



Timber Committee  
Economic Commission for Europe



European Forestry Commission  
Food and Agriculture Organization

## Meeting of the bureaux of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission

15 October 2010, Geneva

### Report

1. The bureaux of the UNECE Timber Committee (TC) and the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC) met on 15 October 2010 at the Palais des Nations, Geneva.
2. The following persons attended the meeting:

Peter Blombäck (Sweden), EFC Chair  
Linda Langner (United States), TC Chair  
Branko Glavonjic (Serbia), TC Vice-chair  
Heikki Granholm (Finland), TC Vice-chair  
Angelo Mariano (Italy), Chair, Joint UNECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics  
Ramazan Bali (Turkey), on behalf of Ismail Belen, EFC Vice-chair  
Johann Georg Goldammer, Leader, UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire.

Virginia Cram-Martos, Director, Trade and Timber Division, UNECE  
Paola Deda, Chief, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section  
Peter Csoka, Team Leader, FAO Forestry Communication and Liaison Team  
Roman Michalak, Forest Resources Officer, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section  
Franziska Hirsch, Economic Affairs Officer, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section  
Ilias Animon, Forestry Officer, FAO  
David Ellul, Associate Economic Affairs Officer, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section  
Eve Charles, Research Assistant, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section

3. The following persons sent regrets:

Ismail Belen (Turkey), EFC Vice-chair  
Conceição Ferreira (Portugal), EFC Vice-chair  
Andrey Filipchuk (Russian Federation), EFC Vice-chair  
Christian Salvignol, Leader, Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Expert Network to Implement Sustainable Forest Management

#### **Item 1 Adoption of the agenda**

4. The bureaux adopted the provisional agenda.

#### **Item 2 Arrangements for chairing the meeting**

5. The chairs of the EFC and TC co-chaired the meeting.

**Item 3 Cluster-level framework for the 2010-11 biennial evaluation**

6. The bureau members reviewed and endorsed a proposal for the biennial evaluations 2010-2011 with the proposed cluster-level framework, as already approved by the Timber Committee. They asked the secretariat to present the results of the performance evaluation over time so as to have a time series of indicators, thereby making it easier to see trends.

**Item 4 Consideration of the outcome of the 35th session of the EFC and organization of work**

7. Ms. Deda brought to the attention of the bureaux the main items discussed at the 35th session of the EFC. She called for a more proactive approach to EFC work, whereby the outcome of the work would have greater impact on the work of member States.

**Item 5 Consideration of the outcome of the 20th session of the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO)**

8. Mr. Csoka briefed delegates on the main outcomes of the 20th session of COFO, drawing their attention to the draft report of the session.

**Item 6 Consideration of the outcome of the 68th session of the Timber Committee**

9. The secretariat presented the draft report of the 68<sup>th</sup> session of the Timber Committee, highlighting the major outcomes of the session, and consulted the bureaux on the follow-up process. The bureaux approved the report.
10. The bureaux invited the secretariat to respond as soon as possible to the request to set up a task force on green building, given the urgency of the study to be conducted. The secretariat suggested that the Executive Secretary should send a letter to the chairs of the bureaux of other UNECE committees informing them about the proposal and requesting them to endorse it. Upon its endorsement, the Executive Secretary might then issue a call for experts to join the task force.
11. Through an exchange of letters, the secretariat should formally request the Working Group on Black Carbon (Expert Group on Particulate Matter) under the UNECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution to consider reviewing the issue of particle emissions from wood fuel. The secretariat would also bring to the attention of the Environment and Housing and Land Management Division the Timber Committee's request to include reference to forests in the next meeting of the Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference.
12. On the issue of the "zero meeting" of the proposed working party to be held back-to-back with the Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics in spring 2001, the bureaux stressed the importance of preparing a detailed background note that should include information on cost implications, resource allocations, reporting lines and terms of reference. The bureaux also stressed that, to encourage enhanced coordination across teams, invitations to the meeting should be sent out to all heads of delegation, as well as to the members of teams of specialists.

13. The bureaux also suggested that the meeting should allow time for simulating the possible working modalities of the proposed working party (e.g. interaction within ToS, setting priorities). It was also suggested that the meeting should tackle the issue of practical cooperation with other sectors and organizations.

**Item 7            Formalization of ECE/FAO cooperation**

14. The secretariat briefed delegates on efforts to formalize cooperation between the UNECE and FAO. A draft text of a Memorandum of Understanding/Interagency cooperation agreement should be ready by early November as a basis for further discussion with the respective legal offices, with adoption of this document foreseen by the end of 2010.

**Item 8            UNECE/Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Memorandum of Understanding**

15. The secretariat briefed the bureaux on the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the UNECE and the CBD secretariat. The MoU should facilitate information exchange between the two organizations and would be signed in October 2010 during the CBD COP10 in Nagoya, Japan. The UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section would act as the focal point on behalf of the UNECE. The bureaux welcomed the initiative as an excellent opportunity for acknowledgement of the current work by the ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section on biodiversity indicators and data gathering.

