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Food
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Продовольственная и
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организация
Объединенных
Наций

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

EUROPEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

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FAO ACTIVITIES IN EUROPE, INCLUDING LAUNCH OF REGIONAL FINDINGS, FRA 2010

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Staff at FAO HQ and in the UNECE/FAO Timber Section have worked closely together to implement the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010 (FRA 2010). The Key Findings of FRA 2010 were published in March 2010 and the Main Report will be presented at the next meeting of the Committee on Forestry in October 2010. The results of the global remote sensing survey of forests are expected at the end of 2011.

2. In addition to assessing European forests and forest management within the framework of the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment Programme, FAO actively supported regional reporting, notably elaboration of the State of Europe's Forests reports. The main effort was directed at the finalization of the 2007 reporting process (SoEF 2007) and setting up and developing a new reporting cycle for the next Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (SoEF 2011).

Regional and Subregional offices

3. Forestry Department activities addressed issues related to forest management for sustainable development in the region. FAO Forestry activities focused on the impacts of political and economic transition of the forest sector in Europe and Central Asia in close collaboration with relevant partners in the region, namely the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Ministerial Conference on Protection of Forest in Europe (MCPFE), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF), International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN). Technical assistance (such as the Technical Cooperation Programme) and capacity building activities are the main tools to strengthen the national capacities and promote sustainable forest management and to secure the platforms for discussion

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on the social, environmental and economical functions of forests and trees in Europe and Central Asia.

II. GLOBAL FOREST RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

4. The FRA 2010 Assessment has been requested by the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) in March 2007. It is based on a comprehensive country reporting process and a global remote sensing survey. A number of special thematic studies linked with FRA 2010 and covering special issues constitute an integral part of the Assessment.

5. The main tool for the FRA 2010 implementation was the comprehensive Country Report consisting of 17 Reporting Tables complemented by Specifications and Guidelines. The scope of national reporting compared to the one done for FRA 2005 was extended by the inclusion of five new tables to enable reporting on the Global Objectives on Forests and on the seventh thematic element of sustainable forest management: forest establishment and regeneration, policy and legal framework, institutional framework, education and research, public revenue collection and expenditure.

6. FRA 2010 covers 233 countries and territories and 178 officially nominated national correspondents provided national information for most of them; however, for 47 countries or territories desk studies had to be prepared.

7. The FRA region of Europe consists of 50 countries; national reports were received from 40 countries, and desk studies were produced for the remaining ones – mainly, but not only, city states and smaller countries.

8. The FAO FRA team and UNECE/FAO Timber Section worked together in assisting countries in the UNECE region with their preparation on national reports to the FRA 2010. A regional workshop was dedicated to increasing capacities of Russian speaking countries (Budapest, November 2008) and providing assistance to national reporting from countries in the region. Involvement of the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management into the FRA process contributed to streamlining regional discussions on harmonised reporting to the FRA 2010.

III. STATE OF EUROPE'S FORESTS

9. The main tool for comprehensive reporting on forest and sustainable forest management (SFM) in Europe are the reports State of Europe's Forests. The reports are prepared on the occasions of the ministerial conferences of Forest Europe process (Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe). The reports that historically developed from the UNECE/FAO reporting are structured by the set of criteria and indicators (C&I) for SFM (qualitative and quantitative) formally endorsed by the Forest Europe process. Reports' preparations are led by the Forest Europe Liaison Units and UNECE/FAO Timber Section and supported by the FAO FRA Team.

10. The release of the previous report "State of Europe's Forests 2007" did not conclude the C&I reporting process for the Forest Europe Warsaw Conference. Due to the large amount of information collected through the country reports on SoEF 2007, only part of the source data was presented in the published report. Thanks to a joint effort between the UNECE Timber Section, FAO and the UNECE Statistical Division, the interactive database on pan-European C&I for SFM database has been completed. The database provides information for 27 quantitative indicators, structured by six criteria for SFM and is available at: <http://w3.unece.org/pxweb/Dialog/>.

11. The Expert Level Meeting of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, held on 7-8 May 2008 in Oslo, decided on elaboration of the report for the next Forest Europe conference. The provisional date for the report's release is by mid 2011. The short timeline between the national reporting for the FRA and expected deadline for the provision of national data for the next Forest Europe reporting has emphasized the importance of the consistency between these two systems. A detailed analysis showed significant discrepancies between them.

12. In a result of intensive work done by the UNECE/FAO Timber Section, FAO FRA Team, Forest Europe and other partners, the reporting on quantitative indicators for the 2011 conference was significantly modified. It is expected that new dataset will allow for including information collected for the FRA 2010 purposes to maximum extent. Also a new form of the enquiry (reflecting the FRA one) and pre-filling the SoEF forms with the data reported to the global process should ease the national reporting.

13. As both, regional and global reporting on SFM include module on reporting on policies and institutions, the FAO, UNECE and Forest Europe have worked together in order to achieve better coordinated and harmonized processes. The new reporting form on qualitative pan-European indicators was the first result of this cooperation. It is expected that improved reporting from European region would also contribute to development of the global online information repository on policies & institutions led by FAO.

14. The visible progress that had place in terms of making the new reporting process more efficient and effective, and a key role in this achievement has been played by the UNECE/FAO "Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management". The Team proved being effective tool not only for streamlining a regional reporting but significantly contributed to the FRA process. At the same time the group served as centre of exchange of information and discussion on reporting and analyzing state of forest as well as promoting sustainable forest management in the region.

