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**Food and Agriculture
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European Forestry Commission**Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Statistics,
Economics and Management****Thirty-fifth session**

Geneva, 23-25 April 2013

Item 9 of the provisional agenda

Report**Report****I. Attendance**

1. The Joint FAO/UNECE Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management held its thirty-fifth session in Geneva from 23 to 25 April 2013. The session was attended by delegates from the following countries: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.
2. Representatives of the European Commission attended.
3. The following UN agencies and intergovernmental organizations attended the session: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO) and European Forest Institute (EFI).
4. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations attended the session: the European Panel Federation (EPF), the Furniture, Wood and Packaging Technology Institute (ADIMA), International Forestry Students Association (IFSA), Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC), the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), and Sicpa.

II. Adoption of the agenda (item 1 of the agenda)

5. The meeting was opened by Ms. Elina Mäki-Simola of Finland, Chair of the Working Party. The secretariat welcomed the participants and reported the outcome and recommendations of the last session of the Timber Committee (Geneva, October 2012) which were of relevance to the work of the Working Party. The participants were also informed that UNECE and FAO had concluded a partnership agreement on the modalities

for their continued cooperation within the context of the joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section.

6. After the opening remarks, the Chair introduced the meeting agenda (ECE/TIM/EFC/WP.2/2013/1) which was adopted without amendments.

III. Report of the seminar on “Innovation in the Forest-based Sector” (item 2 of the agenda)

7. The secretariat reported on the seminar organized by the ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section together with InnovaWood on 22 April 2013: “Innovation in the forest-based sector – a prerequisite for the Green Economy”. The seminar discussed and identified the policy and legal frameworks required to create an enabling environment for innovations, including innovation strategies and action plans. The meeting stressed the importance of financing innovation through different measures and tools, such as feasibility grants, debt or equity guarantees or business services. Also discussed were knowledge transfer, clustering research institutions, and the crucial importance of market innovation. The use of wood in construction was increasing in several countries and was supported by new building codes, which also allow higher multi-storey wooden buildings.

8. During the seminar, examples of innovation in various processes and products were presented. Bioproducts and biochemicals produced from wood were cited as being among the most promising products of the future (e.g. nanocellulose applications). Some barriers to innovation were mentioned, including high production costs and unsupportive framework conditions. Change management, new ways of thinking, as well as a deeper understanding of customers and trend analysis, were needed.

9. In the ensuing discussions during the seminar, the importance for the sector of marketing innovation was noted. The key role of efficiency as an innovative approach, in particular vis-à-vis the role of wood in supporting carbon balance, was recalled. The importance of sustainable financing for innovation was also stressed, as well as the crucial role played by housing to promote innovation in the sector.

10. More information and all presentations from the seminar are available at: <http://www.unece.org/forests/wood-innovation2013>.

IV. Forests and economic development in the UNECE region (item 3 of the agenda)

11. The secretariat presented a study published recently and launched at a well-attended side event at the tenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (Istanbul, Turkey, 9-18 April 2013). Identical to the Forum’s theme, the title of the publication is *Forests and Economic Development*.

12. The Working Party noted that the publication reflected the contribution of the forest-based sector to economic development. Referring to the data in the publication, the representative of Eurostat informed the meeting that more updated data on wood energy could be found on the Eurostat site. EFI stressed the importance of reflecting information on structural changes affecting the sector, including the classification of services and services related to products and forests, such as marketing and product transport.

V. Guidance to Work Area 1: Markets and Statistics (item 4(a) of the agenda)

13. The Working Party was informed about the successful publication of the *Forest Products Annual Market Review 2012*. Despite substantial financial and staffing constraints in 2012, the publication was published on the website in early August 2012 and printed in time for the Committee session. The secretariat thanked Switzerland for its financial support as well as other countries for their contributions in kind and highlighted that the staffing situation had improved, as the vacant position of Forest Products Markets and Marketing Officer had been filled and an additional officer was being recruited. During the ensuing discussion, the Working Party stressed the importance and uniqueness of the ECE/FAO work on forest products markets and urged the secretariat to continue giving a high priority to this area of work.

14. The secretariat informed the Working Party that the Russian version of the last *Market Review* would soon be printed, but added that the French version appeared to be late again. The French delegation expressed its deep concern, as the French language version was already out of date upon publication and printing. This was particularly unacceptable, as the publication is an annual one and intended to analyse unfolding market trends. The delegation urged the secretariat to resolve this issue before next year.

15. The secretariat presented the revised structure of the *Market Review*. The new structure reflected the proposed changes by the Team of Specialists on Sustainable Forest Products. The Working Party expressed its appreciation for the revised structure and content and for the flexible approach applied so that the structure could evolve to reflect new areas of interest and emerging issues. During the discussion, there was a suggestion that the chapter on innovation could focus less on innovative products and more on the drivers of innovation and on how framework conditions for innovation could be improved. The possibility of strengthening its focus on wood construction and how to make modern wood construction profitable was also mentioned.

