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TIMBER COMMITTEE  
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27-30 September 1999

### PROGRAMME OF WORK: ACTIVITIES ON PUBLIC RELATIONS

(Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda)

Note by the secretariat

This document presents the activities of the FAO/ECE Team of Public Relations Specialists in the Forest and Forest Industries Sector. The Committee is invited to review these activities. No decisions are necessary as the Team's mandate runs through September 2000.

In summary, the Team published "The competitive climate for wood products and paper packaging: factors causing substitution with emphasis on environmental promotions." Their May 1999 meeting in Estonia focussed on PR capacity building in central and eastern European countries. The Team has a website under the Timber Committee site and continues to expand its network. It is planning an International Forestry Communications Forum 2000 and a series of European Forest Academies for Decision Makers, both which will provide international opportunities to promote wood as a renewable and environmentally friendly material.

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1. Following the extension of its mandate by the Timber Committee and the

European Forestry Commission, the FAO/ECE Team of Public Relations Specialists in the Forest and Forest Industries Sector (leader Mr. Ingwald Gschwandtl, Austria) met in Sagadi, Estonia in May 1999 (report available on the Timber Committee website ([www.unece.org/trade/timber/pr/meetings](http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/pr/meetings)), or from the secretariat) and discussed the following topics:

- the increasing demands placed on the forest and forest industries sector by markets, authorities, forest owners and environmental non-governmental organizations;
- strategic approaches to professional communications in forestry;
- PR activities with potential for international interactions and cooperation;
- PR activities in countries and institutions with special emphasis on central and eastern European countries;
- International Forestry Communications Forum 2000;
- strategies to stimulate and promote the sound use of renewable forest products;
- PR aspects of timber and forest certification;
- the role of wood and forests in carbon sequestration;
- future work.

2. As regards future work, the Team established two new subgroups to conduct work on:

- capacity building of public relations capabilities in the forest and forest industries sector in central and eastern European countries;
- a series of European Forest Academies for Decision Makers.

3. The Team has published "The competitive climate for wood products and paper packaging: the factors causing substitution with emphasis on environmental promotions." In response to the Timber Committee's request, a *Geneva Timber and Forest Discussion Paper* has been issued (ECE/TIM/DP/16) with an expanded executive summary of the report (available from the secretariat and from the Timber Committee website). The report will be a central focus of the International Forestry Communications Forum 2000.

4. The Forum Subgroup is organizing the International Forestry Communications Forum 2000 to be held in Québec, Canada in March 2000. Further details of the plans will be presented at the Session. Part of the Forum will be devoted to addressing the promotion of the sound use of wood and other forest products as environmentally friendly and renewable resources.

5. As regards other areas of the Team's mandate:
  - the Team now has a website within the Timber Committee site which presently includes subdivisions of its mandate, meetings, members, publications and forum;
  - expansion of the international network of PR specialists in the ECE region now includes 35 countries within the ECE region which have participated in the Team's activities.
6. More details will be provided on the above topics at the Session and the Committee will be invited to review and comment on the team's activities.