



**INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL  
TIMBER COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE ON ECONOMICS,  
STATISTICS AND MARKETS**

**COMMITTEE ON FOREST INDUSTRY**

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**REPORT TO THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER COUNCIL**

**FIFTIETH SESSION OF THE**

**COMMITTEE ON ECONOMICS, STATISTICS AND MARKETS**

**AND THE COMMITTEE ON FOREST INDUSTRY**

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## REPORT

### 1. Opening of the Session

The Fiftieth Session of the Committees was opened on 8 November 2016 at the Joint Session of the Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets (CEM) and the Committee on Forest Industry (CFI), co-chaired by Ms. Alicia Grimes (U.S.A.), Chairperson of CEM and Ms. Akiko Nakano (Japan), Chairperson of CFI. Mr. Tabi Agyarko (Ghana), Vice-Chairperson of the Council chaired the Joint Session of All Committees. The list of participants is presented in document ITTC(LII)/Info. 2.

### 2. Adoption of Agenda and Organization of Work

The Agenda for the Joint Session of the CEM and the CFI as contained in document CEM-CFI(L)/1 was duly adopted. The Joint Session of the CEM and the CFI met on 8, 10 and 11 November 2016 which considered items 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8B, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 of the Agenda. The Joint Session of All Committees met on 9 November 2016 which considered items 4, 6 and 8A of the Agenda.

### 3. Admission of Observers

The Committees admitted the observers listed in document ITTC(L)/Info.3 Rev.1 as approved by the Council.

### 4. Report of the Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals

The Joint Session of All Committees considered the report of the Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals presented by its member, Mrs. Valéria Cristina Rigueira (Brazil), as contained in document ITTC/EP-51.

In response to a question from the delegate of the EU on the status of funding of the Category 1 projects, the Vice-Chairperson of CEM, Mr. Jorge Malleux (Peru), who was also a member of the Oversight Committee, provided a brief explanation on related decisions that will be taken by the Committee on Finance and Administration (CFA) at its Thirty-first Session on project funding as well as on normalizing the cycles of project proposal assessment.

The delegates of Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire and Guatemala also expressed their concern about the issue of on-going projects and pre-projects impacted by ITTO's financial impairment.

Following the presentation of Mrs. Rigueira, delegates of several countries put forward comments and questions.

The delegate of the USA commented on the common trend regarding the lack of quality of submitted project proposals derived from completed pre-projects. Mrs. Rigueira responded that the Secretariat needed to provide more facilitation on capacity building for project formulation to Producer Member Countries. She further emphasized the important role of country focal points to screen out the project proposals.

The delegate of Benin questioned the sunset period of approved Category 1 projects. The Secretariat responded that this was in accordance with ITTO rules and procedures. The delegate of Benin further expressed her concern that many project proposals fell under Category 4. To this question, the Secretariat invited the delegate of Benin to join the session of the CEM-CFI where the issue of concern will be discussed in conjunction report on the progress of PD 73/89 (M,F,I) under its Agenda Item 11.

The Committees noted that the Fifty-second Meeting of the Expert Panel for the Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals scheduled to be held in Yokohama, Japan on 25-29 July 2016 was postponed due to financial constraints.

5. New Projects and Pre-projects

The Committees noted the projects that were approved under the time-bound electronic no objection procedures to accept Expert Panel ratings and circulated to member countries pursuant to Decision 6(XLIII), following the recommendations of the Expert Panel at its Fifty-first Meeting as follows:

| <b>Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets</b> |   |                    |
|---|---|--------------------|
| PD/PPD NUMBER   | TITLE   | SUBMITTING COUNTRY |
| PD 796/15 Rev.2 (M)                                   | Establishing a System for the Collection, Storage, Processing and Dissemination of Forest and Wildlife Statistics in Cameroon | Cameroon           |

| <b>Committee on Forest Industry</b> |  |                    |
|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| PD/PPD NUMBER                       | TITLE  | SUBMITTING COUNTRY |
| PD 761/14 Rev.2 (I,M)               | Promoting Partnership between Farmer Group and Forest Industry   | Indonesia          |
| PD 788/15 Rev.2 (I)                 | Achieving Sustainable Forest Management through Enhanced Competitiveness of Small & Medium Wood Industries (SMWIs) in Ciamis District of West Java Province, Indonesia | Indonesia          |

The Committees noted the following project which had been approved under the time-bound electronic no objection procedure to accept Expert Panel ratings pursuant to ITTC Decision 6(XLIII), following the recommendations of the Expert Panel for the Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals at its Fiftieth Meeting held in Yokohama, Japan on 27-31 July 2015 as contained in document ITTC/EP-50:

| <b>Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets</b> |   |                    |
|---|---|--------------------|
| PD/PPD NUMBER   | TITLE   | SUBMITTING COUNTRY |
| PD 751/14 Rev.2 (M)                                   | Sustainable Forest Management in the Chimbo River Basin, Ecuador: Conserving Forest Resources and Agroforestry Systems as a Mechanism to Strengthen the Economic Inclusion of Community Families, Particularly Rural Women, Settled in the Area | Ecuador            |

6. ITTO Annual Market Discussion – 2016

The Committees noted the summary of the ITTO Annual Market Discussion – 2016, held in the Joint Session of All Committees on 9 November 2016, as contained in Appendix A. The theme of the Market Discussion was "Free Trade Agreements - Challenges and Opportunities for the Tropical Timber Trade". Mr. Jorge Malleux (Peru) and Mr. Barney Chan (TAG Coordinator) co-chaired the Market Discussion.

