



Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe Bulletin

A Report of the Fifth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE 5)

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THE FIFTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE PROTECTION OF FORESTS IN EUROPE: 5-7 NOVEMBER 2007

The Fifth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE 5) commences today at the Sheraton Warsaw Hotel, in Warsaw, Poland. Ministers responsible for forests in Europe are expected to adopt the Warsaw Declaration and resolutions on “Forests, Wood and Energy” and “Forests and Water.” The documents will focus, *inter alia*, on the role of forests in energy production, mitigating climate change and protecting water quality and quantity. Ministers will also consider Ministerial Statements on Forest Fires and on a Pan-European Forest Week 2008. The draft documents have been endorsed by the MCPFE Expert-Level Meetings that took place earlier in the year. A multi-stakeholder dialogue is also scheduled to provide a platform for dialogue among European ministers, non-governmental organizations, members of the research community, forest industry and forest owners associations. Other agenda items include a poster session presenting countries’ and organizations’ achievements in implementing MCPFE commitments, presentations reporting up-to-date information on the implementation of sustainable forest management (SFM) at national and regional levels, and a field trip to the Koziennicka Forest.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MCPFE

The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) is a high-level political initiative working towards the protection and sustainable management of forests throughout the region. Forty-six European countries and the European Union, cooperating with a range of international organizations, are involved in this initiative. MCPFE is assisted by a Liaison Unit based in Warsaw, Poland.

MCPFE 1: The first MCPFE took place in Strasbourg, France, on 18 December 1990. Recognizing increasing threats to European forests and the need for cross-border protection, participants agreed to initiate scientific and technical cooperation in Europe, and the incorporation of scientific data into political action. They adopted a General Declaration and six resolutions on: a European network of permanent sample plots for the monitoring of forest ecosystems; conservation

of forest genetic resources; a decentralized European Data Bank on forest fires; adapting the management of mountain forests to new environmental conditions; expansion of the EUROSILVA Network of research on tree physiology; and a European network for research on forest ecosystems.

MCPFE 2: MCPFE 2 was held in Helsinki, Finland, from 16-17 June 1993. Building on the Strasbourg Resolutions and responding to many of the forest-related decisions adopted at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, participants adopted a General Declaration and four resolutions on: general guidelines for SFM in Europe; general guidelines for the conservation of the biodiversity of European forests; forestry cooperation with countries with economies in transition; and strategies for a process of long-term adaptation of forests in Europe to climate change.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE HELSINKI CONFERENCE:

At the fifth Expert-Level Meeting on the follow-up to the Helsinki Conference, held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 8-9 December 1997, delegates adopted a Work Programme on the conservation and enhancement of biological and landscape diversity in forest ecosystems for the period of 1997-2000. The Work Programme was a joint initiative of the MCPFE and the pan-European Ministerial Process “Environment for Europe,” defining objectives and actions in the field of biological diversity as an essential element of SFM.

MCPFE 3: MCPFE 3 was held in Lisbon, Portugal, from 2-4 June 1998. The Conference focused on the socioeconomic aspects of SFM and affirmed important outcomes of the Helsinki follow-up process. Participants adopted a General Declaration and two resolutions on: people, forests and forestry – enhancement of socioeconomic aspects of SFM; and pan-European criteria, indicators and operational level guidelines for SFM.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE LISBON CONFERENCE:

At the second Expert-Level Meeting on the follow-up to the Lisbon Conference held in Vienna from 28-29 October 1999, participants adopted the MCPFE’s Work Programme for the period of 1999-2003, constituting a key element of the follow-up of the Lisbon Conference and setting out concrete actions for the implementation of the MCPFE commitments.

