

Tropical Forest

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UPDATE

A newsletter from the International Tropical Timber Organization to promote the conservation and sustainable development of tropical forests



Life after 50

The International Tropical Timber Council is turning 50—that is, it is about to convene in its 50th session.¹ The Council is ITTO's governing body, and it has achieved much since its first session in Geneva in 1985/86. This special edition of the *TFU* features interviews with nine Council chairs, from the early days of the Council through to the present, as well as with the chairs of the Trade Advisory Group (TAG), the Civil Society Advisory

Group (CSAG) and a representative of the host city, Yokohama. We ask interviewees about the challenges the Council has faced over the years, its achievements, its strengths and weaknesses, and what its role might be in the future.

Inside: Interviews with Council chairs and others; Fellowship stories...

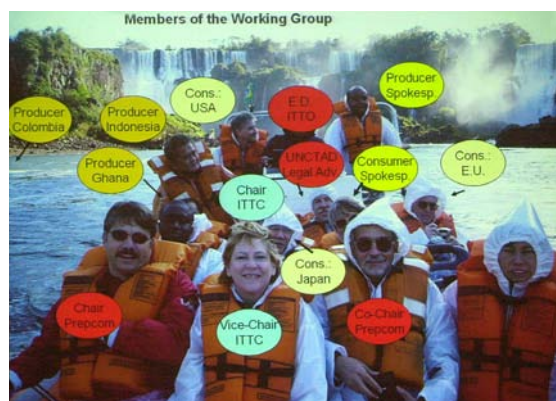


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Images: Cover: Delegates and office-bearers at the 45th session of the International Tropical Timber Council, held in Yokohama in November 2009. *Photo: K. Sato*; Above: Members of a 2003 intersessional working group on the negotiation of a successor agreement to the International Tropical Timber Agreement 1994 enjoy a wild ride. *Photo and captions courtesy J. Blaser and the Earth Negotiations Bulletin*

Markku Simula (p. 3) was the fifth chair of the Council (in 1990). He recalls that in the early days there was a sense of “building something new, something that had never been tried”, although there was also “resistance about how far the Organization should go”.

Ambassador Koichi Suzuki (p. 6) chaired the Council in 1994. He says that the major achievement during his time in office was reaching agreement on the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) 1994, which was negotiated to replace the ITTA 1983 (and subsequently replaced by another agreement, the ITTA 2006).

Stephanie Caswell (p. 7), who chaired the Council in 1998, says that the adoption of ITTO’s first comprehensive set of criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of natural tropical forests (C&I) was perhaps the Council’s most significant accomplishment during her tenure. The Organization’s leadership in C&I “has had a very real impact on the management of tropical forests”.

Josefina Takahashi (p. 10) chaired the Council in 2001. She cites a decision on forest law enforcement in the context of sustainable timber production and trade as one of the important Council decisions made during her term because “it cleared the way for a more open and constructive dialogue on this issue in other forums as well”. Alhassan Attah (p. 12), who chaired the Council in 2005, says that the Council’s work on phased approaches to certification was one of the successes of his term because it gave members “an opportunity to discuss legality as a first step in the certification process”. José Trinidad Suazo (p. 24) agrees that ITTO’s policy development work has been helpful for tropical countries, in particular on issues such as timber tracking, the promotion of efficient wood-processing technologies, and cooperation between ITTO and other international organizations.

Katharina Kühmayer (p. 15) was the first Council chair (in 2008) to preside over the new regime in which only one Council session is held per year. Her focus, therefore, was on procedural matters. This was also the case for Ambassador Michael

Maue (p. 17), who chaired the Council in 2009.

Barney Chan (p. 19), the chair of TAG, says that the Council has had “too many achievements” to name them all, although he singles out the C&I. On the other hand, he thinks the Council has been too cautious on a number of key issues and risks “being pushed aside by others”. Chen Hin Keong (p. 20), co-chair of CSAG, says that the formation of CSAG has been critical because it provides the Council with a voice from civil society, although he also thinks the Council needs to take a stronger lead on certain issues. Makoto Sekiyama (p. 22) thinks that the convening of Council sessions in Yokohama has boosted the city’s international profile and that hosting the headquarters has been beneficial for both ITTO and the city.

Rob Busink (p. 25) is the Council’s current chair. He says that ITTO is a unique organization—the ITTA is the only legally binding agreement on forests at the global level and, although focused on tropical timber, it has a broad scope, encompassing all aspects of sustainable forest management (SFM). Forthcoming discussions on the international arrangement on forests are an opportunity, he says, for ITTO to make more widely known what it can do to help solve international problems.

The Council has considerable strengths that can be built on, and some weaknesses that can be overcome. In the course of its 50 sessions, the Council has made an incalculably valuable contribution to global efforts to promote SFM, sustainable forest industries and a sustainable tropical timber trade, and it has helped build capacity (especially through its Fellowship Programme, p. 27). The eminent people interviewed in this edition of the *TFU* have many good ideas on how to add even more value to the Council. Let the Council’s work continue.

1 The 50th session of the Council will be convened in Yokohama, Japan, in November 2014. This edition of the *TFU* was published on the eve of the Council session, so by the time most readers receive their copies, the session will have been held. See the ITTO website (www.itto.int) for the outcomes of the session.

Interview with Markku Simula

Markku Simula was a member of the Finland delegation to ITTO from 1987 to 1991. He has served as chair of the Committee on Forest Industry (in 1988), as a participant in several diagnostic missions to ITTO member countries, and in a broad range of consultancies. He was vice-chair (and acting chair) of the International Tropical Timber Council in 1989 and chair in 1990



Markku Simula Photo: Earth Negotiations Bulletin

What were the major challenges the Council dealt with during your term as Council chair?

We were still very much in the early phases of the learning curve at that time. We were trying to establish routines, especially on how the Council sessions would be run. But the other kind of challenge was that we had a very polarized situation between the producers and consumers and there were differing views on the Organization's future. Many delegates did not know the subject matter, and there was no institutional history. In such situations, individuals start to play a very strong role. Clearly, the interests or expectations about the Organization were different among producers, consumers and other stakeholders.

The *ITTO guidelines for the sustainable management of natural tropical forests* were approved in that year. In retrospect, this was a historic document because only now—after 24 years—have we been able to revise them. The normative nature of the guidelines—in other words, they identified performance requirements for SFM—was a very conflictive issue in the Council. Due to the lack of experience in the Organization and thanks to the very strong lobbying of some key environmental NGOs, the guidelines were approved during the course of the eighth Council session. I don't think anyone realized at the time the normative power that this document would have. Later on, more focus was given to the criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management (C&I), which are descriptive and therefore less conflictive. Maybe producers didn't realize fully what the guidelines would mean for them, so they kind of just slipped in. Of course, there were expert panels beforehand and we did not work in a blind way, but the true importance probably became clear afterwards.

The Sarawak mission was another big challenge. It was a very high-profile exercise and a pioneer effort because consultations at the ground level in the bush were a major component of it, and there was a strong element of concern about impacts on the indigenous people. Among other things, the mission's report led to decisions by the Sarawak Government to reduce the level of harvesting, and also to a dialogue process. The report itself was not so conflictive, but the NGOs were not happy—at least not all of them—with the outcome, and they called for a more drastic reduction in harvesting. There were even demonstrations against the Organization outside the conference room, which captured a lot of publicity. The Council approved the report, which gained considerable attention in the international press, and it brought attention to ITTO at the international level. So it clearly lifted ITTO's image as a unique kind of commodity organization dealing with serious environmental and social concerns. The mission had wider effects, too, because this kind of diagnostic work was later adapted and performed in other countries; ITTO diagnostic missions have now been conducted in about 20 countries.

The third item was the Year 2000 Objective. At that time we did not have the Millennium Development Goals, so the Year 2000 Objective was an important innovation. It had a deadline and a quantitative target, whereby all trade in tropical timber should come from sustainably managed forests by 2000. Of course, this objective was later incorporated and adapted in the International Tropical Timber Agreements [ITTAs] and continues to serve as a key goalpost for ITTO.

The Council made several other achievements in my time, and one I consider particularly important was the Fellowship Programme. It was Manoel Sobral's idea, and he convinced me to push it through. There was resistance from some parties because there were other ongoing grants programmes, and the question was raised whether another one was needed. Nevertheless, the Fellowship Programme has been one of ITTO's main contributions to capacity building over the years.

Describe the atmosphere in the Council at that time.

There was enthusiasm from one perspective, but also resistance about how far the Organization should go. We were still laying down the foundation for the work. At that time, the stakeholders—the non-members—were very active and vocal in the Council's work, quite different from today. The environmental NGOs pursued their objectives in the Council sessions, directly and also in the corridors. Some also lobbied their views in the capitals during sessions to change the predetermined positions of delegations. The industry was probably more active than today, too, because they saw a concrete opportunity for pursuing their interests through ITTO. So on one side there was a lot of enthusiasm, that was clear—everyone was very happy to be around, and there was a very good and positive atmosphere that we were building something new, something that had never been tried. But then when we came to the real negotiations we found that our views were quite different.

What are the Council's major strengths?

The unique comparative advantage of the Council is its two caucuses—producers and consumers. This equality is the key strength of the Council, and it has made ITTO different from other intergovernmental organizations. It means that the two sides always participate in an equal way—be it in the Council and committees, the expert panels, consultancies, workshops, and so on. For as long as ITTO has been going, care has been taken to involve both sides equally. Both sides understand that we must take the other side clearly into account, and I think this is valuable.

