REPORT

Lisbon, Portugal, 27-30 April 2010

EUROPEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION
PREVIOUS SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION

First session  
Geneva, Switzerland  
6-10 July 1948

Second session  
Geneva, Switzerland  
5-9 September 1949

Third session  
Geneva, Switzerland  
28 August – 1 September 1950

Fourth session  
Rome, Italy  
1-6 October 1951

Fifth session  
Geneva, Switzerland  
14-25 October 1952

Sixth session  
Rome, Italy  
8-16 October 1953

Seventh session  
Geneva, Switzerland  
8-13 November 1954

Eighth session  
Rome, Italy  
10-15 October 1955

Ninth session  
Rome, Italy  
7-14 May 1957

Tenth session  
Rome and Florence, Italy  
7-13 July 1959

Eleventh session  
Rome and Catanzaro, Italy  
22-30 May 1961

Twelfth session  
Geneva and Zurich, Switzerland  
30 September-7 October 1963

Thirteenth session  
Rome, Italy  
15-19 May 1967

Fourteenth session  
Geneva, Switzerland  
9-11 October 1968

Fifteenth session  
Rome, Italy  
7-11 September 1970

Sixteenth session  
Rome, Italy  
3-6 May 1972

Seventeenth session  
Geneva, Switzerland  
20-24 October 1975

Eighteenth session  
Rome, Italy  
13-17 September 1977

Nineteenth session  
Rome, Italy  
24-28 September 1979

Twentieth session  
Innsbruck, Austria  
22-26 March 1982

Twenty-first session  
Rome, Italy  
5-9 December 1983

Twenty-second session  
Budapest, Hungary  
28 October – 1 November 1985

Twenty-third session  
Geneva, Switzerland  
12-16 October 1987

Twenty-fourth session  
Rome, Italy  
5-8 June 1989

Twenty-fifth session  
Oslo, Norway  
3-7 June 1991

Twenty-sixth session  
Rome, Italy  
11-15 October 1993

Twenty-seventh session  
Antalya, Turkey  
25-28 January 1995

Twenty-eighth session  
Geneva, Switzerland  
23-27 September 1996

Twenty-ninth session  
Lahti, Finland  
19-23 October 1998

Thirtieth session  
Rome, Italy  
9-13 October 2000

Thirty-first session  
Barcelona, Spain  
4-8 November 2002

Thirty-second session  
Geneva, Switzerland  
5-9 October 2004

Thirty-third session  
Zvolen, Slovakia  
23-26 May 2006

Thirty-fourth session  
Rome, Italy  
21-24 October 2008
REPORT

of the

THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION

of the

EUROPEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Lisbon, Portugal
27-30 April 2010

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome, 2010
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION** .............................................................................................................................. 1-6

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA** ........................................................................................................ 7

**SPECIAL SEGMENT - FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE: THE WAY FORWARD AFTER COPENHAGEN.**

2.1 Implications of the Copenhagen outcome for the forest sector.................................................... 8-13
2.2 Adaptation of European forests to climate change................................................................. 14-22
2.3 Wood energy for Europe: status and outlook ........................................................................... 23-28

**REGIONAL COOPERATION ON FORESTS**

3.1 FAO activities in Europe ............................................................................................................ 29-31
3.2 *Silva Mediterranea*: progress report on activities.................................................................... 32-33
3.3 XIII World Forestry Congress: outcome ...................................................................................... 34
3.4 International events and initiatives, including future collaboration between the European Forestry Commission (EFC), the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Forests Europe), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Timber Committee (UNECE/TC) and the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)................................................................. 35-36
3.5 European Forest Week: evaluation and future........................................................................ 37-39
3.6 Progress in implementing the Strategic Plan of the UNECE/FAO integrated programme of work on timber and forestry 2008-13................................................................. 40

**REGIONAL ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMISSION FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE 20TH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY** .................................................. 41-44

**FORESTS AND WATER** ................................................................................................................. 45-51

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS** ............................................................................................................ 52

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS** ................................................................................................................. 53

**DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION** ........................................................................................ 54

**ADOPTION OF THE REPORT** ......................................................................................................... 55-56
APPENDICES

A. Agenda ................................................................................................................................ Page 9
B. List of documents ................................................................................................................ Page 11
C. List of participants .............................................................................................................. Page 13
INTRODUCTION AND OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The European Forestry Commission (EFC) held its Thirty-fifth Session in Lisbon, Portugal, from 27 to 30 April 2010. The session was attended by 48 representatives from 19 member countries, one member organization and one observer country. Fifteen representatives of eleven observer organizations also attended. Appendix C provides a full list of participants.

