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Comments and suggestions from the timber and forestry community are most welcome. Please write to us at:  
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United Nations



# 2009 2010

## 2009 in Review and 2010 in Preview

By Ed Pepke, Acting Chief

**"Better than ever!"** – That's what some delegates said of the Timber Committee Week. While the Timber Committee (TC) Week was our highlight, its success was due to the sum of the parts, i.e. the lead-off green building workshop, the annual Market Discussions and the Policy Forum.

Thanks to the initiative of the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Forest Products Markets and Marketing, this second green building workshop built on the last one and prepared the ground for a major conference in 2010. The Workshop "Responding to climate change: Towards a global approach to green building", created a positive atmosphere for the Week.

The annual TC Market Discussions were led by a distinguished slate of speakers from the UNECE region, and beyond (China and Japan). The Discussions shared the same theme as the UNECE/FAO *Forest Products Annual Market Review, 2008-2009*, i.e. the "UNECE region's forest products markets in a global economic crisis". Delegates' lively discussions led to the TC's annual Market Statement, carried worldwide in a UNECE press release.

In 2009 two additional major projects were launched: the Forest Sector Outlook Studies and the *State of Europe's Forests 2011*. Both of these major works are conducted under teams of specialists, with advisory groups, led by the Timber Section.

2009 was the first full year of the new Strategic Plan of the integrated programme of the TC and the European Forestry Commission (EFC). Implementation of the Plan is controlled in part by the FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics. We held its annual session in conjunction with a workshop on "Estimating potential sustainable wood supply". The remainder of the Plan is overseen by the Bureaux, i.e. the officeholders of the TC and EFC.

The Timber Section conducted more workshops than ever in 2009. We began in February with "Forest products statistics for CIS region correspondents"; in March "Estimating potential sustainable wood supply"; in June "Gender and forestry" and "Strategies for increased mobilization of wood resources from sustainable sources"; in September "Current and future woody biomass for energy"; in October "Responding to climate change: Wood's place in a global approach to green building" and in November "Future forest monitoring in the EU" and "Policy options for wood energy". We are grateful to our partners for help in funding and organizing these workshops, and especially the participants.

**WORKING TOGETHER TO STRENGTHEN THE FOREST SECTOR  
AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

We produced 8 *Geneva Timber and Forest Discussion Papers* in 2009, plus 3 *Geneva Timber and Forest Study Papers* – more than ever before!



2010 brings the promise of a new staff member in forest sector policies and institutions. The focus will be on the climate change issues, which was identified as a critical issue during the 2007-2008 Strategic Review of our programme. Thanks to help from a student intern, we added a climate change website. Like you, we're all wondering about the outcomes and impacts from the COP-15 in Copenhagen. Bringing the Timber Section to full strength in 2010, with the eventual selection of a new chief of section, will undoubtedly mean better service to you.

We have a number of high-level meetings scheduled, as well as workshops and meetings of teams of specialists. We plan to produce a number of publications on topical issues too.

In closing let me use this occasion to thank the Timber Section staff for their dedication in 2009 which led to accomplishments which were praised by our clients. And at the same time, the Section wishes you, your family and your colleagues all the very best in 2010!

## POLICY FORUM "THE FOREST SECTOR IN THE GREEN ECONOMY"

The Policy Forum was a unique opportunity for a wide and in-depth exchange of views through presentations and discussions on the challenges and opportunities facing the forest sector, in the context of an expected transition towards a green economy. It was the first occasion to recall the difficulties encountered by the forest sector due to the financial crisis which developed during autumn 2008. The key concepts underlying the notion of green economy were then defined. The forum concluded that the forest sector has a key role to play in a green economy, especially in relation to climate change, as December 2009 negotiations in Copenhagen have again demonstrated. Sustainably managed forests play indeed an essential role in the carbon cycle, releasing oxygen, while locking up carbon dioxide in the trees and soil. The forest sector could play a still more significant role if governments and others seize the opportunity to use wood-based products for green construction and furniture wherever possible and take measures to support the wider adoption of modern wood energy. The Forum also noted that forests provide essential environmental and social values and services, beyond their contribution as a source of wood, such as biodiversity conservation; protection against erosion; watershed protection and employment in often fragile rural areas. A green economy should also generate green and decent jobs. Finally, the Forum noted the key role of appropriate communication by the forest sector in order to ensure the promotion of its strengths and avoid fallacious perceptions by the public.