The advisory groups—the Trade Advisory Group and the Civil Society Advisory Group—are another strength, and a third strength is the very strong commitment of some members. I think the existence of strong supporters has been essential to the Organization's success; they have contributed enormously, not only financially but also intellectually.

What are its weaknesses?

The Council has been limited in its normative work because of the strong polarization of views; it's very difficult to push normative elements on SFM, industry development and trade through the Council, and this is also reflected in the negotiations of the ITTAs themselves. So it's not just a matter of the Council; it's also about the

countries' legitimate interests in how far the Organization should go in setting norms for how tropical forests are managed and used.

Another issue is that, among the Council delegates, there are always people who are not fully trained or educated on the subject matter, and therefore extra effort is often needed to bring them to the level of the others. On the consumer side, the responsible ministries are not normally the sector ministries; they come from trade or development aid authorities, and some important countries are not represented at an appropriate level.

There are also other weaknesses. One is the tendency of the Council to micromanage the Organization, and the need for this is not clear. Another weakness is a certain lack of institutional memory. The Council has an incremental way of making decisions that does not always duly consider what has been decided earlier on, so you get grey areas where various decisions are not fully consistent over time. One should look carefully at earlier decisions, reform what needs to be reformed, and get rid of what is no longer relevant, but this process is not always followed.



Photo: Earth Negotiations Bulletin

What do you see as the future role of the Organization?

This is a tough question. The trade is changing, with some producers becoming net importers; it is a much more complex situation than it used to be. China has become the largest player in tropical timber, and entire trade flows have changed.

We are also facing a paradigm change in the international forest policy landscape. ITTO's underlying paradigm has always been that if we add value to the resource then it will be conserved and maintained, and at the same time we can contribute to sustainable development. This paradigm is highly compatible with the forthcoming Sustainable



Photo: Earth Negotiations Bulletin

Development Goals (these are yet to be adopted, but they are sufficiently developed to say something about them). In the Millennium Development Goals, forests were treated only in an environmental context, but now we are coming back towards ITTO's original paradigm, in which forests and SFM are seen as a sustainable source of economic development, so I think this will strengthen ITTO's case. Populations are growing and we require forests to meet their needs; this provides ITTO with a clear area of work. It's certainly an advantage that there is consistency—and indeed strong convergence—between the Sustainable Development Goals and the ITTA 2006 and thereby the Organization itself.



Photo: K. Sato/ITTO

But the role of forests will change. We are now moving from natural forests to plantations; plantations already account for 30% of global timber supply. At the same time, the environmental and other services of forests are becoming more important. We are moving clearly towards a more holistic approach that goes far beyond timber, not only in the management of the resource but also in markets. So the International Tropical Timber Organization may be having an identity crisis. This is one of the dilemmas ITTO will face more clearly in the future. Other parallel initiatives are targeted at the many

environmental services performed by tropical forests, and I think ITTO is having some difficulty in crystallizing its complementary role for donors and other stakeholders.

Funding is therefore clearly a key problem. There must be a minimum critical amount of financing to enable the Organization to do what it should do. So if there is no funding in the future or if the funding goes down—fortunately we have more or less stabilized it now—then the whole *raison d'être* for having an international organization may not be there. Members should understand that we have to diversify and innovate in this area.

Related to this, if we have limited resources, we cannot ask everything. We are heading now in a direction where we are asking the Organization to do many things identified in action plans and to manage projects and at the same time we are reducing staff. I think this is a very dangerous road. If the quality of the Organization's work cannot be maintained, it's another source of risk. The members should be clearly aware of this. It's very trendy and easy to say, "we want more efficiency and therefore less staff" and at the same time to ask more to be done. This is not logical, and the Council needs to guard against it and to be consistent in its decisions.

It's also important to continue to expand the membership. Some important consumers and producers are not members. We have to understand that, for members, it's always an investment to be part of this kind of organization. To justify the investment, the generated benefits have to be tangible, broadly understood and easily communicated. There is certainly scope to expand the membership; the broader the membership base, the more we can achieve.

Interview with Yoichi Suzuki

Ambassador Suzuki attended sessions of the International Tropical Timber Council in the early 1990s as director responsible for commodity issues in Japan's Foreign Ministry. He served as the Council's chair in 1994



Photo: Embassy of Japan in France

What were the major challenges the Council dealt with during your term as Council chair?

There were two major issues: the negotiation of the International Tropical Timber Agreement [ITTA] 1994, and discussions on the environmental aspects of tropical timber development. As you know, the ITTA was the first and probably only commodity agreement with important environmental components.

Describe the atmosphere in the Council at that time.

In spite of the touchy issues related to the environmental conservation of tropical forests and the inevitable issues related to the budget and the rationalization of the activities of the Secretariat as well as those of ITTO, the atmosphere was, in general, collaborative and friendly. I owed a lot to the constructive and strong leadership shown

by a certain number of delegates from both caucuses, as well as to the support provided behind the scene by Freddie [Dr Freezailah, the executive director at the time] and the members of the Secretariat.

Describe the major achievements of the Council under your leadership.

The major achievement was to reach substantive agreement on the ITTA 1994 and, through it, to improve further the balance between tropical timber production and the environmental aspect of tropical forest conservation. The reason is clear: without the ITTA 1994, ITTO would have ceased to exist, and Japan would have lost an important international organization based on its soil.

In your opinion, what have been the impacts of these achievements, and how have they affected the tropical forest/timber sector?

I have not been involved with ITTO directly since I left the chair, so my impressions may be misguided. But I would say that most, if not all, the commodity agreements are irrelevant today. The ITTA, an exception, maintains its relevance because it was able to transform with the ITTA 1994.

What do you see as the current and future role of the Council?

Today's world lives on past achievements as far as multilateral rule-setting is concerned. It has lost its capacity to come up with new multilateral frameworks or rules in the past decade or more. In some ways, tropical forests are global commons, and their development must be sustainable. I believe there is a lot of work to be done by the Council.



Environmental leader: The ITTA was "the first and probably only commodity agreement with important environmental components".

Photo: Baharuddin

Interview with Stephanie Caswell

Stephanie Caswell attended her first Council session as part of the United States delegation in 1987 and then attended all but two subsequent sessions for the next ten years. She served as Council chair in 1998, and she was a member of the United States negotiating teams for the International Tropical Timber Agreement [ITTA] 1994 and the ITTA 2006



Photo: Earth Negotiations Bulletin

What were the major challenges the Council dealt with during your term as Council chair?

When I became chair we had just lost both the producer and consumer spokespersons. That threw the Council into confusion, and it was some time before the caucuses could pull themselves together and focus on the work. Another issue was the administrative budget: it was very tight and the Council needed to find ways to reduce costs. The executive director, Dr Freezailah, had also announced he would be leaving after 12 years, which meant we needed to establish procedures for electing a new executive director, and this became quite controversial. Those were the internal challenges. More broadly, delegations and the Council were preoccupied with the 1997 Asian financial crisis and its impacts on the tropical timber market, as well as with the disastrous peat swamp fires that were occurring in Indonesia.

Describe the atmosphere in the Council at that time.

The tension surrounding the negotiation of the ITTA 1994 was still being felt. During the negotiation, producers and consumers were polarized on the issue of transforming the ITTO into an “all timber” agreement. The producers strongly advocated this, while the consumers were opposed, partly because the non-tropical timber trade, which accounted for 90% of trade at that time, didn’t need a commodity agreement or a source of project financing, and partly because an all-timber agreement would likely marginalize tropical timber producers given their small trade share. Interestingly, the environmental non-governmental organizations [NGOs], which were very active in ITTO in those days, favoured an all-timber

agreement, and when it didn’t succeed, they very publicly left the Council, not to return for many years. So the highly adversarial debate over an all-timber agreement created a bad atmosphere between producers and consumers, and some of that still lingered in 1997 and 1998.

Describe the major achievements of the Council under your leadership.

There were several positive developments. The Council adopted the first ITTO mission statement, as well as the Libreville Action Plan. We agreed on the first ITTO annual work programme (for 1999) as a way to operationalize the Action Plan and identify priorities for the Council, committees and Secretariat. We set the stage for ITTO leadership in the trade-related work of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, which later became the United Nations Forum on Forests [UNFF]. After much debate we were able to adopt transparent procedures for appointing a new executive director, which also limited the tenure to two four-year terms. We launched a study on ways to address the downturn in the tropical timber market, as well as technical missions and consultations on the fires in Southeast Asia. But perhaps most significantly, the Council adopted ITTO’s first comprehensive set of criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of natural tropical forests [C&I], which built on ITTO’s pioneering work of 1992 and the work of the pan-European and Montreal criteria and indicators processes.

There were also significant administrative achievements. The Council established guidelines for project submission and appraisal and procedures for committee operations which significantly streamlined the work of the Secretariat and committees. The committees had been so

overburdened, especially with the review of poor-quality projects, that they typically met in parallel in late-night sessions. This was hard on everyone, especially small delegations, so the streamlining of procedures was quite important. The Council also approved increased funding to assist producers with project formulation and established a common format for reporting by executing agencies. In addition, we approved the electronic distribution of ITTO documents to members—an innovation at the time—and greatly reduced the number and types of documents that had to be translated and routinely distributed to members.

I introduced a few practices to try to improve transparency and the producer–consumer dynamic. I arranged for the first informal joint caucus session. I encouraged the producer vice-chair to be more active and visible, and had him sit at the podium during Council sessions, another first. I also made the Chairman’s drafting group open-ended, where before it had comprised a small number of “key” countries representing producer and consumer interests.

What were the impacts of those achievements?

