



**INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL
TIMBER COUNCIL**

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FIFTIETH SESSION
3-8 November 2014
Yokohama, Japan

**REPORT OF THE INFORMAL ADVISORY GROUP (IAG)
AT ITS TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING**

**2 November 2014
Yokohama, Japan**

**Twenty-Eighth Meeting of the Informal Advisory Group (IAG)
Yokohama, Japan, 2 November 2014**

Report of the Chairperson

1. The Twenty-eighth meeting of the IAG was convened on Sunday, 2 November 2014 at the Meeting Room of the ITTO Secretariat at 10:20 a.m., chaired by Mr. Rob Busink (Netherlands), Chairperson of the Council. The meeting was attended by Dato' Dr. B.C.Y. Freezailah (Malaysia), Vice-chairperson of the Council, Mr. Shingi Koto (Japan), nominated by Japan as Chairperson of the Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets (CEM), Mr. Björn Merrell (Sweden), Chairperson of the Committee on Forest Industry (CFI), Ms. Ellen Shaw (U.S.A.), Chairperson of the Committee on Finance and Administration (CFA), Mr. Jorge Malleux Orjeda (Peru), Chairperson of the Committee on Reforestation and Forest Management, Ms. Marjukka Mähönen (Finland), Consumer Spokesperson, Mr. Adrian Ngo'o Bitomo (Cameroon), Producer Spokesperson, Mr. Hiroyuki Tanaka and Mr. Akira Yamada (Japan), Representatives of the Host Government of the Headquarters, and Mr. Emmanuel Ze Meka, the Executive Director, together with other senior members of the Secretariat.
2. The IAG considered and adopted the following agenda for discussion:
 - i. Brief background of the IAG:
 - Decision 5(XXVI);
 - Report of the IAG at its Twenty-seventh Meeting, 24 November 2013;
 - General observations by the IAG Members;
 - ii. Matters Related to Article 14 of the ITTA, 2006.
 - iii. Opening of the Fiftieth Session of the Council and Celebration of the Fiftieth Session of the ITTC.
 - iv. Status of the parties to the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 2006.
 - v. Functions of the Informal Advisory Group.
 - vi. Consideration of draft decisions/elements of decisions, if any, submitted pursuant to ITTC Decision 7(XXXIII)
 - Projects, Pre-Projects and Activities [Decision 1(L)];
 - Matters related to Article 14 of the ITTA, 2006 -- *submitted by the Secretariat*;
 - Staff Regulations and Staff Rules of ITTO -- *submitted by the Secretariat*;
 - Draft ITTO Biennial Work Programme 2015-2016.
 - Consideration of Regional ITTO Presence and Representation
 - vii. List of possible decisions for the Fiftieth Session of the ITTC and report to the Council; and
 - viii. Other matters
 - ITTO membership in the World Nature Organization;
 - ITTO position on the WTO Environmental Goods Agreement;
 - ITTO position regarding the IAF;
 - Selection of Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Reforestation and Forest Management;
 - Selection of Chairperson of the Committee on Economics, Markets and Statistics;
 - Admission of observers.
3. In its deliberations, the IAG noted and made reference to Decision 5(XXVI) and the Report of the Informal Advisory Group (IAG) at its Twenty-seventh Meeting held on 24 November 2013 in Libreville, Gabon as contained in document ITTC(XLIX)/2 dated 24 November 2013. The IAG also recalled the consensus regarding the extension of its mandate and the continuation of its existence and role reached by the Council at its Thirtieth and Forty-ninth Sessions. The IAG noted that Council would again review the role and mandate of the IAG at its Fifty-first Session. The IAG took note that this meeting would be the last attended by the current Executive Director and formally extended its congratulations and thanks to Mr. Ze Meka for his many years of service to the Organization.