2. One minute of silence in memory of the victims of the Polish air crash in Smolensk, Russia, was observed.

3. Mr. Rui Pedro de Sousa Barreiro, Secretary of State for Forestry and Rural Development, welcomed delegates to Lisbon. In his statement he expressed the desire of Portugal to see greater recognition of forests’ contribution to the broader sustainable development agenda and referred to the importance of the carbon capture role of forests. He reaffirmed his country’s full support to FAO and recalled how the Organization has been instrumental in addressing forest issues in the region and beyond.

4. Mr. Eduardo Rojas-Briales, Assistant Director-General, Forestry Department, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), expressed the Organization’s gratitude to the Portuguese Government for hosting the meeting and for the excellent organizational arrangements and facilities. He emphasized the importance of the cross-sectoral approach of the Commission in addressing the linkages between forests, climate change, wood energy and water. He further noted the unique cooperation among several actors in the forest community and the role of the 2011 Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Forest Europe) which was expected to provide further guidance to the forest sector in the region. He also addressed the importance of the contribution of the Commission and the other regional forestry commissions to the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and through it to relevant international processes on forests.

5. Mr. Andrey Vasilyev, Deputy Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Geneva, joined Mr. Rojas-Briales in thanking Portugal for hosting the event and for the first-class organization. He referred to the United Nations’ mission to deliver as one and highlighted the existing strong cooperation between FAO and the UNECE, in particular through their joint programme of work and the joint Forestry and Timber Section in Geneva. He pointed out that 2012 was expected to be an important year, given the coincidence of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20), the end of the current Kyoto Protocol commitment period and the discussions under the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), addressing natural resource management.

6. The session was officially declared open by the Chair of the 35th Session, Ms. Conceição Ferreira (Portugal).

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Item 1)

7. The Provisional Agenda, as set out in document FO:EFC/2010/1 Rev.1, was adopted (Appendix A). The list of documents presented to the session is provided in Appendix B.

SPECIAL SEGMENT – FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE: THE WAY FORWARD AFTER COPENHAGEN (Item 2)

2.1 Implications of the Copenhagen outcome for the forest sector (FO:EFC/2010/2.1)

8. The Commission was informed about the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations in Copenhagen in December 2009, in particular as they related to the forest sector. Forests were the only sector specifically referred to in the Copenhagen Accord and it
was noted that the outcomes of the ongoing negotiations on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD-plus) could result in crucial global mitigation benefits and a range of important co-benefits. Decisions on Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) could increase Annex 1 Parties’ offset opportunities and lead to increased incentives for sustainable forest management (SFM). The UNFCCC’s recent increased focus on adaptation could intensify actions at the national level and promote enhanced regional cooperation. Industrialized countries have pledged financial support to assist developing countries to implement adaptation and mitigation measures.

9. The Commission heard presentations on the role of forests in the United Kingdom in combating climate change; LULUCF negotiations in Copenhagen; opportunities for forest owners in Europe to access compliance and voluntary carbon markets; and forest and climate change in the Russian Federation under current and future climate regimes.

10. The Commission noted the current limited synergies between the forest and climate communities. It stressed the need to increase the visibility and appreciation of the multiple roles of forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation and related links with energy, water and biodiversity. It recalled the need to synthesize information on the adaptation of forests to climate change and to make this information more readily available. The Commission noted that high transaction costs were an obstacle for smallholder forest owners wishing to access both compliance and voluntary carbon markets. It further highlighted the need to simplify the rules governing forest carbon projects.

11. The Commission observed that existing regional and sub-regional forest sector cooperative mechanisms, including technical networks supported by FAO, could contribute to strengthened regional cooperation on climate change adaptation. It highlighted the need to enhance the capacity to address emerging climate change needs through existing networks supplemented by new regional efforts. A proposal to establish a global technical network and support service and a working party on forests and climate change was considered.