16. The Working Party confirmed that the format of the old Market Statement (whereby the statement was drafted outside of the regular Market Discussions, as was the case prior to the EFC/TC meeting in 2011 in Antalya) was more efficient and better suited to the needs of the meeting. This format should be applied to the upcoming Market Discussions to take place during Metsä2013, the joint meeting of the FAO European Forestry Commission and the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry in Rovaniemi, Finland in December 2013. It was recalled that, despite the meeting taking place this year in December, the deadline for submission of information and the schedule for the preparation of the *Market Review* remained unchanged.

17. The secretariat reported that no capacity-building workshop on forest products marketing had taken place in countries with economies in transition during the last year due to budget and staff constraints. The Working Party emphasized the importance of building capacity on forest products marketing in the UNECE region and asked the secretariat to restart this activity in the coming year. Delegates highlighted, in particular, the importance of capacity-building to increase use of wood in construction. The secretariat confirmed that its ability to address requests for capacity building workshops was now much better due to the improved staffing situation and invited countries to provide financial assistance for the organization of new workshops.

18. Since marketing can imply a vast range of activities, the secretariat also asked countries to inform it of particular needs they might have. It thanked Austria, Finland and Sweden for their support for previous work on capacity-building and invited member countries to provide financial or in-kind support for such activities.

19. Mr. Eoin O'Driscoll (Ireland), the leader of the Team of Specialists on Sustainable Forests Products, presented the mandate of the team and its role in improving the *Market Review*. He called attention to two important events to take place later in 2013, namely: (a) a workshop on *21st Century Design in Construction: Solutions meeting Society's Expectations and Environmental Imperatives*, to be held in Brussels from 22-23 October and (b) a side event on the perception of wood-based forest products to take place in the margins of Mëtsa2013.

20. The secretariat presented its activities in forest products statistics in 2012 and plans for 2013 and later years, including the dissemination of data based upon the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire and the Timber Forecast Questionnaire. Attention was called to the decline in the rate of response to these questionnaires, which are one of the UN indicators of achievement used to monitor the success of the programme. The secretariat also presented the results of the 2013 meeting of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Forest Sector Statistics, along with the changes made to the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire 2012. Activities carried out by FAO and the Intersecretariat Working Group partners to revise the Harmonized System of trade classification for 2017¹ were presented. Some data issues were also covered, including a procedure for wood balances, an evaluation of the reliability of wood chip data and the principles of making estimates. The secretariat also provided information on use of the ECE/FAO website.

21. FAO presented its current activities, including the 2011 *Yearbook*, the *Pulp and Paper Capacity Survey 2011-2016*, the recent *Facts and Figures*, the preparations for *State of the World's Forests 2014* and *Recovered Paper Data 2012*. It provided the results of the FAOSTAT user analysis, which indicates that the FAOSTAT forestry webpage is visited every two minutes around the clock. There are approximately 200,000 annual queries to the forestry database. The new FAOSTAT provides more functions in terms of analysis and visualization. The China national forest products statistics workshop in early April had helped to identify and clarify a number of issues, particularly in some conversion factors and for plywood industry statistics. A follow-up plan had been proposed for an improvement in China's forest products statistics.

22. Delegations expressed their support for the work undertaken to expand the coverage of forest products in the Harmonized System 2017. Several delegations called for a further attempt to include briquettes explicitly, given the importance of wood energy and expanding trade in this product. The secretariat explained that since this proposal had been rejected in the May 2012 session it would be difficult for FAO or UNECE to raise the issue again. However, this could be done by a country delegation to the relevant WCO body, if an appropriate definition could be developed and the secretariat would be ready to assist with this.

23. Delegates also asked for clarification on the deadlines for provision of data, the frequency of data exchanges among Intersecretariat Working Group members and updates, and the consistency of indicators of data status as data move to different databases. Although delegations regarded as difficult the secretariat's 15 May deadline for data for the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire, they said they would make every effort to provide data as soon as possible. The secretariat pointed out that data for the previous year should be provided in full even if countries were able to supply only partial data for the current year. In response to a question on how to improve response rates, the secretariat said the improvement of contacts with national authorities and the use of other official sources would be pursued, including through national workshops.

¹ The Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System for is maintained by the World Customs Organization (WCO)

24. The current structure in the questionnaires of the items on chips, particles and residues was accepted. A proposal was made to split post-consumer wood from wood residues to improve clarity in wood flows. It was also suggested to change the units to metric tonnes rather than cubic metres. The secretariat indicated these points would be submitted for discussion to the Intersecretariat Working Group.

25. Support was expressed for the wood balance analysis used to evaluate wood supply and the secretariat was encouraged to improve this.

