

ITTC appoints new Executive Director

42nd session of the International Tropical Timber Council

7–12 May 2007

Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

The International Tropical Timber Council appointed the third Executive Director of ITTO, Mr Emmanuel Ze Meka, during its 42nd session. Mr Ze Meka follows Dr Manoel Sobral Filho, ITTO's incumbent Executive Director. After his appointment by consensus, Mr. Ze Meka, a national of Cameroon, addressed the Council and pledged to continue to build on the strong foundations put in place by Dr Sobral, while addressing new challenges and opportunities facing the Organization during his term. Mr Ze Meka, who will commence his duties as Executive Director in November 2007, provides some insights on his vision for ITTO in this issue's *Out on a limb*.

The Council committed US\$5.3 million for nine projects and two pre-projects at this session, including one to promote reduced impact logging in the Congo Basin and another to improve the detection and prevention of illegal logging and illegal timber trade through timber tracking and satellite monitoring in Guyana. Also financed were two projects to support rehabilitation of degraded forests in Indonesia and China and a project to strengthen a forest statistics and information center in Honduras. The Council allocated additional funds to a project working to expand the Pulong Tau National Park in Sarawak, Malaysia, through establishment of a transboundary conservation reserve with neighbouring Indonesia, and a large project to help African member countries of ITTO to improve sustainable management of their forests through the adoption and implementation of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management (see page 18 for descriptions of all funded projects).

Twenty-eight fellowships were awarded, with a total of US\$150 150 going to deserving candidates from 18 different countries (see page 22 for a list of fellowship awardees).

A report detailing the work of ITTO over the past two decades was also released during the session (see page 27 for a description and ordering information).

The Council also received reports on proposed listings of tropical timber species on the CITES Appendices, and on the relationship between climate change and tropical forests. Reports on forest management and the forest industry in Papua New Guinea also featured prominently in Council (where a diagnostic mission reported on progress towards sustainable forest management) and in events organized by the Council's trade and civil society advisory groups. A decision was taken by Council to fund the design of a multipurpose forest inventory for Papua New Guinea based on a recommendation in the report of the diagnostic mission.

The major donors at this session were the governments of Japan and Switzerland, while the governments of France, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Finland and Australia also pledged funds. In addition, funds were mobilized from the Organization's unearmarked resources, including the Bali Partnership Sub-account B.

Wood's future energy role

International Conference on Wood-based Bioenergy

17–19 May 2007

Hannover, Germany

People have used wood for energy since they lit the first campfires. In the industrial age, though, the role of wood in the formal energy sector (at least in developed countries) has been superseded by oil, gas, coal and uranium. Now, wood is coming back in favour. Wood-based bioenergy—renewable and CO₂-neutral—will play a huge and perhaps critical role in the future global energy economy.

This conference, organized by ITTO in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, was attended by about 90 people from 32 countries. It was convened amidst growing interest in the use of logging and wood-processing residues and dedicated bioenergy timber plantations for energy generation, driven by concerns over energy security, climate change and resource-use efficiency.

The conference was held in conjunction with LIGNA-2007, the world's largest biannual international woodworking machinery fair. This allowed conference participants to see, first-hand, recent technological developments in wood processing and the use of wood-based biomass for energy generation. It included a demonstration of wood pellet production, which greatly increases the efficiency of transport and combustion of wood fuel. A study visit to a site near Hannover focused on the optimized use of wood-processing residues in the application of finger-jointing technology for the assembly of off-cuts combined with wood pellet-based heat generation for drying. A second site demonstrated the integrated local use of agricultural biomass (conversion to biogas) and forest-based wood residues as fuel for joint energy generation (electricity and heat) at the village/community level.

The conference delivered five key messages:

- 1) wood-based bioenergy offers countries, including developing countries in the tropics, an opportunity to improve their energy security;
- 2) wood industries can use wood residues for the co-generation of energy, thereby increasing the cost-effectiveness of their operations and improving energy efficiency;
- 3) the use of wood-based bioenergy, both in the wood industry and generally, can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- 4) the wood-based bioenergy sector needs to be developed on the basis of sustainable forest management; and
- 5) the international community should support the development of efficient and cost-effective wood-based bioenergy in tropical countries, including by facilitating the transfer of appropriate technology and investment.