The proceedings of the the Policy Forum organized on 15 October 2009 will soon be made available in the form of a Discussion Paper on the UNECE Timber Committee and European Forestry Commission website at: <http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=126#e515>

## FOREST MONITORING FOR EUROPE

The conference "Future forest monitoring in the European Union providing information for multifunctional forest management" was held in Uppsala, Sweden, 11-12 November 2009. The conference, which grouped 90 specialists coming from European countries, organizations and scientific institutions, aimed at promoting a streamlined European forest monitoring capable of delivering the necessary information in support of policies of relevance for the European forest ecosystems.

The conclusions from the conference can be found at: <http://www-conference.slu.se/futforestmon/>



## 2<sup>ND</sup> MEETING OF THE UNECE/FAO TEAM OF SPECIALISTS ON "MONITORING SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT"

The next (2<sup>nd</sup>) ToS meeting will be hosted by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and will be held in Ispra (Italy) on 26-28 January 2010. The Team will discuss issues that emerged from recent developments of global (FAO FRA) and regional (Montreal Process, MCPFE - Forest Europe) reporting. Forest health condition in the region, cooperation on SFM assessment and reporting for the next MCPFE – Forest Europe Conference will be the main issues of the meeting.

Further information about the meeting is available at: <http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=260>

## GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE ON SUSTAINABLE MOBILISATION OF WOOD

- a joint publication by UNECE/FAO, MCPFE and EC DG Agriculture -

In view of its role of policy monitoring, UNECE/FAO, together with the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) and with the European Commission (EC) DG Agriculture and Rural Development, jointly developed a "Good practice guidance on sustainable mobilisation of wood" to promote knowledge on the subject and support the increase of sustainable wood supply in Europe, in line with the objectives of MCPFE Warsaw resolution 1 "forests, wood and energy" and to support development of EU National Bioenergy Action Plans. The guidance is intended to assist policy-makers and practitioners alike in taking and supporting sound measures.

The development of this guidance was mandated at the workshop on "Strategies for increased mobilisation of wood from sustainable sources", held in Grenoble

in June 2009, and was done as a joint effort between the three sponsoring organizations and partners from the European forest community, as well as from industry and environmental stakeholders.

The guidance document proposes 24 concrete measures, relating to 8 areas of action and covering all relevant aspects of wood mobilisation. For each measure, the document further presents successful case studies ("Good Practices") from 14 European countries. Each case study includes information on specific circumstances, results and lessons learned, as well as the contact details of experts who may be consulted. The case studies are further assessed according to the time needed for implementation, ease of implementation and potential scale of mobilisation. Through this approach, the reader can easily prioritise measures and identify suitable approaches for specific circumstances. In order to ensure sustainability at all stages, the document further introduces guiding principles which need to apply to the sustainable mobilisation of wood.

### POLICY OPTIONS FOR WOOD ENERGY

#### WOOD ENERGY LOOKS PROMISING IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

For participants attending from throughout the western Balkans, a workshop was held in Dubrovnik, Croatia from 17 to 20 November 2009 focusing on identifying a range of policy options that could advance the development of modern, cost-effective wood energy, benefiting the entire region.

The meeting was organized by the Croatian Ministry of Regional Development, Forestry and Water Management and the North West Croatia Regional Energy Agency, together with the UNECE/FAO Timber Section and the FAO Sub Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe in Budapest.

Representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia reported on the present state of wood energy and highlighted the potential for wood energy to contribute significantly to reducing the region's reliance on imported fossil fuels, while at the same time stimulating sustainable economic development and providing social and environmental improvements.

Forest covers between 30% and 53% of the western Balkans (40% on average compared with 42% in the 27 countries of the European Union). Currently most countries rely heavily on fossil fuels to meet their total primary energy needs (between 65% - 85%). According to the International Energy Agency, imported energy dependency ranges between 32% - 58%, with the exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which



has significant hydro-electric capacity and domestic coal production.

Wood is used extensively in several countries of the region but rather inefficiently. It is considered to be responsible for significant health problems due to small particulates released by incomplete combustion in old-fashioned hearths and stoves.

Modern processed wood fuels like wood pellets and briquettes are being manufactured but most of the annual production is exported.