26. The main results of the Joint Wood Energy Enquiry were also presented. The secretariat expressed its gratitude to countries for the replies provided as well as for the significant input provided by a number of correspondents in troubleshooting and improving the worksheet programming. Overall, the updated format of the Joint Wood Energy Enquiry datasheet was well received by the Working Party. Delegations mentioned the contribution of the June 2012 Paris workshop to improved understanding of the methodology, increased awareness of the need for better data, and expanded networks among experts and stakeholders. The secretariat expressed its gratitude to the Government of France for hosting the workshop and providing financial assistance that allowed the participation of a large number of countries. Several countries showed interest in having a similar workshop in the near future. Additionally, delegations suggested using the collected data for a publication that would explain the data collection process, and analyse trends in the supply of and demand for wood energy. Ideally, the publication would also include content such as the national case studies on wood energy data collection presented at the capacity-building workshop. The Working Party asked the ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section to prepare this publication, subject to the availability of funds.

27. Working Party delegates discussed the current Joint Wood Energy Enquiry process, including the early deadline in November. For many countries official statistics only become available around the first quarter of the year; that is, after the official time limit for submissions. Moreover, the breakdown of data into specific sectors was mentioned as posing a challenge for some countries. The secretariat responded by offering flexibility on the submission deadline, as well as assistance to countries that were having difficulties in submitting data. The Working Party agreed to the use of estimates when replies are not received in order to facilitate cross-year comparisons.

28. Some amendments and additions were proposed for future rounds of the Joint Wood Energy Enquiry. Given their growing role as a transport fuel, it was suggested to improve opportunities to report on second generation liquid biofuels in the next questionnaire. Interest was also shown in developing an indicator for the cascaded use of woody biomass. The secretariat indicated its readiness to address these matters in close cooperation with specialists, and that a Team of Specialists on Wood Energy could be established to that effect. Lastly, the European Commission offered its assistance and support on a number of issues, including data on bark and solid co-products and on household consumption of wood energy.

VI. Guidance to Work Area 2: Forest Resources Assessment (item 4(b) of the agenda)

29. The secretariat provided an overview of the process for the collaborative global reporting on forest resources 2015, led by FAO Rome, including major elements and milestones. For the first time, the global reporting would be carried out in parallel to the reporting on the pan-European quantitative indicators. The global and regional questionnaires would be of a complementary nature, i.e. there will be no repetition of questions. The ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section was responsible for organizing the reporting and providing assistance to 54 countries in the ECE region; including the 46

countries that participate in Forest Europe and reply to the regional questionnaire. The deadline for completing national reports is the end of 2013.

30. The secretariat also updated the Working Party on cooperation among organizations and processes dealing with forest reporting and assessment. Two global workshops dedicated to this topic had been organized in 2012, in the United States and Japan. In addition to participating in these workshops, the Section continued to collaborate with regional partners and had initiated cooperation with the Montréal Process.

31. The Working Party was informed about the status of cooperation on the State of Europe's Forest 2015 between the ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section and the Forest Europe Liaison Unit Madrid and the need to reach an agreement between the two on the distribution of work for the preparation of the State of Europe's Forest. Participants highlighted benefits from the joint work on the pan-European reports and urged the Section, and invited the Liaison Unit, to finalize an agreement prior to the Special Session of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry in mid-June in order to continue the cooperation. Participants also urged the Section to continue the work on reporting on quantitative indicators and report on its status at the Special Session. Estonia made an offer to refer the matter to Forest Europe in order to resolve the issue.

32. In response to a question, the secretariat recalled that both the ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section and the Forest Europe Liaison Unit Madrid had received their pan-European reporting mandates from their parent bodies. The secretariat thanked delegations for their support to the role of the Joint ECE/FAO Section in this endeavour and expressed its willingness to conclude an agreement with the Liaison Unit as soon as possible. It also informed the Working Party that issues regarding the copyrights that resulted from the involvement of the United Nations would have to apply to the final publication. These issues would need to be resolved between the Liaison Unit and the United Nations authority dealing with publications.

33. Responding to a question about reference areas in the pan-European reporting, the secretariat explained that those were defined by the pan-European indicators, which clearly specified whether information was requested for forests or other wooded lands. The reference years in the pan-European reporting were consistent with those used in the global assessment and the secretariat had a limited impact on the way countries associated their data with these reference years. According to the preliminary plans, the reporting on qualitative indicators would be coordinated by the Madrid Liaison Unit and was envisaged for 2014. Participants were also informed about the consultation process with countries and organizations regarding the advanced draft of the pan-European questionnaire on quantitative indicators. Addressing a question, the secretariat explained that the questionnaire was fully consistent with the pan-European indicators (as endorsed in Vienna 2003) and any new developments were limited to terms, classification, definitions and technical aspects of reporting.

34. Mr. Johannes Hangler (Austria), Deputy Leader of the Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management, reported on the Team's activities since the last session of the Working Party. The work had included two regular meetings of the Team and several thematic meetings for preparing global and regional reporting.

