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REPORT ON FORESTS AND FOREST PRODUCTION
IN LATIN AMERICA

Resolution adopted 7 June 1951

THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA,
HAVING EXAMINED document E/CN.12/235, Report on the importance
of forests and forest production in the Latin American economy;
CONSIDERING that forests cover more than 40 per cent of Latin
America, an area which represents about one-quarter of the forests
of the world, so that Latin America has a greater proportion of
forest area than any other continent;
CONSIDERING that even though the present needs of Latin
America as to the consumption of lumber are small and its forest
resources, as has been noted, are abundant, the lumber industry in
Latin America cannot satisfy those needs and that, on the contrary,
the balance of trade in lumber is unfavourable, as is demonstrated
by the fact that Latin American lumber importations amount to
75 million dollars annually, whereas exportations amount to 63
million dollars annually;

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CONSIDERING that within a short time the consumption of lumber could increase greatly for reasons of urgency such as the need to develop building to relieve the existing housing shortage;

CONSIDERING that the world's needs constantly are increasing, as is reflected by the shortage of sawn lumber, especially in Europe and the Far East, and by the world-wide inadequacy of the supply of wood pulp;

CONSIDERING that only by making the best possible use of new technical methods of processing and utilizing forest products can growing national and international needs be satisfied;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the exploitation of forest wealth would enable those countries whose economy is founded on only a few agricultural products or essential raw materials to diversify their production;

CONSIDERING that this programme for forest production, if it is to be rational, must be based upon:

1. full knowledge of forest wealth; and
2. a forest conservation, forestry and management policy to maintain forests, to ensure continuous production, to exercise a favourable influence upon the climate and the water system and to conserve the soil;

CONSIDERING that the consumption of wood for fuel, which is very considerable in some of the densely populated regions of Latin America, may cause complete, rapid and dangerous deforestation over large areas;

/1. TAKES NOTE

1. TAKES NOTE with satisfaction of the Report on the Importance of Forests and Forest Production in the Latin American Economy (E/CN.12/235), which is a result of the joint work of ECLA and FAO (E/CN.12/229);

2. RECOMMENDS to the Executive Secretary that work such as this, which is the product of co-operation between specialized agencies and other international organisms, should be continued;

3. RECOMMENDS to the member governments that, in preparing or carrying out their programmes of forest and lumber development, they should take into consideration the study contained in document E/CN.12/235;

4. REQUESTS the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of the FAO to give to the member governments which request it, adequate technical assistance for the purposes to which reference is made in the preceding paragraph;

5. RECOMMENDS to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development that it should pay due attention to the financing of programmes for the development of forestry and the lumber industry in Latin America;

6. RECOMMENDS to the governments that they should

a) continue or initiate complete programmes for the surveying of forests and the drawing up of forest inventories;

b) adopt and put into effect a forest policy - including the organization of competent technical services - based upon adequate legislation and regulations appropriate to the

/specific characteristics

specific characteristics in each case, in order to ensure the conservation of their forest resources, thereby assuring lumber production and the protection of their agriculture and of their interests in general;

c) immediately take the requisite measures to ensure a normal supply of fuel in urban and densely-populated areas by providing for intensive and rational afforestation, encouraging the use of appropriate technical methods in the employment of timber for fuel and developing the use of mineral fuels and other sources of energy; and

7. RECOMMENDS to the Executive Secretary the study, in collaboration with the FAO, of the effects of customs tariffs and other barriers to trade and of shipping charges on the development of the lumber industry in the Latin American countries.