Without doubt, the suite of administrative decisions resulted in immediate and substantial cost-savings and significantly increased the efficiency of the Organization, and over time they catalysed further improvements and cost-saving measures. In terms of substance, I think that ITTO’s leadership role on C&I, including the decision we took in 1998 approving the first comprehensive C&I set, has arguably been one of the Organization’s greatest policy achievements and one that has had a very real impact on the management of tropical forests.

What are the Council’s major strengths?

ITTO is special both as a commodity agreement and compared with UN bodies. Unlike other commodity agreements, ITTO’s mandate goes well beyond the trade in tropical timber. Its membership includes all major actors, but it’s still small enough and focused enough to actually get things done, which is not always the case in the UN system. The policy/programme/project interface of ITTO’s work is very important, and something that is not seen in many organizations. The Market Information Service, which has evolved over time, is unique. The introduction of thematic programmes holds great promise. The potential inherent in the Trade Advisory Group [TAG] and the Civil Society Advisory Group [CSAG] is a clear strength. I’m not sure that this potential has been fully realized, but having the advisory groups in the first place is a very positive feature of the Organization.

Also unique is the ITTO Fellowship Programme. My experience with the Programme began in 1997 when I chaired the Fellowship Selection Panel. I was truly impressed with the vigour of the Programme, the

quality of the applications, the commitment of the Secretariat staff, and generally with how much could be done to support deserving candidates with very little financial investment. I was so impressed that the United States made a first contribution of US\$25 000 to the Programme—a modest amount but one that has grown through regular contributions over the years to total well above US\$1 million. In terms of costs and benefits, the Fellowship Programme may be the most productive of ITTO’s operations, a real investment in the future, and more should be done to showcase its value and accomplishments.



Photo: Earth Negotiations Bulletin

What are its weaknesses?

The producer and consumer caucuses may have outlived their usefulness. The tropical timber world is no longer neatly divided into producers and consumers. A number of producers are net importers and therefore really “consumers”. Also, many producers and consumers have close ties as tropical timber trading partners—there can be more shared interests “across the aisle” than within a caucus. Then there’s the issue of transparency. The caucus structure is opaque; neither group understands the nature of the internal discussions within the other group—all they hear are the outcomes—and this is counterproductive. Since the caucuses are not enshrined in the ITTA, the Council can dispense with them at any time. The merit of phasing out the caucuses is something that should be looked at. We all recognize that producers and consumers have—and will continue to have—certain different interests, but that does not mean that a dichotomy should be fostered. The Organization might benefit greatly from a more bipartisan and open approach to revealing the range of different interests and to developing consensus.

Another weakness relates to the technical committees—Reforestation and Forest Management; Forest Industry; and Economics, Statistics and Markets. Today, the issues of forest management, industry and markets are often closely interrelated and need to be looked at in an integrated way—from the resource base, through the supply chain,

to the end market. Good examples of cross-cutting issues are certification and legal verification but there are many others. This interconnectedness was one of the reasons for establishing ITTO thematic programmes, which are meant to foster a coherent approach. The old committee structure works against this. Despite joint meetings, the Industry and Market committees still manage to function largely separately, with sequential discussion of many agenda items. The potential inherent in the joint committee to look at policies and projects in an integrated way is untapped. The negotiators of the ITTA 2006 missed the chance to merge the three committees into a single subsidiary body, but since the Council has authority to decide how the committees function, there's still an opportunity to better integrate committee work by, for example, making significantly greater use of the joint committee and synthesized reporting to Council.

Looking beyond the Council, ITTO still has a relatively low profile in the international community and among national and international donor agencies dealing with sustainable forest management. As a result, there is a lack of appreciation for and understanding of the potential and scope of the Organization. This is a weakness in terms of generating financial support for ITTO, engaging the NGO community, and ITTO's participation in global debates as an equal player.

What do you see as the future role of the Organization?

Following up on the last point, I would like to see ITTO more outward-looking and more mainstreamed into the broader forest policy and sustainable development world. Next year, the UN will decide on the post-2015 development agenda, including a set of sustainable development goals [SDGs] and targets, and the UNFF will decide on the future “international arrangement on forests”. These will be watershed decisions and ITTO should have—and be seen to have—an important role in advancing their outcomes. I would like to see the Council consider how ITTO can contribute, within its mandate, to achieving the SDGs, including as related to poverty eradication, energy, water, economic growth and sustainable consumption and production, as well as to achieving the UNFF's global objectives on forests.

This would be an opportunity for the Council and the Organization as a whole to change perceptions that ITTO is only a trade organization when in fact it has done a great deal—and hopefully will do more—for tropical forests broadly and the communities that depend on them. During the negotiation of the ITTA 2006 I tried very hard to get the name of the Organization changed to the International Tropical *Forest* Organization to make clear to all—including potential donors—the breadth of ITTO's work. Such a cosmetic change wouldn't have affected the



Looking elsewhere: Stephanie Caswell thinks the Council should expand ITTO's approach to project financing. *Photo: H.O. Ma*

Agreement (or its name) in any way, but it would have gone a long way to attracting interest in and awareness of ITTO, including from a broader base of donors.

I would also like to see the Council find ways to reinvigorate the participation of NGOs and the trade in ITTO's work. In the early years, these stakeholders were a major presence at Council sessions. While that made for some heated discussions, it also made for a very vibrant organization. My sense today is that TAG and CSAG are not fully engaged as partners, and more could be done to bring them and their members fully into the process.

Finally, I would like to see the Council expand ITTO's approach to project financing. The level of voluntary contributions has decreased in recent years, and donor funding to ITTO may never fully meet expectations, whether it's through thematic programmes or the regular project account. So ITTO might consider playing an active role in helping producer members develop and submit successful project proposals to other organizations, particularly the Global Environment Facility [GEF]. The GEF is a huge potential source of forest financing, not just under the focal areas on biodiversity and climate change, but also under the Strategy for Sustainable Forest Management/REDD+ established in 2010 and heavily replenished in 2014. But GEF proposals can be challenging to formulate, may require counterpart financing, and need to be submitted through GEF focal points. ITTO could leverage significant additional funding for producers by helping forest administrations develop project proposals for the GEF and other organizations and to engage successfully in national processes for selecting project submissions.

Interview with Josefina Takahashi

Josefina Takahashi was head of the Peru delegation at the International Tropical Timber Council in 1999, and she was chair in 2001. She continues her involvement in the Council as a member of either the Peru delegation or the Civil Society Advisory Group



Photo: J. Leigh/ITTO

What were the major challenges the Council dealt with during your term as Council chair?

The Council made several important decisions in 2001 [see box]. Some of them had been debated in previous sessions, but consensus had not been achieved—these included decisions on illegal logging and trade, certification, and criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management [C&I]. Therefore, it was important to establish a good working atmosphere and to provide good facilities for members' participation, which was done thanks to the excellent work of the ITTO Secretariat.

Describe the atmosphere in the Council at that time.

As Duncan Poore wrote in his book, *Changing Landscapes*: “The Council entered 2001 in a very positive mood, and by the end of the 31st session had good reasons to be satisfied with its achievements”.

In my experience, the atmosphere of the Council has always been constructive, but at that time the members of both consumer and producer countries were very keen to maintain a collaborative and positive approach to ensure the adoption of some very important decisions. In 2001 it was clear that the most important commitment in the International Tropical Timber Agreement 1994, the Year 2000 Objective, was still far from being achieved. It was recognized that even though most producer countries had made significant progress in the formulation and adoption of policies related to the Objective, more actions were needed for their implementation. Member countries recognized the need for consumers and producers to work together and to make special efforts to raise the capacity of tropical countries for a more diverse and integrated

approach to sustainable forest management [SFM] and to add value to products traded in international markets.

Describe the major achievements of the Council under your leadership.

The Council adopted, by consensus, several very important decisions in that period. They did so only after very intense and constructive work by delegates, always looking to protect tropical forests while also improving the socioeconomic and environmental conditions of indigenous and other local people living in producer countries. Particularly contentious was a decision on forest law enforcement in the context of sustainable timber production and trade, but in some ways it was this decision that cleared the way for a more open and constructive dialogue on this issue in other forums as well. The Council also made important decisions on auditing systems for SFM, the adoption of a new action plan, and several other issues. It was a very dynamic period in the Organization.

What were the impacts of those achievements?

The impacts of these achievements have been increased awareness among world leaders and policymakers in most producer and consumer countries of the importance of sustainable tropical forest management, forest law enforcement, the application of guidelines for C&I in auditing systems, mangroves conservation, and so on. The ITTO Yokohama Action Plan was an important step in increasing efforts towards SFM by producers through incorporation in national plans and by consumers through additional financial support.

Without doubt, tropical forests are now high on the agenda of member countries, considering that even though

tropical forests cover only 12% of the planet, they are home to more than 50% of known plant and animal species. There is also increased awareness of climate change and the role of tropical forests in mitigating this. Nevertheless, to ensure the full impact of Council decisions, there is an urgent need for substantial additional financial support from ITTO consumer countries to continue to promote and implement SFM, add value to tropical forest products and enlarge markets for producer countries.

What are the Council's major strengths?

The major strengths of the Council are its composition, the balance in voting power between producer and consumer countries, the participation of civil society, and the adoption of most decisions by consensus. The consumer and producer caucuses are also major strengths.

What are its weaknesses?

The Council could be strengthened by continuous, ongoing communication among Council members, not only at its annual meetings. Council members, especially past chairs, could support the work of the Secretariat and current chair at important national or regional events related to the ITTO mandate. The participation of ITTO in important forums relevant to tropical forests is limited by the small size of the Secretariat. The Council needs to find innovative ways to support the work of the Secretariat.

What do you see as the future role of the Council?

