



ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

**Joint UNECE Timber Committee/FAO European Forestry Commission  
Bureaux Meeting  
23 March 2007  
Palais des Nations, Geneva**

30 April 2007

**Report**

**Introduction**

1. A joint bureaux meeting of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission was held in Geneva on 23 March 2007. Present were: Messrs. J. Dengg (Germany), Chairman, H. Pajuoja (Finland) and B. Glavonjic (Serbia), Vice-Chairmen of the Timber Committee (TC), Messrs. A. Chaudron (France), Chairman and P. Blombäck (Sweden), Vice-Vice-Chairman of the European Forestry Commission (EFC), and Ms. S. Phelps (Canada), Chairperson of the Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics.
2. Mr. P. Borkowski, Head of the Warsaw Liaison Unit of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) also attended the meeting.
3. The secretariat was represented by Ms. V. Cram-Martos, Director, UNECE Trade and Timber Division and Mr. W. Killmann, Director, FAO Forest Products and Economics Division, supported by Mr. C. Prins, Ms. F. Hirsch, Mr. A. Korotkov, Mr. J. Najera, Mr. E. Pepke, of the UNECE/FAO Timber Section and Mr. V. Sasse, FAO Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe (SEUR).
4. Ms. C. Ferreira (Portugal) and Mr. J. Ilavsky (Slovakia) Vice-Chairpersons of the EFC and Mr. C. Salvignol (France) Chair of the FAO/UNECE/ILO Expert Network on Sustainable Forest Management, sent their regrets for being unable to attend.

**Adoption of the agenda (Item 1)**

5. The provisional agenda presented by the secretariat was adopted as presented.

## **Arrangements for chairing the meeting (Item 2)**

6. Messrs. J. Dengg (Germany), and A. Chaudron co-chaired the meeting. The meeting was based on three background notes and additional material prepared by the secretariat.

## **Preparations for the sixty-fifth session of the UNECE Timber Committee, Geneva, 8-11 October 2007 (Item 3)**

7. The meeting reviewed a draft provisional agenda prepared by the secretariat for the upcoming TC session. It noted plans for the TC Market Discussions, which will be held jointly with the International Softwood Conference (ISC) based on the *Forest Products Annual Market Review*, joint market forecasts and country market statements. A number of changes from previous years are anticipated, including stronger government/industry interaction, better forecasts and twice as many participants. TC delegates will be invited to ISC-organized activities, of which three would have a fee, i.e. the gala, study tour and companions' tour.

8. The bureaux were informed of plans for the policy forum on wood energy and mobilization to be held on 10 October 2007 at the Committee's session. Its objectives are: 1) to inform policy makers on wood energy policies and their impacts, 2) to discuss how much wood can be mobilized for the increasing demands of both the bio energy sector and the wood-processing industry, and 3) to discuss impacts and consequences of increased wood utilization. The bureaux took note of key questions and possible presentations included in a concept note prepared for the meeting. Two studies are anticipated to be presented at the forum, one by CEPI and another by the UNECE/FAO secretariat. The bureaux will be kept informed of developments, of which the next will be an information note to announce the forum.

9. The UNECE Aarhus Convention had asked the views of international forums on the Almaty Guidelines on Promoting the Application of the Principles of the Aarhus Convention in International Forums. The Timber Committee at its sixty-fourth session invited the bureaux to prepare a response based on a secretariat draft. The response to the questionnaire, slightly amended, was approved (annex I).

## **Progress report on the implementation of the TC/EFC integrated work programme (Item 4)**

### **A. FAO/UNECE strategy for countries in transition**

10. Mr. V. Sasse (FAO/SEUR) briefed the bureaux on the activities and achievements of the team of specialists on Contribution of forests to sustainable development in Eastern Europe and the implementation of the revised Strategy.

11. The secretariats in Rome, Budapest and Geneva had reviewed the Strategy and the mandate of the team based on inputs provided by the team and guidance by the bureaux at its last meeting in October 2006 as well as outcomes of international workshops on forest management in Eastern Europe:

- An updated summary table of program elements and expected outcomes, which is structured into (i) Strengthened forest management and marketing, (ii) Strengthened policy and institutional framework of the forest sector and (iii) Improved forest information management and communication;
- A work plan for the year 2007 to be implemented by the secretariats in Rome, Budapest and Geneva, aiming for improved coordination of activities on Eastern Europe;
- A revised mandate of the team of specialists reflecting the updated structure of program elements, as mentioned above, and a revised title: Team of specialists on “Contributions of forests to sustainable development in Eastern Europe”. The bureaux agreed to consider the terminology used in the strategy at its next meeting;
- Planning for an update of the H-3 database and the establishment of an event calendar in the sub-region, comprising forestry activities by FAO and UNECE as well as by other organisations, agencies and governments.

