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Item 9 (b) of the provisional agenda

Joint Committee/Commission matters**Food and Agriculture Organization****European Forestry Commission****Thirty-sixth session**

Antalya, 10-14 October 2011

**Proposed revision of the terms of reference for the Joint
UNECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Economics and
Statistics****Note submitted by the bureaux of the UNECE Timber Committee and
the FAO European Forestry Commission****I. Background**

1. In March 2011, back-to-back with the regular meeting of the WPFES, the “Meeting on a possible Working Party to facilitate exchange of expert advice based on the work of UNECE/FAO Teams of Specialists” discussed the possible establishment of a Working Party to strengthen and facilitate current reporting architecture for Teams of Specialists (ToS).
2. Further to a proposal by the bureaux and leaders of the ECE/FAO Teams of Specialists the meeting was requested by the Timber Committee at its sixty-eighth session in October 2010, to decide on recommending the establishment of a new Working Party or identify another arrangement to enable the expert, technical and policy level of the relevant UNECE and FAO bodies to be linked and provide better means for exchanges among them. This was based on the acknowledgement that the current architecture for ToS reporting is inadequate and uneven for different Teams of Specialists, and has so far not fostered cooperation among them but in particular has not fostered dialogue between the expert and the policy levels of the Timber Committee and the European Forestry Commission.
3. To address this issue, the meeting in March 2011 was presented with two options:
 - (a) To create a new working party to specifically address ToS related matters and reporting;
 - (b) To enlarge the current WPFES functions to include new tasks.

4. The assessment of the two options included current needs, analysis of expected functions, and resource implications.

5. As highlighted in the report of the meeting (see document ECE/TIM/EFC/WP.2/2011/4) there was a general consensus about reporting lines and exchanges amongst ToS not being satisfactory. Delegates also 'concluded that there were no significant differences in resource implications for the Secretariat between the two original options. They concluded that proposing a new Working Party in the current economic climate would send the wrong signal to governments. The extension of the mandate of the WPFES thus emerged as the more feasible solution.' (page 14 of above document).

6. Delegates also agreed to elaborate further on the terms of reference for the revised Working Party. To this end, and as agreed during the meeting in March 2011, the Secretariat sent a request to member States for comments and suggestions. Six member States responded and provided input. The proposal contained in this note is based on this information.

II. Summary of inputs provided

7. Comments received underscored a divergence of opinions on the possible way forward. Two parties were still concerned that extending the ToR of the WPFES to cover all ToS would dilute its focus on economics and statistics, thus risking to compromise its effectiveness. They suggested instead that reporting lines would be changed for ToS to report direct to the parent bodies or the bureaux. One member State stressed that having two working parties would be more appropriate to best address the different requirements of the ToS: one WP would have to deal with the ToS on forest products marketing, the ToS on SFM monitoring and the ToS on the Outlook Study, and another one with the remaining four ToS (ToS on Forest Fire, ToS on Forest Policy in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Joint ECE/FAO/ILO Network on SFM implementation and Forest Communicators Network).

8. On the other hand, other member States stressed the need for the revised ToR to reflect a more general nature of the Working Party and reiterated their agreement with the conclusions of the March 2011 meeting, i.e. the extension of the functions of the WPFES.

9. The proposed names for the working party also reflected different views. Some stressed the need to reflect its more comprehensive nature covering a number of issues, and thus the need to make the name as general as possible. These were the proposals received:

- (a) Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forests;
- (b) Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Sustainable Forest Management;
- (c) Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Information and Use.

10. Others wished to continue to stress the different specific functions, and in particular to retain the term "statistics" in the title:

- (a) Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Information and Statistics on Economics and Management;
- (b) Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management

11. A question was raised by one member State on whether the joint Working Party, as both the United States and Canada are members, should also be a subsidiary body of the FAO North American Forest Commission (NAFC).

III. Proposal by the bureaux

12. The bureaux are of the opinion that the Timber Committee and the European Forestry Commission should build on the consensus reached at the meeting in March 2011, and propose the enlargement of the ToR of the existing WPFES (see Annex for old and new ToS reporting lines), for a trial period of two years, until the third quarter of 2013. This trial period will run in parallel to the review process of the Joint ECE/FAO Programme of Work on Timber and Forestry.

13. The ToR of the Working Party could then be revised according to, and in line with the new ECE/FAO Joint Programme of Work for the period 2014-17 (in this regard see document ECE/TIM/2011/9 --FO:EFC/11/9).

14. The bureaux suggest to call the new Working Party "Joint Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management", thus recalling the function of the WPFES, but also enlarging it to cover the responsibilities of other ToS dealing with different aspects of forest management.

15. The bureaux also proposed the following terms of reference, which are entirely based on those approved in March. Only the sequence of tasks has been reorganized.

Revised Terms of Reference of the Working Party

16. The Working Party is a subsidiary body of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission and contributes to the implementation of the integrated programme of work of those two bodies. It meets annually to provide guidance on the implementation of all five areas of the programme of work. The Working Party also facilitates exchange of information on the work of the Teams of Specialists, identifies priorities for action and relevant emerging issues; and transmits suggested priorities to the Committee and the Commission for consideration.