The prospects of an increase in the use of efficient wood-energy technologies thus look promising. However, the meeting confirmed that modern wood energy will not realise its full potential without commitment at the political level, both nationally and locally. In addition, closer cooperation between the various public and private bodies with an interest in energy and forest management will help to ensure that their combined efforts complement each other and provide the necessary boost to wood energy.

There was optimism that this will happen in spite of the challenges that countries face. There are already several excellent examples of how such working together can achieve impressive results, with the installation of new wood burning technology, bringing benefits to investors and communities alike.

For full information, including country reports, conclusions and recommendations, please visit:

<http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=256>

## Staff changes



Since the beginning of 2009, **Matthias Wilnhammer**, a forestry scientist from Germany who has already assisted the Timber Section in previous years, has been working for the secretariat on the topics of sustainable wood supply potential and sustainable wood mobilisation. In particular, he has helped in the organisation of workshops linked to these topics as well as in the development of the "Good practice guidance of sustainable mobilisation of wood". Matthias has also supported work on the upcoming European Forest Sector Outlook Study (EFSOS II). Starting from January 2010, Matthias will begin a PhD thesis in the field of wood energy in Germany.



**Cédric Pène** has joined Timber Section as a Policy Officer (a 3-year secondment through the FAO Forestry Department, funded by the French Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fishery). Before joining UNECE/FAO, Cedric worked for 8 years as an Agricultural Counsellor, in charge of Trade and Environment and Sanitary and Phytosanitary issues in the French Delegation to World Trade Organization in Geneva. Cedric will reinforce our Team in the field of policy and cross-sectoral Issues, including trade issues, increased cooperation with various partners and monitoring of policies at international and national levels of relevance for the wood and forestry sector. He will also be involved in the work of the Team of Specialists on Forest Policy in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

**Douglas Clark**, who worked from May 2004 - July 2008 in Timber Section has returned as a temporary staff member. Douglas expects to be here until the end of



Douglas Clark and Florian Steierer

**Florian Steierer** has worked in the Timber Section as a consultant on wood energy and wood mobilization for the past few years. His contributions on these topical issues are many including publications, organization of meetings, and critical support. Florian leaves the Section, but will continue to work remotely on these issues, and especially in their integration into the European Forest Sector Outlook Study. We'll miss Florian in Geneva, but are glad that we'll continue to work together.

## 32ND FAO/UNECE WORKING PARTY ON FOREST ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS AND TRADE BARRIER WORKSHOP

GENEVA, 24-25 MARCH 2010

The annual Working Party meeting will discuss issues related to forest statistics on 24-25 March. This year there will also be an item on forest economics, specifically prices of forest products, including a look at drivers and results. The Working Party will: review activities in the area of markets and statistics, including the redesigned Joint Wood Energy Enquiry; discuss the FRA 2010 and the State of Europe's Forests 2011; the status of EFSOS II; conversion factors and the guidelines on potential sustainable wood supply. A review of the Copenhagen outcomes will be made. The Working Party meeting is open to all delegates subject to the approval of your Head of Delegation.

On March 23, preceeding the Working Party, and following recommendations from the last UNECE Timber Committee, will be a one-day workshop on wood products markets trade barriers and subsidies. The aim will be to present these measures and better identify their objectives as well as their consequences on the market. It could cover, among other things, the US Lacey Act, the European FLEGT (Forest Law enforcement on Governance and Trade) regulation, other non tariff measures, tariffs or export taxes. The workshop is open to all who are interested in the topic.

The registration form and the documents can be found at:

<http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=261>

### 2010 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- 26-28 January, UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management, Ispra, Italy
- 22-23 February, Bureaux of the Timber Committee and European Forestry Commission together with the Bureau of the Working Party on Mountain Watersheds, Geneva
- 24-25 February, MCPFE Working Group on Legally Binding Agreement, Geneva
- 22-23 March, EFSOS Core Group Meeting, Geneva
- 23 March, Workshop on tariff and non-tariff trade barriers, subsidies, etc., Geneva
- 24-25 March, FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics, Geneva
- 22-23 April, Green Building and climate change: from science to policies, Quebec City, Canada
- 27-30 April, European Forestry Commission, Lisbon, (P)
- April, Corporate social responsibility in the forest sector, Serbia
- 11-15 October, Timber Committee Week joint with International Society of Wood Science and Technology, Geneva

See website at: <http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=124>