IV. ACTIVITES LED BY REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL OFFICES

15. The FAO sub-regional offices for Central and Eastern Europe (SEUR) and Central Asia (SEC), contribute to the implementation of the integrated programme of work. The FAO SEUR and SEC offices, in cooperation with the UNECE/FAO Timber Section, provide the secretariat for the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Forest Policy in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. This Team constitutes a potentially powerful network of forest policy specialists throughout the region which could serve as a platform for information sharing between the organizations active in the region, and the countries.

16. Both SEUR and SEC offices have worked with UNECE/FAO Timber Section to organize several joint regional workshops and seminars, notably forest products statistics capacity building for national correspondents, wood energy in the Baltic countries, as well as forest policy developments and reform. Capacity building events on forest products markets/marketing and sustainable forest management have also taken place. The first workshop of the joint "*UNECE/FAO Policy Options for Wood Energy*" initiative was implemented in South-East Europe and has been successful in promoting cooperation between the energy and the forest communities, recognized that is crucial to improve wood energy statistics and to promote the use of modern wood energy. The next event of this initiative will gather the representatives from Eastern Europe and Central Asia in June 2010. The SEC/SEU Joint Forestry Initiative on "*Climate Change impacts on Forest Management in Europe and Central Asia*", which was developed to provide platform for the representatives of the countries to exchange information on climate change impacts on forest management, to analyze the current status of research and policy framework addressing issues related to forest land use and climate change in the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, with an additional emphasis on the identification of potential

FAO technical assistance. Workshops and seminars on policies and institutions have led to better cooperation between FAO and UNECE member States, improved understanding of their different experiences and possibilities for application, and better access to information throughout the region. Technical assistance plays also an important role in the region. The activities are addressing forest fires preparedness, wood energy development and forest policy framework development in South East Europe and afforestation efforts in the Caucasus. (Central Asian projects – by the SEC colleagues) The collaboration with the Russian Federation is continuously strengthening and the technical cooperation with TCP project proposals was initiated. Full fledged TCP on capacity building for policy reforms in Russia is underway.

17. Activities to date have tended to be dependent on one-off bilateral donations and irregular contributions from countries. The need to build on the pillars of expertise in the areas of sustainable forest management, forest products markets, and policies and institutions is well recognised. The potential to effectively build the capacity of countries in EECCA to implement sustainable forest management and to strengthen the forest sector and its contribution is significant. However, without a commitment of resources to support and extend capacity building through established networks, this potential is unlikely to be reached, beyond the organization of occasional topical workshops and seminars. The allocation of additional such resources would enhance current efforts in the different topical areas and enable a more integrated approach towards implementing sustainable forest management to develop, including a reinforcement of its local network and a better coordination with other institutions activities in the region. The 27th FAO Regional Conference for Europe at its meeting in Yerevan, Armenia 13-14 May 2010 is being informed of the ongoing cooperation and this situation.

18. The EFC invited to take note of the joint activities throughout the region and to provide advice on funding opportunities that would allow a consistent, strategic approach to be firmly adopted.

V. CONCLUSIONS

19. The Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010 provides new and updated information on the current status and recent trends for more than 90 variables, encompassing indicators used to monitor progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, the 2010 Biodiversity Target of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the four Global Objectives on Forests adopted by the United Nations Forum on Forests. In addition, FRA 2010 statistics on trends in forest carbon stocks will support predictions of climate change and development of appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures. All of this information, combined with data on forests' health, their contribution to national economies, the legal and institutional framework governing the management and use of the world's forests will help assess progress towards sustainable forest management and will support policies, decisions and negotiations in all matters where forests and forestry play a part.

20. The State of Europe's Forests reports, prepared for the Forest Europe ministerial conferences serve as the most comprehensive source of information about European forests. At the same time they supplement and extend SFM assessment done at the global level. For that reason, maintenance of the mutually complementary character of these reports is of high importance. Thanks to the close cooperation among the FAO FRA Team and UNECE/FAO Timber Section and other partners a consistency between the global and regional reporting significantly increased. This, in the end would lead to diminishing reporting burden, improving quality of the reporting and optimising the use of secretariats' resources.

Regional and Subregional offices

21. The region possesses vast forest and woodland resources playing important roles in sustainable development of the countries through production of various forest products and

services, provision of vital environmental functions well as provision of socio-economic benefits, including contributing to food security, employment and livelihood of local communities and recreation opportunities for urban people. Strengthening of sustainable forest management is the common need in all countries of our region. The FAO Forestry Work Programs are appreciating the professional and technical support of the UNECE/FAO Timber Section and recognize its valuable support during the implementation of the integrated programme of work in the region.

VI. POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- Despite many similarities there are significant differences between the regional reporting on forests and SFM. Measures applied in the recent process aimed at reaching a fair balance between the specificity of each process and the need for a consistent reporting process. What else could be done to enhance the link between these two processes, what are the areas for strengthening cooperation at between global and regional reporting?
- The difference in timing of the Global Forest Resources Assessment (currently every five years i.e. FRA 2005, FRA 2010...) and the regional reports (linked to the meetings of the MCPFE i.e. SOEF 2007, SOEF 2011) places a heavy reporting burden on countries despite significant progress in harmonizing definitions, classifications and reporting years. What, if anything, could be done to further streamline the timing of these reports?

Issues from the Regional and Subregional offices

- How might regional cooperation contribute to collecting and sharing of information, knowledge and experiences on forest policy reforms and institutional developments
- How to assure maintenance of the various technical networking activities at Regional and Subregional levels

Annex 1. References

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3	FAO, 2010: Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010. Key findings. FAO, Rome, 12 p.
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