

# **Team of Specialists (ToS) on the Temperate and Boreal Forest Resources Assessment (TBFRA-2000)**

## **REPORT**

### **of the 5th meeting of the Team**

Geneva, 22-24 March 1999  
(As approved by the participants)

#### Introduction

1. The 5th meeting of the Team of Specialists on TBFRA-2000, extended to include participation of TBFRA National Correspondents, was held in Geneva, Palais des Nations, from 22 to 24 March 1999. The Team works under the auspices of the Joint UN-ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics, a subsidiary body of the UN/ECE Timber Committee, and the FAO European Forestry Commission.

2. The meeting was attended by the representatives from Australia Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America, as well as from the Economic Commission for Europe, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Conservation and Monitoring Centre, World Wide Fund for Nature, and the European Forest Institute. The list of participants is attached (Annex I).

3. Dr. Carol Cosgrove-Sacks, Director of the UN/ECE Trade Division welcomed the participants, and thanked them for an exemplary implementation of this ambitious project. She emphasized the crucial role of the ToS and the TBFRA-2000 National Correspondents in the TBFRA process, as well as the FAO role in maintaining the project development withing the Global FRA-2000 Framework.

4. Professor Michael Köhl (Germany), the Leader of the Team, chaired the meeting.

5. The proposed provisional agenda of the meeting was adjusted and adopted (Annex II).

#### Developments since the 4th meeting of the Team (March 1998- March 1999)

6. Participants were informed by Dr. Michael Köhl, and the UN-ECE/FAO and FAO secretariats about the work done since the last meeting of the team, the relevant on-going developments of the Global FRA, and decisions of the parent bodies which could affect the future activities of the team.

7. Mr. Kit Prins (UN-ECE/FAO) presented information on the developments and achievements in the TBFRA-2000 process, and highlighted the next steps to be undertaken in the project implementation. The results achieved so far, and the progress made at this final stage of the Assessment, were considered as being very satisfactory and encouraging, keeping in mind the very tight time-schedule in the preparation of the TBFRA information for publication in autumn 1999. It was specifically noted that TBFRA, as part of the Global

FRA-2000 process, aimed to provide policy-relevant information, and to respond to the needs of major users: governments, participants in the international forest processes and dialogues (e.g. IFF, Pan-European and Montreal processes), follow-up to the UNCED-Rio conventions (e.g. CBD, FCCC), many NGOs, scientists, researchers, industries, forest practitioners, and the wider public, which are interested in the subject. The crucial importance of comparability between countries of the TBFRA data, and the monitoring of changes were stressed.

8. Mr. Peter Holmgren (FAO) informed participants about the work being done under the Global FRA-2000 programme, in particular within the FRA information process, the FRA publication planning, FORIS (source data), and the FAO Forestry web-site development. The FAO Forestry Internet Site is being renewed, so that users can browse the information by country.

9. Mr. Holmgren noted that FRA-2000 is a global effort, and the "Forest Change" information is a vital component of the Assessment. The further analysis of "Forest Change" is necessary for all countries, and the following factors should be taken into consideration: transparency and accountability, incremental improvements, global reporting, and local information. The Global FRA-2000 Publication Plan includes 11 books (volumes), namely, 1-4: "Country data by regions (Africa, Asia, Europe/industrialised TBFRA countries, Latin America)", 5: "Forest Change", 6-8: "Special thematic studies", 9: "Pan-tropical remote sensing survey", 10: "Global Synthesis", and 11: "Findings and Recommendations" (to be published by the end of the year 2000). The set of terms and definition applied for the Global FRA-2000 (developing countries) is suppose to be kept consistent with the "Kotka-III" decisions and TBFRA-2000.

The Main TBFRA-2000 Report: status by end-March 1999

10. The general overview of the TBFRA-2000 implementation, and its outcome was presented by Mr. Alex Korotkov (UN-ECE/FAO). With reference to the Draft Main TBFRA-2000 Report, which was available at the meeting, the attention of participants was drawn, in particular, to plans for TBFRA publication (and dissemination of its results), which initially was suggested by the secretariat as follows: TBFRA-2000 results should be presented in two main volumes accompanied by a number of discussion papers. The two volumes which would constitute the main publication are: "Main TBFRA-2000 Report", and "TBFRA-2000 Supportive and Explanatory Information". They should be based on the national replies to the enquiry from the 55 temperate/boreal industrialized countries.