12. The Commission acknowledged with appreciation the past and current work of FAO and UNECE on climate change, including as related to information services, awareness raising and capacity building and technical support to countries. It noted the need to augment their human and financial resources in order to meet ever-growing demands on the organizations for services.

13. The Commission recommended that FAO and UNECE facilitate regional networking on climate change, using existing regional forest networks, with a view to providing inputs to a global framework on climate change adaptation. It further requested that FAO and UNECE help address information needs related to forests and climate change and communication gaps in information and policy-making between the climate change and the forestry communities.

2.2 Adaptation of European forests to climate change (FO:EFC/2010/2.2)

14. The Commission benefited from a series of presentations on the impact of climate change on forests at the global, regional and sub-regional levels. The presentations also highlighted the status of efforts in adaptation, including case studies from southwest Europe.

15. The Commission noted that, unless adequate adaptation measures were taken, temperate and boreal forests, which are currently net carbon sinks, could become net sources of greenhouse gases. It expressed concern at the inadequate level of attention being paid to the needs for climate change adaptation in these forests by the international climate change community, and highlighted the need for raising awareness in this regard.

16. The Commission noted that the following were impediments to the implementation of SFM and climate change adaptation: fragmented forest ownership patterns; the high average age of small forest owners; depopulation of rural areas in Europe; and the lack of forest management in certain countries.
It also noted the particular constraints experienced by countries in South-eastern Europe and in the Mediterranean region in implementing SFM.

17. The Commission acknowledged that SFM is, by definition, a versatile tool which could provide an adequate framework for adaptation. It considered that best practices in SFM should be the basis for adaptation measures.

18. The Commission acknowledged the important roles of the FAO and UNECE in the collection, synthesis and dissemination of data and information on forests in the region and the potential use of these data for climate change purposes.

19. The Commission requested FAO and UNECE to continue to play active roles in generating and disseminating information on forests and climate change adaptation and in facilitating the exchange of related experiences among Commission members.

20. The Commission recommended that its members assess the adequacy of their forest resource assessment systems for the purpose of monitoring climate change risks and impacts. It suggested that regionally adopted criteria and indicators used for assessing and reporting on SFM should not be revised until the assessment of needs for additional data and the costs of data collection had been evaluated.

21. The Commission requested that the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Forest Policy in Eastern Europe and Central Asia continue to address the needs of this group of countries with regard to the implementation of sustainable forest management, including climate change adaptation measures, and to seek means to assist them in capacity strengthening.

22. The Commission further requested that FAO and UNECE raise awareness of the need to create an enabling policy environment for forest adaptation measures by small forest owners in Europe and to facilitate the sharing of country experiences in overcoming constraints to implementing SFM and climate change adaptation.

2.3 Wood energy for Europe: status and outlook (FO:EFC/2010/2.3)

23. The Commission was briefed on the status and outlook for wood energy in Europe and to facilitate its discussion was guided by a number of presentations on the opportunities arising from wood energy for forest owners; the environmental perspective; sustainable wood mobilization, and the development of modern forest fuel systems.

24. The importance of wood energy within Europe, as the major renewable energy source, was reiterated and the potential for increasing the use of wood for energy in the region was noted. In this context, the Commission considered major challenges for the forest sector vis-à-vis wood energy and recalled the important link between the utilization and collection of wood for energy and the prevention of forest fires. It further noted the need to clarify misperceptions on wood energy.

25. The Commission requested FAO and UNECE to address knowledge gaps by collecting up-to-date information on wood energy, continuing the Joint Wood Energy Enquiry in order to improve data on the supply and use of wood, and preparing outlook studies, taking into account other energy sectors’ targets and drivers. It further requested FAO to assist countries in improving their knowledge on wood energy.

26. The Commission was briefed on the launch of “Good Practice Guidance on the Sustainable Mobilization of Wood from Renewable Sources” developed by UNECE, FAO and Forest Europe, with support from the European Commission.
27. The Commission was also briefed on the potential impact of wood energy on air quality, including its contributions to global warming and impacts on health. The Commission noted a knowledge gap regarding the particle emissions from wood energy, in particular when also compared with other materials. It recommended that the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, in cooperation with the Working Group on Black Carbon under the UNECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, consider reviewing this matter.

28. The Commission noted that renewable energy action plans can be effective tools for achieving enhanced coordination with other sectors and that appropriate tools were needed to evaluate the impact of wood energy policies on forest management.

