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FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE

Thirty-third Session

Łódź, Poland, 10–13 May 2022

Report from the outcome of the debate of the Joint Session of the 41st European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the 79th UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI)

Executive Summary

The Council, at its 151st Session in March 2015, as well as the Conference, at its 39th Session in June 2015, in reviewing the document “Assessment of FAO Governance Reforms” ([C2015/26 Rev.1](#)), endorsed the suggestion “that the priorities identified by the regional technical commissions on forests and fisheries could be included as an integral part of the Regional Conference reports to Council as regard to priorities for the work of the Organization in each region.”

The 41st Session of the European Forestry Commission (EFC) was held jointly with the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) from 22 to 25 November 2021 in Rome, Italy.

This paper provides a secretarial summary of EFC-related matters. The [full report](#) from the joint session is available on the UNECE website at <https://unece.org/info/Forests/events/357375>.

Suggested action by the Regional Conference

The Regional Conference is invited to review the summary report and endorse the recommendations of the 41st Session of the EFC.

Queries on the content of this document may be addressed to:

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I. Background

1. The 41st Session of the European Forestry Commission (EFC) was held jointly with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and the 6th European Forest Week from 22 to 25 November 2021 in Rome, Italy.
2. The session was held in a hybrid format, and more than 200 participants were in attendance, both physical and virtually. Attendees were from 38 countries (32 EFC Members plus the European Union, and five non-EFC Members); two intergovernmental organizations; one intergovernmental process; several non-governmental organizations; and members of the private sector, local entities, academia, and the media.
3. The joint session discussed and assessed policy and technical issues relevant to forestry in the region. In particular, the session discussed global and regional policy developments and their regional implications and FAO activities and governance matters in the region. The session also adopted the Integrated Programme of Work 2022–2025 of COFFI and the EFC. Furthermore, the session touched up on important technical topics, such as the Global Forest Resources Assessment, forest economies and markets, forest landscape restoration, and the contribution of forests and forest products to a circular bioeconomy. The session also integrated a successful panel discussion on regional intersectoral dialogue on forestry and agriculture matters.

II. Summary Report

A - EFC and COFFI Joint Matters

Progress in the global and regional forest resources assessment processes

4. The Commission and the Committee:
 - Requested that FAO and ECE continue to work with Forest Europe on joint ECE/FAO/Forest Europe data collection on forests and forest management and coordinate it with global reporting, to the extent possible.
 - Encouraged Members to continue collaboration with ECE, FAO and partner institutions to achieve synergies in data collection, analysis and management; reduce the duplication of efforts; and support the implementation of joint ECE/FAO/Forest Europe data collection on forests and forest management.

Global and regional policy context

5. The Commission and the Committee requested that FAO and UNECE, within their mandates:
 - continue supporting Members in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as they relate to forests, and the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030;
 - update Members and other stakeholders on forest-related global and regional policy developments and contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030 implementation and review process; and
 - continue to cooperate with relevant regional bodies and processes.

Integrated Programme of Work 2022–2025 of COFFI and EFC

6. The Commission and the Committee reviewed and adopted the Integrated Programme of Work of EFC/COFFI for 2022–2025.

Forest landscape restoration

7. The Committee and the Commission discussed the direction and future activities in this area, particularly in the context of the 2021–2030 United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and requested that the ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section continue to support Members in their work on forest landscape restoration.

The contribution of forests and forest products to a circular bioeconomy

8. The Committee and the Commission invited ECE and FAO, through the Joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, to:

- **prepare** a series of studies further reviewing the application of circular models in specific forest-based industries, and how they apply to the Paris Agreement goals and the SDGs, including through the identification of case studies and best practice;
- **take into consideration** the whole forest-based value chain and **bring attention** to the circular nature of wood as a renewable resource and the role of sustainable forest management;
- **look** at existing definitions and present recommendations for adjusting them to the forest sector for the consideration of Members during the next joint session while considering that work on a definition of a circular bioeconomy in the forest sector is premature;
- **assess** Members' priorities and needs in the application of circular models in the forest sector, as appropriate; and
- **provide** opportunities for Members to exchange knowledge and best practices on the implementation of circularity principles in the forest sector.