12. The bureaux recognized developments in the forest sector in Eastern Europe as of essential importance for European forest sector developments. The bureaux appreciated the work implemented by the secretariats in Rome, Budapest and Geneva on forest management in Eastern Europe and welcomed the presented achievements and proposed amendments to the Strategy and mandate of the team of specialists. Mr. P. Borkowski (MCPFE Liaison Unit Warsaw) positively noted that the Strategy was linked to the implementation of MCPFE resolutions, particularly, H3.

13. The bureaux recognized a need for further updating and streamlining of the Strategy and suggested particularly to:

- consider the NFP-facility activities and resources available for implementation of policy assistance measures and further strengthen existing areas of cooperation;
- emphasize high priority of capacity building;
- take adequately into account issues of forest management in Eastern Europe in other work areas of the joint Program of Work;
- stress the gathering and dissemination of information on forest policies and institutions as an important activity;
- work on funding of participation from Eastern European country representatives in UNECE/FAO activities;
- consider the need for coordination also with forest management activities run by other organizations;
- monitor and report on achievements.

14. The bureaux requested the secretariats in Rome, Geneva and Budapest to prepare a reviewed version of the Strategy and to present it at the next bureaux meeting, the Strategic Review process and to the upcoming EFC and TC sessions for comments and approval.

**B. Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics, twenty-ninth session, 20-22 March 2007**

15. The meeting was informed of the outcome of the Working Party's session by its chairperson Ms. S. Phelps (Canada). The session had reviewed the activities under work areas 1, 2 and 3 for which it provides guidance. The topic of wood-energy and mobilization had appeared as a priority area and suggested that it should be included as such in the forthcoming strategic review. The Working Party had agreed to carry out an evaluation of its own activities and prepare proposals for improvements for the strategic review process.

**C. Mobilizing wood resources – follow-up to workshop recommendations**

16. The bureaux were informed of the follow-up activities to the workshop "Mobilizing wood resources" organized by UNECE and FAO with partners on 10/11 January 2007. Potential follow-up activities to the workshop focus on gathering information on wood use for energy as well as the supply and demand structure of wood. The UNECE/FAO Timber Section has been mandated as per the workshop recommendations to work on improving the information base and can provide much of the relevant information, analysis and communication platform. Three main follow-up activities are being envisaged:

- (i) Provide input to the MCPFE negotiation process, in particular on the resolution on wood and energy;
- (ii) Organize the UNECE/FAO Policy Forum during the sixty-fifth session of the Timber Committee in October 2007 on wood mobilisation and wood availability (title to be finalised);
- (iii) Improve information and analysis on wood balance (supply and demand structure) in UNECE countries. Related to this point, potential activities were discussed shortly before the bureaux meeting with Messrs. Bernard de Galembert (CEPI), Jeremy Wall (EC, DG Enterprise and Industry), Arvydas Lebedys (FAO), Udo Mantau (University of Hamburg) and the UNECE/FAO secretariat. Sweden and Finland also expressed their strong interest. Activities should lead to improved data for sector outlook studies like EFSOS, incorporating the EU biomass targets and be able to answer the question of how much biomass can domestic forests supply. The activities can partly be funded from resources available from the workshop in January. In addition, CEPI had announced it would assist financially the research activities described above.

17. The bureaux noted that the theme was highly topical to countries and should be reflected as a priority area in the integrated programme of work. It was stressed that improved information on wood for energy is of crucial importance for the energy and wood-based industries, as well as for decision making at EU level. Mr. J. Degg, informed of a workshop to be held this summer, which will analyse the situation in Germany, based on a recent cluster study. Five issues were of particular importance in Germany: (i) the mobilization of biomass potential in the forest including profitability of forest management, optimising wood harvest, and the willingness of forest owners to utilize their forest; (ii) fast growing species and potential of short rotation plantations on agricultural land; (iii) promotion of the use of hardwood, in

particular in the panel industry; (iv) new forest policies to allow and engage the utilization of existing potential in the forest (including standing stock) on a sound scientific base; (v) revision of subsidy schemes for bioenergy and consideration of other renewable sources apart from biomass. It was suggested to add to these points the question of the expansion of forest area, the consideration of how to achieve the EU 2020 target, the assurance of a level playing field between domestic and imported products and agricultural and forest products, and the new role of forestry to contribute to the sustainable energy supply for the region.