11. The Main Report includes the statistical and descriptive information together with analyses provided by high level experts in the following specific thematic areas: Area of Forest and Other Wooded Land (OWL): Situation and Changes; Ownership and Management Status of Forest and OWL; Wood Supply and Carbon Sequestration: Situation and Changes; Biological Diversity and Environmental Protection; Forest Condition and Damage to Forest and OWL; and Protective and Socio-Economic Functions. These topics have constituted the Chapters of the Report. The Report should also include the Introduction and Executive Summary, as well as the section with the analysis of Reliability and Comparability of the TBFRA-2000 data. More than 80 summary tables with the validated national statistics on the different parameters of forest resources will be included in the publication.

12. The second volume should consist of country files which would include tables of essential TBFRA-2000 data for each participating country, as well as comments, notes and supplementary information provided by national correspondents and the secretariat. In cases where official TBFRA data were not available, estimates were made by the correspondents in cooperation with the secretariat. The electronic TBFRA-2000 database will be made available on the Internet (UN/ECE Timber Committee home page).

13. It would not be possible to cover all the aspects and scope of the information provided by countries in two volumes, and the remaining national data would be analysed and published in accompanying discussion papers. The following topics might be the subjects of the accompanying papers: biodiversity, carbon sequestration and balance, protected areas, forest condition and damage to forest, etc.

14. The participants in the meeting, as well as all TBFRA national correspondents, were invited to review the data set, and comment on the information presented in the draft report. Their remarks should be sent to the secretariat during the meeting or soon after it, but not later than mid-April.

15. Mr. Michael Köhl presented briefly the findings and conclusions on the comparability, quality and reliability of TBFRA-2000 data, which will form a special section of the Report. A number of questions were raised in this connection: How to further analyse the data quality and adjustment information provided by correspondents ? How to improve the presentation of the information on data quality in the final publication ? How to assess the overall quality of the TBFRA data set ?

16. The presentations and discussions were organised in three plenary sessions:

Session I (Moderator: Mr. Albert Knieling): the following issues were presented and discussed: a) "General overview of the TBFRA-2000 outcome" (presented by Mr. Alex Korotkov) b) "Comparability, quality and reliability of the TBFRA-2000 data, as a pattern and test of the standardisation and harmonization of international statistics" (presented by Mr. M. Köhl), c) "Area of Forests and OWL: Situation and Changes", and d) "Ownership and Management Status of Forest and OWL" (both presented by Mr. Tim Peck).

Session II (Moderator: Mr. Michael Köhl): e) "Wood Supply & Forest Growth/Drain Balance: Situation & Changes" (presented by Mr. Erkki Tomppo), and f) "Carbon sequestration; Carbon cycle/Biomass" (presented by Mr. Jari Liski).

Session III (Moderator: Mr. Erik Sollander): g) "Biological Diversity and Environmental Protection" (presented by Mr. Nigel Dudley), h) "Forest Condition and Damage to Forest and OWL" (Presented by Mr. John Innes), and k) "Protective and Socio-Economic Functions" (presented by Mrs. Linda Langner).

17. All the presentations included details of the TBFRA-2000 results and findings in the specific thematic areas, which provided together the whole picture of the Assessment. The participants contributed questions and remarks after each presentation, and during the general discussion after all the presentations in each session. Some participants had requested more detailed consideration to find the solutions and answers to their questions and comments. This was done in three break-out working groups on the main thematic issues

which were led by the moderators. The recommendations of the Working Groups (Annex III) were presented and discussed at the plenary session.