The Council should play a more active role in international forest and environmental policy; therefore, it needs to evaluate very carefully the Organization's future. It should seek to change its name to the "International Tropical Forest Organization", because for most policymakers and the general public, the current name seems to limit the scope to timber production, which is also confused with "deforestation", even though the International Tropical Timber Agreement is much more broad than that. This would help in obtaining more funds for the important work of the Organization.

The Council should increase its promotion of SFM, as well as of timber and non-timber forest products, agroforestry, natural forest management and certified plantations of high-market-demand species in deforested areas under the control of forest authorities. It should analyze forest laws in producer and consumer countries and promote the best elements of them. The Council should also promote programmes for innovation and the transfer of technology from developed to developing member countries, and create technical service centers for small producers, including in Amazon countries.



Long road: In 2001, Council members recognized the need to raise the capacity of tropical countries for SFM and to add value to products traded in international markets. *Photo: H.O. Ma/ITTO*

1 Major decisions at the 30th session of the Council (May 2001)

- Guidelines for management of secondary tropical forest, restoration and rehabilitation of degraded forest land
- Independent certification (promotion, policies, special schemes, etc.)
- The role of ITTO in international and regional organizations
- Programme support fund of the Special Account and the Bali Partnership Fund
- Reporting formats and training for ITTO C&I
- Cooperation between ITTO and FAO: international conference on C&I
- Cooperation between ITTO and IUCN
- Strengthening SFM in the Congo Basin

Major decisions at the 31st session of the Council (November 2001)

- Forest law enforcement in the context of sustainable timber production and trade
- Adoption of Yokohama ITTO Action Plan 2002–2006
- Guidelines for establishing auditing systems for ITTO C&I for SFM
- Mangrove forest ecosystem work plan 2002–2006
- Strengthening SFM and controlling illegal logging in Indonesia
- Establishment of database on statistics on trade of bamboo and rattan

Interview with Alhassan Attah

Alhassan Attah has served ITTO in several capacities, including as a delegate of Ghana, chair of the Committee on Economic Information and Market Intelligence, a member of the Expert Panel on Project Appraisal, and chair of Working Group I in the negotiation of the International Tropical Timber Agreement [ITTA] 2006. He was chair of the International Tropical Timber Council in 2005



Photo: Earth Negotiations Bulletin

What were the major challenges the Council dealt with during your term as Council chair?

There were a number of issues. We had embarked on a process to negotiate a successor agreement to the ITTA 1994, so the potential for a polarized membership was quite strong, and I thought that keeping members of the Organization together was critical. An issue also arose in which two countries, Mexico and Papua New Guinea, both offered to host the 40th session of the Council in 2006. Negotiating a compromise between those two member states was one of the challenges I faced. They were both producers, but we could not quite reach an agreement in the session in Congo (Brazzaville), so as chair of the Council I was tasked with resolving it. It was an issue that had the potential to polarize the Organization, particularly among the producer group in keeping a united front in the negotiation of the successor agreement.

There was also considerable discussion at both Council sessions in 2005 on phased approaches to certification. This concept had met significant resistance from key forest certification bodies but, in hindsight, it has become a flagship approach, particularly when one considers that a number of those certification bodies have now adopted a phased approach.

Describe the atmosphere in the Council at that time.

Negotiations over the Mexico/Papua New Guinea impasse were somewhat tense—but even so, there was plenty of goodwill on both sides. One of the key aspects of my term was a strong willingness on all sides to compromise and to reach decisions that were acceptable to all, and of course I appreciated the support of the member states and everybody involved in doing this. Overall, I would say that

the atmosphere was very collaborative. It allowed us to prepare for the negotiation of the ITTA 2006, and I would say that the collaborative approach taken by member states was instrumental in reaching an agreement on that. There was movement on both the consumer and producer sides. Much was happening in the international landscape at the time, including a major debate on the role of forests in climate change that was highly polarized. This had an impact on what we were doing at ITTO, so to reach compromises and to succeed in bringing some of the non-consumptive aspects of forests [such as environmental services, and the role of indigenous and local communities in achieving sustainable forest management—SFM] into the ITTA was a big achievement of the parties. It was encouraging to see countries make these compromises.

What were the impacts of the Council's achievements during your term as chair?

The Council's work on the phased approach to certification has had a significant impact. It gave member states an opportunity to discuss legality as a first step in the certification process, and in my view this later gave grounds for the approach that is presently being adopted by the European Union [EU] and partner countries as the EU's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade/Voluntary Partnership Agreement (EU FLEGT/VPA) process. So it appears that ITTO's work on phased approaches provided the foundation both for the EU as a key importer, and partners in producer countries, to look at approaches other than certification systems that were acceptable in the trade. The EU FLEGT/VPA process is, in my view, a phased approach because you look first at legality—how strong are the systems for monitoring the forest and providing evidence of legality—but drawing strongly on some of the

social elements with the view to providing a platform in which member countries can later move more towards the ultimate, which is SFM certification.

I would say that ITTO's work on phased approaches allowed a discussion on alternative approaches to certification and therefore did not exclude producers from the markets. So, to me, this was an important outcome of the Council's deliberations and the strong support it gave to phased approaches to forest certification. Over time, it also allowed certification bodies to consider other models and to introduce variants of the schemes—so now you have chain-of-custody certification and forest certification. Today you can find firms in the tropics who do not have SFM certification but who still pursue and obtain chain-of-custody certification.

In terms of the more general impacts of the Council, its policy development work—such as its various guidelines and criteria and indicators—has been very strong, and this has been important in demonstrating to the world that a major effort is underway to improve tropical forest management. The publication of the *Status of Tropical Forest Management* reports has created awareness of member countries' efforts on SFM.

The ITTO Fellowship Programme is another very strong aspect of its work. Many people in member countries, including me, have benefited from ITTO Fellowships, and you can see tangible benefits on the ground in member countries. Many people in very senior positions today—particularly in tropical timber producer countries—have benefited in the past from ITTO Fellowships. So a lot of the policy changes that are occurring now in member countries is because of the capacity that has been built up through this process and the Freezailah Fellowship Fund. The Fellowship Programme has also promoted the sharing of experiences and is presently creating a network of ITTO Fellowship alumni.

Sharing the lessons learned from the many ITTO projects, such as through the webpage and the *TFU*, is helping to inform people and to keep ITTO and tropical timber visible in people's minds. More than 400 million dollars has been spent on ITTO projects and policy work, so clearly a lot of effort has been made, and this is visible when you go to member countries. The fact that the Council sessions were hosted in the various producer member countries in the past has given a lot of visibility to the Organization's work, and it has helped engage stakeholders and enabled the greater sharing of experiences; it has helped build a kind of family within the tropical forest community. This is one of the strengths; it creates opportunities for strong networks for sharing knowledge on tropical forests. ITTO does studies that inform its policy work, and this in turn has informed the policy work of member countries. So clearly I would say it has made a big impact.



Good governance: Alhassan Attah thinks ITTO's Thematic Programme on Tropical Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade should be scaled up. *Photo: Bosques Sociedad y Desarrollo*

What are the Council's major strengths?

The two groups, producers and consumers, have equal voting power, which inevitably leads to consensus decisions. You could say this is a weakness but it's also a strength, because it means that to make any sort of progress, both sides have to agree. Also, no country feels weak because it does not carry a large vote. Each issue might involve a time-consuming discussion; despite the divide of producers and consumers, however, the Council has almost always managed to come up with some level of compromise that has moved debate forward. That is one of the strengths, because if you cannot find consensus there will be winners and losers, and when that happens it can really polarize an organization. So I think, looking back, the Council's ability to compromise and to reach decisions by consensus has been one of its key strengths.

Another strength has been the Council's willingness to encourage collaboration with other organizations, such as the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat, the role ITTO plays in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and the memoranda of understanding with the Convention on Biological Diversity and other organizations. Clearly, the Council has shown leadership in reaching out to other organizations, engaging with them, and drawing out the synergies. This has been a key strength.

The Council's policy work—reflected in the various guidelines, the criteria and indicators, and others—is another key strength, and this has been complemented by its ability to take forward policies by providing support for their implementation through projects.

The Council has also generated important information through its statistics on the tropical timber trade and market information. This work has generated considerable knowledge, which of course accrues to the member countries and the forest sector. For some countries, the



Photo: *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*

cost of generating this information in isolation would be too high, and the ITTO process allows us to do this collaboratively and cost-effectively. If you read the various trade journals you see extensive quotes from ITTO's Market Information Service. Also, the Council's willingness to harmonize its reporting requirements with those of other intergovernmental agencies, such as FAO, has been important. Lastly, the training in project formulation provided by ITTO has not only benefited ITTO, it has helped member countries engage in other processes in the forest sector, such as REDD+, and helped provide member states with the capacity to design and develop projects.

What are its weaknesses?

The main weakness of the Council has to do with financing. First, there has been a general decline in the level of funding for projects in the Organization. Additionally, some member countries have defaulted on their contributions, and this has caused difficulties for the Organization. This, for me, is the Council's main weakness.

What do you see as the future role of the Organization?

It still has an important role to play, and the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013–2018 sets the direction. Perhaps the key area for the Council, which is coming out strongly now and which is highlighted in the Strategic Action Plan, has to do with forest law enforcement, governance and trade. The Council should strongly engage member states in improving forest governance in their countries. With improved forest governance you will get better forest practice and you can make better progress towards SFM. Communities in forest areas will benefit, governments will optimize forest revenues, and the forest sector will contribute more to the economy and in that respect also give more visibility to forestry. ITTO's Thematic Programme on Tropical Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade could be scaled up to ensure there is strong engagement by the member states and sufficient funding to support the work. Timber legality is a key issue in the markets now. The EU Timber Regulation and similar regulations in other countries require that only timber from legal sources is traded. I think the Council should focus on this issue—by developing policy, providing

financial support and encouraging member states to improve forest governance.