REGIONAL COOPERATION ON FORESTS (Item 3)

3.1 FAO activities in Europe (FO:EFC/2010/3.1)

29. The Commission took note of the recent launch of the 2010 Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) and its main findings for Europe. The Commission further noted that this information could help in the preparation of the State of European Forests, an important analytical document for the next Ministerial Conference of Forest Europe.

30. The Commission was briefed on the outcome of the workshop on the SEC/SEU Joint Forestry Initiative on Climate Change impacts on Forest Management in Europe and Central Asia.

31. The Commission was informed about the outcome of the 27th Session of the Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds, held from 7-10 April 2010 in Srbske Pleso, Slovak Republic, and the recommendation by the Bureaux of the Commission, the Timber Committee and the Working Party to amend the Strategic Plan of the Integrated Programme of Work on timber and forestry to fully integrate all subsidiary bodies of the Commission.

3.2 Silva Mediterranea: progress report on activities (FO:EFC/2010/3.2 and FO:EFC/2010/3.2 Add.1)

32. The Commission was briefed on recent developments in Silva Mediterranea, including the strengthening of its secretariat and current and future activities. It endorsed the proposal to include Silva Mediterranea activities in the Strategic Plan of the Integrated Programme of Work, in order to facilitate linkages between the activities of parent and subsidiary bodies. This would also increase cooperation and strengthen information sharing with other regions facing similar issues such as the Caucasus.

33. The Commission was presented with a position paper to be submitted to the Ministerial Conference of the Union for the Mediterranean on Food Security, Agriculture and Rural Development to be held in Cairo, Egypt, from 15 to 16 June 2010. The Commission noted the benefits of the initiative and concluded that further consideration was needed by countries in order to take an informed decision on the proposal.

3.3 XIII World Forestry Congress: outcome (FO:EFC/2010/3.3)

34. The Commission was briefed on the XIII World Forestry Congress held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in October 2009. It was informed, in particular, of the Congress’s focus, conduct and major outcomes, including the message transmitted to the UNFCCC 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) and the Congress’s Final Declaration. The Commission was also informed about the preparations for selecting the host country of the XIV Congress scheduled for 2015.
3.4 **International events and initiatives, including future collaboration between the European Forestry Commission (EFC), the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Forests Europe), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Timber Committee (UNECE/TC), United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) (FO:EFC/2010/3.4)**

35. The Commission considered cooperation between different organizations active in pan-European forestry and their current and possible contributions to the regional and global processes. The Commission took note of important global international events of interest to the forestry community, and the roadmap leading to the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, to take place in 2011 in Oslo, Norway. It was acknowledged that the pan-European region benefits from strong cooperation among forest-related organizations, based on their commitment to partnerships and collaboration. This practice had so far allowed duplication of efforts to be avoided and should be maintained. The Commission noted that the UNECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work had proven to be a successful vehicle for fostering synergies.

36. The Commission was informed about the development of the European Commission’s Green Paper on Forest Protection and the ongoing process to gather inputs to the current draft. Information was also provided on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) programme for improving forest law enforcement and governance in the “European Neighbourhood Policy East Countries and Russia”.

3.5 **European Forest Week: evaluation and future (FO:EFC/2010/3.5)**

37. The Commission reviewed the experiences of the first European Forest Week (EFW) held in 2008, the core activities of which took place in Rome, Italy, in conjunction with the joint meeting of the Commission and the UNECE Timber Committee. It was also provided with information on the International Year of Forests (IYF) to be celebrated in 2011. It also received an update on current activities of the Forest Communicators Network (FCN), including the work on the communication strategy for European forests and the FCN’s role in and contribution to shaping the programmes for the IYF.

38. The Commission was invited to consider whether to hold another EFW in conjunction with its next meeting, taking into account that this would be a joint meeting with the Timber Committee and possibly with the FAO Near East Forestry Commission. It was noted that, while such an arrangement would represent huge potentials for collaboration and synergies, the proximity to the International Year of Forests might reduce the capacity of countries to organize such an event in 2012. The Commission decided to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the events related to IYF and to take a decision on whether to organize a second EFW when considering the results of such a review.