**Item 9            Preparations for State of Europe's Forests 2011**

16. Mr. Michalak reported on how the State of Europe's Forests 2011 (SoEF) was progressing. He mentioned the proposal to include the logos of cooperating institutions on the publication cover (pending approval from the UN legal office on the use of logos). To save printing costs, he said it might be possible to have the publication printed in-house free of charge. He also said that the key findings of the publication should be available in the first quarter of 2011.
17. The bureau members then discussed the possibility of presenting these key findings to a large audience during a one-day event in the margins of the meeting of Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics (WPFES) and the "zero meeting" of the proposed Working Party during the week 21-25 March 2011. A workshop was usually organized every year back-to-back with the WPFES.
18. The bureaux welcomed this opportunity, in view of the limited time available for launching the SoEF final version before MCPFE 6 and following the successful example set by the launch of the 2010 Forest Resources Assessment. This meeting should also include presentations on data from, and enhance synergies with, other processes (such as the FRA and SoFo) and countries in the region.
19. The bureaux pointed out that UNFF 9 offered another opportunity to present the key findings, possibly through a statement and/or presentation in the margins of the meeting. The secretariat should seize this opportunity. The bureaux asked the secretariat to report at their next meeting on its proposed dissemination plans.
20. The bureau members discussed the need to strengthen cooperation with Forest Europe. They proposed holding a joint meeting of the TC/EFC bureaux and the Forest Europe General Coordination Council in the week of 21-25 March 2011. They recommended that the secretariat

should continue to follow the discussions on a possible legally binding agreement on forests in Europe, and should report back on the possible implications of Forest Europe discussions on UNECE/FAO work. Ms. Langner drew the attention of the participants to the geographical scope of these processes and called for adequate attention to North American and Central Asian regions. The secretariat would share proposals coming from the TC/EFC bureaux with Forest Europe so as to coordinate on the organization of the above-mentioned activities.

**Item 10      Update from the Team of Specialists on Forest Fire**

21. Mr. Goldammer gave a briefing on the work being done by the Team and the plans for a “UNECE/FAO Regional Forum on cross-boundary fire management” in Italy in 2011. The Forum would address the need to better understand and manage the consequences of rural abandonment and urbanization on agriculture, forestry and wildfire hazard. It would also address the development of new standards for controlling gaseous and particle emissions from fossil-fuel and biomass burning, as well as secondary problems associated with wildfires on territories contaminated by radioactivity and remnants from armed conflicts.
22. The Forum would be a first step towards developing an agreement on international cooperation to enhance fire-management capability in the region. Mr. Goldammer highlighted the positive impact of dialogue between countries in addressing transboundary forest-fire events, as corroborated by the request by APEC region countries to strengthen cooperation with the Team. Mr. Goldammer closed with an appeal for greater financial resources for the Team.
23. Mr Csoka said that COFO had invited countries to consider how forest fires contributed to greenhouse gas emissions. Countries should include forest-fire management in their programmes to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD-plus). COFO had also invited countries to incorporate vegetation-fire management in broader sustainable land-use and landscape policies, planning and practices; and to contribute to the voluntary trust fund focused on helping developing countries apply the principles and strategic actions of the fire-management voluntary guidelines (which needed to be adapted to local conditions).

**Item 11      Update from the Team of Specialists on Implementing Sustainable Forest Management**

24. On behalf of Christian Salvignol, Ms. Deda informed the participants of plans by the Team to organize a workshop on the impact of climate change on forest work (third quarter, 2011, Geneva). Bureau members were invited to disseminate the announcement and provide support to the event. The bureaux asked for further information to be published online as soon as available.

**Item 12      International Year of Forests 2011**

25. Ms. Charles explained the secretariat’s plans for an exhibition on wood products in January 2011, a short movie as a contribution to the International Year of Forests (IYF), and some workshops. The secretariat was interested in launching a web-based platform, which would be hosted by the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section. The platform would receive major input from the Forest Communicators Network, in close cooperation with member States. The

platform would include details of country activities to celebrate the IYF. Mr. Csoka pointed out the need to coordination with the United Nations Forum on Forests on IYF activities.

**Item 13      Thesis award**

26. The secretariat also told the bureaux about its plans for an annual UNECE/FAO award for the best doctoral dissertation on sustainable forest management and forest product markets. The bureaux welcomed the proposal, noted the need for identifying regular funding for the prize, and suggested ways to improve the call for submissions. Ms. Deda said that various private funding partners were being approached. The bureaux approved the project, and endorsed the nomination of Professor Piotr Paschalis (Poland) as Chair of the expert jury.

**Item 14      Next joint session**

27. The bureaux considered a note prepared by the secretariat on the proposed theme for the next joint session of the Committee and the Commission. As a main theme of the joint session during the IYF, the secretariat proposed “Forests in a Green Economy”. The meeting would consider an Action Plan addressing themes ranging from forest products to wood energy to the policy and institutional framework.
28. Member States would be invited to contribute to preparing the Plan. This would be done through a consultation via e-mail and a meeting to discuss the draft text, foreseen for the first quarter of 2011. The Plan would be part of the secretariat’s contribution to the Rio +20 Conference and the next cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development sessions, thereby increasing the relevance and visibility of the forest sector. The bureaux strongly supported the choice of theme for the joint session and the proposed way forward, and recalled the need for involving other organizations in preparing this document, for example the ILO. Mr. Dengg proposed the addition of the closed cycle value of the timber industry in the discussion themes set out in the background document. The bureaux asked for the preliminary draft of the Action Plan to be discussed at the next bureau meeting.
29. Ms. Hirsch briefed delegates on plans for a Workshop on Payment for Ecosystem Services to be held in July 2011. The bureaux endorsed these plans.
30. The secretariat proposed mid-October 2011 as a possible date for holding the joint session and confirmed the interest of Turkey in hosting the meeting. The bureaux invited the secretariat to respond to Turkey and welcome the offer. The bureaux also urged the secretariat to fix the dates and communicate them to member States as soon as possible.

**Item 15      Any other business**

31. Mr. Bali informed the bureaux of a project proposal to establish a platform and network on forests and climate change. The bureaux took note of the proposal and invited Turkey to develop the proposal further in cooperation with the secretariat.

**Item 16      Date and format of the next meeting**

32. It was agreed that the next bureau meeting would be held on 25 March 2011. The bureaux suggested to include in the agenda a discussion on their working methods, roles and responsibilities.