## Conclusions and recommendations

18. The conclusions and recommendations of the team on the draft report are summarized as follows:

- The first TBFRA draft provides a good and well elaborated basis for the preparation the final Main TBFRA-2000 Report by the autumn 1999;
- Continued close co-ordination with FAO will be necessary in the process of finalising the TBFRA-2000 Main Report, follow-up work and the preparation of TBFRA accompanying papers, as well as that part of the Global FRA data set pertaining to TBFRA countries;
- The reference period(s) should be maintained in the publication (summary tables) in the present format;
- The country groupings in all chapters and sections of the report should be reasonably consistent and standardized, but more specific groupings are possible within Chapters for the purpose of analysis and presentation of the material; The 4 (four) main groups (Europe, CIS, North America, Asia-Pacific) should be retained in the main summary tables;
- It would be highly desirable and more user-friendly to present the notes (comments) of national correspondent and the secretariat, as an integral part of the publication, in the same volume with the statistics i.e. in one volume (Volume I); the secretariat should consider the mode of the main TBFRA-2000 publication in one volume, while some specific TBFRA information could be published in accompanying supplementary papers;
- It is possible to use in the report some other sources of information (non-TBFRA), but only as illustration of specific points;
- An outside review of the drafts of the TBFRA chapters by well known experts, (which could be done by the authors of the corresponding chapters), would be welcomed, but this review should not cause a significant delay in the publication of the Main Report;
- The Executive Summary, as a compilation of results presented in the main chapters and comments on the reliability, quality and comparability of the TBFRA data, should be drafted and circulated for comments to the ToS members, before it is included in the publication;
- The comments and notes to the TBFRA data should be included also in the Global FRA-2000 publication which is to be prepared by FAO, as they form an integral part of the data set.

19. The processing and analysis of the TBFRA-2000 data was proving to be even more time and labour consuming than had been expected. The following timetable for the TBFRA-2000 publication is proposed by the Team:

- The process of checking and preparing comments, observations and remarks on the first draft (including the main summary tables and chapters/sections) by members of the team and national correspondents by 14 April;

- The improved version of the draft, incorporating comments and corrections to be sent to national correspondents for their further comments by end-April;
- Changes proposed by the national correspondents should be incorporated by the secretariat by mid-May;
- The final version of the draft should be provided by authors of the Chapters by end-May, so that the final draft would be ready by end-June (the FAO/ECE Joint Working Party will consider a preliminary version of the TBFRA-2000 report);
- The Main TBFRA-2000 Report should be sent for the reproduction (publication) by end-July.

#### TBFRA-2000 electronic database

20. Mr. Peter Csoka demonstrated to participants the TBFRA-2000 electronic database, which had been designed in "Access 2" format. He explained the structure of the database, and details of its components. All the national data, including statistics, comments, notes and supplementary information had been loaded into the database after checking and validation. The data can be retrieved in any requested format (e.g. tabular or graphic information in EXCEL format, or text in WORD, etc).

21. It was noted that at this stage this was only a "pre-fabricated" version of the database, and further improvements would be made. For example, the problem of the presentation (and calculation) of "not available", "not applicable", "missing" " " or "0" information should still be resolved. The question of "links" between the statistics (figures) and comments (notes) was also discussed. A possible solution could be an indication with a symbol against the country names (e.g. asterisk "\*") in the tables for which comments (notes) on the data were provided.

22. The participants noted that the TBFRA-2000 electronic data base is a product in itself, which will be in use for many years after it is launched. Mr. James Barton noted, in particular, that coming technologies and rapid changes in informatics should be taken into account, and the present features of the TBFRA database should be modern enough to be "user-friendly" in the forthcoming years. It is expected that it will be available on Internet soon after the hard paper version of the TBFRA-2000 is published.

23. Presumably, the database should be placed on the UN/ECE Timber Committee home page with links to other relevant data bases, and first of all, to the FAO Forestry Web Site. A CD-ROM version of the database would be desirable, and would reduce the cost of dissemination. The procedure of users' access to the TBFRA data, taking account the price of the access, should be explored and elaborated by the secretariat. Of course, the TBFRA database and the access to it should be free for the ToS members and national correspondents.

#### Dissemination (presentation, publication) of the TBFRA-2000 data

24. The participants discussed the strategy of the dissemination of the final output (the main report), as well as accompanying and supplementary TBFRA-2000 papers. They confirmed that all modern means ("interactive" or "not interactive" Internet DB version, WWW, CD-ROM, etc.) should be used for the TBFRA's dissemination. The proper preparation of the web site presentation would request resources and skills, so that its format and architecture would be user-friendly and attractive. The CD-ROM version of the database should be distributed by the secretariat in due time.