39. The Commission was briefed on the recent consideration within the FAO Forestry Department on how to capitalize on opportunities offered by forthcoming major events such as the IYF and the Ministerial Conference of Forest Europe or to revive existing but under-utilized initiatives for raising awareness of forests.

3.6 **Progress in implementing the Strategic Plan of the UNECE/FAO integrated programme of work on timber and forestry 2008-13 (FO:EFC/2010/3.6 and FO:EFC/2010/3.6 Add.1)**

40. The Commission was presented with an overview of the status of implementation of the UNECE/FAO joint programme of work and a forward-looking perspective on how the UNECE/FAO Section is planning to respond to fund-raising and communication challenges, as well as facilitating the overall implementation of the activities of the programme of work. The Commission supported the proposed approach.
REGIONAL ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMISSION FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE 20th SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY (Item 4)

Forest sector and climate change

41. The Commission noted the achievements and the value of work by FAO in the area of forests and climate change and requested that the Organization consider developing a network and support service at the global level to assist countries in implementing international commitments related to forests and climate change. Such a network could be supported by the establishment of a working party or similar arrangement to enhance the linkage between scientific and technical work and the political level, where regions were well represented. It further requested FAO to strengthen its capacities in forests and climate change.

Wood energy

42. The Commissions requested that FAO improve knowledge and enhance data gathering on wood energy, with a view to clarifying its environmental impacts and potential in sustainable energy production, including compared to other renewable energy sources, and to support countries’ efforts in this regard.

Raising the profile of forests

43. The Commission recommended that FAO make every effort to raise the profile of forests and forest related issues through concerted action and synergies with relevant partners at the regional and global levels, including by actively contributing to the International Year of the Forests in 2011.

Forests and Water

44. The Commission requested FAO to provide information on the forest and water interface and recommended that FAO provide information and support to countries in formulating policy and legal frameworks related to forests and water and in strengthening capacities related to the establishment of such payment of ecosystem services schemes.

FORESTS AND WATER (FO:EFC/2010/5) (Item 5)

45. The Commission was briefed on the nexus between forest and water, previous work undertaken on the subject and the challenges ahead. It noted the need to develop a concrete agenda on forests and water, comprising policy, research and economic issues, based on the work conducted so far and the recommendations arising from previous meetings. It discussed areas for interaction between the forest and water sectors, including on legislation and policy frameworks, payments for ecosystem services and research on forest and water management.

46. The Commission noted that forests have important hydrological functions and contribute to the delivery of ecosystem services, in particular by contributing to water quality, stabilizing soils, minimizing surface erosion, reducing sedimentation in water courses, filtering of pollutants, and disaster risk mitigation. Forest management, when sustainable, can be conducive to enhancing these functions, but, particularly in semi-arid areas, can also adversely impact water supply.

47. With respect to the policy agenda, the Commission noted that in some member countries policy attention leans towards the protection of water supply. The role of forests in ensuring water supply was often not fully recognized in existing policy frameworks. The Commission recommended that policy and legal frameworks be adapted to recognize the role of forests and other land uses for water supply and to overcome institutional barriers. The Commission further recommended that mechanisms be developed to integrate forest owners into the value chain of water provision.
48. Regarding the economic agenda, the Commission noted the benefits of payment for ecosystem services (PES) schemes for the forest and water sectors, supporting the objectives of SFM and integrated water resources management. It took note of the UNECE recommendations on PES developed under the UNECE Water Convention, based on good practices from different sectors, including forestry. The Commission recommended that further work be conducted, in cooperation with the water community, to raise awareness of the value of forest ecosystems for water supplies, mobilize political support for PES and to enhance institutional capacities for implementing such schemes.

49. With regard to the science and research agenda, the Commission recognized that further work was needed to assess the multiple roles of forests in the water cycle, particularly in the context of climate change. Increased levels of wood production e.g. for renewable energy should be based on thorough research assessing the environmental impacts on forests and water. The Commission recommended the development of long-term monitoring and research, building on existing scientific cooperation between member countries.

50. The European Union Water Framework Directive was presented as an important opportunity for closer collaboration between the forest and water sectors. The Commission noted the role of international organizations and networks in supporting countries’ efforts to enhance collaboration between the two sectors and to implement the relevant recommendations emanating from previous conferences and processes in these areas of work.