Matters Related to Article 14 of the ITTA, 2006

4. The IAG discussed the logistics of presentations by the six short-listed candidates for the post of Executive Director (E.D.) and arrangements for voting in case a decision on the election of a new E.D. cannot be reached by consensus. The Secretariat noted that a proposal had been received that the candidates attend briefing sessions with the Producer and Consumer caucuses and that a schedule had been prepared to facilitate this. The Consumer Spokesperson indicated that a common set of four questions had already been prepared for their meetings with the candidates; if time allowed another question from the floor would also be allowed. It was agreed that the common questions would be shared with the Producer caucus. On further reflection the IAG recommended that the two caucuses consider a combined meeting to interview the candidates in a joint caucus session Tuesday morning and that there would be no Q&A session following the presentations of the candidates to Council on Monday afternoon. Follow-up meetings with the separate caucuses could be scheduled as required with individual candidates at caucus meetings later in the week. Once this is formally agreed by the caucuses, a new schedule of meetings will be prepared.

The process of deciding on whether consensus is possible in deciding on the selection of the E.D. was discussed; if one or more members makes a motion that consensus appears impossible and this is seconded by one or more members, the Chair will seek a decision from Council on whether consensus is possible or not, either by consensus (with all agreeing that consensus is not possible) or by simple majority vote. Once a decision is taken that consensus is not possible, the election will be decided by special vote as per the ITTA, 2006.

The Secretariat reviewed measures in case balloting is open or secret (voting will be secret if any member so requests it). It indicated that the results of open voting would show each country's vote; for secret ballot only overall results would be shown. The need to ensure that the report of the credentials committee is complete prior to any voting was stressed; any country that doesn't have their credentials and payments to ITTO in order will be unable to vote during the session. The IAG urged all countries to ensure their payments and credentials are in order as soon as possible so that all countries are eligible to vote. The requirement for delegation of votes to be submitted in writing ahead of the session was noted; several countries had already done so. The reallocation of votes as per ITTA Article 10, paragraph 8 was discussed; the reallocated votes will be circulated to members under Council agenda item 5 with the report of the credentials committee. Any country paying at any time during the Session will require the credentials committee to reconvene and release a new reallocation of votes. Quorum will be ascertained at each meeting of Council during the week taking account of any payments affecting the allocation of votes.

Opening of the Fiftieth Session of the Council and Celebration of the Fiftieth Session of the ITTC

5. The Secretariat briefed the IAG on the special arrangements for the Fiftieth ITTC Session as contained in the attached program for the opening session. In addition to the opening session, a panel will be convened on Wednesday November 5 to discuss future directions for ITTO and the ITTC. The Chair provided background on the inclusion of the presentations by three ITTO Fellows in the opening session, which had been included as a way to highlight the work of ITTO at its Fiftieth Session and the Twenty-fifth anniversary of the ITTO Fellowship Program.

Status of the Parties to the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 2006

6. The IAG noted that following the definitive entry into force of ITTA, 2006 on 7 December 2011, there are now a total of sixty-nine (69) parties to the Agreement, 68 countries plus the European Union (EU). The parties to the ITTA, 2006 comprise thirty-seven (37) consumer members including the EU and thirty-two (32) producer member countries.
7. The E.D. reported that Suriname and Viet Nam had become members of ITTO since the Forty-ninth Session of the ITTC and had been assessed for contributions to the 2014 administrative budget on a pro rata basis as per the ITTA, 2006. The issues of membership and assessed contributions to the administrative budget would be further discussed in the Committee on Finance and Administration (CFA). The IAG welcomed Suriname and Viet Nam as new members of the Organization.

Functions of the Informal Advisory Group

8. The IAG recalled that its role and continuation were discussed at the Forty-ninth ITTC Session, when its mandate was extended to the Fifty-first ITTC Session under ITTC Decision 2(XLIX). The IAG agreed to review its mandate and terms of reference (TOR) as per Decision 2(XLIX) at the Fifty-first ITTC Session. The IAG requested the Secretariat to develop a draft decision to extend its mandate to be approved at the Fifty-first ITTC Session and to undertake consultations with members regarding any changes that may be desired in the IAG's TOR.

