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**SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN THE REGION:
CONTRIBUTION TO THE LISBON MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
ON THE PROTECTION OF FORESTS IN EUROPE, AND FOLLOW-UP TO IPF**

(Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda)

Note by the secretariat

The document contains a description of how the Committee's activities support sustainable forest management and in particular the pan European process and the implementation of the IPF proposals for action. The Committee is invited to review these activities, and consider whether they are appropriate ways of supporting sustainable forest management within the Committee's resources and mandate, and whether any activities should be added or strengthened.

Introduction

1. At its joint session with the FAO European Forestry Commission in 1993, the Committee attached priority to supporting sustainable forest management in the region, notably through supporting the pan European process on the protection of forests in Europe and the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF). Since then, this aspect has influenced all parts of the Committee's programme, which has indeed been focused on a "core programme" of "monitoring and analysis of sustainable development of the forest and forest products sector in the region". Thus everything done under the Committee's auspices may be seen as a contribution to sustainable forest management in the region. This note however, will describe the direct inputs made under the Committee's auspices to the pan European and IPF processes. The Committee is invited to review these activities and decide on the direction of future work in this respect.

Pan European process on the protection of forests in Europe

- general

2. The Committee's secretariat is a member of the pan-European process' General Coordinating Committee (GCC) and as such is kept informed of developments and consulted in advance about proposals by the lead countries in the process. Effective cooperation and working relations have been established.

- indicators of sustainable forest management

3. The 1996 joint session agreed that ECE and FAO, in cooperation with other international organisations, "should collect and make available to the pan European process data on as many indicators of sustainable forest management as possible. In particular this aspect should be taken into account in the design of the Forest Resource Assessment 2000". (ECE/TIM/87, para. 41) The TBFRA 2000 enquiry (see TIM/1997/5/Add.3 for details) requests data relevant to 22 of the 27¹ Helsinki indicators (see list in the annex). The timetable of the TBFRA 2000 has been accelerated to make it possible to present at least preliminary data on these indicators to the Lisbon Conference in June 1998. Because of this contribution by TBFRA 2000, it is understood that countries will not be requested to provide this information a second time in their reports to the Lisbon Conference, thus contributing to lightening the "reporting burden", and improving the comparability of the data to be presented.

- assistance to countries in transition

4. The Geneva secretariat was nominated international coordinator for the implementation of Helsinki resolution H3 on forestry assistance to countries in transition. In this role it has produced two reports and created a data base which provides project by project information on the assistance and analyses to what extent it corresponds to the priority needs identified by the countries themselves (see ECE/TIM/DP/12). This work is discussed also in TIM/1997/5. The secretariat will report to the Lisbon Conference as requested on this mandate.

¹Counting "sub-indicators" as indicators, so that, for instance, indicator 1.2, which is subdivided into a, b. and c., counts as three indicators, not one.

- socio economic aspects of forestry

5. It has been proposed by a number of countries, and endorsed by the joint session in 1996 that "socio economic aspects" of forestry should be addressed by the Lisbon Conference. The Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training in 1996 agreed to set up a team of specialists to "prepare the factual basis for a possible resolution on this subject. This team is being set up and will meet in autumn 1997 to identify major issues and make proposals for the Lisbon preparatory process. The Committee will be informed orally or by an addendum to the present document, of progress on this topic.

Follow up to IPF

6. In June and July, the special session of the General Assembly and ECOSOC approved the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests. The General Assembly noted that "there is an urgent need for:

(a) countries and international organisations and institutions to implement the proposals for action agreed by the Panel in an expeditious and effective manner, and in collaboration and through effective partnerships with all interested parties, including major groups, in particular indigenous people and local communities"

Almost all of the Committee's activities are relevant to, or input for, debate on the major issues identified and discussed by the IPF. However, the secretariat believes that there are some of the Committee's activities which may be considered in effect as implementation at the regional level of the IPF proposals for action. As all the Committee's regional level activities are available to FAO, which is responsible for similar actions at the global level, they also represent regional input into global implementation of the IPF proposals. The links between the Committee's programme (as approved in October 1996) or completed activities are briefly described below (references are to paragraphs in the IPF report E/CN.17/1997/12).

7. The Panel "urged countries ... to analyse comprehensively the historical perspective of the causes of deforestation and forest degradation in the world" (para. 27)

The study on long term historical changes in the forest resource (ECE/TIM/SP/10) presented valuable case studies on a number of ECE countries, information which is not easily available at the international level.

8. The Panel "urged countries ... to consider long term trends in their supply and demand for wood, and to consider actions to promote the sustainability of their wood supply and their means for meeting demand" (para. 28)

The series of European, North American and Russian timber trends studies prepared for the Committee, notably ETTS V, issued in 1996, address precisely these issues at a regional level and are in addition valuable tools for analysis of these issues at the national level.

9. The Panel "expressed strong support for FRA 2000", and "requested FAO to implement the Global Forest Resource Assessment 2000 in collaboration with international organisations, countries and other organisations with competence in assessments and to share the results of the assessment effectively with the international community" (paras 77 and 81) and made a number of more detailed remarks on the topic.

The Geneva secretariat is responsible for the Temperate and Boreal Forest Resource Assessment 2000, an integral part of the Global Assessment, to which it is devoting significant resources in 1997-1999, as well as seeking extra budgetary funding (see TIM/1997/5 and Add.3).