17. The Working Party shall:

(a) Review, on an ongoing basis, the needs at the international level for statistics and other information relating to forestry, wood-processing and forest products, including wood energy, and develop programmes to meet these needs. Particular attention shall be paid to improving quality, concepts, definitions and methodologies to increase the international comparability of statistics and other information;

(b) Develop, upon request from the parent bodies, methodologies for use in economic analysis of the sector, as well as techniques for collecting, validating, analysing and disseminating information and statistics;

(c) Undertake, upon request from the parent bodies, ad hoc projects in economics and statistics relating to forestry, forest products and forest policies and institutions;

18. Within the framework of the integrated programme:

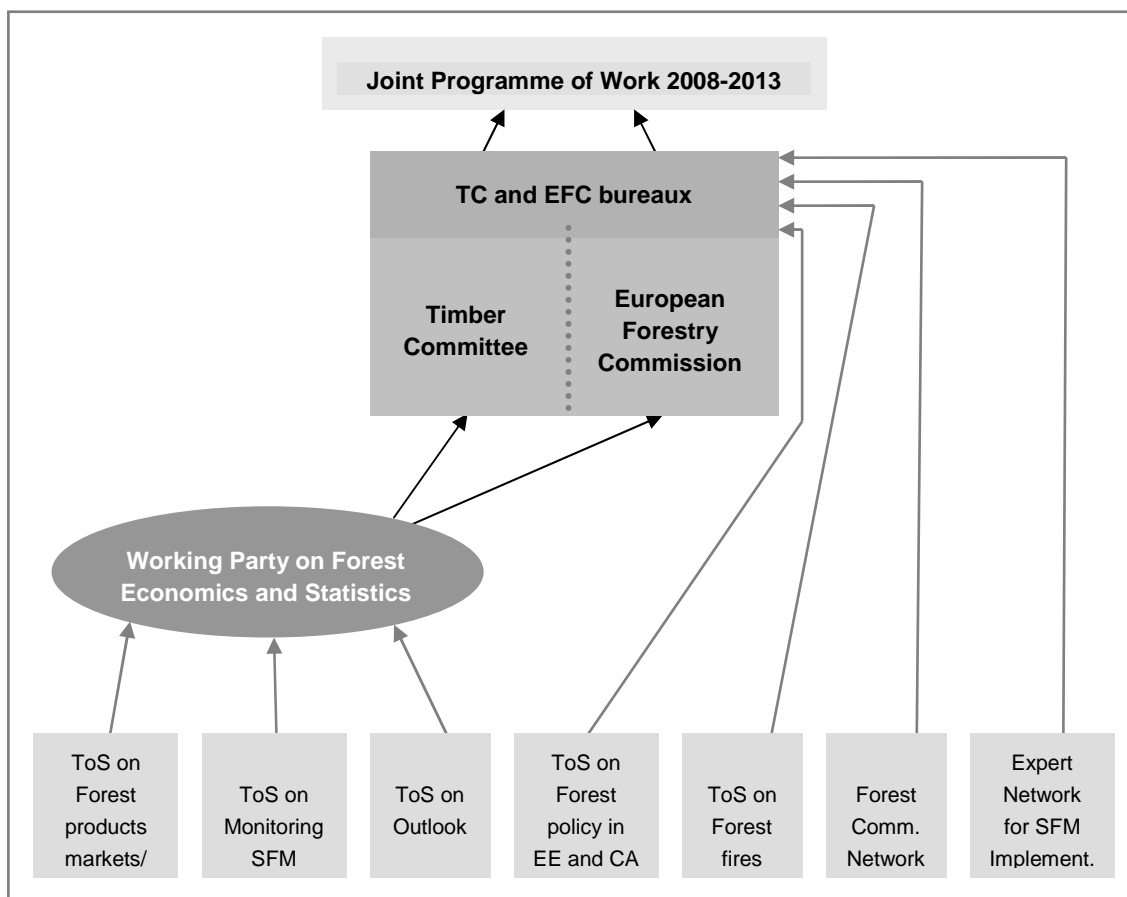
(a) Contribute and provide technical advice to the Committee and the Commission on issues under consideration by those bodies, including on the preparations of studies such as the Outlook and the Forest Products Annual Market Review:

- (i) Receive and discuss the reports from the Teams of Specialists to enhance the understanding of their respective mandates and work; identify possible synergies; and facilitate the exchange of experiences between Teams of Specialists and delegations from member States. When needed, the Working Party would be requested to review and update mandates;
- (ii) Increase the visibility and impact of the work of Teams of Specialists among member States and within the relevant bodies in the United Nations.
- (b) Reach out to other sectors to discuss related to forest information and management matters of common interest, including best practices in sustainable forestry management and their impact on the overall sustainability of forests, natural resources management, and other issues such as biodiversity and climate change;
- (c) Identify themes and issues for in-depth discussion and review as part of the annual workshop held back-to-back with the Working Party session;
- (d) Work together with other international bodies, including Forest Europe, Eurostat, the International Tropical Timber Organization and the Conference of European Statisticians, with a view to coordinating of activities and avoiding any duplication of effort.

19. The Timber Committee and the European Forestry Commission are invited to consider the above proposal by the bureaux and decide on a future arrangement for the work of the Teams of Specialists and their reporting lines.

Annex

Current reporting lines of the Teams of Specialists



Proposed reporting lines for the Teams of Specialists