35. Mr. Kit Prins presented the proposed method for assessing the sustainability of forest management and the rationale behind its development. The rationale included using the method to support evidence-based policymaking, to demonstrate the confidence and strength of the sector, to improve communication, as well as putting the quantitative data into context. The method had been developed by the Team of Specialists and the intention was to apply it on a pilot basis in the preparation of the next issue of the *State of Europe's Forests*.

36. He informed the Working Party about the major new developments in the method, which is now seen as an interactive tool for reporting and communicating with countries, significantly extending the role and responsibilities of national correspondents regarding data quality, analysis and policies. The method had been developed on the basis of the pan-European indicators for sustainable forest management. In order to make the evaluation more meaningful, three types of parameters had been established – assessment, context and background. Assessment indicators are used to identify possible areas of concern, leading to a dialogue with national correspondents, triggered when assessment indicators go over warning levels.

37. The delegations expressed their support and appreciation for the method as a significant step forward and acknowledged the progress of work. The method was now more interactive and inclusive; while remaining comprehensive and objective. The participants noted that there was still much work to do; however, the method was considered as an important step towards addressing the major question that was being posed to the sector – is forest management sustainable? Although many questions would have to be answered before the method was applied on a permanent basis, the delegations supported the idea of a pilot implementation as a means of learning about the method, its applicability and the results of the process.

38. In response to questions, the Secretariat explained that the issue of scale was seen as an important one and there was room for further improvement in making the process more specific and meaningful. However, as the current reporting was being done at the country level only, it was proposed that the method should also be tested at that level. Values for the warning levels had been established through discussion with members of the Team of Specialists. Furthermore, the method did not envisage prioritizing or combining indicators. Each of them had the same weight.

39. Mainly because of availability of data, the method focused only on forests and not on other wooded land. The majority of parameters were related to changes of monitored values, while some of them included absolute thresholds, established on the basis of discussion with experts. It was noted that the method was proposed to be tested on a one-time basis; however, if it were decided to continue use of this method, it was envisaged that the assessment would be repeated, at least in 5-year cycles, following the Forest Resource Assessment reporting cycles.

40. The delegations underlined the importance of the role of national experts in this process and observed that consultations with national correspondents responsible for reporting on quantitative indicators would be insufficient. For that reason, they called for involving other national specialists, including those responsible for policy making and implementation. The participants stressed the need for allocating sufficient time and resources for communication and consultation, also internally within countries, as well as for analysis of collected information. Communication with countries was of great importance, and reaching the warning-level thresholds was only the beginning of the dialogue at the country level. Furthermore, national experts should be informed about how their data would be used before they concluded the national data reporting process.

41. The possible relevance of the proposed method to the work on the Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe, currently under negotiation, was noted; however, at this stage, the application of the method was clearly seen as an independent, self-standing activity. Other users would be free to use the method if they found it applicable and relevant.

42. The secretariat invited the delegations to provide further comments on the method and application of the process by e-mail to the secretariat by mid-May. Inputs received would be used in the revised version of the method that would be submitted to Metsä2013 in December 2013. The Working Party concluded that an objective and credible method for

assessing the sustainability of forest management was possible and desirable, and welcomed the proposal to carry out the exercise on a pilot basis in connection with the forthcoming State of Europe's Forest.

VII. Guidance to Work Area 3: Outlook Studies (item 4 (c) of the agenda)

43. The secretariat presented the conclusions of the Friends of the Outlook meeting held on 16 October 2012 where strategic partners expressed their interest in cooperating further. It also presented the outcome of the first meeting of the Steering Committee for the Partnership Agreement between ECE and FAO to implement their integrated programme of work on forest-related matters, held on 15 January 2013, where it was proposed to undertake a feasibility assessment for the next round of outlook studies in the region.

44. Delegations stressed the need for continuing efforts in this work area. EFI and Eurostat confirmed their interest in the exercise and offered their support. The relevance of engaging the EU Joint Research Centre was also noted. Outlook studies needed constant revision: from a methodological point of view to benefit from the latest data and modelling tools and approaches as they became available and also from a substantive point of view in order to address emerging issues affecting the forest sector. There was a call for future outlook studies to supplement modelling data with expert opinions and foresight on emerging issues such as innovative wood products and second generation biofuels.

45. It was noted that there was an urgent need for a study on emerging issues, to address structural changes in the sector. It was also suggested that the Team of Specialists, in addition to addressing the development of the next Outlook(s), might also broaden its perspective to develop more focused and sectorial studies. Some delegations also pointed out the need for producing results that were useful on a national as well as a regional scale. A bottom-up approach was, therefore, proposed whereby national experts, provided with a common methodology and taking national specificities and circumstances into account, would develop national outlooks to be integrated into a region-wide study. This would also respond to the call for greater involvement of national correspondents and experts.

