



THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER COUNCIL AND RELATED COMMITTEE MEETINGS: 13-18 DECEMBER 2004

The thirty-seventh session of the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC-37) will meet from 13-18 December 2004 in Yokohama, Japan. Delegates to ITTC-37 will discuss, *inter alia*: CITES listing proposals; the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) Objective 2000; forest law enforcement in the context of sustainable timber production and trade; phased approaches to certification; criteria and indicators (C&I) for sustainable forest management (SFM); the 2004-2005 Biennial Work Programme; the Asia Forest Partnership; and issues relating to the negotiations for a successor agreement to the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 1994 (ITTA, 1994).

The thirty-fifth sessions of the ITTC's Committees on Economic Information and Market Intelligence, Forest Industry and Reforestation and Forest Management will also meet to: consider reports on completed projects and pre-projects; review *ex-post* evaluations; review projects, pre-projects and activities in progress; and consider project and pre-project proposals. The ITTC's Committee on Finance and Administration will convene its sixteenth session to review the status of the Administrative Account and resources of the Special Account and the Bali Partnership Fund. In addition, the committees will consider ways of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of project work and hear the report of the Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ITTA

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 the 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 in 1993-1994. The

successor agreement to the ITTA, ITTA, 1994, was adopted on 26 January 1994, and entered into force on 1 January 1997. It contains broader provisions for information sharing, including 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 to enhance members' capacity to implement a strategy 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 to assist producing members in achieving the ITTO Objective 2000. Initially concluded for three years, the ITTA, 1994 was extended twice for three-year periods and is scheduled to expire on 31 December 2006.

The ITTA established the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), headquartered in Yokohama, Japan, which provides a framework for tropical timber producer and consumer countries to discuss, exchange information about 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 59 members divided into two caucuses: producer countries (33 members) and consumer countries (26 members). The ITTO's membership represents 90 percent of world trade in tropical timber and 80 percent of the world's tropical forests.

ITTC-33: The 33rd session of the ITTC met from 4-9 November 2002, in Yokohama, Japan. The Council adopted the ITTO's 2003 Work Programme and decisions on: public relations, education and outreach; partnerships for SFM; prevention and management of forest fires; measures to reduce costs and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization; extension of the ITTA, 1994; and preparations for negotiating a successor agreement to the ITTA, 1994. The Council approved 12 projects and 15 pre-projects. In addition, the CSAG held a panel discussion on the certified forest products marketplace.

ITTC-34: The 34th session of the ITTC met from 12-17 May 2003, in Panama City, Panama. The Council adopted 11 decisions on: projects, pre-projects and activities; the management of the Administrative Budget; the Asia Forest Partnership; C&I for SFM; matters related to Article 16 of the ITTA, 1994 concerning the Executive Director of the ITTO and staff; negotiations for a successor agreement to the ITTA, 1994; cooperation between ITTO and CITES on broad-leaf mahogany; the management of project implementation; the Biennial Work Programme and Administrative Budget; phased approaches to certification; and the expansion and diversification of international trade in tropical



timber. Delegates also approved nine projects and eight pre-projects.

ITTC-35: The 35th session of the ITTC met from 3-8 November 2003, in Yokohama, Japan. The Council adopted decisions on: projects, pre-projects and activities; management of the Administrative Account for 2003; an Executing Agencies Account; and the ITTO 2004-2005 Biennial Work Programme. The Council also approved 16 projects and four pre-projects.

ITTC-36: The 36th session of the ITTC met from 20-23 July 2004, in Interlaken, Switzerland. The Council approved 11 projects and seven pre-projects. No substantive decisions were adopted.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

UN CONFERENCE ON THE NEGOTIATION OF A SUCCESSOR AGREEMENT TO ITTA, 1994: The United Nations Conference on the Negotiation of a Successor Agreement to the ITTA, 1994 met at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland from 26-30 July 2004, under the auspices of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Delegates met in two working groups, one dealing specifically with the Preamble and Chapters I-IV and the other with Chapters V-XI of the draft working document (TD/TIMBER.3/4). Since the negotiators were unable to reach a final agreement, it was decided that the negotiation would reconvene from 14-18 February 2005, in Geneva. The main areas of disagreement were on the financial structure of the new agreement and its objectives. Some members sought a limited number of objectives that could be broadly interpreted, and others sought to list specific objectives. On finance, the main issue of contention was the addition of an Assessed Work Programme account.

