

**Joint UNECE Timber Committee/FAO European Forestry Commission
Bureaux Meeting
Palais des Nations, Geneva, room A-206
23 March 2007, starting at 09:00 hrs**

Item 3 of the Provisional agenda

**Preparations for the sixty-fifth session of the UNECE Timber Committee,
Geneva, 8-11 October 2007**

Background Note

A draft provisional agenda for the sixty-fifth session of the UNECE Timber Committee to be held in Geneva from 8 to 11 October 2007, prepared by the secretariat is set out in annex I to this document.

The bureaux are invited to comment and agree on the agenda and timetable and provide guidance on the organization of the policy forum.

In addition they are invited to discuss and approve a response to the questionnaire circulated by the Aarhus Convention which was briefly discussed at the Committee's sixty-fourth session (see annex II).

ANNEX I**UNITED
NATIONS**E
**Economic and Social
Council**

 Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/TIM/2007/1

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

TIMBER COMMITTEE

 Sixty-fifth session
8-11 October 2007
DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE SIXTY- FIFTH SESSION
 To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
starting at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, 8 October 2007
DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA**Agenda item****Document**

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|---|----------------|
| Opening of the session | |
| 1. Adoption of the agenda | ECE/TIM/2007/1 |
| 2. Matters arising from the UNECE Commission session | ECE/TIM/2007/2 |
| 3. UNECE/FAO in a changing international environment: briefing and discussion of recent developments | ECE/TIM/2007/3 |
| 4. 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 | ECE/TIM/2007/4 |
| 5. Market developments in 2007 and prospects for 2008, joint UNECE Timber Committee and International Softwood Conference market discussions | ECE/TIM/2007/5 |
| 6. UNECE/FAO Policy forum: Mobilization of wood-energy and wood resources | ECE/TIM/2007/6 |

7. Review of activities since the sixty-third session and programme of work to 2008 ECE/TIM/2007/7
8. Election of officers
9. Any other business
10. Date and place of next session
11. Adoption of the report

II. TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

	Agenda item	Morning session	Agenda item	Afternoon session
Monday 8 October Plenary	1. 2. 3. 4.	Opening of the session Adoption of the agenda Matters arising from the UNECE session UNECE/FAO in a changing international environment Strategic review preparations	5.	Market developments Joint Timber Committee/ International Softwood Conference market discussions “Softwood markets and policies”
Monday 8 October Side meeting 1		International Softwood Conference, private discussions, producers/ exporters		
Monday 8 October Side meeting 2		International Softwood Conference, private discussions, users/ importers		
Monday 8 October <i>to be confirmed</i>	1400hrs	Briefing for Permanent Missions		
Tuesday 9 October Plenary	5. (cont.)	Market developments (continued) Joint Timber Committee/ International Softwood Conference market discussions “Softwood related market sectors: competition and synergies”		
Wednesday 10 October Plenary	6.	Policy forum on Mobilization of wood-energy and wood resources		
Wednesday 10 October <i>to be confirmed</i>	Side event 1400hrs	Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC): briefing		
Thursday 11 October Plenary	0830hrs 1000hrs 6. 7.	Drafting Committee (no interpretation) Summary of policy forum Programme of work	8. 9. 10. 11.	Election of officers Any other business Date and place of next session Adoption of the report
Thursday 11 October <i>to be confirmed</i>	14:00 hrs or later	Meeting of the UNECE Executive Committee and the Timber Committee Bureau		

ANNEX II**UN ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
TIMBER COMMITTEE**

- Draft for Discussion –
Version 1.1, 9 March 2007

Response from the UNECE Timber Committee to the**“QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CONSULTATION PROCESS ON ISSUES ADDRESSED
BY THE AARHUS CONVENTION’S ALMATY GUIDELINES”**

At its meeting of 3-6 October 2006, the UNECE Secretariat of the Aarhus Convention presented the above referred-to questionnaire, requesting the Timber Committee (TC) to respond to the Aarhus Convention’s questionnaire and to submit them on its behalf. The Committee discussed the issue and the Secretariat proposed to draft an answer to the questionnaire on behalf of the Committee. Selected Committee delegations did not concur with such an approach and the Secretariat thus proposed to further discuss the issue via circulation. It was agreed that the Bureau should prepare a response built on a secretariat draft. The draft below, would address only the factual questions. It is submitted for review by the bureaux.

1. Please provide any comments on the Guidelines, in view of your forum’s own processes, activities and particular characteristics.

The UNECE Timber Committee has no comments to 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.