Specific recommendations for international organizations, national-level policy-makers, and the wood-based bioenergy sector were to:

- 1) assist countries in strengthening their capacity to assess, monitor and report on forest- and wood-energy-related information;
- 2) convene regional fora for government, the private sector and civil society and support demonstration projects to increase awareness about the potential of efficient wood-based bioenergy and support the exchange of best practices in this field;
- 3) commission regional and global studies to assess the extent to which wood-based bioenergy can substitute for fossil fuels in the energy economy;
- 4) encourage and assist governments, in partnership with the private sector and other stakeholders, to formulate and implement policies and strategies to develop efficient, cost-effective and sustainable bioenergy as an alternative to fossil fuels;
- 5) develop measures to increase the participation of the tropical wood-based bioenergy sector in international carbon markets and the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol;
- 6) investigate the creation of small-grant schemes to stimulate local- and community-level development of wood-based bioenergy, especially in tropical countries;
- 7) work with producers to identify suitable markets for wood-energy products such as charcoal, wood and charcoal pellets, briquettes and other biofuels and to ensure they meet any standards that may be required for export;
- 8) support research and development, including through pre-projects and projects, into wood-based bioenergy technologies and the marketing of bioenergy, and make efficient wood-based bioenergy generation technologies available to developing countries in the tropics;
- 9) support, through projects, investment and other means, the development of integrated wood-processing industries that use wood residues to efficiently and cost-effectively generate thermal energy and electricity for both their operational needs and those of local communities.

The report of the conference will be published shortly and will be available from ITTO on www.itto.or.jp or by request to itto@itto.or.jp.

CITES and tropical timber

14th Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species

3–15 June 2007

The Hague, Netherlands

Timber trees have only recently started to be covered by CITES. However, concern has grown over the need for better controls due to unsustainable practices in many countries (see *TFU* 17/1). To date CITES has focused primarily on tropical timber species, with Latin America's bigleaf mahogany and Southeast Asia's ramin trees included in Appendix II in the past few years. Appendix II listing requires countries to issue documentation with all exports of listed species confirming that their trade is non-detrimental to the continued survival of the species in the wild.

At the recently concluded 14th CITES CoP, several other tropical timber species were proposed for Appendix II listing. All species in the genus *Cedrela* and the rosewood species *Dalbergia retusa*, *Dalbergia granadillo* and *Dalbergia stevensonii* were proposed by Germany on behalf of the EU, while *Caesalpinia echinata* (pau brasil or pernambuco) was proposed by Brazil. The rosewood species grow in the swamp forests of southern Belize and nearby regions of Guatemala and Mexico. The proposal argued that these species are threatened by increasing deforestation in the region, are subject to strong demand as tonewood for musical instruments and that easier access to their habitat and declining stocks of other rosewoods may boost trade levels. *Cedrela* spp (the most common and valuable of which is *Cedrela odorata* or Spanish cedar) are native to Central and South America and have been selectively cut for at least 250 years for their timber. This timber is valued locally and internationally for its resistance to rotting and insects. The proposal stated that *Cedrela* is affected by extensive deforestation throughout its range.

After substantial discussion amongst member states and observers, the German proposals were withdrawn due to strong opposition from range states and others, who claimed that the *Cedrela* and *Dalbergia* proposals were incomplete, that further population assessments were needed and (in the case of *Cedrela*) that the existence of substantial plantation resources both locally and internationally needed to be taken into account. A decision was subsequently adopted calling on countries to update available information on these species, assess their populations, provide information on plantations, and compile accurate trade data, including the proportion arising from plantations. Range states were also encouraged to consider listing populations of these species in Appendix III. Information compiled on the species is to be reviewed by the CITES Plants Committee and will inform any debate on these species at the 15th CITES CoP. The decision also calls on CITES to seek technical and financial support from ITTO for its implementation.

Pernambuco was accepted for listing in Appendix II. This species, highly desired for manufacturing bows for stringed musical instruments, has been subject to harvest and export controls for some time from Brazil which is the only range state. The listing will apply only to raw materials of the species (including the sawnwood blanks from which the bows are made), with finished bows not subject to CITES requirements.

