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**Food and Agriculture Organization
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Geneva, 4-7 November 2019

Item 5(d) of the provisional agenda

**FAO European Forestry Commission matters: Progress
report of EFC Working Party on the Management of
Mountain Watersheds****Food and Agriculture Organization
European Forestry Commission****Fortieth session**

Geneva, 4-7 November 2019

**Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds
report****Note by the Secretariat***Summary*

The Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds (WPMMW) is a technical body under the umbrella of the European Forestry Commission (EFC), established in 1950. It promotes sustainable development in mountain watersheds by fostering exchange and knowledge creation about the many challenges faced in mountain watersheds such as climate change and anthropogenic uses and ensuring the long-term provision of environmental services by watersheds for both upstream and downstream areas.

The paper provides brief information on the activities of the WPMMW conducted during the reporting period.



I. Activities of the Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds

1. Since the last session of European Forestry Commission (EFC) in Warsaw, Poland, in 2017, the Working Party undertook the following activities:

(a) In the period 2018-2019 two Steering Committee meetings of the Working Party were organized. The meeting in 2018 in Rome focused on a strategy to stimulate interest of the members in the activities of the EFC WPMMW whereas the one in 2019 in Vienna focused on the preparation of the 32nd session of the Working Party;

(b) The Working Groups (WG), WG1 “Forest and water” co-led by Turkey, Finland and Italy, and WG2 “Hazards and disaster risk management” co-led by Austria and France, implemented their respective work plans;

(c) In June 2018, WG1 organized a meeting at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest to review its progress, evaluate actions and develop future objectives. Main achievements included the presentation of papers of the WG1 satellite session at the 2nd International Conference on Environmental Education held in Eger (Hungary);

(d) WG2 has implemented the fourth and fifth workshop for practitioners on the topic of “Effect of forest and check dams on water surface, bedload input and debris earth flow in Alpine watersheds” in Austria in 2018 and in France in 2019. The exchange of best practices, learning from each other and working in international teams on a practical watershed management issue are key assets of the WG. The reports are available for download at the website of the Working Party (<http://www.fao.org/forestry/89331/en/>);

(e) The Working Party held its 32nd Session in Innsbruck, Austria, from 25 to 27 September 2019. With the overall theme of “Protective Functions of Forests in a Changing Climate”, the session included an overview of the Working Party and Working Groups, followed by reports from the countries, an overview of international mountain watershed and protective forest collaboration, and discussion on the action plan for the next five years. An adjoining conference on the overall theme was held with experts from various countries. An excursion focused on “Multifunctional protection forests in Alpine areas”, providing the participants an insight into the rich experiences of Austria regarding protective functions of forests. A co-publication with the Austrian Government on the Protective Functions of Forests in a Changing Climate featuring the examples and recommendations of Working Party members is expected to be released in early 2020 as the main result of the session. Other outcomes of the session will be presented to EFC members by the Secretariat;

(f) In order to better promote the Working Party and its Working Groups, the Secretariat prepared three flyers in collaboration with the Focal Points to be displayed in the website as well to be distributed during the WP and EFC Sessions, and other suitable occasions. The flyers aim to highlight the main actions and goals of the Working Party and both Working Groups and are seen as valuable tools to encourage the engagement of other countries in the activities.

II. Points for Consideration

2. The Commission may wish to take full advantage of the services of the Working Party and facilitate its work by:

(a) Strengthening engagement in the Working Party, including through designating national Focal Points to serve on the Working Party, (so far, nineteen countries have nominated Focal Points); and

(b) Strengthening broader relevance of the work of the Working Party by identifying priority topics to be addressed within the five-year action plan for the benefit of EFC and its members.