46. The creation of the informal group of the Friends of the Outlook was welcomed. The secretariat also clarified the relationship between the Friends of the Outlook and the Team of Specialists on Forest Sector Outlook. The Friends of the Outlook is an informal group gathering major organizations involved in outlook in the pan-European region on an ad hoc basis to advise and discuss on strategic outlook issues, including the pooling of necessary human, financial and physical resources. The Team remains the principal interface for the secretariat, international experts and member States through their national correspondents and experts.²

47. There was no final recommendation on a tentative timeline for the next round of outlook studies. However, delegations underscored the rationale for having an Outlook study following the release of the Forest Resource Assessment 2015 data. The Working Party recommended that the Team, as well as policymakers and the Friends of the Outlook, should meet in the margins of Metsä2013 in December 2013 to further discuss the matter.

² A number of suggestions regarding outlook studies were made during the discussion under agenda item 6 and can be found in paragraph 70 of this report.

VIII. Guidance to Work Area 4: Social and Cultural (item 4(d) of the agenda)

48. The Working Party took note of the activities of the Joint ECE/FAO/ILO Expert Network (JEN) to implement sustainable forest management; and, in particular, the organization of a seminar on the impact of climate change on forest work to take place on 11 December 2013 at Metsä2013. The secretariat expressed regrets on behalf of the JEN Leader and Deputy Leaders who were unable to attend the Working Party meeting due to other commitments.

IX. Guidance to Work Area 5: Policy and Cross-Sectoral Issues (item 4 (e) of the agenda)

49. The secretariat briefed delegations on the last developments regarding the finalization of the Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy. The draft Action Plan would be reviewed by the special session in June 2013 and was expected to be adopted at Metsä2013.

50. The Working Party was informed about the four National Forest Policy Dialogues that had been organized in 2011 and 2012 in France, Switzerland, Poland and the Russian Federation. In addition, a series of bilateral meetings with relevant stakeholders in the Swedish forest sector was held in Sweden. The National Forest Policy Dialogues provided increased knowledge and visibility of the Section's outputs in these countries and was an opportunity for the Section to gather information on the expectations of national actors regarding the ECE/FAO Programme of Work. Finland also shared its positive experience with this kind of exercise and highlighted the benefits gained from its participation in the National Forest Policy Dialogue in Poland.

51. The Working Party was informed about the latest developments and ongoing work in preparation for European Forest Week 2013. The Week will be held from 9 to 13 December in order to further highlight the importance of forests for our environment and societies and the achievements of the forest community. It will be held in parallel to Metsä2013. It will be celebrated throughout Europe, with special events taking place in Rovaniemi, the capital of the European Forest Week 2013.

52. The secretariat presented the rationale behind the European Forest Week 2013, its key objectives and main messages. It also explained that an information note about Metsä2013 and the Week would be issued in May, and would contain a series of logistical and organizational details for stakeholders wishing to take part in the joint session of the Committee and the Commission, and/or wishing to organize side events, parallel meetings and meetings of parent organizations during the Week—whether at the Metsä venue in Rovaniemi, Finland or elsewhere in Europe. In addition to the informative note, an official letter on behalf of ECE and FAO and in partnership with the fifteen organizations³ that took part in the 19 February 2013 preparatory meeting for the Week would be sent to heads of

³ Confederation of European Private Forest Owners (CEPF), Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI), European Forest Institute (EFI), European Network of Forest Entrepreneurs (ENFE), European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), FOREST EUROPE, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Geneva Environment Network (GEN), International Forestry Students' Association (IFSA), International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD).

forest delegations shortly after the host country agreement was signed. The Working Party was encouraged to promote the Week and identify opportunities for reaching out to other sectors and improving cross-sectoral linkages and interactions. Following a request from delegates, the secretariat, in consultation with the host country, will provide a list of hotels in Rovaniemi as well as additional information on when the meeting venue will open bookings for Metsä participants.

53. The secretariat delivered a presentation on the forthcoming capacity-building project, “Sustainable forest management for greener economies in the Caucasus and Central Asia”, funded by the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) 8th Tranche.

54. This project would help eight countries to respond to key capacity gaps and overcome these development challenges by providing knowledge, capacity-building, training materials and advisory services on:

- (a) Strengthening forest-sector policies and institutions to address how sustainable forest management could contribute to a green economy and to mitigating climate change;
- (b) Developing action plans and implementing sustainable forest management in three pilot countries;
- (c) Promoting sustainable forest products, including for bioenergy production.

55. The target groups would be government officials from ministries responsible for forestry and related institutions. The project would mainly develop capacities at national level but would also reach out to the local level to ensure that staff from local forest and forest related administrations are trained and advised on how to request further support. This would be achieved through tailored training workshops based on the content used at national level. Implementation was expected to start by mid-2013 and would cover a period of two years.