The Council could also help promote trade in domestic markets. Most tropical timber producer countries have focused on exports, to the neglect of their domestic or regional trade. A number of tropical timber producer countries have fast-growing economies, and therefore the demand for wood in those countries is growing. As a result of their focus on the export trade, however, domestic markets have been neglected, and the informal sector is filling that gap. The informal sector tends not to be compliant with rules and regulations that promote sustainability, and therefore all the good work that has been done in terms of managing the forest could be undone. So, clearly, developing domestic markets in producer countries could be helpful.

ITTO should also continue to work to its strength in forest-sector statistics and market information—it should further strengthen this aspect of its work.



Photo: *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*

Building capacities and human resources in member states is an area that ITTO should continue to strengthen moving forward because in this way you can really have an impact on the ground. The Council should continue to develop capacity in forest management, and it should also make a considerable effort to strengthen capacity in further processing in those countries where processing lags behind. Many tropical timber producers continue to export primary products, including to emerging markets. But a lack of capacity in further processing is a gap that has been there for all these years, and because our focus has been on the forests, we have perhaps neglected markets and industry. Moving forward, these are areas we should look at.

Lastly, the Council should address the funding issue. It should work on a few key priority areas where it has particular strengths. This will help ensure that the membership has a continuing interest in participating and contributing.

Interview with Katharina Kühmayer

Katharina Kühmayer attended her first Council session in 2002. She was Austria's chief negotiator for the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) 2006, and she was elected vice-chair of the Council in 2007 and chair in 2008



Photo: Earth Negotiations Bulletin

What were the major challenges the Council dealt with during your term as Council chair?

There were two major issues. An overarching one was the entry into force of the ITTA 2006, which, as chair, I urged member states to ratify as soon as possible. The other major challenge was finding a solution to the issue of the frequency and venue of future Council meetings. I was the first chair to preside over a new regime in which the Council changed from two sessions per year, rotating between a spring session in a producer country and the November session at headquarters, to a single session per year.

Of course, the way in which Council went about things had to be adapted to this new regime. We had a meeting in Accra, Ghana, in June, which I chaired; this was an informal meeting, but nevertheless it was important because we were in this transitional stage to the new regime. Because it was informal, the fear was that member states would perhaps forget what positions, conclusions and agreements had been taken there. So it was my task to remind people at the Council session in November 2008 that there had been agreement in Accra and that we were not in a position to renegotiate everything. And the Accra meeting was important because the thematic programmes had been generally supported, the idea of a pilot phase of the thematic programmes had been endorsed, the functioning of the committees had been discussed and reviewed, and the main issue, on the frequency and venues of future sessions, had been thoroughly examined.

Describe the atmosphere in the Council at that time.

There was some tension and sensitivity, because nobody really knew how the Accra meeting would be perceived.

We had to deal with the change from two Council sessions per year to one, and there was a lot of scepticism. Would it work? Would we have enough time? Would enough delegations attend the Accra meeting and accept the new system? It was sensitive; one could feel it. But nevertheless and foremost, as at all Council meetings I have attended, there was good collaboration, and we all had a spirit of compromise to reach our common goals.

Describe the major achievements of the Council under your leadership.

The most important achievement was to agree on the approach for one Council session per year, with alternation between a producer country and headquarters. It was under my chairship that we found this agreement and paved the way for the new system, which has now been in progress for some time. We also approved the Biennial Work Programme and the thematic programmes pilot phase, so there were a lot of important decisions.

I'm not a forester, I'm a lawyer, so I was always most involved in the organizational, operational and financial issues of the Council, and generally I left the forest issues for those who are experts in that field. However, in this period the Council was very much focused on these organizational discussions because we had to find a way to a financially sustainable future for the Organization. We didn't know whether the thematic programmes would succeed. We had indications from some member states that they strongly supported the idea, but we didn't know if others would accept it, so in that sense I think it was an achievement to establish the thematic programmes. Looking back now from 2014, I wish we had had more time to focus on the core forest issues at the Council. On the



Photo: K. Sato/ITTO

other hand, it was absolutely necessary to deal with those operational and financial issues, so we did what we needed to do.

What are the Council's major strengths?

The members and the Secretariat are its great strengths; it's all about the people who are devoted to the Organization, who are devoted to forest issues, to climate issues, to developing-country issues, who are involved in timber trade. ITTO has more members than ever—69, which shows the strength of the ITTA. It's still the sole international legally binding instrument in the forest sector, and that really makes it a different species from other organizations. The Council always works in a collaborative spirit, taking nearly all its decisions unanimously, and it's got a family feeling about it. It's a good atmosphere, really; people have become friends and are part of a family. Also, the Council has a good mixture of policy work and project work, which takes the work to the ground level. It's very special.

What are its weaknesses?

Nobody is perfect, right? Wherever people are involved there are weaknesses, and the Council is constituted of people. I would prefer not to talk about weaknesses, but I would like to make an appeal and give one piece of advice. The appeal would be to member states in general—and some in particular—to really seize the opportunity of being part of this very special forum by making themselves heard, to raise their voices and to say what is important to them and to highlight the problems they want the Council to address. This is a forum where you need to raise your voice. I would encourage member states to take full advantage of that great possibility.

My advice to future chairs would be to do justice to the Council agenda. Sometimes one could get the impression that the work being done in the margins of the Council is taking more and more time and the Council itself has less and less time. There are so many subgroups, and friends-of-whomever groups, and I would hope that the Council can deal more with the core issues and have sufficient time to discuss the big issues in the plenary.

What do you see as the future role of the Council?

For the future it will be important to make good use of the time in Council sessions and to focus to the greatest extent possible on core matters—to do what the ITTA intends us to do. Take the Annual Market Discussion, for example. This is so important, but sometimes it is virtually squeezed into a lunch time. A balance needs to be found between financial issues, policy work and impact on the ground. The Council and its members should take full advantage of the tools provided by the ITTA to deal with the issues around sustainable forest management and a sustainable trade and to not be distracted by internal issues. If they do that, I look forward to a bright future for the Organization, and to another 50 Council sessions.

Interview with Michael Maue

Ambassador Michael Maue was part of the diplomatic corps of the Embassy of Papua New Guinea (PNG) in Belgium in the early 1980s dealing with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, including the first negotiation for an International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA). He served as the chair of the International Tropical Timber Council in 2009



Photo: Earth Negotiations Bulletin

What were the major challenges the Council dealt with during your term as Council chair?

During a Council session it is difficult to predict which topics will become controversial. Some of the issues we dealt with in 2009 were the approval of the Biennial Work Programme; accession of countries to the ITTA 2006; and the rotation of Council meetings between headquarters and producer member countries, an issue which took long hours of negotiation to resolve. Another important issue the Council dealt with was the focus of climate-change negotiations on forests as mitigation and adaptation options.

Describe the atmosphere of the Council at that time.

It's natural for delegations to put up their views during the discussions, and this can create controversy. Nonetheless, members are capable of talking over those issues informally in their hotels or during the coffee breaks. I think this is the regular *modus operandi* of delegates and it is how they always seemed able to come up with solutions. There will always be controversial issues between consumers and producers, but there has also always been collaboration, too. In the process there is tension, of course, but the negotiation does happen.

In the case of the Biennial Work Programme there was some controversy because members on both sides wanted to see that approved activities were funded, but at the end it is the relationships that develop between delegations that make it possible to arrive at decisions.

What were impacts of these achievements?

During my tenure, the major achievements were the adoption of the Biennial Work Programme 2010–2011 and the financing of several activities contained in it. It was a unique exercise due to the transition to the new ITTA, which gave rise to certain unique considerations.

The other major issue was the ratification of the ITTA 2006. Each member country has its own procedures and timing for ratification, so even though it was not possible to come to any decision or resolution on the matter, very compelling messages came from the Council and its members. It was clear that the threshold for the entry into force of the ITTA 2006 would soon be met.

The discussion on the hosting of Council sessions outside headquarters had a very big impact. It is in the interests of producer members to show consumers and donors how their generous contributions are working on the ground. During my tenure as chair, there was a lot of debate around the upcoming session in Guatemala and particularly the cost of hosting sessions outside Japan. I think this debate had a great impact on the *modus operandi* of the Organization. By itself, the concept of rotation has value, but now producer members also have to make budgetary commitments to host Council sessions and contribute financially to the work of the Organization.

What are the Council's major strengths?

The Council counts on the support of a well-qualified and well-resourced Secretariat to implement its decisions. The fact that ITTO has a Biennial Work Programme is a distinctive advantage that is not common in other international organizations; it guides the work of both the Council and the Secretariat.



In focus: A family poses next to teak seedlings in central Papua New Guinea. Ambassador Maue thinks the Council should focus more on its project programme. *Photo: H.O. Ma/ITTO*

Collaboration with other relevant organizations— such as FAO and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change—is also an important strength of the Council; this allows and enhances the implementation of key activities. I believe it is important to continue such collaborative work because at the end of the day we live in a global village.

What are its weaknesses?

The main weakness of the Council is that it deals with too many issues, and during Council sessions these issues often require full days of discussions; prioritization may help us manage these debates. This is especially true for delegations that have only one or two delegates. Such delegations want to know what is happening and to exchange views, but when too many things are happening at the same time, it becomes a big challenge.

