



**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY EMMANUEL ZE MEKA,
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THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER ORGANIZATION (ITTO),
AT THE LAUNCHING OF SFM TROPICS 2011
GURTEN, BERN, SWITZERLAND, 7 JUNE 2011**

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted with this opportunity to address this meeting in Gurten, Bern, for the launching of Status of Forest Management in the Tropics in 2011, or SFM Tropics 2011. First of all I would like to thank sincerely the Government of Switzerland for helping us to launch SFM Tropics 2011. SFM Tropics is one of ITTO's landmark publications. It shows the results of the efforts made in promoting sustainable forest management in ITTO member countries in the tropics, including by ITTO. I am pleased to be joined here by the team who put the report together, from whom you will learn much more during this event.

I would also like to thank sincerely the Government of Switzerland for its unflinching technical, financial and moral support of ITTO over the past 25 years. With a total of about USD 30 million of voluntary contributions since the establishment of ITTO, Switzerland is the Organization's second-largest donor.

The support of Switzerland to ITTO also includes the availability of highly qualified experts for the various activities of the Organization and their active participation in the deliberations of the Council, including, recently, Mr. Daniel Birchmeier, the most recent Chairman of the Council. Daniel contributed substantially to the improvement of the work of the Council, including resolving many long standing issues, such as the financing of Council Sessions outside the Organization's headquarters. For all these reasons, ITTO was delighted to respond positively to the offer made by Switzerland to launch SFM Tropics 2011 here, and to take this opportunity to inform Swiss citizens about the activities of the Organization.

For some of you who are not familiar with ITTO, I would like to briefly tell you about its objectives, activities, achievements and challenges in connection with the publication of SFM Tropics 2011. ITTO is an intergovernmental organization which was established in 1986 under the auspices of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to administer the provisions of the International Tropical Timber Agreement of 1983 (ITTA, 1983). Discussions regarding the Agreement started in the 1970s amidst international concerns over the destruction of tropical forests and the degradation of tropical forest resources with dramatic consequences on people's livelihoods, the environment and national economies. It was perceived at that time that the international tropical timber trade was a key driver of this situation. The ITTA, 1983, was therefore established to reduce the deforestation of tropical forests and at the same time to maintain or expand a sustainable international tropical timber trade that contributes to national economies and the improvement of the livelihoods of rural communities. ITTO is maintained by its members because they care about tropical forests and about people living within them.

From its start, one of the major concerns of ITTO was to assess the extent to which tropical forests are sustainably managed, including for timber production. Therefore a study started in 1987, and published in 1988, indicated that only a minor fraction of tropical forests, in the range of a little less than one million ha, was sustainably managed for timber production. Although this assessment did not include forest managed for other purposes than for timber production, it showed, however, the extent of the challenges facing tropical countries and ITTO, with deforestation in the tropics then estimated at about 15 million ha/year. In those circumstances, the task assigned to ITTO was, to say the least, daunting. Following this report, the Organization put in motion many policy activities and an impressive amount of normative work in order to reverse the trends. This included, among other policy activities, the development of criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of natural tropical forests in the early 1990s, for which ITTO was the pioneer, and the ITTO Target 2000 in 1990. The assessment of the implementation of the ITTO Target 2000 (later renamed Objective 2000) in 2000 revealed that tropical countries had made significant progress in the formulation and adoption of policies compatible with the Objective, but less evidence was found of progress in implementing such policies in the field.

ITTO has produced a bulk of normative guidelines and practical tools, covering almost all aspects for the implementation of the sustainable management of tropical forests in the field.

In 2006 ITTO published a second assessment of the Status of Sustainable Management of Tropical Forests in tropical member countries, in the format that we have today, known as SFM Tropics 2005. This report incorporated coverage of production and protection forests used for various purposes. Central to the publication was the estimation of permanent forest estate (PFE), which is land, whether public or private, secured by law and kept under permanent forest cover. In the view of ITTO, this is a key indicator of sustainable forest management. The report also assessed the extent of forests within this PFE which are managed sustainably for production and protection purposes. It concluded that, out of a total PFE of about 858 million ha in ITTO tropical member countries, about 36 million ha of natural forests were managed sustainably, of which about 27 million ha were designated for production and about 9 million were designated for protection. These figures excluded about 1.8 million of plantation forests considered well-managed for production purposes. The study also revealed that the most significant increases in areas under SFM were observed in Asian countries, African countries and Latin American countries in that order.

SFM Tropics 2005 was acknowledged by the international community as providing a reliable estimate of forests sustainably managed in the tropics and provided the Council with a clear picture of the challenges that remained to be tackled.