18. The bureaux approved the three envisaged activities, in particular improving the availability of data on wood balance and the analysis of the present situation, considering the EU 2020 targets. Activities should address long-term data quality improvement, whilst, at the same time, providing the best data available in the short term, in view of upcoming events such as Policy Forum.

#### **D. Reporting to the MCPFE 2007 Ministerial Conference**

19. The meeting was informed of the activities conducted by the MCPFE Advisory Group and the UNECE/FAO secretariat in preparation for the Report on the “State of Forest and Sustainable Forest Management in Europe 2007.”

20. The dataset encompassing quantitative criteria and indicators on SFM was completed and submitted to the lead authors, the process having been comparable to that of the FRA, consisting of 23 reporting forms and 450 parameters/variables. Data was received with country support, extensive correspondence with national correspondents and desktop studies for some countries. Challenges remain in particular as regards questions not covered by traditional national forest inventories, notably socio-economic issues. Outstanding cooperation with FAO Rome on the electronic database, the contribution of experts from Norway and the Czech Republic, financial support from the United Kingdom and the European Commission for the writing of the report have led to the completion of the project on the quantitative indicators.

21. Replies on the qualitative indicators for SFM on the legal, policy and institutional framework are currently being received. A pilot enquiry on private forest ownership will also contribute to the report on the State of Forests and SFM in Europe.

22. Mr. P. Borkowski (MCPFE Liaison Unit Warsaw) welcomed the fruitful cooperation between the UNECE/FAO secretariat and the Liaison Unit. He noted that the bureaux together with the General Coordinating Committee could be briefed on the draft of the report at the occasion of the informal meeting discussed under item 6 (c) below.

#### **E. Review of activities since the sixty-fourth session of the Timber Committee last October and programme of work**

23. The bureaux took note of the activities implemented since the sixty-fourth session of the Committee.

## **Planning of the 2007/2008 Strategic Review of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission integrated programme of work on forests and timber (Item 5)**

24. The bureaux agreed with the five basic principles for the strategic review process as set out in the secretariat note:

- All aspects of the ECE/FAO integrated programme should be considered, even the most fundamental. This would include objectives, methods, structures, resources and institutional arrangements;
- Stakeholders and partners should be closely involved in all stages of the process, but decision lies with the Committee and the Commission, in their respective organisational structures;
- The process should be completely transparent;
- The process should be based, to a greater degree than in the past, on evaluation of the programme's success in achieving its goals, using objective and quantitative methods where possible;
- Consensus on all aspects should be achieved by summer 2008.

25. The bureaux further agreed that as in the past, the strategic review gather information on opinions of the programme through an enquiry, addressed to Governments and to stakeholders: the private sector, civil society, research and academic institutions, participants in the UNECE/FAO work, partners, users of the services provided and any others concerned with the area. All responses received would be posted on the website, as well as relevant background information and secretariat papers

26. Mr. P. Borkowski (MCPFE Liaison Unit Warsaw) noted the strong cooperation and synergy between the MCPFE work programme and the UNECE/FAO integrated programme of work on forests and timber. The bureaux agreed that it was necessary to keep in close contact with the MCPFE process during the strategic review.

## **European Regional Forestry Cooperation (Item 6)**

### **A. Information from COFO 2007**

27. Mr. A. Chaudron (France) Chair of the EFC informed the bureaux of the outcome of the eighteenth session of COFO and expressed his appreciation for the balanced format between side events and plenary discussions. Innovations including that the chairs of the regional forestry commissions, serving as vice-chairs of COFO, chaired the plenary discussions were appreciated. During the in-session seminar on regional action on SFM, Mr. Chaudron had presented the cooperation of different regional processes in Europe and Mr. P. Borkowski the MCPFE processes and commitments.

