

ITTO International Expert Meeting Addressing Climate Change through Sustainable Management of Tropical Forests

30 April - 2 May, 2008 / Yokohama, JAPAN

Tropical forests, covering close to 2 billion hectares of the earth's surface, have enormous potential to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Deforestation and forest degradation are responsible for about 20% of current global greenhouse gas emissions. Virtually all these emissions originate in developing countries, most of which are ITTO members. In 2001–2005, 15 of ITTO's 33 producing member countries accounted for over 70% of total tropical deforestation, which averaged almost 12 million hectares per year. With a mandate to promote the sustainable management of tropical forests, ITTO has a special responsibility to address the issue of climate change as it relates to tropical forests and to assist its member countries to meet the challenges and opportunities posed by it.

The 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which was convened in December 2007, agreed to what is known as the 'Bali roadmap'. This roadmap charts the course for a new negotiating process to be concluded by 2009 that will ultimately lead to a post-2012 international agreement on climate change. It emphasizes the development of appropriate policy approaches and positive incentives that would lead to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) and the role of conservation, sustainable forest management and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks in the mitigation of climate change.

Since tropical countries are where the bulk of such policy approaches and positive incentives will be required, there is an urgent need for the development and implementation of forestry mitigation and adaptation measures and other actions to enhance the carbon balance in tropical forests. ITTO is planning a series of initiatives to help meet this need.

As a first step, ITTO proposes to convene an International Expert Meeting with the aim of promoting the role of tropical forests and their sustainable management in climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Expert Meeting is expected to clarify and illustrate the role of ITTO in climate change adaptation and mitigation in relation to tropical forests and to assist members in formulating and implementing an integrated forest-sector response to climate change. A particular focus of the Expert Meeting will be given to integrating REDD and carbon sequestration as an additional criterion within the context of sustainable forest management and to formulating approaches and methods to be applied in this respect.

Based on a short review of global issues and opportunities in tropical forests for mitigating and adapting to climate change, including relevant negotiations, outcomes and decisions under the UNFCCC, the Expert Meeting will focus its deliberations on:

- the sustainable management of tropical forests for reducing carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, managing existing carbon stocks and sequestering additional carbon; and
- scientific and technological issues related to forest mitigation options, with a particular focus on REDD, carbon sequestration and the development of pilot projects.

The Expert Meeting will include information on regional trends and country-level actions in tropical countries. It will also address some of the wider aspects of forest-related climate change, adaptation and mitigation activities by focusing on:

- the substitution of carbon-intensive materials by wood products and the use of wood-based bioenergy; and
- current policy options and positive incentives for effective forest-related climate change adaptation and mitigation activities.

Expected outcomes include:

- the development of practical proposals on how to include REDD and carbon sequestration in the concept and implementation of sustainable management in tropical forests; and
- proposal(s) to the International Tropical Timber Council on integrating forest-based climate change mitigation and adaptation in its policy and operational work and for supporting its member countries in the development of feasible implementation schemes.

The preliminary recommendations of the Expert Meeting will be made available to the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) to be held in Yokohama in May 2008, the UNFCCC Workshop relating to REDD to be organized before the 29th session of the SBSTA (December 2008), and the G-8 Summit to be held in Hokkaido in July 2008.

Language: English (English - Japanese simultaneous interpretation during Opening Session)

Participants: *Governments* - policy and decision makers/key negotiators of UNFCCC forestry related matters from selected countries

International organizations - key CPF members

NGOs - key forest-related environmental and trade NGOs

Others - the Opening Session will be open to the Japanese public and other selected invitees

Partners: The Government of Japan and the City of Yokohama

The Government of Switzerland (State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and Intercooperation)

Others to be confirmed

More information about this expert meeting (including a detailed program) will be posted as available on www.itto.or.jp

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