance of the FPN. The workshop identified priority actions for the RAP implementation by 2020, concluded that there is still a need for a tool for the forest sector in a green economy such as RAP in the future, and discussed options for the next steps in that direction.

The FPN members welcomed the outcome of the workshop to be presented at the next session of the ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management on 22-23 March 2018 in Geneva. The FPN members agreed to continue support on the RAP review.

## 7. Discussions on the Forest Policy Network 2018 work plan within the scope of WIPoW

Based on presentations and discussions, the Team agreed to contribute to the following work areas and activities:

- **Further contributions to the implementation and monitoring the Rovaniemi Action Plan.** The ToS contribution to the specific activities under RAP will be decided during the JWP based on the RAP mid-term review of priorities and recommendations.
- **Cooperation and consultation with the ToS on Forest Sector Outlook for EFSOs studies.** This work will include inputs from the Forest Policy Network to the EFSOS studies, joint or back to back workshops/annual meetings and active participation in the EFSOS studies process.
- **Preparation of policy briefs on the contributions of the forest sector to the implementation of Agenda 2030.** These 4-5 pages policy/communication briefs could be shared with delegates during HLPF 2018.

- **Preparation of case studies on forestry sector contributions to other sector (to relevant SDGs).** Case studies will be distributed/shared during the HLPF 2018 roundtables considering that it would be difficult to organize specific forest-related roundtables.
- **Support partnership and cross-sectoral cooperation.** The FPN will contribute to the development of regional partnerships and cross sectoral cooperation.

## 8. Housekeeping and election of FPN leader/deputy leaders

The FPN re-elected Ms. Marta Gaworska as team leader, Mr Stefan Karlsson (Sweden) and Mr Tomas Krejzar (Czech Republic) as deputy team leaders. The FPN also requested the secretariat to identify meeting dates and communicated them to ToS members as early as possible. In this regard, it was suggested to consider organizing another meeting in autumn 2018. In addition, the secretariat was requested to renew the call for memberships, and use the opportunity offered by the JWP in this regard; use social media, and consider coordinating the next annual meeting with ToS on Forestry Sector Outlook.

The session was closed by the FPN Team leader.

All presentation made during the FPN annual meeting is available at: <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=47701>