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UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR EUROPE

Telephone: +41 22 917 2553
Telefax: +41 22 917 0041
E-mail: paola.deda@unece.org

Room 438 Palais des Nations
CH - 1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

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Dear Sir or Madame,

I enclose for your attention the 2016 Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JFSQ), requesting forest products data for 2015 and 2016, for use by four international organizations: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Eurostat and International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). Together these four organizations collaborate in the Intersecretariat Working Group on Forest Sector Statistics (IWG). I would be grateful if you would send us the data for your country by **22 May 2017**.

The basic principle of the JFSQ is that data are collected from only one correspondent in each country, by one of the four organizations. The information received is then distributed to all the organizations, each of which will use it according to its own mandate. In this way, the supply of information to international organizations is concentrated and streamlined, there is no duplication of effort and all organizations use the same basic data, reducing the reporting burden on countries and enabling each organisation to concentrate its data collection activities on a smaller group of countries. In the late 1980s, a country that was a member of all four organizations would have had to fill in over 25 data tables: this number has been reduced to 9.

The JFSQ contains a production and trade questionnaire common to all countries and organizations (JQ1, JQ2 and JQ3), and other questionnaires for the specific needs of individual organizations. All the terms and definitions have been harmonised and are internally consistent. Please fill in the questionnaires attached, as listed below:

JQ 1, 2 and 3

ECE/EU

And, if a member of ITTO, questionnaires ITTO 1, 2 and 3

General definitions, including cross-references to the Harmonised System (HS) and Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), are also attached. I would like to underline that the questionnaire is trying to cover all of the wood products industry and thus, for example, all wood removals, including from non-forest land, should be accounted for, as should all primary use of wood.

The data you supply will be passed on, by us, to the other organizations participating in the JFSQ of which your country is a member. You do not need to send data to the other three organizations.

An expanded cross-reference system is now available. Some small changes were made to the definitions and the corresponding questionnaire items. Kindly indicate whenever the unit for data on the questionnaire is different from that requested.

I would like to draw your attention to the attached User Manual which contains basic explanations on which questionnaires should be completed, the structure of JFSQ items, symbol usage, conversion factors, and product group diagrams, as well as listing all changes in definitions.

Countries are requested to address all queries and responses to our statistician, Mr. Alex McCusker (stats.timber@unece.org or telephone +41 22 917 2880). We also ask that your complete contact details (or those of the statistical correspondent responsible for that part of the questionnaire) be indicated on your response, so that we may undertake follow-up queries with a minimum of delay. An electronic spreadsheet of the JFSQ (Microsoft Excel 2003 format) is attached, and you are invited to **supply information via e-mail to stats.timber@unece.org**. It is also available on our web site at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=29752>. If you have difficulties in opening the files, or in any other respect, please contact Mr. McCusker.

I would draw your attention to the following:

- Please fill in **all** cells of the questionnaire, either with data (however small, even less than half a unit) or with zero (if no production/trade occurred) or with three dots (...) to indicate not available.
- Well-founded and timely estimates (e.g. based on industry publications) are preferable to blanks, which may be highly misleading. You will have the possibility to correct your data later when final official figures are available.
- Please do not delay returning the questionnaire if a few data are missing, as this means we have no data at all for your country. Send in the questionnaire by the deadline and any missing data later.
- Ensure the data you supply are consistent with those we have for earlier years. If the basis for reporting has changed, please provide a long-term series for earlier years, so that no misleading series breaks appear.
- A number of data checks are incorporated in the questionnaire. These are located to the right of the questionnaire itself in each Excel sheet. Kindly review these data checks prior to sending in the questionnaire.

The IWG would like to draw your attention to the portions of JQ1 and JQ2 marked "of which tropical", to which responses from non-tropical countries have traditionally been poor. Correspondents are requested, when completing JQ2, to cross-check the data classified by HS code in national trade statistics as "tropical" with the data classified by actual country of origin. Both ITTO and the European Forest Institute (in an independent study carried out for Eurostat in 2002) have found significant instances of misclassification as well as substantial quantities of tropical timber included in "Others" categories.

Many countries also have difficulty completing the tropical portions of JQ1 (production from imported tropical logs). Please attempt to at least provide estimates for such production or an indication of what proportion of imported tropical logs goes to sawn, veneer- and/or plywood- mills. Such estimates or more detailed production statistics may be available from relevant industry associations.

The deadline for responses to the 2016 JFSQ by UNECE countries is **22 May 2017**. We will contact you prior to this date to confirm that you have received this letter and the questionnaires and will subsequently confirm receipt of questionnaires you return to us. Please ensure that your response reaches us in time to allow processing and distribution of responses to all partners, and timely preparation of the *Forest Products Annual Market Review*. It is particularly important that the core data requested in JQ1 and JQ2 arrive promptly, as they are essential for preparation of the above

publication in June. Any comments that you have regarding market developments, as indicated by changes in trends in your statistics, would be most welcome by the secretariat in preparation of the *Market Review*.

Aside from these publications, the data supplied by your country will be used in the *FAO Yearbook of Forest Products* (finalized in December) and will appear in July (with an update in December) on the FAO database on their web site. I encourage you to check your data on this site as thousands of users access the site weekly. The address is <http://faostat3.fao.org/browse/F/FO/E>. The ECE also makes these data available through its website at <http://www.unece.org/forests/fpm/onlinedata>. For ITTO members the data supplied will appear in the *Review and Assessment of the World Tropical Timber Situation* and for EU countries in the *Agriculture, forestry and fishery statistics* book.

The partner organizations seek input from member states on all aspects of the JFSQ (questionnaire format, terms and definitions, process). They are constantly reviewing progress in this endeavor within their own fora and in the IWG. Details on the activities of the IWG are available at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=23657>. The IWG has proposed some significant changes to the JFSQ for next year as indicated in the notes of the February 2017 IWG meeting. Please attach any comments or suggestions you may wish to make to your return, and we will share them with the other organizations.

Thank you for working with us to improve global forest sector statistics.

Yours sincerely,

Paola Deda
Chief, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section
Forests, Land and Housing Division