Another weakness is the small amount of time dedicated to reporting on the implementation of projects during Council sessions (which has been done in the interests of time). I believe more attention should be given to this because the project programme represents the way in which ITTO is investing its money. Donors want to know how their funds are being applied, and producer members are interested in developments in their fellow countries. In the end, this is what we want to achieve—international cooperation among the producers and consumers.

Finally, countries become members because of their interest in tropical timber. It's important that recruitment to the ITTO Secretariat reflects a regional balance of representation without compromising quality, experience and expertise. This balance is difficult to achieve when the staff is so small, but continued efforts should be made in that direction.

What do you see as the future role of the Council?

Let me say first that I am not a forester but a diplomat. Nevertheless, in my view the Council should place great emphasis on the conservation of forest resources and the contribution of tropical forests to the global environment. We all live on this one small planet, and deforestation can have impacts anywhere. In my own country, PNG, we are now experiencing sea-level rise, while other parts of the world are being affected by unpredictable weather. Therefore, the Council should secure funding and resources to collaborate with other relevant UN bodies, because climate change is already affecting every country, and in my view this is very relevant to the role of the Council.

Interview with Barney Chan

Barney Chan attended his first Council session in May 1990 as a member of the Malaysia delegation and a representative of the Malaysian Timber Organization, and he has attended almost every session since. He is chair of the Trade Advisory Group (TAG)



Photo: Earth Negotiations Bulletin

What are the most important achievements of the Council over the period of your involvement?

There are too many achievements to name, but two stand out: the excellent series of technical guidelines, and the innovative criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of natural tropical forests [C&I].

On a more personal level, the setting up of TAG and the Civil Society Advisory Group was also an important achievement; it allowed “traditional enemies” to work together, as well as with the Council. Today, the engagement between non-governmental organizations [NGOs] and the tropical timber trade is much more constructive than it was in the early days, when many NGOs and activists were working to ban logging in the tropics and ITTO was new to the international forestry scene. Demonstrations were common in Council sessions in the early 1990s; activists agitated outside while the meetings went on behind closed doors and security guards.

What were the impacts of these achievements?

The groundbreaking C&I, published in July 1992, represented a systematic approach to the complexities of tropical forestry. This influenced the way in which other intergovernmental organizations approached tropical forestry in later years. More importantly, it allowed producer countries to understand and work towards sustainable forest management [SFM].

What are the major strengths and weaknesses of the Council?

The partisan nature of the ITTO membership—consumers and producers—is the Council’s strength as well as its weakness. Two sides of the same coin. This arrangement produces intense and focused discussions, but it also reveals the divergent interests of the two groups. This disparate approach makes it difficult and even problematic for the two camps to agree on some problems in forestry and the timber trade.

How you do see the future role of the Council?

The international spotlight first shone on tropical forests in the 1980s. Then it focused on “sustainability”, which eventually moved to “timber certification” and then evolved into “legality”. These last few years, “climate change” has been the priority.

In my opinion, the Council did not follow the spotlight well, although it started brilliantly in “sustainability”, with cornerstone work and publications on SFM. The Council dropped the certification baton and could not find the legality baton. Has Council got the climate-change baton?

Despite urging in earlier years by TAG, the Council chose not to work on timber certification and legality. As it turned out, other international organizations stepped into our shoes and took those challenges away from us. ITTO missed two golden opportunities to make a huge impact on tropical forestry. In Libreville in November 2013, TAG again urged the Council to step up or risk being pushed aside by others. TAG said: “ITTO might become a spectator on the international stage, and we will all just sit on the sidelines and watch others play the game of tropical forestry”.

Interview with Chen Hin Keong

Chen Hin Keong is the leader of TRAFFIC's Global Forest Trade Programme. He attended his first session of the International Tropical Timber Council in 2001. He helped create the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) in 2002 and is its current co-chair



Photo: Earth Negotiations Bulletin

What are the most important achievements of the Council over the period of your involvement?

The most important achievement of the Council from my perspective has been the formation of the CSAG. CSAG provides the Council with a voice from civil society; in particular it gives it a new perspective on gender and on land and forest tenure. It is vital that the Council has a body like CSAG to provide those inputs and to bring in different perspectives to the Council decision-making process. Forests are not solely about harvesting and trading timber; we are talking about much more, such as climate change and the whole suite of services and benefits of forests to the people living in forests or relying on forest resources. These have to be reflected in the Council's decisions, and that's why civil society has an important role to play in providing that voice.

What impacts has CSAG had on the Council?

ITTO does a lot of good policy work, developing frameworks that member countries can use as guidance and for their own statutory purposes in the national context. For CSAG, the impact is in terms of ensuring that our interests and views are accepted and adopted within the guidelines and standards that ITTO has been developing. For example, I was involved through CSAG in the revision of the SFM guidelines¹, and we were able to provide inputs to make sure that tenure issues, native customary rights, climate-change issues and other aspects that concern us—and which were basically absent from the original 1990 version—were captured in the new version.

A lot of people are interested in these issues, including governments, but certainly CSAG pushed hard to make sure that tenure, livelihoods and benefits for local communities and indigenous peoples were highlighted much more. We would like to think we made an impact, together with others. The second thing I think we can say we contributed to recently was the development of the current ITTO Strategic Action Plan, in which we had strong inputs.

In your view, what are the major strengths of the Council?

The strength of the Council is that it is specific to tropical forests and it is the only platform that focuses solely on tropical forest issues. It brings together the consumers, producers and processors of tropical timber. If it does its job well, the Council should be able to channel its deliberations into other forums, like the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to feed in the perspectives and inputs of the tropical regions. And that is very important, I think. The current International Tropical Timber Agreement is quite encompassing, for example looking broadly at the services and benefits of tropical forests, so the deliberations of the Council should have considerable relevance in other related global forums.

What are its weaknesses?

The Council sessions involve a lot of difficult negotiations, with the various parties often pushing in different directions, resulting in the watering down of some of the key issues. That's one of the main weaknesses. But a second weakness is that Council doesn't have the ability to sanction member countries. So even though it tries

¹ Voluntary guidelines for the sustainable management of natural tropical forests.



Out in front: Chen Hin Keong thinks the Council should be seen to be leading on certain key issues. *Photo: ANPM*

hard to adopt good policies and standards, such as the SFM guidelines, countries resist because of cost factors, the challenges they will create for their industries, or the difficulty of implementation and enforcement. The Council also operates at the international level and doesn't have strong links to the ground. On the other hand, a lot of projects are specific to particular sites, and governments do not take on recommendations in a holistic way at the national level and in a way that can be monitored.

ITTO's membership comprises practically all the countries in the tropical world and the Council potentially has a lot of leverage, but this is not always utilized. For example, the Council could have created something along the lines of the European Union Timber Regulation, the United States' Lacey Act and Australia's new Illegal Logging Prohibition Act, which are all about stopping illegal timber from entering countries, thus helping producer countries in combating illegal logging. Instead, now these things have been done on a piecemeal basis.

What do you see as the Council's future role?

The Council has to be seen to be leading on certain key issues, such as REDD+ in the climate-change arena, illegality and good forest governance. If institutions and interest groups don't see that leadership from the Council, they will try to form their own bodies. Nevertheless, tropical timber is still the *raison d'être* for ITTO, whereas tropical timber is just a minor component in all the other forestry arenas. At the end of the day, timber is a renewable resource, so it would be a shame if we lose this opportunity to have a greater input and to help countries interested in managing their forests sustainably and equitably for their people. So the Council has a critical role

to play. It can bring a balance: consumers need timber, but natural forests cannot meet all the demand. Now a lot of countries are moving towards plantations, and these timber plantations—and other tree crops—are eating away at forest land, so we need a balance between consumption, development and conservation. The Council can assist its members in balancing development in a transparent way, and in taking a good-governance approach while meeting the needs of the people living in the forest.

Interview with Makoto Sekiyama

Makoto Sekiyama is Director General for Foreign Affairs at the City of Yokohama, the host of ITTO headquarters. Mr Sekiyama has been in charge of ITTO-related matters on behalf of the City for seven years



Photo: R. Carrillo/ITTO

Looking back to the mid-1980s, why did Yokohama offer to host the newly created International Tropical Timber Organization?

The port of Yokohama is well known as Japan's gateway to the world. After opening in the 1850s it became an important destination, first for traders from the United States, the United Kingdom and other Western countries and later for merchants from China and India. It can be said that Yokohama was the city that started Japan's international business, and such an idea is still strong in the minds of our citizens.

In the mid-1980s, the City of Yokohama was aiming to build a dynamic international city, and efforts to add more value to it were visible in the building of international conference facilities in the new Minato Mirai district and the promotion of a good living environment for foreigners. At the same time, a new international organization [ITTO] was born with the mission of promoting the proper and effective conservation and development of tropical forests. This was an ideal that was very much in line with the city's vision, which was to be not only a hub of business and economic activity but also a contributor to the global environment. This was the motivation for Yokohama in hosting the ITTO headquarters.

How has Yokohama benefited from hosting ITTO over the last nearly 30 years, and vice versa?

Hosting ITTO had a great deal of influence on the city's success in attracting offices of other international organizations in the 1990s, such as the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. This has added value to the city, just as the authorities had envisioned.

As you know, many participants come to the sessions of the International Tropical Timber Council and stay in Yokohama, and we hope that those visitors leave with a good impression of the city and encourage other people to visit it. The development of Minato Mirai had only just begun when ITTO arrived in Yokohama in 1986; now it is a landmark in Japan's national capital region. The city is proud to always mention ITTO in its public relations activities, and this effort paid off with the hosting of two major international conferences in 1994, soon after ITTO moved to Minato Mirai (in 1991): one of these was the tenth International AIDS Conference, and the other was the United Nations Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction. More recently, we hosted the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development [TICAD IV] in 2008, the Economic Leaders' Meeting of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation [APEC] in 2010, and TICAD V in 2013, just to mention a few. It can be said that, thanks to this effort, more than 160 000 visitors have come to Yokohama to attend international conferences. This showcases our city around the world and gives pride to our citizens.