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON STRENGTHENING THE ASIA FOREST PARTNERSHIP: This ITTO-sponsored workshop, hosted by the Government of Indonesia, met from 30 August - 1 September 2004, in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Workshop participants sought to: refine and operationalize the goals of the Asia Forest Partnership (AFP) and the mechanisms for its implementation; draw from experiences and lessons learned in similar partnerships, especially the programmes and activities of the AFP; formulate the programmes and activities of the AFP; and formulate the structure and modalities of the AFP. Participants also discussed the issue of developing standards of legality, timber tracking and chain of custody systems, and verification systems among AFP members.

UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS: The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) *Ad Hoc* Expert Group on Consideration with a View to Recommending the Parameters of a Mandate for Developing a Legal Framework on All Types of Forests met from 7-10 September 2004, at UN Headquarters in New York. The Expert Group assessed existing regional and international binding and non-binding instruments and processes relevant to forests; considered reports prepared by countries, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and the UNFF Secretariat; considered the outcomes of previous UNFF sessions; considered other outcomes of the international arrangement on forests; reviewed experiences of existing forest-related and other relevant organizations and agreements, focusing on complementarities, gaps and duplications; and adopted a report providing a range of options for the future framework to be forwarded to the fifth session of the UNFF (E/CN.18/2005/2).

ITTO INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE FOREST SECTOR: CLEAN DEVELOPMENT MECHANISM IN TROPICAL COUNTRIES: This ITTO-sponsored international workshop was held from 21-23 September 2004, in Seoul, Republic of

Korea. The objectives of the workshop were to enhance the understanding of the specifics of afforestation and reforestation projects under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), and identify the related opportunities for the forest industry and rural communities in tropical countries. During the workshop, several implementation constraints were identified, including: stringent requirements for baseline-setting and monitoring; lack of domestic capacity; and market conditions that affect the price of carbon, such as technology, the price of oil, and international policy. Participants also recognized that: the CDM is a potential source of income for local communities; forest conservation has a role to play in climate change mitigation; and additionality is one of the main constraints on afforestation and reforestation projects under the CDM.

13TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE CONVENTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE OF ENDANGERED SPECIES: The thirteenth Conference of the Parties of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species met from 2-14 October 2004, in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting considered a range of topics, including: species trade and conservation issues; management of annual export quotas; trade control issues; enforcement; and cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. In addition, ramin was listed in Appendix-II.

3RD IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS: The 3rd World Conservation Congress, organized by the World Conservation Union (IUCN), convened in Bangkok, Thailand, from 15-25 November 2004. Over 4,800 attended the Congress, which had the theme "People and Nature – Only One World." IUCN members approved 118 resolutions and recommendations aimed at improving the governance, programmes and policies of the Union that addressed a series of topics, including: a call for a moratorium on the further release of genetically modified organisms; the establishment of the World Conservation Learning Network to build the capacity of conservation and development professionals; actions that contribute to combating poverty through nature conservation; conservation and sustainable management of high seas biodiversity; and work with indigenous peoples, particularly in the establishment and management of protected areas.

ITTO PANEL DISCUSSION ON ILLEGAL LOGGING: On 19 November 2004, as part of the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress, the ITTO, in conjunction with the IUCN, convened a panel discussion on the issue of illegal logging and associated trade. During the panel, several issues were discussed, including: the need for a clear definition of illegal logging and legality; the need for more accurate forest statistics; transboundary conservation; and the effects of illegal logging on indigenous and local communities. Two ITTO-sponsored international conferences to be held in 2005 were also announced: one on the international transportation of timber products and the other on indigenous and community forestry in the context of illegal logging and associated trade.

FIFTEENTH INFORMAL ADVISORY GROUP: On 12 December 2004, the fifteenth session of the Informal Advisory Group of the ITTO met in Yokohama, Japan, in advance of ITTC-37 to discuss issues relevant to ITTC-37, including potential decisions on: a ministerial-level conference on community forests and forest industry; a study and expert panel on issues relating to the international transportation of tropical timber forest products, illegal logging and associated trade; capacity building measures relating to compliance with CITES Appendix-II listings of mahogany and ramin; and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the project cycle.