28. Mr. W. Killmann (FAO) informed of high profile issues discussed, such as climate change and energy, plenary discussion of energy, and discussion fora on forests and energy, the agriculture-forestry interface, and the issue of reducing emissions from deforestation. FAO received a clear mandate to continue work on energy, on implementing the voluntary guidelines on forest fires and planted forest, on working on forest tenure and small-scale forest enterprise, and on organising the World Forestry Congress to take place in Argentina in 2009. He informed of the intention to continue to enhance the regional influence in COFO, e.g. through the regional

Commissions having a stronger input in the COFO agenda, and the Chairs of the Regional Forestry Commissions, chairing the COFO plenary sessions in rotation. Other innovations included the project market place as well as poster exhibits. COFO 18 was perceived, according to the IISD coverage, as “*the most substantive forestry meeting in years.*”

29. Mr. W. Killmann (FAO) informed the bureaux of meetings with delegates of the Russian Federation following its accession to FAO as well as a presentation by the Chief of the Russian Federal Forest Agency, Mr. Valery P. Roshchupkin, during a session on “*Russian Forests: National and International Dimensions*” during COFO. Mr. Roshchupkin informed of the recently adopted Forest Code, roundwood exports and the areas in which Russia seeks enhanced collaboration with FAO:

- The building of an international monitoring centre with three hubs in Russia to strengthen national forest resource assessment and feed into the regional and global FRA;
- Forest health, the forest die-back in the Russian Federation;
- (Re)training of Russian foresters.

30. In informal meetings with the FAO Rome and FAO Budapest, Mr. Roshchupkin informed of his country’s particular interest in cooperating in forest products statistics, another Forest Sector Outlook Study, and in being involved in the pan-European forestry week, possibly with a satellite event in the Russian Federation.

#### **B. European Forestry Week 2008**

31. Mr. W. Killmann (FAO) recalled that the TC and EFC had agreed that a next joint session between the two bodies be held possibly in Rome in October 2008.

32. A concept note on the European Forestry Week (EFW) by FAO and UNECE had been developed, to take advantage of the opportunity and organize a joint event together with the MCPFE and possibly the EC, to give greater strength to the fragmented forestry sector. During COFO, following an initiative by Messrs. A. Chaudron and P. Borkowski, representatives of MCPFE General Coordinating Committee (GCC) met with the joint bureaux and other colleagues to discuss the concept note, to clarify the objectives of the week and express concerns, namely the creation of additional costs and structures, while respecting the importance and different roles of the bodies involved. Subsequently, a revised note for a “Pan-European Forestry Week 2008” was drafted. Agreement was reached on the major objective to raise the profile of forestry in Europe and strengthen awareness. Longer-term achievements are aimed at a greater coordination of the European forestry agenda and closer cooperation between the different processes. As a next step, the format and objectives of the European Forestry Week should be agreed by involved parties, as well as the modalities for inter-organizational cooperation.

33. Mr. A. Chaudron explained the proposal for a pan-European forestry week, encompassing three pan-European processes, which would more clearly set out a distinction from the EU with its 27 Member States, the European Commission (DG Environment) organizing an annual “*green week*”.

34. The bureaux discussed the objectives of the new proposed format of the European Forestry Week, encompassing different events in various parts of Europe, including the feasibility of one day in Brussels and three days in Rome or a member country, such as Norway, considering that participation could be different and that events could run parallel. It was

stressed that opportunities arising at the country level to promote European forestry issues should be utilized and the bureaux were informed that this issue had been discussed during the informal meeting at COFO. The proposal for organizing events during a European Forestry Month was made, to accommodate more space for different meetings. The bureaux further elaborated on the expected outcome. Mr. P. Borkowski suggested that, as a prerequisite for subsequent planning process, objectives for the event should be carefully elaborated and agreed upon by the co-organizing parties. It makes a difference whether the aim is to organize a series of PR events in different parts of Europe aimed at public awareness raising or to hold a joint meeting between all regional bodies with the aim of producing a joint outcome and input to UNFF and COFO 2009.. The costs and other resources, including personnel and time, should be calculated in advance. It was stressed that the value-added of the meeting should be kept in mind as well as the practical developments in the field of forestry of relevance to the region.

35. Mr. C. Salvignol (France) Chair of the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Expert Network on SFM had expressed in writing the interest of the Expert Network to contribute and participate in the EFW, in particular on the issues of training centres and programmes.

36. Mr .P. Borkowski informed that the MCPFE Expert Level Meeting (ELM) is the relevant body to take a decision on joining the EFW 2008 on behalf of the MCPFE. Both the ELM and the General Coordinating Committee (GCC) have been informed of the intention of FAO and UNECE to organize a joint EFW together with the TC/EFC and the European Commission. He also informed that the issue will be taken up at a meeting of the GCC countries the following week. A decision shall be taken at a later stage.

37. The bureaux expressed their agreement with the concept of a pan-European forestry week, as outlined in the revised draft note resulting from discussions during COFO (annex II). In the case of a positive response by the MCPFE, further steps will be taken to operationalise plans between Geneva, Rome, Warsaw and Brussels to be circulated for comments to the joint bureaux and the GCC. The involvement of NGOs (e.g. IUCN, WWF) and the private sector should subsequently also be considered.