B - EFC matters

9. The Commission:

- **appreciated** the progress made and requested that FAO **continue** its current work – including on forest invasive species, forest fires and definitions of forest degradation – and keep Members updated about relevant developments (paragraph 64).
- **recommended that FAO:** (a) **strengthen** the integration of land use and integrated landscape approaches in operational forestry work in the region, as well as into existing and future regional priorities of the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU), considering the multifunctional roles of forests; (b) **integrate** poverty considerations into the design and formulation of projects, in particular large projects submitted for financing mechanisms such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF), applying approaches such as poverty measurement, poverty profiles, poverty mapping, and poverty-based targeting; (c) **continue supporting** natural resources management, including in forests, through the harmonization and strengthening of national policies, financing, incentives, taxation and governance frameworks and measures, including regulations, standards and monitoring for forest management interventions and practices, and support capacity development in this regard; (d) **continue supporting** countries and other stakeholders, including the private sector, in the promotion of coordinated action enhancing the sustainable production and

- consumption of non-wood forest products (NWFP), including capacity-building related to the collection and dissemination of statistics on NWFP; and (e) **continue supporting** the Forest Invasive Species Network for Europe and Central Asia (REUFIS) and its activities, in particular in organizing topical trainings on emerging invasive species, and collaborate with relevant organizations, including Forest Europe (paragraph 68, a-e);
- invited FAO to: (a) send a message to the Regional Conference for Europe **emphasizing** the need to consider food security, agriculture, forestry and different aspects of rural development in an integrated manner; (b) **strengthen** the focus on regionally specific priorities, in particular the regional priority “managing natural resources sustainably and preserving biodiversity in a changing climate”; and (c) **continue addressing** intersectoral matters through initiatives and land-use policies aimed at halting and reversing forest loss and land degradation, promoting restoration, and promoting sustainable agriculture and forest management in ways that lead to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems (paragraph 84, a-c).
 - requested that FAO: (a) **play an active role** in advancing the United Nations Secretary-General’s initiative on turning the tide on deforestation and related activities; (b) **explore** how the related pledges from United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP 26 can be monitored; and (c) **continue** to take an active role as the Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and, through this, enhance advocacy on forests through relevant global processes and initiatives (paragraph 87, a-c).
 - requested that FAO: a) **continue** to synchronize the calendar of future EFC sessions, taking into account its joint sessions with COFFI (ECE), with the timetable of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC) sessions in order to provide inputs from the EFC to the ERC in a timely manner; b) **invite** the EFC chairperson to attend the Regional Conference and enhance intersessional activities by improving interactions between EFC and ERC Members, including Rome-based delegations, with a view to strengthening intersectoral policy dialogue and ensuring that important regional forestry matters are integrated in the themes of the Regional Conference; c) **consider** undertaking a review of the EFC with the aim to further enhancing its relevance, including the focus on Agenda 2030 and the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31, and its efficiency and effectiveness; and d) communicate the results of the discussion on this item to the next session of the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) for its consideration (paragraph 91, a-d).
 - **elected** by acclamation Ms Liubov Poliakova (Ukraine) as Chair and Mr Keith Anderson (Switzerland), Mr Teemu Seppä (Finland), and Mr Abduvokhid Zakhadullaev (Uzbekistan) as Vice-Chairs to hold office until the end of the 42nd Session (paragraph 92).

10. The Commission made recommendations for the agendas of COFO and the ERC, as listed below:

Recommendations of the European Forestry Commission for the attention of the FAO Committee on Forestry

- **Continue strengthening** coordination between COFO and the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) on intersectoral forestry and agriculture matters.
- Progress on the implementation of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

Recommendations of the European Forestry Commission for the attention of the Regional Conference for Europe

- **Consider** the report of the 41st Session of the EFC.

