

UNECE, FAO Promote Forest Restoration and Cooperation on Boreal Forests

November 14, 2019



Country representatives from the Caucasus and Central Asia agreed on a regional greening strategy to scale up goals, actions, investments and collaboration on landscape restoration by leveraging funds for green infrastructure development.

The UNECE region established a Team of Specialists dedicated to streamline science and policy cooperation on boreal forests and increase awareness on the role of boreal forests in climate change and the bioeconomy.

COFFI launched the UNECE/FAO Forest Products Annual Market Review 2018-19.

During the Fifth European Forest Week and Forêt2019, country representatives came together to discuss forest restoration and cooperation on boreal forests. Industry representatives highlighted a market review that predicts the use of dead, overstocked and damaged trees will increase significantly by 2024. The events provided an opportunity to reflect on trends in the forest sector and to discuss the role of forests in a circular economy.

The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) jointly organized the Fifth European Forest Week, which convened from 4-8 November in Geneva, Switzerland, under the theme 'Forests and the Circular Economy.' The week was held in conjunction with Forêt2019, the Joint Session of the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC). The joint session addressed a number of topics, including invasive species risk to forests, implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests and collaboration with the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF), and the role of sustainable wood value chains in achieving the SDGs.

Country representatives from the Caucasus and Central Asia agreed on a regional greening strategy focused on landscape restoration and greening infrastructure. According to the UNECE, this region's ecosystems and landscapes have suffered from excessive extraction and waste of water, deforestation and pollution from mining, resulting in desertification, land erosion and soil loss. To address these challenges, experts from Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan met to develop a country-owned strategy for the region. The strategy aims to leverage

funds for green infrastructure development to increase funding for landscape restoration. Armenia's Deputy Minister of Environment, Vardan Melikyan, said "we expect that the strategy will help us to scale up goals, actions, investments and collaboration on landscape restoration and facilitate cooperation with international partners. Countries hope to endorse the strategy in 2020. When implemented, the strategy is expected to contribute to nature-based solutions to climate change and global efforts to restore forests and degraded landscapes, including the Bonn Challenge; UNECE states that reversing land degradation can provide over "one-third of the climate mitigation required by 2030" to remain below 2°C increase in average global temperatures.

On boreal forests, the UNECE region established a Team of Specialists (ToS) dedicated to streamline science and policy cooperation on boreal forests. The ToS will contribute to increasing awareness on the role of boreal forests in climate change and the bioeconomy, increasing collaboration with the International Boreal Forest Research Association (IBFRA) and other boreal-related research organizations, and advising the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section on boreal forest matters. The ToS's establishment follows a commitment by ministers from the circumboreal countries to increase research cooperation and knowledge-sharing on boreal forests. In June 2018, ministers from Canada, Finland, Norway, Sweden, the Russian Federation and the US signed the 'Harparanda Ministerial Declaration on Circumboreal Cooperation on Forests,' in which they encouraged the ToS's establishment, noting that such an approach could accelerate research and knowledge exchange on boreal forests and reduce duplication of efforts.

The COFFI also launched the UNECE/FAO Forest Products Annual Market Review 2018-19 at the session. Participants discussed innovations in salvaging and using dead, overstocked and damaged trees, such as by using fire-prone material from over-stocked forests to produce cross laminated timber (CLT). Using CLT and glue laminated timber products (Glulam) increases spacing in forests and decreases the risk of wildfires, which significantly impacted the forest sector in 2018. The Market Review predicts the CLT market will more than double its 2017 value of US\$603 million by 2024, contributing to more sustainable, renewable construction and responsible sourcing. The Review also features analysis on markets for other wood materials and highlights the role of sustainable forest products in international markets.

SOURCE:- <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/unece-fao-promote-forest-restoration-and-cooperation-on-boreal-forests/>