### **C. Proposed joint bureaux meeting with the MCPFE-GCC**

38. The usefulness of having a joint meeting between the TC/EFC bureaux and the GCC before the next ELM in early June to further explore the issue of EFW 2008 was expressed. Another occasion for that would be a meeting to be organized in order to review the draft *“Report on the State of Forests and SFM in Europe 2007,”* preliminarily schedules for June 11-12 2007 in Warsaw, Poland, where representatives of the joint bureaux and the GCC are expected.

39.

A new date for such a meeting is being considered, a proposed option being 21/22 May 2007, back-to-back with a Joint Expert Network seminar to be held in Annecy, France. The value of discussions in a smaller circle was noted. Mr. P. Borkowski informed that he would transmit the proposal of the joint bureaux to the GCC and attempt to find agreement on the date.

40. It was suggested that future joint bureaux meetings with the MCPFE may also be envisaged, for example during the period between November 2007 and October 2008, after the MCPFE Warsaw Ministerial Conference and before the completion of the 2008 strategic review of the UNECE/FAO integrated subprogramme, which should also consider how achieve the goals set by the 2007 Ministerial Conference.

**Dates of next bureaux meeting (Item 7)**

41. The joint bureaux agreed to set Tuesday 18 September 2007 in Geneva as a tentative date to hold their next meeting. Other alternatives were 11 or 25 September.

**Other business (Item 8)**

42. The secretariat raised the question of how the TC Market Discussions will be included in the joint TC/EFC session in 2008, and requested guidance from the bureaux.

43. The meeting was informed that the Timber Section's work in capacity building for forest products marketing in southeast Europe and the CIS had benefited tremendously from a loaned expert from the UK Forestry Commission, Mr. Douglas Clark, over the past 2 1/2 years. However, his full UK Forestry Commission funding ends at the end of 2007, and they request co-funding to continue his secondment. To date no extra-budgetary resources had been secured that would allow this specific programme to continue into the medium term.

## ANNEX I

**Response from the UNECE Timber Committee to the:****“QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CONSULTATION PROCESS ON ISSUES ADDRESSED BY THE AARHUS CONVENTION’S ALMATY GUIDELINES”****1. Please provide any comments on the Guidelines, in view of your forum’s own processes, activities and particular characteristics.**

The UNECE Timber Committee is not in a position to comment on the Guidelines.

**2. Does your forum have any formalized rules or procedures concerning access to information, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters? If yes, please provide an overview.**

The relevant provisions in the revised Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (E/ECE/1437) adopted by the Commission at its Sixty-first session (21-23 February 2006) state *that “the Commission shall make arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which have been granted consultative status by the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with the principles approved by the Council for this purpose and contained in Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968, parts I and II”* (article 13 of the Revised Terms of Reference). Rule 20 of the Revised Rules of Procedure of the Commission specifies that Subsidiary Bodies shall adopt their own rules of procedure unless otherwise decided by the Commission.

The Timber Committee has not adopted rules of procedures, as such. Under its terms of reference, however, participation by “international and intergovernmental organizations” is formalized. The revised Terms of Reference for the Committee, as approved by the UNECE Executive Committee in October 2006 contain the following wording: *“It should (...) cooperate with other international and intergovernmental organizations active in the sector, and in particular with the FAO and its European Forestry Commission (EFC), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and with the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), in order to ensure complementarity and to avoid duplication, thereby optimizing the use of resources.”*

**3. Does your forum have any non-formalized practices concerning access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters? If yes, please provide an overview.**

The active participation of civil society in the work of the Timber Committee is a practice of long-standing. Representatives of non-governmental organizations, industry, the academic community and other interest groups, including the environmental community, have been taking part as observers at the annual sessions of the Committee. The representatives of civil society do not have decision-making powers, but can participate in the discussions. Additionally, all official documents of the Timber Committee and reports of its sessions are available to the public on the Committee’s website (<http://www.unece.org/trade/timber>).

**4. Are there any current or future work plans of your forum that may affect the extent of or modalities for access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters? If yes, please provide an overview.**

No current or future work plans are likely to change the present situation.

**5. In particular, what kind of challenges, if any, has your forum encountered with regard to access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters (for example, low involvement of civil society, or practical difficulties in managing public participation)? If appropriate, please provide a description underlining those experiences you think could be most useful to consider when reviewing the relevance and practicality of the Almaty guidelines.**

No particular challenges are found to exist.