10. The Panel "urged FAO, in partnership with other international organisations, the Intersecretariat Working Group on Forest Statistics, national institutions and NGOs, to address the need for better coordination and avoidance of overlap between forest and other related information systems and for clearer prioritisation in data collection" (para. 81)

The Geneva secretariat was a founder member of the Intersecretariat Working Group and contributes actively to its work. One of the main functions of the Joint FAO/ECE Working Party is the prioritisation of data collection. The joint FAO/ECE/EUROSTAT questionnaire is now well established and ITTO has been invited to participate. Many new partnerships are being formed for TBFRA 2000.

11. The Panel "recommended that criteria and indicators be used by FAO and other relevant organisations in order to improve consistency in reporting on forest assessment and sustainable forest management" (para. 105).

The TBFRA 2000 has been designed in such a way as to collect information on the quantitative indicators of sustainable forest management drawn up by the pan European process, with the aim of providing data relevant for the assessment of sustainability of forest management and to improve consistency

12. The Panel "called upon relevant organisations to support efforts to gather more information and conduct more independent market and economic studies of potential competition between wood and non-wood substitutes, analysing the costs and benefits, including any substitution effects, and the overall impact on management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests" (para. 111)

The team of specialists on recycling, energy and markets for forest products is addressing these issues, as is the team on public relations. A workshop on "wood as a competitive and versatile raw material" was held in Sweden in 1996. However the secretariat believes more intensive and ambitious work could be carried out if more resources were available.

13. The Panel "invited relevant organisations in accordance with their mandate, to carry out further studies on various aspects of voluntary certification and labelling schemes including ..(vii) their impacts on relative competitiveness of forest goods and services in the absence of equivalent schemes of the substitutes" and "urged countries and relevant international organisations dealing with trade in forest products to bring the current trends on certification into perspective .."(para. 123)

A team of specialists on certification presented a report to the joint session in October 1996, and the special topic at this session is the markets for certified forest products.

14. The Panel "called upon relevant international organisations and national institutions to expand their work on market transparency for trade in forest products and services, and to include the possible development of a global database" (para. 125)

The Committee's extensive programme of statistics and market review, including Annual Forest Products Market Review, the Committee's own market discussion and the data on production, trade and prices in the Timber Bulletin represent a significant contribution to market transparency.

15. The General Assembly also decided that "the Commission on Sustainable Development should promote increased regional implementation of Agenda 21 in cooperation with relevant regional and sub-regional organisations and the United Nations regional commissions" (para 121 of the report of the special session)

The Timber Section participates in the ECE interdivisional task force on sustainable development and will make sure that any regional work on sustainable development has the full benefit of the knowledge and information brought together on the forest and forest products sector.

Conclusions

16. The Committee is invited to review the activities briefly outlined above (more detail is available in the documents cited), and decide on the direction and methods of future work in the support of sustainable forest management at the regional or global level. In particular:

- are the Committee's activities described above in line with the directions laid down at the regional level by the pan European process and at the global level by the IPF?

- should certain activities to support sustainable forest management be added, or strengthened to achieve the aims identified by the pan European process and the IPF? If so, what should be undertaken, and what would be the resource or programme implications?

Annex

**Pan European quantitative indicators for sustainable forest management
for which TBFRA 2000 will provide relevant data**
(references to TBFRA 2000 tables in brackets)

- 1.1 Area of forest and other wooded land and changes in area (tables 1, 7)
- 1.2 changes in:
 - a. total volume of growing stock (table 17)
 - b. mean volume of growing stock on forest land (table 17)
 - c. age structure or appropriate diameter distribution classes (table 13)
- 1.3 Total carbon storage and changes in the storage in forest stands (biomass only in TBFRA 2000) (table 14)
- 2.2 Changes in serious defoliation of forest using the UN/ECE and EU defoliation classification (table 20)
- 2.3 Serious damage caused by biotic or abiotic agents:
 - a. severe damage caused by insects and diseases (table 18)
 - b. annual area of burnt forest and other wooded land (table 19)
 - c. annual area affected by storm damage and volume harvested from these areas (table 18)
 - d. proportion of regeneration area seriously damaged by game and other animals or by grazing (table 18)
- 3.1 Balance between growth and removals of wood over the past 10 years (tables 15, 16)
- 3.2 Percentage of forest area managed according to a management plan or management guidelines (table 5)
- 3.3 Total amount of and changes in the value and/or quantity of non-wood forest products (e.g. hunting and game, cork, berries, mushrooms etc.) (tables 24, 25)
- 4.1 Changes in the area of:
 - a. natural and ancient semi-natural forest types (table 2)
 - b. strictly protected forest reserves (table 8)
 - c. forest protected by special management regime (tables 3, 8)
- 4.2 Changes in the number and percentage of threatened species in relation to total number of forest species (table 10)
- 4.3 Changes in the proportion of stands managed for the conservation and utilisation of forest genetic resources; differentiation between indigenous and introduced species (tables 9, 12)
- 4.5 In relation to total area regenerated, proportion of annual area of natural regeneration (table 11)

5.1 Proportion of forest area managed primarily for soil protection (table 21)

5.2 Proportion of forest area managed primarily for water protection (table 21)

6.2 Provision of recreation: area of forest with access per inhabitant, % of total forest area (table 23)

Notes:

1. Information on indicators 6.1 (share of forest sector in Gross National Product) and 6.3 (changes in the rate of employment in forestry) may be generated by the team of experts on socio economic aspects of forests.

2. Information on indicators 2.1 (total amount of and changes in depositions of air pollutants) and 2.4 (changes in nutrient balance and acidity, level of saturation of CEC) is being developed through the EU/ICP programme on forest condition, which is a TBFRA 2000 partner. However, reliable results will probably not be available by the Lisbon conference.