- Send a message to the Regional Conference for Europe **emphasizing** the need to consider food security, agriculture, forestry and different aspects of rural development in an integrated manner.
- **Strengthen** the focus on regionally specific priorities, in particular the regional priority “managing natural resources sustainably and preserving biodiversity in a changing climate.”
- **Continue addressing** intersectoral matters through initiatives and land-use policies aimed at halting and reversing forest loss and land degradation, promoting restoration, and promoting sustainable agriculture and forest management in ways that lead to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems.

Annex A

Recommendations of the European Forestry Commission

A. Recommendations of the European Forestry Commission for the attention of the FAO Committee on Forestry (issues to be considered for inclusion in the Agenda)

<i>Priority issues for COFO to consider</i>	<i>Expected outcome (information/discussion/decision)</i>	<i>Possible follow up activities for COFO and FAO</i>	<i>Commission</i>	<i>Reference to other RFC recommendation</i>
The Commissions recommended to continue strengthening coordination between COFO and COAG on cross-sectoral forestry - agriculture matters	Discussion/decision	Development of policy recommendations and programme elements for the PWB	EFC	NAFC, NEFRC
Progress on the implementation of the UN Decade on Restoration	Discussion/decision	Development of policy recommendations and programme elements for the PWB	EFC	COFLAC, NAFC

B. Recommendations of the European Forestry Commission for the attention of the Regional Conference for Europe

<i>Priority issues for the Regional Conference for Europe to consider</i>	<i>Expected outcome (information/discussion/decision)</i>	<i>Possible follow up activities for FAO</i>
Consider report of EFC41	Discussion/decision by ERC	Develop summary of EFC report
To send a message to the Regional Conference for Europe emphasising the need to consider food security, agriculture, forestry and different aspects of rural development in an integrated manner.	Discussion/Decision	Development of policy recommendations and programme elements for the PWB
To strengthen the focus on regionally specific priorities, in particular Regional Priority “Managing	Discussion/ Decision	Development of policy recommendations and programme elements for the PWB

<i>Priority issues for the Regional Conference for Europe to consider</i>	<i>Expected outcome (information/discussion/decision)</i>	<i>Possible follow up activities for FAO</i>
natural resources sustainably and preserving biodiversity in a changing climate".		
To continue addressing cross-sectoral matters through initiatives and land use policies aimed at halting and reversing forest loss and land degradation, and promoting restoration, as well as promoting sustainable agriculture and forest management in ways that lead to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems.	Discussion/Decision	Development of policy recommendations and programme elements for the PWB

C. EFC recommendations for the FAO Programme of Work in Forestry related to the agenda of the current session

<i>Area/action for FAO programme of work</i>	<i>Priority (H, M, L, De-emphasis)</i>	<i>Type (new, continued)</i>	<i>Level of action (subregional/regional/global)</i>	<i>Global Forest Goals</i>	<i>Area/action for FAO programme of work</i>
<u>Progress in the global and regional forest resources assessment processes:</u>					
1. Requested FAO and ECE to continue to work with Forest Europe on the joint ECE/FAO/Forest Europe data collection on forests and forest management and coordinate it with the global reporting to the extent possible.		Continued	Global, Regional	Goal 1- Goal 6	-
<u>Follow-up to the decisions of the fortieth session of the European Forestry Commission:</u> FAO to continue to work on:					
2. The Commission appreciated the progress made and requested FAO to continue its current work, including on forest invasive species, forest fires and definitions of forest degradation and keep Members updated about relevant developments.		Continued	Regional	Goal 1	-
<u>Presentation of forestry activities of the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia:</u> FAO to:					