Consideration of draft decisions/elements of decisions, if any, submitted pursuant to ITTC Decision 7(XXXIII)

9. The IAG considered the draft decisions/elements of decisions submitted pursuant to ITTC Decision 7(XXXIII) as follows:
- i. Projects, Pre-projects and Activities [Decision 1(L)];
 - ii. Matters related to Article 14 of the ITTA, 2006 -- *submitted by the Secretariat*;
 - iii. Staff Regulations and Staff Rules of ITTO --*submitted by the Secretariat*;
 - iv. Consideration of Regional ITTO Presence and Representation
 - v. Draft ITTO Biennial Work Programme for 2015-2016.

The IAG noted that two draft decisions circulated to Members (one on gender and another on tropical forest plantations) had been withdrawn by the government of Mexico. It also noted that Activity 2 of the BWP 2015-2016 focuses on the development of guidelines to incorporate gender equity in the Organization's activities. The government of Mexico may propose revisions or additions to the BWP 2015-2016 to incorporate activities addressed in the withdrawn draft decisions.

List of possible decisions for the Fiftieth Session of the ITTC and report to the Council

10. The IAG considered the possible list of decisions to be considered and adopted by the Council at its Fiftieth Session as follows:
- i. Projects, Pre-projects and Activities [Decision 1(L)];
 - ii. Matters related to Article 14 of the ITTA, 2006;
 - iii. Staff Regulations and Staff Rules of ITTO;
 - iv. ITTO Biennial Work Programme for 2015-2016.

These draft decisions (except for the first) are included in Annex A to this report.

Other Matters

11. The IAG considered the invitation for ITTO to become a member of the World Nature Organization (WNO). Several members of the IAG reported difficulties obtaining information on the WNO. The IAG recommended that the Secretariat seek further information on the legal status, objectives, funding and structure of the WNO before any decision is taken on membership in this body.
12. The IAG discussed the relevance of the Environmental Goods Agreement (EGA) initiative to ITTO. The representative of the USA provided more background and indicated that any link with ITTO was premature since it had not been decided which products would be covered by any eventual EGA. Japan supported the USA, noting that the delegates to ITTO were different from the delegates covering WTO. The IAG concluded that this issue was important but that consideration of ITTO's involvement in the EGA should be deferred until WTO members decided whether to include timber products in the EGA and on the role of other international organizations in this process.
13. The IAG noted the ongoing review of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF). It noted the recently concluded country-led initiative on this topic in China which had included discussions on the future role of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). It noted that the final decision on the IAF would be taken by member countries and that ITTO (as the only legally binding agreement on tropical forests) will have much to contribute to a future IAF. The IAG recommended that ITTO should remain actively engaged in the process, including through its role in the CPF.

14. The IAG noted that the Chairperson of CEM (Mr. Osamu Hashiramoto - Japan) would not attend the Fiftieth ITTC and that the Vice-Chairperson of CRF (Dr. James Gasana - Switzerland) had resigned. The IAG recommended that the Consumer caucus should at the earliest opportunity nominate a new candidate to be elected by the Council as the new Chairperson of CEM for 2014 (who would act as Chairperson of the Committee at the current session) and Vice-Chairperson for CRF for 2014.
15. The Chair informed the IAG of the request for a side event by a possible Observer at the session. Side events that occur within the rooms hired by ITTO for the Sessions and that appear on the program of the Session can only be convened by Observers that are officially admitted to the Session by Council. The Secretariat informed the IAG of the rules and process for admitting Observers to Sessions of the Council. Observers were usually approved by consensus but if any member objected to any Observer, then a decision could be taken by simple majority vote. Some IAG members noted the importance of transparency and freedom of speech in admission of Observers. The IAG noted that side events can be a positive contribution to the work of the Council at its Sessions. It recommended that further consideration of the process of approving and notifying members of side events during Sessions (including development of possible guidelines for ensuring side events are consistent with the mandate of ITTO) should be undertaken within the caucuses and by Council.
16. Pursuant to ITTC Decision 7(XLIX) on Consideration of Regional ITTO Presence and Representation, the IAG recommended that the Council should discuss this issue under its agenda item 17 and consider a follow-up Decision as appropriate.

