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Item 3(e) of the provisional agenda

**FAO European Forestry Commission matters****Implementation of the new structure and modus operandi of the Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

The note explains the procedures followed to review the mandate and modus operandi of the EFC Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds and the decisions taken by the 29<sup>th</sup> session of the Working Party on the implementation of the recommendations of the review. Two working groups (WG) were established based on the needs expressed by countries: WG 1 “Forest and water”, and WG 2 “Hazards and disaster risk management”. The WG concepts and a Working Party strategy and governance paper will be presented during a parallel event at Metsä2013.

**I. Background**

1. Since the establishment of the European Forestry Commission (EFC) Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds in 1952, a number of processes, programmes and networks with relevance to mountain watersheds have been created in Europe, which to some extent, deal with similar issues as the Working Party. Additionally, over the past few years, a trend of decreasing interest and participation from member countries and observers in the activities of the Working Party has been noticed.

2. Participants at the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Working Party in Slovakia, April 2010, proposed to initiate a major review to: analyse the past and current structure, mandate and modus operandi of the Working Party; analyse country involvement; compare other ongoing processes, networks and organizations working on similar themes; and propose a new mandate, institutional structure and modus operandi for the Working Party. This

proposal was approved by the participants at the 35th Session of the EFC in Lisbon, April 2010.

3. The preliminary findings of the review were presented and discussed by the **28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Working Party** in Turkey, September 2011, and the Secretariat of the Working Party subsequently presented the results of the review to the **36<sup>th</sup> Session of the EFC** in Turkey, October 2011 that was held jointly with the UNECE Timber Committee (see document ECE/TIM/2011/17 – FO: EFC/2011/17). The report was finalized in 2012.

4. Meetings of the Working Party with the bureaux of the EFC and the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI<sup>1</sup>) of the Economic Commission for Europe in February 2010, May 2011 and June 2013 complemented the review process.

5. In order to give the Working Party a new profile and to address strategic issues, participants at the **29<sup>th</sup> Session of the Working Party** in France, September 2013, decided to implement the recommendations from the review process:

(a) The main mandate of the Working Party will be to serve the EFC and its member countries as advisory body for watershed management and sustainable mountain development. These topics are crosscutting, require inter-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder approaches as well as a long term vision and commitment.

(b) The Working Party shall remain a country driven institutional structure under the umbrella of the EFC. A “Strategy and Governance Paper” will be developed.

(c) Two pilot working groups (WG) related to mountain environments have been established, based on the gaps identified and the needs expressed by the countries: WG 1 “Forests and Water”, and WG 2 “Hazards and disaster risk management”. Other WGs can be established on request in the future.

(d) The following products of the WGs have been identified: publications on relevant topics, policy advice from local to national level, capacity development through the preparation and dissemination of training material and the conduction of workshops, seminars and field trainings (e.g. summer schools), research programmes.

(e) Each WG will be coordinated by lead countries (WG1: Turkey, Finland, Poland; WG2: France, Austria), define its terms of reference, work plan, outputs and products and a budget plan to accomplish its tasks. Any member country of the EFC is encouraged and invited to join these working groups according to their interest and priorities.

(f) The WGs will be in close contact with the national EFC focal points. They will also closely collaborate with relevant European institutions and mechanisms (e.g. INTRAPREAVENT, EFI-MOUNTFOR, EU-Commission, etc) and with other countries and partner organizations of the ECE region.

6. WG leading countries and the Working Party Secretariat have submitted a proposal for a parallel event at **Metsä2013**, the joint session of the EFC and COFFI in Finland, December 2013, in order to present the latest developments in watershed management, the working group concept and the new strategy and governance paper of the Working Party.

## II. Points for Consideration

7. The Commission may wish to:

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<sup>1</sup> Previously named the UNECE Timber Committee (TC)

- endorse the decisions taken by the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the Working Party;
- renew their commitment to the Working Party and, if not already done so, assign a focal point to serve on the Working Party in the future;
- express their wishes, expectations and future needs from the Working Party;
- take full advantage of the services the Working Party will offer in the future.