

FORTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER COUNCIL AND ASSOCIATED SESSIONS OF THE FOUR COMMITTEES: 3-8 NOVEMBER 2008

The forty-fourth session of the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC) and the Associated Sessions of the four Committees (Finance and Administration, Economic Information and Market Intelligence; Forest Industry, and Reforestation and Forest Management) are scheduled to be held in Yokohama, Japan, from 3 to 8 November 2008.

Major items on this session's agenda include consideration of a proposal to capture funds from carbon markets to promote sustainable forest management (SFM), and review of the status of the deposit of instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval, or accession to the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 2006. The Council will also consider the Report on the Meeting on Operational Modalities of Future Work of the ITTC, held in Accra, Ghana on 9-12 June 2008, and receive the final draft of the ITTO Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Tropical Timber-Producing Forests.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER COUNCIL

The International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) was negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to: provide an effective framework for cooperation and consultation between countries producing and consuming tropical timber; promote the expansion and diversification of international trade in tropical timber and the improvement of structural conditions in the tropical timber market; promote and support research and development to improve forest management and wood utilization; and encourage development of national policies for the sustainable utilization and conservation of tropical forests and their genetic resources and for maintaining the ecological balance in the regions concerned.

The ITTA was adopted on 18 November 1983, and entered into force on 1 April 1985. It remained in force for an initial period of five years and was extended twice for three-year periods. The Agreement was renegotiated during 1993-1994. The successor agreement, the ITTA, 1994, was adopted on 26 January 1994, and entered into force on 1 January 1997. It contains broader provisions for information sharing, including on non-tropical timber trade data, allows for consideration of

non-tropical timber issues as they relate to tropical timber; and includes the ITTO Objective 2000 for achieving exports of tropical timber and timber products from sustainably managed sources by the year 2000. The ITTA, 1994 also established the Bali Partnership Fund (BPF) to assist producing members in achieving the Year 2000 Objective. Initially concluded for three years, the ITTA, 1994 was extended twice for three-year periods.

In 2003 negotiations began on a successor agreement to the ITTA, 1994. The ITTA, 2006 was adopted in Geneva on 27 January 2006. The ITTA, 2006 builds on the foundations of the previous agreements and focuses on the world tropical timber economy and the sustainable management of the resource base, simultaneously encouraging the timber trade and improving forest management. It also allows for the consideration of non-tropical timber issues as they relate to tropical timber.

The ITTA, 1983 established the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), headquartered in Yokohama, Japan, which provides a framework for tropical timber producer and consumer countries to discuss and develop policies on issues relating to international trade in, and utilization of, tropical timber and the sustainable management of its resource base. The ITTO also administers assistance for related projects. The ITTO has 60 members, including the European Community (EC), which are divided into two caucuses: producer countries (33 members) and consumer countries (27 members). The ITTO's membership represents 90% of world trade in tropical timber and 80% of the world's tropical forests.

The governing body of the ITTO is the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC), which includes all members. Annual contributions and votes are distributed equally between the producers and consumers. The Council is supported by four committees, which are open to all members and provide advice and assistance to the Council on issues for consideration and decision: Economic Information and Market Intelligence (CEM); Reforestation and Forest Management (CRF); Forest Industry (CFI); and Finance and Administration (CFA).

ITTC-40: The 40th session of the ITTC met from 29 May to 2 June 2006, in Mérida, Mexico. Delegates proposed the formation of a committee on wildlife trafficking, and received a report on the status of tropical forest management. The Council approved 18 projects and three pre-projects and allocated US\$3.9 million in project funding. The Council also decided to allocate US\$200,000 to help fund the First International Conference of Members of Parliament on the Sustainable Management of Central African Forest Ecosystems in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

ITTC-41: The 41st session of the ITTC met from 6-11 November 2006, in Yokohama, Japan. The Council approved 13 new projects and granted funding for 11 projects and seven pre-projects. Additional funding from the European Commission was allocated to support capacity building in ITTO member states for the implementation of CITES listings of timber species. The Council adopted a decision on the extension of the ITTA, 1994, which provides for a review of the status of deposits of instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession to the ITTA, 2006, as well as other provisions of the Decision at Council Sessions held between 2007-2009 and the consultations to be undertaken by the Secretary-General of the U.N. if the ITTA, 2006 did not come into force by 1 September 2008.

ITTC-42: The 42nd session of the ITTC met from 7-12 May 2007 in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. The Council selected Emmanuel Ze Meka (Cameroon) as the new Executive Director of the ITTO. Delegates also discussed issues concerning operational, project and policy work, including: forest law enforcement in the context of sustainable timber production and trade; CITES listing proposals; ITTO guidelines for the restoration, management and rehabilitation of degraded and secondary tropical forests; civil society/private sector partnerships for sustainable forest management; and developments in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) regarding forests.

