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Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry

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Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Draft Rules of Procedure for the Committee

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Note by the Secretariat

Summary

In line with the outcome of the review of the 2005 reform of ECE (E/ECE/1468), the Committee considered a document (ECE/TIM/2014/12) containing its draft rules of procedure at its seventy-second session held in Kazan, Russian Federation in November 2014. At that session, proposals were made by delegates and included in a second draft subsequently tabled at the seventy-third session of the Committee in Engelberg, Switzerland, in November 2015 (ECE/TIM/2015/10-FO:EFC/15/10). At the seventy-fifth session of the Committee in Warsaw, Poland, in November 2017 the Committee considered again the Draft Rules of Procedure for the Committee (ECE/TIM/2017/10-FO:EFC/2017/10) as updated to reflect comments from session in Engelberg. The Committee could not agree on the current version nor on the necessity to have Rules of Procedure for the Committee in general, and finally decided to postpone the discussion to the seventy-sixth session of the Committee.

The Committee is invited to consider these Draft Rules of Procedure for further discussion/adoption or whether to continue to use the ECE Rules of Procedure instead, without adopting rules specific to the Committee.

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I. Introduction

1. The draft rules of procedure in this document have been prepared in accordance with the Guidelines on Procedures and Practices for ECE bodies adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe (E/2013/37-E/ECE/1464, annex III, appendix III).¹ In any area not covered in this document, the Rules of Procedure of the Economic Commission for Europe will be used and, where applicable, the Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council, and taking into account the Guidelines on Procedure and Practices for ECE bodies *mutatis mutandis*.

II. Organization of the Committee sessions

2. Sessions of the Committee shall be held regularly once a year. Additional meetings may be convened by the Bureau² in consultation with the secretariat.

3. At its regular sessions, the Committee decides on the dates of the next session. Changes in previously agreed dates of sessions due to unforeseen circumstances can be initiated by the Bureau in consultation with the secretariat.

4. The provisional agenda for the upcoming individual³ sessions of the Committee shall be drawn up by the secretariat in consultation with the Bureau and shall be circulated to member States at least six weeks⁴ in advance of the meeting.

5. The agenda of the individual sessions of the Committee shall cover, *inter alia*, a review of the implementation of its programme of work, including a review of capacity-building activities, policy-relevant documents developed in the context of the Committee's programme of work, as well as deliberations on future activities in accordance with its Terms of Reference, as contained in document ECE/EX/10.

6. The Bureau shall suggest important substantive issues within the aforementioned Terms of Reference to be addressed during the substantive segment of the sessions.

7. The Committee shall agree on its programme of work, which shall be compatible with the Integrated Programme of Work of the Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission.

III. Representation and accreditation

8. The rules for representation and participation in the Economic Commission for Europe (E/ECE/778/Rev.5)⁵ and the Guidelines on Procedures and Practices for ECE bodies adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe (E/2013/37-E/ECE/1464, annex III, appendix III) shall be applied.

¹ Outcome of the review of the 2005 reform of ECE (E/2013/37-E/ECE/1464, annex III).

² See section IV.

³ With individual session is meant a meeting of COFFI not held jointly with EFC.

⁴ Rules of procedures of UNECE, Decision 2010/19, Rule 7.

⁵ Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic Commission for Europe – Fifth edition (E/ECE/778/Rev.5).

9. Representatives of non-governmental organizations, private sector and academia and other entities, which do not have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council⁶ may participate in the sessions of the Committee as observers without a right to vote, at the invitation of the secretariat and subject to approval by member States.

10. The list of delegates in the Committee's sessions shall be communicated by the secretariat to the Permanent Representations of member States to the United Nations Organizations in Geneva five working days prior to the starting date of the session.

IV. Officers

11. The Committee shall elect a Chairperson and three Vice-Chairpersons among individuals nominated by member States of UNECE. The Committee Bureau shall consist of those four officers.⁷

12. The term of office shall be two years. Bureau members, including the Chair, can be re-elected for three additional terms. Efforts shall be made to ensure continuity within the Bureau, as appropriate. The terms of office of elected officials will begin at the end of the session in which they are elected. This will allow the current officers to preside over the session that they have prepared and organized.

13. Candidates for the Bureau of the Committee and other subsidiary bodies shall be nominated by member States based on the person's expertise, professionalism, and expected support from the membership.

14. Geographical balance should be taken into due consideration when examining the candidatures of potential Bureau members.