As for the benefits for ITTO, Yokohama takes pride in being a patron of ITTO and believes that the city is not only a sponsor but also a true stakeholder. We believe that hosting an organization that tackles the global issues around protecting and sustainably managing tropical forests is fully compatible with the vision of the city and its citizens.

In addition, I think there are benefits for ITTO in terms of reducing the operational costs of the headquarters for members because the city bears some of them, including the cost of hosting the sessions of the Council when they are held in Yokohama.

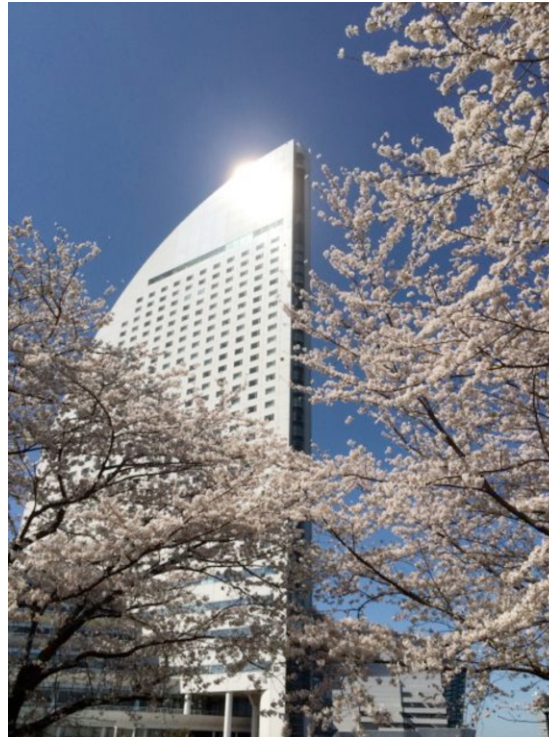
How do you perceive the future role of ITTO?

Recently there has been a lot of talk about climate change and global warming. We know that ITTO's objective is the sustainable management of tropical forests, and even though it may not be evident at first, tropical forests have an important role to play in preventing, combating and mitigating the effects of climate change and global warming; indeed, forest conservation may be a key to solving the problem of climate change because of their capacity to act as carbon reservoirs. ITTO can speak out about this, and it can also empower people to conserve and sustainably manage tropical forests.

I can't help but wonder whether it is because of climate change that we lost so many lives during the recent landslide disasters caused by heavy rain in Japan this year. Therefore, I think that playing a role in protecting tropical forests and promoting sustainable forest management should be the focus of the future work of ITTO.



Minato Mirai: The development of this district coincided with ITTO's creation and growth *Photo: Earth Negotiations Bulletin*



HQ: The Pacifico-Yokohama building in Minato-Mirai, Yokohama. Among other things, the Pacifico-Yokohama houses ITTO's headquarters. *Photo: R. Carrillo/ITTO*

How do you see the relationship between ITTO and the citizens of Yokohama developing in the future?

I recall clearly the international Children's Environmental Education Conference held in 2009, jointly convened by ITTO, the City of Yokohama and the Government of Japan, at which students not only from Yokohama but also from other parts of the world got together to learn about tropical forests. I think such events can have a great impact on the next generation, which will carry on the work of solving the problems of today. I hope ITTO continues educating future generations of Yokohama citizens, as well as of other countries and cities, and inspires them with knowledge of what they can do to conserve the global environment.

ITTO has always been involved in such educational activities in the city by giving lectures and inviting children to know more about its work, and I hope such activities will continue.

Interview with José Trinidad Suazo Bulnes

José Trinidad Suazo Bulnes has attended sessions of the International Tropical Timber Council since 2010 as a member of the Honduran delegation. He was Council chair in 2013



Photo: Earth Negotiations Bulletin

What were the major challenges the Council dealt with during your term as chair?

Our major challenge was reaching consensus on the selection process for a new ITTO executive director. Another major challenge was the adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forests.

Describe the atmosphere of the Council at the 49th session.

At the beginning the atmosphere was a bit tense; debate was exhaustive, often impassioned and not at all easy, but in general we were effective in bringing about agreement on a number of significant issues. Later, as the session proceeded, the atmosphere became more collaborative as members put aside their particular interests and participated in a positive and constructive manner. I am grateful to all parties in the negotiations for their flexibility and spirit of commitment.

What do you see as some of the major achievements of the Council?

Various decisions by the Council over the years to promote trade in tropical timber from sustainably managed and legally harvested forests have paved the way for the development of innovative timber traceability systems in many countries, as well as for the monitoring of forest and timber certification processes. Recently, the Council has made strong moves to promote efficient wood-processing technologies by financing training programmes as a way of strengthening the capacity of timber-producing countries.

Cooperation between ITTO and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora has become stronger in recent years, and this is important. The ITTO–Convention on Biological Diversity Collaborative Initiative also continues to

strengthen, with the overall objective of enhancing biodiversity conservation in tropical forests with the direct participation of local stakeholders and addressing the main drivers of biodiversity loss in tropical forests. At the 49th session, one of the Council's important financing decisions was the awarding of ITTO Fellowships valued at US\$151 445.

What do you see as ITTO's impacts?

Since it became operational in 1987, ITTO has funded more than 1000 projects, pre-projects and activities valued at more than US\$400 million. The area of tropical forest under sustainable management in ITTO producer member countries has grown significantly since the Organization came into being.

ITTO has developed many internationally agreed policy documents to promote forest law enforcement, sustainable forest management and forest conservation. The Council provides great assistance to tropical member countries to enable them to adapt such policies to their local circumstances and to implement them in the field through projects. On the down side, the Council's main weakness is related to its limited capacity to fund the full implementation of its mandate, as embodied in the Strategic Action Plan 2013–2018.

What do you see as the future role of the Council?

Following the entry into force of the ITTA 2006, which includes ambitious social, economic and environmental goals, and the adoption of the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013–2018, ITTO has a great opportunity to enhance the contribution of tropical forests to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Council should further strengthen its policy work to encourage sustainable forest management and promote trade in legal, sustainably produced timber and timber products. It should also focus on promoting non-timber forest products and environmental services in the sustainable management of tropical forests; encouraging the restoration of degraded tropical forests and the rehabilitation of degraded forest lands; further enhancing public relations, education and outreach activities to best convey the Organization's objectives and achievements; and strengthening the use of efficient wood-processing technologies in tropical timber-producing countries.

Interview with Rob Busink

Rob Busink did his Masters thesis on tropical timber in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development integrated programme of raw materials, and he has been a member of the Netherlands delegation to the International Tropical Timber Council since 2009. He is Council chair in 2014



Photo: R. Carrillo/ITTO

What are the main challenges the Council will face at its 50th session?

Time management will be a challenge for all of us, especially the chair. We have several issues on our agenda, and I think the main one will be the appointment of a new executive director [ED] for the Organization. That's an important decision. Last year we had extensive discussions about the profile of the new ED and now we have six candidates in a short-list. It's also about how you look at the future of ITTO and which ED will fit best for that.

We also have a challenge related to resource mobilization. When you see the ambitions of ITTO, especially in our new Strategic Action Plan and the Biennial Work Programme, and you see what we think is needed in terms of finance and what is available, there is a big gap. We had a discussion two years ago on how we could increase funding for ITTO, but the challenge is still there.

Third, a report on the impact of governmental procurement policies on tropical timber markets will be discussed in the Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets and also in the Council plenary. This issue came up almost four years ago, and it's complex and divisive. On the one hand, producers expect clear conditions for market access in consumer regions, but various consumer governments have policies to promote the consumption of forest products from sustainable forest management. Now there are also policies on banning illegally harvested timber from the market—in the United States there is the Lacey Act; in the European Union there is the EU Timber Regulation; and recently Australia also enacted a law. So I imagine that, for many countries, this could be very confusing and the report should give us more insight on the impacts.

We will also have to discuss the revision of staff rules and regulations. Another important issue is ITTO's regional presence—its regional offices. Members have been invited to make submissions on the roles and functions of the regional offices.

We have many important issues, so it will be a challenge to manage our time. I expect everybody will be constructive and cooperative because ultimately we strive for the same goals, which are a sustainable tropical timber trade and sustainable forest management.

How do you perceive the atmosphere of the Council?

I have now attended several Council sessions, and I can remember that one—in which governmental procurement policies were debated—was quite tense, even adversarial. But in recent sessions I think we have moved on, especially in discussing the Strategic Action Plan, and I think gradually we have established a more constructive and collaborative atmosphere. Perhaps everyone is realizing that we need to collaborate to have a strong organization, strong policies and, as a result, a strong tropical forest sector.

Actually, we have a basis that could lead to an adversarial relationship within the Council, because we have two categories of country: on the one hand the producers of tropical timber and on the other hand the consumers, and of course producers and consumers have different interests. But the situation is dynamic, evolving and complex: some consumer countries are also producing tropical timber products. China, for example, is regarded as a consumer country but it is also producing many tropical timber products. Some producer countries are also big

tropical timber consumer countries; for example, most of the tropical timber produced in Brazil is being consumed in Brazil. So ultimately we are all parties in the forest value chain, and our common interest is in sustainable forest management and a sustainable supply of tropical timber in the long term. Maybe we are realizing this more and more and this is contributing to a more collaborative atmosphere.