56. The secretariat presented the project “Safeguarding Sustainable Forest Management in the UNECE region through International Cooperation in Fire Management”, funded by Germany. The objective of the project was to help UNECE member States, and in particular those with economies in transition, to meet the increasing threats of wildfires affecting forests and support sustainable forest management. Therefore, legal regulations or protocols, or voluntary and broadly accepted guidelines were needed to ensure swift, efficient and safe interventions of a multinational character.

57. Beneficiaries of the project were countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and in South-Eastern Europe, as well as other countries in the UNECE region. The target group included experts in forest-fire management, policymakers, government officials, researchers and NGOs in ECE member States and, in particular, those with severe forest fire problems.

58. The project had started in March 2013 and was expected to be completed in July 2014. Its activities would include:

- (a) Study (analysis) of the contemporary and expected future forest fire problems in the UNECE region;
- (b) Development of a White Paper on the State of Wildfires and Fire Management in Forests and other Vegetation Resources in the UNECE Region;
- (c) Development of specific guidelines or Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for international cooperation in fire management;
- (d) Preparation and organization of an ECE/FAO Regional Forum on Cross-boundary Fire Management to take place in Geneva from 27 to 29 November, 2013.

59. Both projects were welcomed by the delegations, who noted their relevance and timeliness in the context of much-needed capacity-building for countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia, especially for the provision of forest statistics, and forest-fire-management issue in the context of climate change.

60. Mr. Johann Goldammer (Germany), leader of the Team of Specialists on Forest Fire, reported on the work and achievements of the Team. The Working Party expressed its deep appreciation and satisfaction with the work of the Team that under his capable leadership had been shaping the work on forest fires not only in the region but also at the global level, through the creation of the Global Fire Monitoring Center. Given the success of the Team in achieving its goals and the fact that the Center is now established and functioning well, it had been proposed to disband the Team. Opinions diverged, however, in this regard. It was noted that standards for reporting meaningful data were necessary. The Team leader saw the phasing out of the work of the Team as a feasible option, provided that the work at the global level could receive the same type of legitimacy and support as the regional efforts had received during these last years under the aegis of ECE/FAO.

61. In the absence of a representative of the Team of Specialists on Forest Policy in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, the secretariat reported that no activity of this Team had taken place due to a lack of funds and experts. The Team Leader recommended revising the mandate for the Team.

62. The secretariat informed the Working Party that the Team Leader of the Forest Communicators Network could not join the meeting, but that a detailed report of the activities of the team had been submitted to the secretariat and was accessible on the website.

X. Self-Assessment of the Working Party (Item 5 of the agenda)

63. The current mandate of the Working Party had been accepted in 2011, by the Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission, on the understanding that it would be reviewed after two years. In line with this decision, the Working Party, at its 34th meeting, was asked to conduct a self-assessment, which it decided to carry out during its 35th meeting. The self-evaluation would determine whether the Working Party considered that it was carrying out its mandate successfully and had the appropriate capacity to do so.

64. To ensure a participatory self-assessment, the secretariat (after consulting with the chair and vice-chairs) suggested that the Working Party be split into four groups. Each group was asked to review the following question “How well is the Working Party accomplishing its mandate?” This question was answered using the technique of the “H-form” which is designed to elicit the maximum number of comments and bring them together in a constructive manner. Recommendations formulated by the four groups were collected and clustered and presented to the plenary session in order to consolidate the comments and finalize the results.

65. Recommendations were grouped in five clusters covering the Working Party’s mandate, organization, work with other organizations and bodies, statistics and outlook studies (see annex). In general, participants indicated the need for an earlier and more participatory approach to preparing the agenda of the Working Party in order to include proposals of common interest. A new format should facilitate more in-depth discussions and debates that would directly contribute to the work of the teams of specialists and to the ECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work.

66. Results of the self-assessment will be submitted to the Special Session of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry of the ECE (in Geneva, 17-18 June 2013) for its consideration. Results from the Special Session will then be submitted to Metsä2013.

XI. Terms of reference for existing and proposed teams of specialists (item 6 of the agenda)

67. The secretariat presented the draft guidelines for the ECE/FAO teams of specialists, which had been developed at the request of the ECE/FAO joint bureaux. It was suggested to introduce flexibility in the implementation of the guidelines in case of exceptional circumstances (e.g. replacement of the Team leader by a Deputy Team leader at meetings). Moreover, while the suggestion of keeping the leadership period limited to two years was appreciated, the importance was also stressed of allowing, under certain conditions, the possibility for re-election of the same leader for more than one term. The Working Party suggested amending the guidelines for the teams of specialists to enable the creation of task-related subgroups.

68. In response to a request from the Working Party, the secretariat confirmed that new members could be appointed at any time by member countries. The secretariat would be actively inviting countries to appoint members to the different teams of specialists after the final approval of the different teams by the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry. Also, recalling the financial constraints that often prevented some delegations from attending, it was suggested to use electronic means whenever possible. The Working Party endorsed the guidelines with the inclusion of the above suggestions. The amended draft guidelines will be forwarded to the Special Session of the Committee and the European Forestry Commission in June for its consideration.