We hope that SFM Tropics 2011 will serve the same purpose. The details of the study and results will be introduced to you shortly by my colleagues. However, I can mention that new elements and information have been added to the format provided in SFM Tropics 2005, in particular information related to the climate change. We have seen an increase in tropical forests managed sustainably of over 3 million ha per year in the past 5 years, with a significant increase in Africa. Overall, the survey suggests that that we will see a further increase in the area under SFM in the future, as production forests with management plans are increasing significantly. Nevertheless, over 90% of the world's tropical forests remain under poor or no management. Continuing progress will depend very much on the international economic environment, on the support provided to promote the fair trade in legal and sustainably produced forest products and services, and on the support provided to tropical countries and to the institutions working with them to promote SFM.

I would like to take this opportunity to put on record ITTO's appreciation for the immense contribution of the various experts who have compiled and analyzed the information for the production of SFM Tropics 2011, including Dr. Jürgen Blaser, another Swiss expert, who has a long track record of cooperation with ITTO, as an individual or through INTERCOOPERATION, another Swiss institution, also familiar with ITTO's work.

I would like to present special thanks to Dr. Duncan Poore, who I am very glad has joined us today for this special occasion. Dr. Poore has been instrumental in ITTO's assessment of the status of sustainable management of tropical forests. He led the first assessment in 1988; he participated as a co-author of SFM Tropics 2005 and he also agreed to take time from a busy retirement to be involved in the production of SFM Tropics 2011. In fact no one other than Duncan could trace so precisely progress in the management of tropical forests. ITTO is deeply indebted for his experience, expertise and analysis.

Finally, I also would like to underscore the role played Alastair Sarre, one of the corner-stones of this publication and the 2005 report, as well as member countries who have provided information and all experts who have reviewed them.

Ladies and gentlemen, the problems that ITTO is tackling to promote SFM in tropical forests are all internationally well recognized and are of critical importance to the government and people of Switzerland. Tropical forests provide invaluable goods and services to local, national and international communities, including timber, non-timber forest products and other services such as their contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to the protection of terrestrial biodiversity. Tropical forests also provide substantial economic benefits, including by supplementing the income and livelihoods of forest-dependent communities. These benefits are further enhanced with the establishment of tropical forest plantations and the rehabilitation of tropical degraded forests. The achievement of these objectives and benefits are however impeded by many shortcomings and bottlenecks such as unclear or unfair tenure arrangements, illegal logging, corruption, a lack of governance, the insufficient involvement of local communities in decision-making, and a lack of institutional capacity.

The overall objective of ITTO is to help countries to realize the many benefits that tropical forests can offer and to be actively engaged in addressing impediments towards this. As already mentioned, ITTO has formulated internationally recognized policies and has assisted member countries for the implementation of these policies in the field. The latter is particularly important, as forestry problems can be solved only in the field, while working with people involved and this is where ITTO has a good track record. In order to address strategically the various aspects of sustainable forest management of tropical forests, ITTO has established, on a pilot basis, five thematic programmes since November 2008. These cover, in a comprehensive way the promotion of goods and services delivered by forests and offer a tool to overcome the various constraints preventing the sustainable delivery of these goods and services. The thematic programmes are:

- Reducing deforestation and forest degradation and enhancing environment services in tropical forests (REDDDES);
- Forest law enforcement, governance and trade (TFLET);
- Community forest management and enterprises (CFME);
- Trade and market transparency (TMT); and
- Industry development and efficiency (IDE).

These thematic programmes contribute comprehensively to the achievement of sustainable forest management in the tropics. Although the enthusiasm of tropical countries was overwhelming on ITTO's launch of thematic programmes, funding of the programmes has not kept pace with the number of proposals submitted. Out of a total of USD 58 million sought for the implementation of the pilot phase of the thematic programmes just mentioned, only about 30% has been secured so far, including USD 9 million for REDDES out of a total of USD 18 million. Some thematic programmes, such as IDE, have so far received no funding and others, such as TMT and CFME, have an insignificant amount of funding, despite their critical importance to SFM.

In order to resolve the problems facing tropical forests, interventions should be timely and on a significant scale. I would therefore like to call on Switzerland and other donors for even stronger support to ITTO's activities. ITTO has received from donors about USD 340 million since its establishment 25 years ago. This amounts to about USD 13.6 million/year. Considering the total PFE in ITTO producer member countries of over 750 million ha, this means that ITTO has been spending about 2 cents/ha/year to promote SFM in the tropical permanent forest estates of its member countries. Despite this very modest level of funding, ITTO has made some remarkable achievements.

Based on its 25 years past experience, and with adequate funding and the full involvement of our member countries, the NGOs, the private sector, the civil society and local communities, there is no doubt that progress would be more rapid and that tropical-forest-related issues such as rural poverty, biodiversity loss and greenhouse gas emissions would be resolved more quickly.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.