Several other issues relevant to ITTO were considered at CoP 14. These included:

- a review of Peru's implementation of the Appendix II listing of bigleaf mahogany by the 55th session of the CITES Standing Committee (2 June) which resulted in Peru agreeing to restrict mahogany exports to material sourced from areas with approved management plans in 2007 and thereafter;

- a resolution (sponsored by the US) on cooperation between CITES and ITTO regarding trade in tropical timber which was approved by consensus after minor amendments;
- the report of the June 2006 meeting of the Mahogany Working Group (co-sponsored by ITTO) which gave rise to a CoP decision to develop principles, criteria and indicators for making non-detriment findings for timber species, to develop explanatory materials to assist interpretation of the annotation of the mahogany listing, and to the adoption of an action plan for the control of international trade in bigleaf mahogany;
- the report of the April 2007 international expert meeting on non-detriment findings for bigleaf mahogany (co-sponsored by ITTO), which gave rise to a CoP decision calling for a larger international expert meeting on non-detriment findings for high priority taxa;
- a proposal on physical inspection of timber shipments which led to the establishment of an electronic working group to compile existing procedures for the inspection and identification of CITES-listed and look-alike timber species; and
- an ITTO sponsored side-event to present and seek input on collaboration with CITES, including via a large capacity-building project funded through ITTO's 2006–07 Work Program (see *TFU* 17/1).

In addition, the Government of the Netherlands organized CITES' first Ministerial debate on Wednesday 13 June. The debate focused on timber, fisheries and how CITES can best support the enforcement efforts of its Parties to combat illegal trade.

Reports of all meetings and text of all CoP decisions and resolutions are available on www.cites.org; information on ITTO-CITES collaboration (including papers presented at the side event referred to above) is available on www.itto.or.jp.

President of Honduras addresses Central American regional workshop on illegal logging

FAO/ITTO Regional Workshop on Forest Law Enforcement in Central America

27–29 June 2007

San Pedro Sula, Honduras

Honduran President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales was the guest of honour at a recent ITTO-FAO sponsored workshop to promote better forest law compliance in the Central American region. President Zelaya told the more than 60 experts from nine countries attending the workshop that social change was required in Honduras and many other countries in the region to improve recognition of

the importance of sustainable development and management of forest resources. He noted that such change would often be resisted by vested interests, and that vigorous efforts needed to be maintained to fight illegal logging, illegal trade of timber and illegal deforestation. He stressed the importance of implementing and enforcing existing laws, noting that his government was mobilizing the armed forces (including thousands of armed troops, helicopters and other supporting infrastructure) in its battle against commercial illegal loggers.

The workshop, one of four being jointly convened by ITTO and FAO throughout the tropics, was held in the northern Honduran city of San Pedro Sula from 27–29 June. Participants included forestry administrators, environmental prosecutors, civil society and the private sector from Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama. The workshop was convened in collaboration with the Honduran Forest Administration (AFE-COHDEFOR) and the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD). All participating countries were CCAD members with the exception of Mexico, which is an observer.

Objectives of the workshop were to:

- facilitate an interchange between countries and representatives of different sectors from the region on their experiences in dealing with illegal logging and illegal timber trade;
- promote dialogue between the various actors working in forests in the region;
- develop recommendations of best practices to improve forest law compliance, emphasizing the policy and legal framework, institutional structures and mechanisms for participation of civil society, and technology/information; and
- prepare recommendations for CCAD to assist member countries to improve the implementation of forest laws.

The final report (including a declaration from the participants) and all presentations from the workshop will be available on www.itto.or.jp and www.fao.org, or on request from itto@itto.or.jp.

ITTO's Executive Director, Dr Manoel Sobral, attended the workshop and took part in a signing ceremony for a new Honduran project with President Zelaya and Mr Ramon Alvarez, General Manager of AFE-COHDEFOR. The US\$400,000 project is designed to strengthen Honduras' forest statistics and information centre, including providing information required to combat illegal forest activity. Information on this project (PD 443/07 REV.1 (M)) is available on page 19.