Team of Specialists on Sustainable Forest Products and Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management

69. Secretaries of existing teams of specialists then introduced changes to the terms of reference of their teams. The terms of reference of the following two teams were endorsed with no amendments or minor amendments that would be reflected in the draft to be presented at the Committee Special Session to be held on 17-18 June 2013 in Geneva:

- (a) Team of Specialists on Sustainable Forest Products
- (b) Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management

Team of Specialists on Outlook

70. The Working Party also endorsed the extension of the Team of Specialists on Outlook and suggested that the ToR could be amended to enlarge the function of the Team in order to:

- (a) Not limit the output of the outlook to the traditional discussion of demand and supply;
- (b) Stress the economic significance of the sector, including latest developments, emerging issues and employment;
- (c) Expand the methodologies, tools, methods and approaches in support of the outlook and other studies;
- (d) Monitor developments in outlook or similar studies (such as scenarios or “foresight”) undertaken within other processes and institutions or at the national level;
- (e) Improve statistics in support of the studies;
- (f) Address modelling for climate change;
- (g) Increase the participation of national experts in the preparatory phase.

A proposal was made to change the Team's name to, "Team of Specialists on Forest-based Outlook".

Team of Specialists on Forest Policy

71. The Working Party endorsed the extension of the Team of Specialists on Forest Policy, and suggested that the terms of reference be amended to:

- (a) Include a reference to the focus of its capacity-building activities on Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia
- (b) Include a clear reference to the National Forest Policy Dialogues

The Working Party stressed the need for funding to support the Team's activities. In this regard it was noted that the UNDA project would provide assistance to engage experts from the Caucasus and Central Asia. EFI expressed its willingness to participate in and contribute to the work of this Team, in particular through the work of ThinkForest.

Team of Specialists on Forest Communication (Forest Communicators Network)

72. The Working Party endorsed the extension of the Team of Specialists on Forest Communication, and suggested that the terms of reference be amended to:

- (a) Ensure support to the work of the Working Party and other teams of specialists in their communication activities;
- (b) Include work on reporting about external communication work of relevance to forests;
- (c) Reference the communication processes of civil society and their engagement, in particular when undertaking the survey;
- (d) Suggest planning the production of fact sheets for 2014.

Since the next meeting of the Team would take place at the end of May and some of these proposals might have cost implications, they would be discussed with the meeting and possibly included in the revised version to be considered in June 2013.

73. The Working Party also endorsed the continuation of the Team of Specialists on Green Jobs in the Forest Sector (ILO/UNECE/FAO Joint Expert Network on Green Jobs in the Forest Sector). It was suggested that the terms of reference be amended to include reference to higher forestry education as well as the need to address the low attractiveness of the sector for young people. The Working Party underscored the relevance of this Team in the context of the green economy.

74. The EU and EFI expressed their support and willingness to be involved. The International Labour Organization expressed its support for the work of this Team and informed the meeting that it had developed a series of publications and data that would feed into the work of the Team.

Team of Specialists on Forest Fire

75. Returning to the issue of the work of this Team of Specialists, the Working Party recommended extending the work of this Team to the end of July 2014 to allow completion of the project "Safeguarding sustainable forest management in the UNECE region through international cooperation in fire management".

76. The secretariat then introduced proposals, from the Bureau and taking into account the Strategic Review, for three new teams of specialists.

Team of Specialists on Forest Products Statistics

77. It was noted that the decision on the creation of this Team was strictly linked to the decision on the role of the Working Party. Should the Committee and the Commission decide that the role of the Working Party was mainly of coordination of the Teams' work, the Working Party supported the creation of this Team of Specialists because there would be a need to address statistical work separately. In this regard, some participants stressed their strong support to the proposal for the Working Party to focus on coordinating functions.

78. The Working Party noted the need to coordinate the work of this proposed Team of Specialists with that of the Team on Sustainable Forest Products as well as the proposed Team of Specialists on wood energy. It also highlighted the importance of forest products statistics and wood energy for the successful production of the *Market Review*. It discussed in what format the work of these three groups could be coordinated under the cluster 'sustainable forest products'; making sure that these teams remained independent in their nature while at the same time ensuring that their work would be coordinated and synergetic. It was agreed that in response to this need, meetings should be organized back-to-back to allow expert participation in the relevant meetings. For the Team of Specialists on Forest Product Statistics, clear linkages should also be established with other groups, such as the Eurostat Working Group on Forestry Statistics.

Team of Specialists on Wood Energy

79. The Working Party supported the creation of this Team of Specialists, taking into account suggestions for cooperation as above, in order to include the work of this Team under the 'sustainable forest products' cluster. It was noted that it should be stressed how this work contributed to and complemented programmes on renewable energy undertaken by other parts of ECE.