## ANNEX II



*Draft Concept Note*  
*Version 26 March 07*

## **The Pan-European Forestry Week 2008**

### **Working together for sustainable forest management in Europe**

The Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), the European Forestry Commission (EFC), and the UNECE Timber Committee (TC) are considering a Pan-European Forestry Week 2008.

### **Objectives of a Pan-European Forestry Week**

- raising of profile and strengthening of awareness of European forests in policy agendas and with general public;
- sharing with a broad audience the progress made in Europe towards sustainable forest management;
- providing a joint regional input to global processes such as COFO and UNFF as well as an opportunity to consider results of such global processes.

### **Proposed Format**

“One week” jointly organized by MCPFE, EFC, TC and EC, could include the following:

- A joint or back-to-back meeting of UNECE/TC, EFC and MCPFE<sup>1</sup>
  - ⇒ addressing selected joint substantive agenda item(s);
  - ⇒ back-to-back statutory business sessions for TC, EFC and MCPFE separately;
  - ⇒ one or two day “policy forum” or “high level segment” organized together with partners (CEPF, CEPI, WWF, IUCN...);
  - ⇒ preparing a joint regional input to COFO and UNFF;
  - ⇒ exhibition, posters, side-events.

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<sup>1</sup> The Timber Committee of UNECE and the European Forestry Commission have already scheduled a joint meeting in 2008. There is an opportunity for holding an Expert-Level Meeting of the MCPFE back-to-back with the EFC/TC joint meeting.

- Parallel events
  - ⇒ at EC in Brussels (half day with high level participation);
  - ⇒ in Member countries, addressing country-specific forestry issues of that country;
  - ⇒ in national media;
  - ⇒ by private sector and NGOs.

## Outcome

The European forest sector would jointly address core European issues, presenting itself and speaking with one voice to other sectors and the general public. This powerful message would help to raise the profile of the sector and bring it more to the attention of the general public and policy makers. Europe would also channel consolidated, joint inputs and messages to the global forest dialogue at UNFF and COFO.

More specifically, the outputs could include the following:

- raised awareness of the role of forests in addressing key social, economic and political concerns related to issues such as climate change mitigation, market integration, etc.;
- highlight the already good collaboration between the three bodies, leading to even closer synergies on forestry issues in Europe;
- a joint approach to address emerging and most pressing issues in the region;
- better coordination in the implementation of the actions agreed by the regional processes impacting the sector at pan-European level.

## Background

Member countries have been coordinating forest sector issues at the European level through three different bodies, namely the

- Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE, a pan-European forest policy process);
- FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC, forest management);
- UNECE Timber Committee (TC, forest products).

These bodies have different origins, different objectives, different roles to play and, in part, different membership. However, over the years, a congruence in terms of subjects dealt with, and a certain identity in terms of participants could be observed. TC and EFC have an integrated work programme, joint publications and a joint secretariat, and both participate in drawing up and implementing parts of the MCPFE work programme.

While the TC meets annually, the EFC meets every two years. Every four years, EFC and TC conduct joint meetings, alternating between Geneva and Rome. In practice the joint meeting has meant some joint substantive agenda items, while both EFC and TC have conducted also their own statutory businesses.

The MCPFE holds meetings at a ministerial level every three to five years, as the occasion arises. The next Ministerial Conference will be held in November 2007 in Warsaw. The Expert Level Meetings are convened at least once per year.

In 2008 there will be a joint meeting between TC and EFC, originally scheduled to be held in Rome. In response to a recommendation at the 33<sup>rd</sup> session of the European Forestry Commission, held in May, 2006 in Zvolen, Slovak Republic, the secretariats of the three bodies have been investigating options for a joint meeting in 2008. This idea has been received positively by the TC/EFC bureaux, the 64th TC session, and was initially considered by the MCPFE Expert Level Meeting (9-10 October, 2006, Warsaw, Poland).

In 2008, TC and EFC are expected to agree a revised work programme for 2008-2012 and the MCPFE would consider how to implement the decisions of the 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference in Warsaw (5-7 November 2007). There is scope for synergies between these processes, and perhaps an opportunity for more coordinated programming for implementing actions agreed by these bodies.

### **Next Steps**

- decision by MCPFE Expert Level Meeting;
- confirmation by EC.

### **Place and date**

Possibly Rome, or a host country, one week in October-November 2008.

If the EC joins, a one day meeting in Brussels before or after could be considered.

### **Current contacts**

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