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Joint Committee/Commission matters

Seventieth anniversary of the UNECE/FAO Partnership

Food and Agriculture Organization

European Forestry Commission

Thirty-ninth session

Warsaw, Poland 9-13 October 2017

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Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The following document is circulated by the Secretariat at the request of the Government of the Czech Republic.

At the kind and generous invitation of the Czech Republic, from 5 to 7 September 2017, over seventy participants from twenty-five countries celebrated seventy years of cooperation between UNECE and FAO for sustainable forest management. The meeting took place in Mariánské Lázně, in the same venue where the International Timber Conference took place seventy years ago. After the conference in 1947, new intergovernmental bodies were created to improve cooperation and promote mobilization of wood on a sustainable basis after the wartime levels of harvest: the UNECE Timber Committee, later renamed the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI), and the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC). At the meeting in Mariánské Lázně in September 2017, participants reviewed and endorsed an Anniversary Message, as proposed by the Czech Republic. This Anniversary Message highlights the important achievements in protecting and managing forests in the region over the past seventy years, as well as the need for cooperation to address future challenges.

Delegates are invited to take note of the document.

MARIÁNSKÉ LÁZNĚ ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE

5-7 September 2017

WE, the PARTICIPANTS of the meeting in Mariánské Lázně, the Czech Republic, on 5-7 September 2017, convened to celebrate 70 years of fruitful cooperation between the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the European Forestry Commission (EFC) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO),

Recall that in May 1947, an International Timber Conference was convened in Mariánské Lázně, former Czechoslovakia, to address the situation of forests and timber markets in post-war Europe, addressing both the future demand for timber and the capacity of forests to supply it,

Recall that, subsequently, new intergovernmental bodies were created to improve cooperation and promote mobilisation of wood on a sustainable basis after the wartime levels of harvest: the UNECE Timber Committee, later renamed to the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI), and the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC), previously known as the European Commission on Forestry and Forest Products,

Honour the work of previous generations in implementing Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in the region, in line with the Statement of Forestry Principles adopted by the FAO European Commission on Forestry and Forest Products in 1950, which recognized that forests constitute an important contributor to economic stability and progress, and which highlighted already at the time the importance of the protection of forests, ensuring sustained yield, and the promotion of economic and rational methods of forest use in the production and utilization of forest products,

Recall also that for the last 70 years, the two intergovernmental bodies have been working in partnership for forests and the forest sector, also with other partners, including the process of Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Forest Europe) and the European Forest Institute (EFI): They were able to respond to the changing circumstances and needs, moving from a focus on urgent post-war reconstruction, to becoming a leader of analysis of the forest sector's long-term outlook, an advocate of a dynamic forest policy, and a forum for exchange of experience and information, resulting in today's emphasis on monitoring and advocating SFM and the forest sector's contribution to the emerging green economy,

While recognizing the progress made since then, *reiterate* the importance of SFM, and continuous need to address current challenges in the region,

Acknowledge the importance of the Integrated Programme of Work (IPoW) for adapting activities of UNECE-COFFI and FAO-EFC to the changing and evolving needs of the forest and the forest sector,

Are also mindful of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017 – 2030 (UNSPF), adopted by the UN General Assembly on 27 April 2017, that identifies regional bodies, notably the UN regional commissions and the FAO regional forestry commissions, and other regional and sub-regional bodies, as important partners for providing a crucial bridge between international policies and national actions in the implementation of the UNSPF and achieving its global forests goals and targets,

Are also mindful that regional and subregional bodies and processes, including those within the United Nations system, as well as the criteria and indicators processes, have been encouraged to build and strengthen synergies between the UNSPF and their policies and programmes, including in the context of their contributions to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG),

Recall also that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations acknowledges the importance of the regional and sub-regional dimensions, regional economic integration and interconnectivity in sustainable development, and the role that regional and sub-regional frameworks can play in facilitating the effective translation of sustainable development policies into concrete action at the national level,

Commend UNECE and FAO for their longstanding partnership on forest-related matters in the region, *acknowledge* further considerable potential for its development and *invite* the two organizations to continue and reinforce their partnerships on forests in a mutually beneficial way,

Encourage member States, all relevant stakeholders and experts to continue to support the joint work of UNECE-COFFI and FAO-EFC in order to enhance synergies at the regional level,

Invite member States to engage in and support the implementation of the IPoW 2018-2021, to be adopted at the joint session in Warsaw in October 2017, also by encouraging active participation of national experts in the work of the teams of specialists and by providing financial and in-kind support,

Encourage member States to strengthen regional and sub-regional forestry development, dialogue and coordination to advance the UNSPF and to achieve its six global forest goals and associated targets,

Invite the UNECE and FAO to cooperate in the future with all relevant regional and sub-regional processes and organizations, such as FOREST EUROPE and the EFI, in accordance with the UNSPF, which identifies regional bodies as important partners for its implementation,

In light of the cross-cutting nature of the SDGs, *encourage* UNECE and FAO to reach out to and cooperate with other relevant sectors to maximize the contribution of the forest and forest sector to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda,

Encourage relevant actors to continue the dialogue on forest certification in view of the interesting discussion here in Mariánské Lázně with the support of the joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section,

Invite UNECE and FAO to collect data related to certified forest products in order to improve the understanding of the role of forest certification in the region.