What are the major strengths and comparative advantages of the Council?

The Council's strength is that you have all the governments of the producers and consumers, the main actors, around the table. I think the International Tropical Timber Agreement was the first raw-material agreement that also took the sustainability of the resource seriously into account. The work to promote sustainability is a strength. It's related to so many aspects—the social aspect, the biodiversity aspect, the economic aspect; we take them all into account in the Council.

Another strength is the strong relationship between ITTO and other organizations, as expressed in the memoranda of understanding we have with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the Convention on Biological Diversity. I also very much support ITTO in starting to work more closely with the World Bank, which plays a very important role in sustainable development.

One of the main challenges I see for ITTO in general and also at the national level is in making forestry an integral part of national sustainable development policies. Forests are not regarded as a politically attractive issue; when you talk about climate, biodiversity or sustainable energy you get a lot of attention, but most politicians are not aware that in all those issues forests can and do play a very important role. So we need much more work on political influence; if we can increase that influence, the challenge of resource mobilization could also be more easily resolved.

What are its weaknesses?

As I mentioned, a strength of the Organization and the Council is the broad scope of its work, but that strength is also a weakness, because we can lose focus. We have a broad vision, but the danger is that it is too broad.

The lack of active participation by the private sector is another weakness. We need much more involvement by the industry, and the Council should promote to a greater extent the role ITTO can play in tropical timber markets. What we see in the long term is a growing need for raw materials that are environmentally friendly, and tropical timber from sustainably managed tropical forests fits that

profile. ITTO could work more closely with the private sector to, for example, help secure the raw-material supply. We also need to look at ways in which ITTO's work can have a greater impact on wider sustainable development policies. One of the problems with the Council—and this is not unique to it—is that our discussions stay quite isolated. They need to be integrated more in national policies to increase the influence of the forest sector in general.

What do you see as the future role of the Organization?

ITTO is a unique organization. It is the only legally binding agreement on forests (in this case tropical forests) at the global level, which covers all the different aspects. It focuses on tropical timber, but in the context of sustainable forest management—the social, economic and ecological aspects. We have a unique concept; tropical forests are the forests most in danger; we have all the people around the table; and we have a very broad view. Therefore, I think ITTO could play an important role in solving some of the big challenges we face in the near future. We can encourage sustainable tropical forest management, help supply local and international communities with wood fibre, including biofuels, and make progress on the role of forests in climate-change mitigation and adaptation.

Next year is very important because we will discuss the review of the international arrangement on forests, and ITTO is one of the components of that arrangement. The raw-material supply will become an increasingly important issue, and timber is a raw material that can solve many environmental problems. ITTO should therefore be much more active in the various fora and make much more noise about what it can do to help solve international problems. ITTO can continue to encourage cooperation between producers and consumers in changing timber markets; help bring REDD+ into being; encourage the development of bioenergy; and help make payments for environmental services more operational. ITTO can also help in creating sustainable trade chains for commodities that contribute to deforestation, and encourage the development of plantation forests to meet future needs for tropical timber.

Fellowship stories

Several of the interviewees in this edition of the TFU mention the ITTO Fellowship Programme as one of ITTO's most significant capacity-building activities. Here we hear from some ITTO Fellowship alumni

Daniela Pauletto (Brazil), aged 34, Assistant Professor at Universidade Federal do Oeste do Pará

In 2008, Ms Pauletto participated in an international course on diversified tropical forest management in Costa Rica:

“The ITTO Fellowship allowed me to access top-range academic training. During my participation in the course, I became interested in payments for environmental services (PES) schemes and model forests. I recently participated in a selection process for a university post, and one of my strengths was my knowledge of PES schemes, climate change and forest management gained through the Fellowship. A great benefit of having participated in this type of course was the development of a network of professional contacts, to which I still have access today. I rate the ITTO Fellowship to be extremely useful because it enables researchers and students to participate in courses that national institutions are unable to support.”



In the field: Daniela Pauletto marks out a temporary survey plot in natural tropical forest. *Photo: D. Pauletto*

San Win (Myanmar), aged 54, Pro Rector, Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry

Dr San Win, who received ITTO Fellowships in 2003 and 2008, studied the shifting cultivation practices of hill tribes in Myanmar:

“Through the ITTO Fellowships I documented the shifting cultivation practices of various hill tribes, and some are truly sustainable for soil while reducing impact on the remaining natural forests. A clear example of this is the Danu tribe's fallow land management. The Danu uses wild sunflowers (*Tithonia diversifolia*) as fallow species. Their management style is that they cut twice a year on abandoned land; this adds biomass to the soil because wild sunflower, a herb species, decomposes easily. Two years after practising such management, the Danu crop the same area again. They need only a few plots to maintain their livelihoods while conserving soil fertility and maintaining the remaining natural forests. The ITTO Fellowship Programme enhances the capacities of foresters in their research and understanding of forestry and related fields in Myanmar. Forestry is one of the major economic sectors in Myanmar and sustaining forestry management surely enables sustainable development in the country.”



Shift work: San Win speaks with a local farmer in a shifting cultivation field during a field visit to document shifting cultivation practices in northern Myanmar. *Photo: S. Win*

Paul Bosu (Ghana), aged 47, senior research scientist at the Forest Research Institute of Ghana

Dr Bosu received two fellowships, one in 1993 to carry out Masters research and another in 2009 to attend a short training course on environmental leadership and communication:

“The Fellowship enabled me to visit experts and laboratories in the USA to complete my Masters. Through that I was able to identify natural enemies of a certain tree pest, develop protocols for handling and managing the pest in the field, and improve my skills in forest health management. As a result I had the opportunity to undertake a PhD in forest entomology. Since returning to Ghana, I have applied my skills in supporting Ghana's forest plantation development efforts. I believe my research and promotional activities have contributed substantially to the development of mixed-species plantations in Ghana. In addition, the course on environmental leadership helped me make a meaningful contribution to the development of butterfly-based ecotourism in Ghana, which my organization has been implementing, and it also helped me engage with children in Ghana in tree-planting and environmental conservation. Without the Fellowship it might have been impossible for me to acquire these skills.”



Mixed results: Paul Bosu explains a mixed-species plantation experiment in Ghana. *Photo: P. Bosu*



Community work: Sandra Rodriguez (pointing) meets a community as part of her research on the human dimensions of forest management. Photo: S. Rodriguez

Sandra Rodriguez (Colombia), aged 43, associate professor, Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua, Mexico

In 2001 Dr Rodriguez undertook a Masters programme in forest resources and conducted research on markets for timber products on Colombia's South Pacific coast:

"The ITTO Fellowship has had an indelible positive impact on my career. Thanks to the Fellowship I completed my Masters in forest resources with satisfaction, which in turn opened the door to my PhD in forest management. It has also helped extend my knowledge in different settings and countries. Currently, I am working on applied field research projects in Mexico and Colombia and I have produced a scientific publication on the human dimensions of forest management. In 2008 I was selected as an International Tropical Timber Market Expert endorsed by ITTO, and I received an Outstanding Environmental Science Program Research Award from Oklahoma State University in 2009 and an Outstanding Doctoral Research Award from IUFRO in 2014. My research on the human dimensions of forest management will help in the design of policies that are consistent with people's values and cultures, and it is helping professionals to understand social dynamics in forests, which is important in achieving SFM."

Christine Fletcher (Malaysia), aged 38, senior research officer at the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM)

Dr Fletcher undertook an environmental leadership course at the Smithsonian Institute, USA, in 2005:

"The course presented to me a myriad of techniques on management and leadership, guided me through a self-discovery of my innate leadership skills, and helped me further develop and express them in words and action. The course also gave me renewed motivation, clearer goals and a sense of purpose to excel in my career. The skills learned and experience garnered during the short course helped me tremendously with my confidence and prepared me to take up a bigger leadership role at my organization. I am now the Head of the Forest Ecology Branch and Principle Coordinator of the Pasoh FRIM Research Station. I have also been invited to participate in international meetings and national policymaking processes such as on forestry practices, certification and climate change.



Teamwork: Christine Fletcher (foreground) with the field team responsible for developing and testing the rapid biodiversity assessment guide. Photo: C. Fletcher

I have been involved in two SFM-related projects funded by ITTO. One of these, which concluded last year, enabled my team to produce a manual for rapid biodiversity assessment in Malaysian production forests. The Malaysian Forestry Department and ITTO have shown support for the manual, and the Cabinet is currently reviewing it for implementation at the national level."

Brice Nganda (Gabon), aged 42, coordinator of the Forest Programme at the WWF Central Regional Programme Office and manager of the Global Forest Trade Network

Mr Nganda undertook a Masters programme in integrated land development and management with several institutions in France in 2010:

"The Fellowship helped me advance my career. Before the Fellowship I was an undergraduate with only a three-year college training, and on completing the Fellowship I had a Masters degree. This graduation directly resulted in a promotion in my professional career in the Gabonese public service. Furthermore, I've been trained in the use of professional tools such as capacity building in environmental management and integrated land management and development. There was also the sharing of professional and cultural experiences with other persons hailing from all four continents. Prior to the Fellowship I was the manager of a forest community project with CARPO [the regional WWF Office]. After the Fellowship, I was able to apply for the position of coordinator for the entire WWF-Gabon Forest Programme. Thanks to the skills I have acquired, I'm now the co-manager of the ATO/ ITTO Principles, Criteria and Indicators [PCI] project currently under implementation, which is to adapt the PCI to each country involved."



Heading out: Brice Nganda travels to a forest concession on a forest audit mission as part of an ITTO project. Photo: B. Nganda