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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE  
TIMBER COMMITTEE  
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**Activities of FAO and of other principal Subsidiary Bodies of ECE relevant to  
the Timber Committee**

(Item 6 of the provisional agenda)

Note by the secretariat

This document intends to inform the committee very briefly of relevant activities and cooperation with FAO and other ECE Principal Subsidiary Bodies (PSBs). The committee is invited to review this information, comment on it, and take it into account when determining its programme of work.

1. One of the Committee's strengths is that it is interested in developing partnerships with other organisations, and developing cross sectoral linkages, notably benefiting from ECE's cross sectoral nature. This document intends to inform the committee very briefly of relevant activities and cooperation with FAO and other ECE Principal Subsidiary Bodies (PSBs). The committee is invited to review this information, comment on it, and take it into account when determining its programme of work.

#### **FAO**

2. The Committee's close, indeed organic cooperation with FAO has been at the heart of its activities since its foundation, simultaneously with the FAO European Forestry Commission, in 1948. There is an integrated work programme, implemented by staff of both organisations, two joint subsidiary bodies, joint publications and periodic joint sessions, the next in 2000 (see TIM/1999/7 under agenda item 7). These are all reviewed as part of the Committee's own programme under item 6 of the provisional agenda and are not repeated here.

3. There are also a number of areas of close cooperation with the FAO staff in Rome HQ, as well as elsewhere. Examples of this are:

- cooperation on forest resource assessment, where Geneva provides key input to the global Forest Resource assessment;
- cooperation on statistics collection, validation, handling and presentation, in publications and on the websites, notably the joint FAO/ECE/EUROSTAT/ITTO forest sector questionnaire. Closer cooperation on website and database management is being planned, whereby Geneva staff will remotely manage certain sections of the FAO Forestry Department database and website;
- Geneva staff were able to help in collecting information on national forest programmes for the IFF, as part of a global effort led by FAO;
- FAO staff contribute to certain activities, providing essential expertise and technical input; examples are the chapter on trade barriers in the 1999 *Annual review*, and the workshops on marketing of forest products;
- future Geneva outlook studies will benefit from studies carried out in other regions, notably Asia Pacific and at the global level by FAO, and be coordinated with them (see TIM/1999/5 Add. 4).
- cooperation on forest fire information.

4. Further information on these and other related activities is available from the Geneva or Rome secretariats, who are happy to answer questions.

#### **Trade and environment issues**

5. Whatever action is decided on under trade and environment issues of the forest and forest products sector, it will be carried out in close cooperation with the two ECE Committees on Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development and on Environmental Policies.

#### **Committee on Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development**

6. The project on capacity building to improve trade finance and investment prospects for the Russian timber sector is being carried out on extra-budgetary funds. The Timber Section is advising the project coordinator on timber issues.

## **ECE Committee on Sustainable Energy**

7. At its session in November 1999, the Committee on Sustainable Energy will consider how it will contribute to the preparation of the CSD meeting on sustainable energy in 2001. It has been arranged with the secretariat of the Committee on Sustainable Energy that when the broad direction of that Committee's action is defined, the Timber Committee secretariat will be approached for input (data, comment, contacts etc.) in the field of wood energy, where it has considerable experience, in the outlook studies and in servicing the teams of specialists on wood energy and on recycling, energy and market interactions.

## **Economic Analysis**

8. The *Economic Survey of Europe*, prepared by the ECE Economic Analysis Division, constitutes an important input to the introductory economic chapter of the *Annual Forest products Market Review*.

## **Environment**

### **Implementation of Environmental Programme for Europe**

9. The Sofia Conference in October 1995 endorsed the Environmental Programme for Europe (EPE) and entrusted the Committee on Environmental Policy to oversee this process, and report on its implementation. The Committee on Environmental Policy, in cooperation with the European Environment Agency (EEA), will assess the implementation of EPE from the policy point of view. A report on progress in the implementation of the Programme was submitted to the fourth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe", Crhus (Denmark), June 1998. The Committee may ask contributions from other ECE PSBs, including the Timber Committee. The EEA is a partner for TBFRA 2000. In the context of the pan European process the secretariat contributed to the action programme for the conservation of forest biodiversity approved by the forest ministers in Lisbon and the environmental ministers in Crhus.

### **Regional promotion of the implementation of Agenda 21**

10. The activities of the Committee on Environmental Policy promote the regional implementation of Agenda 21. The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) monitors at the global level the implementation of the follow-up to UNCED. The General Assembly at its special session in 1997 recognized the need to decentralize the implementation of Agenda 21 and to entrust larger responsibilities to regional Economic Commissions. A consultative meeting among the regional institutions (e.g. United Nations regional commissions, regional offices of some United Nations global institutions, European Community, etc.) took place in New York in February 1998. The meeting agreed that ECE would organize a pilot workshop for sharing national experiences in implementing Agenda 21 and assessing it in a regional context.

### **Environmental performance reviews**

11. The Committee on Environmental Policy reviews the environmental performance of ECE member countries in eastern Europe and Central Asia, on how they meet domestic environmental policy objectives and relevant international commitments. The environmental performance reviews also support the Environmental Programme for Europe and monitor national progress in the implementation of Agenda 21. The Timber Section advises the Environment and Human Settlements Division on forestry and timber aspects of these reviews.

### **Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution**

12. The Convention's International cooperative programme on the assessment and monitoring of air pollution effects on forests, collects comprehensive and comparable information on changes in forests under actual environmental conditions (in particular air pollution, as well as other stresses) with the view of determining cause-effect relationships. National and transnational surveys are carried out in cooperation with the European Commission using harmonized methodology. The task force programme is led by Germany and the Hamburg Federal Research Centre for Forestry and Forest Products. This EU/ICP programme will provide and analyse data on forest condition for TBFRA 2000. A new multi-effect, multi-pollutant protocol is presently being negotiated for adoption and signature at the end of 1999.

### **Environmental data base development and dissemination**

13. An environmental data base is under development in the ECE Environment and Human Settlements Division. It will have a forestry and timber component to which the Timber Section will contribute.

### **Human Settlements**

#### **Development of human settlements statistics**

14. Together with the Conference of European Statisticians, the Committee on Human Settlements develops and improves international human settlements statistics, including data on sawnwood which are published in the *Bulletin of Housing and Building Statistics for Europe and North America*. Next issue of this Bulletin will be published in the year 2000.