15. Member States, while making their nomination, shall ensure that candidates or their employers have no contractual agreement with ECE, from which they or their employers may financially benefit, in order to avoid conflicts of interest.

16. The elections for the Bureau will take place in accordance with the Guidelines on Procedures and Practices for ECE bodies (E/2013/37-E/ECE/1464, annex III, appendix III).

17. If the Chairperson is absent from any meetings or part thereof, a Vice-Chairperson shall perform the functions of the Chairperson. If no Vice-Chairperson is present, the Committee shall elect an interim Chairperson for that meeting or that part of the meeting.

18. If the Chairperson can no longer perform the functions of the office, the Bureau of the Committee shall designate one of the Vice-Chairpersons as interim Chairperson to perform those functions pending the election of a new Chairperson by the Committee. The interim Chairperson shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairperson.

19. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons serve collectively in the interest of all member States of the Committee and not as official representatives of their Governments, and act within the Terms of Reference of the Committee and these Rules of Procedures. The work of the Bureau is carried out in a way that is member driven, consensus-oriented, transparent and accountable.

⁶ Non-governmental organizations recognized by the Economic and Social Council are covered in document E/ECE/778/Rev.5, which is referred to in paragraph 8.

⁷ This is compatible with the membership of the European Forestry Commission Executive Committee as adopted at "Orman2011," the joint session of the Committee and the European Forestry Commission held in Turkey in October 2011 (see ECE/TIM/2011/13-FO:EFC/2011/13 and http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/gsb/Statutes/EFC_RoP.pdf).

V. Functions of the Bureau

20. The key functions of the Bureau are those detailed in the Guidelines on Procedures and Practices for ECE bodies (E/2013/37-E/ECE/1464, annex III, appendix III).

21. In addition to these key functions, Bureau members, together with the members of the FAO European Forestry Commission Executive Committee, are responsible for the preparation and organization of joint sessions of the Committee and the European Forestry Commission and the coordination of intersessional work. For this purpose, and to discuss other cooperation issues between the two bodies, Bureau members will attend the joint Bureaux⁸ meetings.

22. The Bureau shall report to the Committee.

VI. Procedures for the adoption of decisions and Committee meeting reports

23. The Committee shall make all possible efforts to take decisions on the basis of consensus. If voting is used, the Chapter on Voting in the Rules of Procedure of the ECE shall apply.

24. A draft report of the meeting, which reflects in a concise and factual manner the discussion and the views expressed by participants, should be circulated before the end of the meeting for comments and adoption by member States at the end of the meeting.

25. If the draft report cannot be circulated at or adopted during the meeting for technical reasons, the Committee will distribute it to all Geneva Permanent Representations for subsequent approval no later than ten days after the conclusion of the meeting.

VII. Subsidiary bodies

26. The Committee may establish Teams of Specialists or other subsidiary bodies (e.g. Working Parties), in accordance with the existing Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of Working Parties (ECE/EX/1) and Teams of Specialists within ECE (ECE/EX/2/Rev.1), in order to fulfil particular objectives in accordance with the terms of reference created for them, subject to approval by the ECE Executive Committee (EXCOM).

27. The terms of reference and reporting procedures of the subsidiary bodies shall be determined by the Committee.

⁸ Joint meetings of the Committee Bureau and the FAO European Forestry Commission Executive Committee (see ECE/TIM/2013/2-FO:EFC/2013/2 and ECE/EX/10).

Annex

Decisions taken by COFFI (former Timber Committee) at the joint COFFI-EFC session in Antalya, Turkey in 2011 on the composition of its Bureau

1. At the end of each session, the Committee will elect a Chair and three Vice-Chairs from among the representatives to the Committee. Elected officials will remain in office until a new Chair and Vice-Chairs are elected at the following session. The outgoing Chair and Vice-Chairs will be eligible for re-election, and the office of Chair will not normally be held for more than two consecutive periods by the representative of the same member State.
 2. In practice, Bureau members will continue to be elected for a one-year term, with the possibility of being re-elected. The current practice of re-electing Bureau members for a second term will be maintained. For continuity, the outgoing Chair could remain in the Bureau as Vice-Chair. The longer-serving Vice-Chair who had not already served as Chair would normally be expected to be elected as Chair. The practice outlined here would be subject to the availability of the candidate and could be modified upon the agreement of member States.
 3. This practice would allow the Committee to elect a Chair to remain in that function for two consecutive years, as it is the current practice, or to step down from the function after one term. As elections are held every year, this means that the minimum term to be served by one member is one year, with eight being the maximum.
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