ITTC-43: The 43rd session of the ITTC met from 5-10 November 2007, in Yokohama, Japan. The Council approved: the Biennial Work Programme for 2008-2009; funding for studying the linkages between climate change and tropical forests; and Guidelines on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Tropical Timber-Producing Forests. The Council also approved draft Rules of Procedure and Financial Rules of Procedure, to be considered at the first meeting of the ITTC after the ITTA, 2006 enters into force.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

UNFCCC BALI FOREST DAY: A "Forest Day" event was held on 8 December 2007, co-hosted by CIFOR and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), parallel to UNFCCC COP13 in Bali, Indonesia. It was attended by more than 800 participants, and discussed the key role that forests play in both mitigation and adaptation to climate change, according to four cross-cutting themes: methodological challenges in estimating forest carbon; markets and governance; equity versus efficiency; and adaptation.

EXPERT PANEL ON FOREST ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE: The Expert Panel on Adaptation of Forests to Climate Change met 11-12 February 2008 in New York. The Panel was convened as a part of the CPF, with a view to building on information provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and to carry out a sector-specific assessment of current knowledge concerning, *inter alia*: the interrelationship between the climate and forest ecosystems; threats and future impacts of climate change on forest ecosystems and socioeconomic impacts on the forest sector; and adaptation practices, options and constraints. The Panel began work on an Assessment Report, which will be externally reviewed and published in time for the eighth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF)

ITTO/ BOLIVIAN FORESTRY CHAMBER FORESTRY INVESTMENT FORUM: The Forestry Investment Forum met on 26-27 March 2008, in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, co-hosted by ITTO and the Bolivian Forestry Chamber, to analyze investment opportunities in the Bolivian tropical forestry sector. Participants discussed investment incentives, analysis of the major international markets for tropical wood, industrial plantations, bioenergy, carbon markets and investment

opportunities within the region. The forum ran in parallel to the EXPOFOREST International Wood and Wood Technology Trade Fair.

CITES PLANTS COMMITTEE: The 17th meeting of the Plants Committee (PC17) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) convened from 15-19 April 2008 in Geneva, Switzerland. Forest-relevant agenda items included the assignment of responsibilities for carrying out work on bigleaf mahogany. The Committee also heard a progress report on the implementation of the Action Plan for Bigleaf Mahogany, and recommended a number of range states to be listed for the Review of Significant Trade (RST) in Appendix II species.

FAO MEETING ON FOREST SECTOR RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE: The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) hosted a meeting on 17 April 2008 in Rome, Italy, with senior representatives from CPF organizations, to initiate the elaboration of a strategic framework for a coherent inter-agency response to the climate change agenda. It was agreed that the strategic framework would: facilitate countries' preparations for the UNFCCC post-2012 climate regime through information; contribute to the implementation of the UNFCCC, UNFF and other relevant agreements; and enhance coordinated action on the ground.

CIFOR FOREST DAY: The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) hosted a "Forest Day" event in Yaoundé, Cameroon on 24 April 2008, to help shape the debate on forests and climate change in Central Africa. Participants analyzed the issues surrounding forests and climate change, with the aim of informing climate policies in the region. Debates and presentations centered on, *inter alia*: reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD) and associated markets and governance; pilot projects and their technical, monitoring and data-related challenges; and financing mechanisms.

MEETING ON OPERATIONAL MODALITIES: The Meeting on Operational Modalities of Future Work of the ITTC, was held in Accra, Ghana on 9-12 June 2008. Delegates discussed challenges to SFM and development assistance needs in Africa and approved grants worth over US\$2 million to address these. Participants also addressed the entry into force of the ITTA, 2006, including the modalities of operation of new thematic programmes and the functions of the Council's subsidiary committees.

FOREST FINANCING CLI: The Country-Led Initiative on Financing for SFM in Support of the UNFF met from 8-12 September 2008 in Paramaribo, Suriname. Participants shared experiences in mobilizing forest funding and generating revenues, identified emerging and existing public and private financing sources, and examined the relationship between forest financing and forest-related governance.

EUROPEAN FOREST WEEK: European Forest Week was held in Rome, Italy on 20-24 October 2008 in conjunction with the joint meeting of the 66th session of the UN Economic Commission for Europe Timber Council and 34th session of the FAO European Forestry Commission. Participants discussed collaboration on SFM issues and shared perspectives and solutions to global challenges relating to forests and climate change, energy and water, and forest law enforcement and governance.

DAILY MEETING COVERAGE AND SUMMARY REPORT

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* will be providing daily web coverage of this meeting at <http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/itto/itto44/>. A full summary and brief analysis will be available on Tuesday, 11 November 2008.