Adjournment

17. The Twenty-eighth meeting of the IAG was adjourned at 13:10 p.m. with a vote of thanks to the Chairperson of the meeting.

ANNEX A

Draft Decisions

Only text of draft Decisions is appended to this Report.

The full text of the draft BWP 2015-2016 and the proposed revision to the ITTO Staff Regulations and Rules can be found in documents ITTC (XL)/10 Rev.1 and CFA(XXIX)/7, respectively.



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DECISION ...(L)

APPOINTMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The International Tropical Timber Council,

Recalling its Decision 5(XLII) of 12 May 2007 which appointed Mr. Emmanuel Ze Meka to the post of Executive Director of ITTO for a period of four years beginning on 6 November 2007,

Recalling also its Decision 2(XLVI) of 18 December 2010 which renewed the mandate of Mr. Emmanuel Ze Meka with effect from 6 November 2011 to 5 November 2015, as the second term of his appointment;

Noting, with appreciation, his dedication and untiring contribution to the management of the Organization;

Acting pursuant to Article 14, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA), 2006;

Further recalling Decision 3(XLIX) on matters related to Article 14 of the ITTA, 2006, and in particular the Annex to Decision 3(XLIX) on the Vacancy for the Position of the Executive Director of ITTO;

Also further recalling the Report of the Panel on Matters Related to Article 14 of the ITTA, 2006, [ITTC(L)/8];

Underscoring the strategic role of the Executive Director as the Head of the Organization;

Noting the applications for the position of Executive Director of ITTO;

Decides to appoint [by consensus]as Executive Director of the International Tropical Timber Organization for a period of four years, beginning on 6 November 2015, in accordance with the terms and conditions contained in the letter of appointment approved by the Council.

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DECISION ...(L)

AMENDMENTS TO THE STAFF REGULATIONS AND RULES OF THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER ORGANIZATION (ITTO)

The International Tropical Timber Council,

Recognizing the provisions under Rule 901 of the Staff Regulations and Rules of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) which provide for the “Amendments of, and Exceptions to, the Staff Rules”;

Noting that the Staff Regulations and Rules of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) were approved by the Council for implementation on 17 November 1988 and subsequently amended on 8 November 2008;

Noting also the need to revise the Staff Regulations and Rules of the ITTO, which are based on those of the United Nations, to synchronize with the changes in the staff regulations and staff rules of the United Nations which have been constantly revised over the years;

Appreciating the work of the Committee on Finance and Administration at its Twenty-ninth Session in revising these Regulations and Rules;

Noting further the recommendations of the Committee on Finance and Administration, as contained in Document CFA(XXIX)/9;

Decides to:

1. Approve the amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules of the ITTO, as contained in the Document CFA(XXIX)/7; and
2. Approve the implementation of the revised Staff Regulations and Rules of the ITTO with effect from 1 November 2014.

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DECISION ...(L)

ITTO BIENNIAL WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE YEARS 2015-2016

The International Tropical Timber Council,

Appreciating the work of the Secretariat in its proposal to Council on the Biennial Work Programme for the years 2015-2016;

Noting further that activities listed in the Annex to this decision are derived from the following: (a) ITTA, 2006; (b) the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018; (c) the four ITTO Committee Reports to the Fiftieth Session of Council; and (d) previous Council decisions;

Decides to:

1. Adopt the Biennial Work Programme for the years 2015-2016 as contained in the Annex to this Decision;
2. Authorize the Executive Director to seek voluntary contributions from Member Countries and other funding sources to finance implementation of the activities listed in the Annex;
3. Request the Executive Director to implement and/or facilitate the implementation of activities in the approved Biennial Work Programme for the years 2015-2016, as contained in the Annex; and
4. Request the Executive Director to report to Council on the progress in implementing the Biennial Work Programme for 2015-2016 during the Fifty-first and Fifty-second sessions of the Council.

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