Area/action for FAO programme of work	Priority (H, M, L, De-emphasis)	Type (new, continued)	Level of action (subregional/regional/global)	Global Forest Goals	Area/action for FAO programme of work	
3. Strengthen the integration of land use and integrated landscape approaches in operational forestry work in the region, as well as into existing and future REU Regional Priorities, considering the multifunctional roles of forests.		Continued	Regional	Goal 1	-	
4. Integrate poverty considerations into the design and formulation of projects, in particular large projects submitted to financing mechanisms such as GEF and GCF, applying approaches such as poverty measurement, poverty profiles, poverty mapping, and poverty-based targeting.		Continued	Regional	Goal 1 Goal 4 Goal 5	-	
5. Continue to support natural resource management including forests through the harmonization and strengthening of national policy, financing, incentives, taxation and governance frameworks and measures, including regulations, standards and monitoring for forest management interventions and practices, and support capacity development in this regard.		Continued	Regional	Goal 1 Goal 5	-	
6. Continue supporting countries and other stakeholders, including the private sector, to promote coordinated action enhancing the sustainable production and consumption of NWFP, including capacity-building related to the collection and dissemination of statistics on NWFP.		Continued	Regional	Goal 1 Goal 6	-	
7. Continue to support the Forest Invasive Species Network for Europe and Central Asia (REUFIS) and its activities, in particular in organizing topical trainings on emerging invasive species and collaborate with relevant organizations including Forest Europe.		Continued	Regional	Goal 1 Goal 6	-	
<u>Progress of <i>Silva Mediterranea</i> and the European Forestry Commission Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds:</u> FAO to:		Continued	Regional	Goal 5 Goal 6	-	
8. Encourage the development of activities related to youth entrepreneurship in the bioeconomy as a way to address the challenges faced by Mediterranean forests in the context of global changes.		<u>Regional cross-sectorial dialogue on forestry - agriculture matters: panel session:</u> FAO to:	Continued	Regional	Goal 5 Goal 6	-

<i>Area/action for FAO programme of work</i>	<i>Priority (H, M, L, De-emphasis)</i>	<i>Type (new, continued)</i>	<i>Level of action (subregional/regional/global)</i>	<i>Global Forest Goals</i>	<i>Area/action for FAO programme of work</i>
9. Strengthen the focus on regionally-specific priorities, in particular Regional Priority “Managing natural resources sustainably and preserving biodiversity in a changing climate”.		Continued	Regional	Goal 1 Goal 6	-
10. Continue addressing cross-sectoral matters through initiatives and land use policies aimed at halting and reversing forest loss and land degradation, and promoting restoration, as well as promoting sustainable agriculture and forest management in ways that lead to MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems.		Continued	Regional	Goal 1 Goal 3 Goal 6	-
<u>Global processes and initiatives:</u> FAO to:					
11. Play an active role in advancing the United Nations Secretary-General’s Initiative on Turning the Tide on Deforestation and related activities.		Continued	All	Goal 1 - Goal 6	-
12. Explore how the related pledges from UNFCCC COP26 can be monitored.		Continued	All	Goal 1 - Goal 6	-
13. Continue to take an active role as the Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and through this enhance advocacy on forests through relevant global processes and initiatives.		Continued	All	Goal 1 - Goal 6	-
<u>Preparations for the thirty-third Regional Conference for Europe (ERC 33), twenty-sixth session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO 26) and the XV World Forestry Congress:</u> FAO to:					
14. Continue to synchronize the calendar of future EFC sessions, taking into account its joint sessions with COFFI (ECE), with the timetable of the European Regional Conference (ERC) sessions in order to provide inputs from EFC to the ERC in a timely manner.		Continued	Regional	Goal 5 Goal 6	-
15. Invite the EFC Chairperson to attend the Regional Conference and enhance inter-sessional activities by improving interactions between EFC and ERC Members, including Rome-based delegations, with a view to strengthening cross-sectoral policy		Continued	Global, Regional	Goal 5 Goal 6	-

<i>Area/action for FAO programme of work</i>	<i>Priority (H, M, L, De-emphasis)</i>	<i>Type (new, continued)</i>	<i>Level of action (subregional/ regional/global)</i>	<i>Global Forest Goals</i>	<i>Area/action for FAO programme of work</i>
dialogue and to ensure that important regional forestry matters are integrated in the themes of the Regional Conference.					
16. Consider undertaking a review of the EFC with the aim to further enhance its relevance, including the focus on Agenda 2030 and the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, and its efficiency and effectiveness.		New	Regional	Goal 5 Goal 6	-
17. Communicate the results of the discussion on this item to the next session of COFO, for its consideration.		Continued	Global, Regional	Goal 5 Goal 6	-