Team of Specialists on Wildlife Management

80. The Working Party discussed the establishment of this Team of Specialists, and suggested that its scope might be better clarified and possibly broadened to include non-forest products, valuation of natural resources and payment for ecosystem services, as well as environmental accounting. The terms of reference should also include references to other wildlife issues such as: conflicts and specific damages caused by wildlife; human and wildlife interaction; and mapping wildlife habitats. There would be the need for further thinking on whether to also extend the mandate to cover biodiversity. The title should reflect the full scope of this Team.

81. While there was general support for the Team, the Working Party did not reach agreement on this matter and suggested that discussion on a revised terms of reference be considered at the Special Session.

82. The Working Party stressed the importance of cooperation and communication among teams. Given the linkages among topics, it is crucial to identify opportunities for teams to exchange information on their work.

XII. Other business (item 7 of the agenda)

83. The date of the next meeting was discussed. Support was shown for the possibility of organizing it around International Forest Day (March 21) and the secretariat was requested to explore this option.

XIII. Election of officers (item 8 of the agenda)

84. The Working Party re-elected Ms. E. Maki-Simola (Finland) as Chair and Mr. A. Mariano (Italy) and Mr. J. Hangler (Austria) as vice-chairs to hold office until the end of the thirty-sixth session.

XIV. Adoption of the report (Item 9 of the agenda)

85. The Working Party adopted the report at the end of the session, based on a draft by the Secretariat. The meeting was closed by the Chair at 1 p.m. on 25 April.

ANNEX

Recommendations from the Working Party self-evaluation

The Working Party recommends to COFFI/EFC to:

Mandate

(a) **Substantive focus**

Revise the mandate of the WP, and consider revising the working areas to be as follows:

- Forest economics and statistics including profitability and competitiveness in the construction sector
- Forest resources assessment
- Outlook studies
- The introduction of new methods for forest-related economic analysis
- Sound use of wood
- Work on environmental accounting

(b) **Role and function**

- Clarify the role and function of the WP, in particular to avoid duplication of work by the different bodies.
- Decide whether the WP has coordination, communication and outreach functions or it provides technical advice. This clarification would have to be extended also to the role of the WP vis-à-vis each ToS and the role of the ToS (for example, provide technical advice, develop methodologies, improve concepts and definitions).
- Conduct an in-depth review to streamline the WP mandate and ensure that only ToSs that contribute directly to the Program of Work, and for which the Secretariat has capacity to service, should be established.
- Create ToS with technical responsibilities on forests and forest industry statistics (This will allow more analysis to be done and to delete this issue from the WP mandate).

Organizational

(a) **Preparation of WP meetings**

- Ask member State delegates for better preparation, better coordination (between specialists and between the technical and policy levels), and for better communication at the national level both before and after WP meetings.

Request the Secretariat to:

- Make meeting documents, preferably shorter, and available at least three to four weeks prior to the WP meeting in order to allow participants to consult with their colleagues.

- While preparing the Agenda provide the possibility for participants to include emerging issues or questions of interest for discussion.
- Highlight on the Agenda the main questions to be answered during the WP for a better preparation of the participants.
- Make a comprehensive list of abbreviations related to the WP work, with their full names and a brief description, and keep it updated.

(a) **Structure of WP meetings**

Request the Secretariat to:

- Encourage and facilitate roundtables during WP meetings to stimulate more in-depth discussions on key issues (these can be identified by ToSs).
- Develop more initiatives like the “Friends of the Outlook”, i.e. which assemble experts that work on a particular topic at the ECE level in order to work on issues of common interest.

(b) **Communication**

Request the Secretariat to:

- Improve communication through electronic means (e.g. through “live meeting” software, webinars, video telecommunications), and look into how to involve people in other ways.
- Establish a web-based platform accessible to delegates before WP meetings to provide on-line inputs or decisions.

(c) **Participants**

- Encourage countries to nominate and send specialists in forest economics.
- Encourage specialization of national correspondents and the participation of more than one participant from each country.
- To that effect, prepare a list of professionals for each country with their well-defined areas of speciality at the ECE level.

(d) **Monitoring and evaluation**

- Undertake regular self-evaluations of the WP, once every two years, to adjust its mandate whenever needed.

Work with other organizations and bodies

- Continue working together with other international organizations to avoid duplication, in particular continue working on an equal footing with FAO, Eurostat and ITTO and agree all terms, definitions and methodologies for statistical data.
- Strengthen coordination with other government bodies of participating countries responsible for forest statistics.

- Enhance communication with other sectors; for example, for the broad dissemination of the action plan, through open workshops and at the next WP.

Statistics

- Enhance coordination and the comparison of data with other statistical databases.

Outlook

- Encourage Outlook studies to adopt a simple set of scenarios that can be modelled quickly and put funds towards that end so that studies are completed quickly.
 - Integrate analysis and structural changes in EFSOS studies.
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