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MCPFE 4: MCPFE 4 was held in Vienna, Austria, from 28-30 April 2003. Conference participants adopted the Vienna Living Forest Summit Declaration “European Forests - Common Benefits, Shared Responsibilities,” and five resolutions on: strengthening synergies for SFM in Europe through cross-sectoral cooperation and national forest programmes; enhancing the economic viability of SFM in Europe; preserving and enhancing the social and cultural dimensions of SFM in Europe; conserving and enhancing forest biological diversity in Europe; and climate change and SFM in Europe.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE VIENNA CONFERENCE:

At the Expert-Level Meeting on the follow-up to the Vienna Conference held in Vienna from 28-29 April 2003, participants adopted the MCPFE’s Work Programme for the period 2003-2007 for the implementation of the commitments agreed at MCPFE 4, comprising 30 pan-European actions for implementation.

PREPARATIONS FOR MCPFE 5: MCPFE Expert-Level Meetings were held in Warsaw, Poland, on 5-6 June and 3-4 September 2007, to follow up on three drafting meetings held earlier in 2007 and to finalize the documents for MCPFE 5. The experts finalized the content of the documents for the Warsaw Ministerial Summit, including the draft Warsaw Declaration, and the resolutions on “Forests, Wood and Energy” and “Forests and Water.”

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

SEVENTH SESSION OF THE UN FORUM ON FORESTS: UNFF 7 was held from 16-27 April 2007, at UN Headquarters in New York, US. After two weeks of difficult negotiations, culminating in an all-night session, delegates adopted the Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests and a Multi-year Programme of Work for the period 2007-2015. Delegates also participated in two multi-stakeholder dialogues, a panel discussion with member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and the launching of preparations for the International Year of Forests 2011.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOOD-BASED BIOENERGY: This conference, hosted by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), took place from 17-19 May 2007 in Hannover, Germany. Approximately 90 participants convened to discuss the use of logging and wood-processing residues and dedicated bioenergy timber plantations for energy generation. Participants agreed, *inter alia*, that the international community should support the development of efficient and cost-effective wood-based bioenergy in tropical countries, and that the wood-based bioenergy sector needs to be developed on the basis of SFM.

THE EUROPEAN UNION AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON VALUATION AND COMPENSATION METHODS OF NON-WOOD FOREST GOODS AND SERVICES:

The first meeting of the EU *ad hoc* Working Group on valuation and compensation methods of non-wood forest goods and services was held in Brussels, Belgium on 28 June 2007. Tasked with implementing the 3rd Key Action of the EU Forest Action Plan 2007-2011 (exchange and assess experiences on the valuation and marketing of non-wood forest goods and services), the Working Group discussed, *inter alia*, state-of-the-art valuation methods and the possible establishment of new markets for non-wood forest goods and services. The Group made recommendations on how to include these measures in rural development programmes.

IUFRO EUROPEAN CONGRESS “FORESTS AND FORESTRY IN THE CONTEXT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT”:

Held from 6-7 September 2007 in Warsaw, Poland, this European Congress of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) examined the role of forests in rural development. The Congress focused on the role of research as a foundation for the development of forestry and rural development policies and the planning and management of natural resources. Four themes were addressed: policies supporting rural development; forests and rural development in light of global change; social aspects of forests and forestry; and the economic role of forests in rural development.

SIXTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

“ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE”: This meeting took place from 10-12 October 2007 in Belgrade, Serbia. The high-level meeting, attended by over 1000 delegates from over 50 countries, provided a forum for participants to consider the future of the multilateral “Environment for Europe” process. Participants of the conference also addressed various topics, including: assessment and implementation of commitments; the state of the environment; implementation of multilateral environment agreements; findings of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe environmental performance reviews; education for sustainable development; biodiversity; capacity building; perspectives of South-East Europe; environmental policy and international competitiveness; and environmental finance and partnerships. Outcomes of the meeting included a Ministerial Declaration on the future of the Environment for Europe process and Ministerial Statements on education for sustainable development and biodiversity.

DAILY WEB COVERAGE AND MCPFE 5 SUMMARY:

IISD Reporting Services will be providing daily web coverage of MCPFE 5, online at <http://www.iisd.ca/ymb/mcpfe5/>. The MCPFE 5 Summary will be available at this link on Saturday, 10 November.