25. The references and links should be made in the Internet TBFRA version to the FAO website, where the TBFRA core data should be presented in line with the FAO Forestry Department strategy on Global FRA-2000. The links should also be shown to the national (countries) relevant home pages. FAO was requested to provide the UN-ECE/FAO secretariat with the structure of their global FRA-2000 data base, so that the secretariat would have time to prepare the necessary data for transferring to FAO. The UN-ECE/FAO secretariat should in its turn advise the FAO on how to handle the TBFRA data.

26. The secretariat has to consider the question of prices of the information on CD-ROM and Internet, so that expenditures on the TBFRA publication in the hard paper format and CD-ROM could be covered. The secretariat should explore the question of existing licenses and agreements when publishing the database on CD-ROM so as not to affect existing agreements. The hard paper publication (in which a CD-ROM disk could be included as an "in-folder"), would be absolutely necessary as the main output, so that temperate/boreal regions and other places (where access to Internet is limited) would have an opportunity to use the huge amount of variable TBFRA-2000 information.

27. More detailed information should be published in linked documents ("working", "satellite" or "accompanying" papers). The participants also discussed the publication of the scientific or research papers on the basis of the analyses of the TBFRA-2000 information. Such scientific papers would be possible (before the Main TBFRA-2000 Report is published) for those experts who are involved in the TBFRA process, with the proper references and consultation with the secretariat. After the TBFRA-2000 is issued and available for all possible users, the references to these data sources would also be requested.

28. The final TBFRA-2000 should (if possible) be presented by the secretariat at the UN/ECE Timber Committee session, at the EU Standing Forestry Committee, IUFRO World Forestry Congress (Malaysia, August 2000), and other relevant forums and meetings. A press-release should be issued by the secretariat in due time, so that the dissemination of the information on the TBFRA would be available not only for the key international professional and scientific magazines, but also at the national and local levels as well.

29. A brief summary TBFRA paper (or one-page information flyer) would be useful and helpful. It should be sent to the national correspondents and ToS members, so that they could translate it, and publish TBFRA extracts in their national and local publications. The participants were urged to provide any further ideas on the subject to the secretariat.

#### Issues of the next TBFRA and future activities of the Team

30. The participants expressed their interest in the continuation of the work of the TBFRA Team of Specialists. Among the further actions of the team should be the TBFRA-2000 follow-up work, and preparations for the next temperate/boreal forest resources assessment. The prolongation of the ToS mandate and adjustment of the Terms of Reference for the Team should be considered by the forthcoming Joint FAO/ECE Working Party session.

31. Among the main reasons to maintain the present ToS activities are the following:

- the team has already a very good "grasp" of the issues and relevant matters, so that it would be helpful in future TBFRA work;
- the experience of the team and lessons learned in the past work, would help to summarise and analyse the strong and weak TBFRA points, and propose solutions for the problem areas;

- a necessity to formulate as early as possible recommendations to the secretariat for the next Assessment;
- the team would guarantee the continuity of the TBFRA process in the future in the right direction, especially in new areas of the assessment, such as forest condition, NWGS, biodiversity, etc;
- establishing a new TBFRA team would involve some additional unnecessary procedural efforts, and organizational set-ups.

32. Among the main issues needing to be raised at the next meeting of the team, and in the next TBFRA, are the following:

- geographical coverage (participation in the process of such temperate zone countries as Argentina, Chile, China, Mexico, etc);
- Content and thematic coverage of the TBFRA-2010;
- Methods for the next TBFRA (RS, other techniques);
- Terms and definitions to be applied;
- Methodological approaches (network of national correspondents, etc)

33. The leader of the Team of Specialists, together with the secretariat, will write a letter to the members of the Team to ask their view on the subject, their willingness to continue work within ToS, and their position on the question of extending work into new areas.

34. Mr. Chijien Lin, on behalf of EFI, proposed to organise the next meeting of the TBFRA team at EFI headquarters in Joensuu (Finland), provisionally in May 2000. The invitation was noted by participants with gratitude. The organizational details will be discussed by the secretariat, the leader of the team and EFI in due time.

35. A possibility to hold a ToS meeting also in August 2000, as a satellite event to the IUFRO World Congress in Malaysia was also discussed. The ToS leader will explore the question (a letter to participants of the IUFRO Congress, members of the team), and will inform the team of specialists in good time on the matter.