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Продовольственная и
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организация
Объединенных
Наций

Organización
de las
Naciones
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para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

EUROPEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION

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EUROPEAN FOREST WEEK: EVALUATION AND FUTURE

I. Introduction

1. The European Forest Week (EFW) was held on the occasion of the joint session of the UNECE Timber Committee (TC) and FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC), from 20-24 October 2008. The anchor of the week was FAO Headquarters in Rome, with plenary sessions on "Forests and climate change", "Forests and energy", "Forests and water" and "Working together for European Forests," as well as numerous side events. The week was jointly sponsored by the FAO European Forestry Commissions, the UNECE Timber Committee, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe¹ Liaison Unit Oslo and the European Community.
2. Rome-based events brought together approximately 450 participants who met in plenary sessions, policy dialogues and partner events. In conjunction with the Rome meetings, the European Economic and Social Committee met for a day of meetings on relevant themes in Brussels. At the same time, across Europe, approximately 150 in-country events in 30 countries were held under the logo and themes of the European Forest Week. The website www.europeanforestweek.org is a portal on all events and press coverage.
3. The outcome of the European Forest Week has been reviewed at three meetings of the Bureaux of the TC and EFC, following the request of the joint session of the Committee and the Commission. In addition, a survey of the in-country events has been conducted. The results of this review and proposals for the consideration of the EFC are set out below. On this basis, the EFC is requested to decide whether and, if so, in which format, a European Forest week and in-country events should be held again.

¹ The process is now being referred to as « Forest Europe ».

II. Evaluation of European Forest Week events in Rome

4. In evaluating the success of FAO Headquarter events, the Bureaux agreed that they were well-organised and ambitious undertakings which covered many different subjects. Cross-sectoral interaction was regarded as particularly successful during the Green Building workshop and the “forest and water” plenary session, which was embedded in the business meeting of the UNECE Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management. The involvement of colleagues from other sectors in the preparation was seen as instrumental towards their success. It was noted that other parts of the week lacked the expected cross-sectoral outreach, and that although invitations had been sent to a broad audience, a larger civil society involvement was missing. In addition, the focus may have been on too many themes, in particular as a number of side events were not related to the core themes of the week, and suffered from lower participation. The large number of parallel events had a negative impact on the attendance of some of the policy dialogues and partner events.

5. The Bureaux suggested that 2012, the year of the next joint TC/EFC session in Geneva, would be a suitable opportunity for another European Forest Week with a focus on selected events in the European Headquarter of the United Nations in Geneva.

III. Evaluation of EFW in-country events

6. Results of the survey of the country-based events, which varied in size and impact, showed that nearly 70% of the respondents to the survey found the main messages of the EFW useful in the organization and promotion of their event. Almost 79% used the EFW logo in promoting their event; and 100% would be in favour of organizing events under the umbrella of a future EFW. Results of the survey are documented in the background note prepared for the meeting of the TC/EFC Bureaux in April 2009:

http://timber.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/meetings/Item_10_EFW_Evaluations_and_follow_up.pdf

7. Participants at several country-level events praised the regional and local dimensions of the EFW, particularly the decentralized nature of the week and its communications. They appreciated that the initiative offered an attractive symbol and themes they could use and the fact that it was easy to sign up to the week with no central approval.

8. The Bureaux agreed that it would be worthwhile developing further the concept of the in-country events and applying it to future meetings beyond a European Forest Week. They recommended that the International Year of Forests in 2011 be seen as a unique opportunity for organizing in-country events, which will help countries promote their forest sector nationally and internationally. Bureaux members considered that in-country events would be conducive to supporting the communication efforts emanating from the International Year of Forests and outreach efforts of the forest sector in the countries. They should be organized again with the support of the Forest Communicators Network (FCN), whose efforts to design logos, messages and a website, together with FAO and UNECE, were recognized by the countries.

9. The Commission is invited to share its opinion on the organization of in-country events in support of the International Year of Forests in 2011.

IV. Proposals

10. The Commission is requested to express its views with regard to the organization of a European Forest Week in 2012, on the occasion of its joint session with the TC. Based on the

suggestions outlined above, it is proposed that the 2012 European Forest Week events should be mainly concentrated at UNECE Headquarter-based in Geneva.

11. The EFC is invited to voice its opinion on the organization of in-country events in support of the International Year of Forests in 2011 proclaimed by the UN General Assembly, apart from a "European Forest Week." In-country events could, for example, be organized by different regional or local organizations during the entire year, under the auspices of FAO and its different regional forestry commissions. The EFC and TC could then act as the organizational sponsors for the events organized in Europe, jointly with the FCN. The FCN could set up a platform for events world-wide, coordinated by FAO Headquarters, linked to the UNFF website, to promote the communication efforts in support of the International Year of Forests. In-country events could also be organized at the more regional level during the Timber Committee week in 2011, in support and recognition of the International Year of Forests.