51. The Commission endorsed the recommendation in paragraph 31 to include the EFC Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds in the Strategic Plan of the Integrated Programme of Work. It also endorsed the proposal to initiate a review of the mandate and modus operandi of the Working Party and to report on the outcomes of this review at the Thirty-sixth Session of the Commission. The Commission concluded this item by recommending to expand the mandate of the Working Party to include issues related to forests and water.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS** (Item 6)

52. The Commission elected Mr. Peter Blombäck (Sweden) as Chair and Ms. Conceição Ferreira (Portugal) and Messrs. Andrey Filipchuk (Russia) and Mr. Ismail Belen (Turkey) as Vice-Chairs, to hold office from the end of the Thirty-fifth Session until the end of the Thirty-sixth Session. It warmly thanked Ms. Ferreira (Portugal) for her contribution to the Commission’s work during her tenure as Chairperson, and Mr. Alain Chaudron (France) for his services as former Chair and Vice-Chair.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS** (Item 7)

53. No other business was brought to the attention of the Commission.

**DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION** (Item 8)

54. The next session of the Committee was scheduled as a joint session with the UNECE Timber Committee to be held in Geneva in the early part of 2012. An offer to host the joint session of the EFC and TC had been extended by the Government of Turkey. The Commission acknowledged the offer of the Turkish Government.

**ADOPTION OF REPORT AND CLOSURE OF THE SESSION** (Item 9)

55. The Commission adopted the present report in English. The Secretariat confirmed that the final report in the three languages of the Commission would be distributed as early as possible.
56. In closing the session Ms. Isabel Leitão, Vice-president of the National Forest Authority and Mr. Miguel Galante, on behalf of the State Secretary of Forests and Rural Development of Portugal, addressed the Commission.
AGENDA

1. Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda

2. Special segment – Forests and Climate Change: the way forward after Copenhagen
   2.1 Implications of the Copenhagen outcome for the forest sector
   2.2 Adaptation of European forests to climate change
   2.3 Wood energy for Europe: status and outlook

3. Regional cooperation on forests
   3.1 FAO activities in Europe
   3.2 Silva Mediterranea: progress report on activities
   3.3 XIII World Forestry Congress: outcome
   3.4 International events and initiatives, including future collaboration between the European Forestry Commission (EFC), the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Forest Europe), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Timber Committee (UNECE/TC) and the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF)
   3.5 European Forest Week: evaluation and future
   3.6 Progress in implementing the Strategic Plan of the UNECE/FAO integrated programme of work on timber and forestry 2008-13

4. Regional issues identified by the Commission for the attention of the 20th Session of the Committee on Forestry

5. Forests and water

6. Election of officers

7. Any other business

8. Date and place of next session

9. Adoption of report and closure of session
APPENDIX B

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FO:EFC/2010/1 Rev.1</td>
<td>Provisional Agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO:EFC/2010/2.1</td>
<td>Implications of the Copenhagen outcome for the forest sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO:EFC/2010/2.2</td>
<td>Adaptation of European Forests to Climate Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO:EFC/2010/2.3</td>
<td>Wood Energy for Europe: status and outlook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO:EFC/2010/3.1</td>
<td>FAO activities in Europe, including launch of regional findings, FRA 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO:EFC/2010/3.2</td>
<td><em>Silva Mediterranea</em>: progress report on activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO:EFC/2010/3.2 Add.1</td>
<td>Addendum: <em>Silva Mediterranea</em>: progress report on activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO:EFC/2010/3.3</td>
<td>XIII World Forestry Congress: outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO:EFC/2010/3.5</td>
<td>European Forest Week: evaluation and future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO:EFC/2010/3.6</td>
<td>Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2008-2013 of the integrated programme of work on timber and forestry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO:EFC/2010/3.6 Add.1</td>
<td>Addendum: Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2008-2013 of the integrated programme of work on timber and forestry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO:EFC/2010/5</td>
<td>Forests and Water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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INFORMATION DOCUMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>FO:EFC/2010/Inf.1</td>
<td>List of Documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO:EFC/2010/Inf.2</td>
<td>Provisional Timetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO:EFC/2010/Inf.3</td>
<td>List of Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO:EFC/2010/Inf.4</td>
<td>Statement of Competence and Voting Rights Submitted by the European Community (EC) and its Member Countries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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