The following feature presentations were made during the Market Discussion:

Prof. Labode Popoola  
Forest Economics/Sustainable Development  
University of Ibadan, Nigeria and  
President, Forestry Association of Nigeria

*Free Trade Agreements and Wood Export in West Africa: Nigeria as a Case Study*

Mr. Enrique Téllez Pacheco  
Presidente  
Cámara Nacional de la Industria Maderera, Mexico

*Free Trade Agreements: Impact on the Tropical Timber Trade in Mexico*

Mr. Jirawat Tangkijngamwong  
Chairman, Thai Timber Association  
Director of Deesawat Industries Co. Ltd/  
Deesawat Design Co., Ltd, Thailand

*Open Trade Drives Finished Product Exports  
and Design Opportunities*

Mr. André de Boer  
Secretary General  
European Timber Trade Federation  
The Netherlands

*FTA'S - The Promotion of Tropical Timber in  
Europe*

Mr. Joe O'Donnell  
Senior Manager for Government and Public Affairs  
Intl. Wood Products Association (IWPA)

*On the Brink of Historic Agreement, Skepticism  
Colours Trade Debate in the U.S.*

Mr. Erik Luis Fischer Llanos  
Presidente del Comité Forestal  
Asociación de Exportadores (ADEX), Peru

*The Impact of Trade Agreements on Tropical  
Timber Trade*

The Committees further noted the statement of the Trade Advisory Group (TAG) presented during the Market Discussion as contained in Appendix B.

#### 7. Report on Completed Projects and Pre-projects

The Committees considered the Report of Completed Projects and Pre-projects as contained in document CEM-CFI(L)/2 as follows:

##### **Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets**

PD 124/01 Rev.4 (M)                      Promotion of Sustainable Management of African Forests (ITTO)  
Phase III Stage 2

The Secretariat informed the Committees that the development objective of this project was to promote the sustainable management of African forests through the application and implementation of the ATO/ITTO PCI with the support and participation of all stakeholder groups. The Project's general strategy was largely based on collaborating with the African Timber Organization (ATO), a regional institution considered capable of providing the Project with efficient mechanisms for exchanging experiences, and for facilitating the development of harmonized and coordinated approaches for developing, implementing and monitoring SFM Principles, Criteria and Indicators (PCI).

The Project was split into three phases and further into stages within phases to facilitate funding. Completion reports on Phases I and II as well as Phase III Stage 1 have been considered and approved by the Committees at their previous sessions and are available on request. The Phase III Stage 2 of this project was effectively completed, with all activities implemented and objectives for this stage attained. The full completion report and financial audit have been submitted to the Secretariat and approved. The Committees were encouraged to recommend immediate financing for Phase III, Stage 3 (the final stage) of this important project.

The Committees duly declared the Phase III Stage 2 of this project completed.

PD 449/07 Rev.2 (M)                      Enhancing Forest Law Enforcement in Papua New Guinea  
(Papua New Guinea)

The Secretariat reported that implementation of this project had experienced considerable delays since commencement due to the replacement of project personnel and in the preparation of the completion report, technical reports and final financial audit report. The Executing Agency finalized and submitted the project completion report and the technical reports in August 2014, and the final financial audit report was eventually submitted in April 2016, which was reviewed and deemed satisfactory in principle. However, expenses for items 12 (National Consultants) and item 16 (International Consultants) highly exceeded the total original approved budget. If a reasonable explanation could be provided by the Executing Agency and accepted by the Committees, the Committees may declare this project completed.

Following the report by the Secretariat, the delegate of PNG explained that this project was successfully completed with the submission of the completion report and five technical reports as well as the final audit report. The implementation of project activities was delayed due to the submission of the financial statements and audit by the Executing Agency and hence the release of funds from ITTO, and the coordination with the local partners (SGS and Pacific Islands Project).

In response to the overrun on expenditures of the two items, the delegate of PNG explained that these items were sub-contracts to local partners. Taking into account the delay in implementation and many changes of personnel, the reasons for items exceeding budget were attributed to overlapping payments and extension of contracts. The Executing Agency had further failed to report those changes to the ITTO Secretariat in advance due to insufficient coordination with relevant partners. Therefore, the Executing Agency requested the Committees' understanding and consideration to declare the completion of this project.

Based on this explanation, the Committees duly declared the project completed.

PD 620/11 Rev.1 (M)                      Development and Implementation of a Species Identification and Timber Tracking System in Africa with DNA Fingerprints and Stable Isotopes (Germany)

The Secretariat reported that the project developed a species identification and timber tracking system with DNA fingerprints and stable isotopes for three important timber tree species in seven African countries, namely Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Gabon, Ghana and Kenya. The project involved 14 collaborative agencies from Europe, Africa and Australia and was initialized during a pre-project under the TFLET Thematic Programme.

The project officially commenced in February 2012. An extension of 6 month was approved in November 2014, after the additional budget required (US\$220,751) was approved by the German Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL). The final project conference was held in Douala, Cameroon in July 2015. However, due to delays in the presentation of the final financial report and the final project audit, the payment of the final instalment in the amount of US\$ 302,843.79 was delayed and then affected by the suspension of ITTO funding.

The final financial report and the final financial audit report have been submitted to the Secretariat and approved.

The Committees duly declared the project completed and recommended the Council to make provisions to allow the final instalment to be released.

PD 678/12 Rev.1 (M)                      Establishment of a National Forest Statistics Information Management System in Benin (Benin)

The delegate of Benin informed the Committees that this project was designed to develop a forest statistical information system for Benin. The project is now completed with the successful achievement of the development and specific objectives and all the outputs. Technical reports and applications developed by the project include: (i) periodic reports on data related to the forest sector, (ii) monitoring and evaluation procedures of forestry statistics manual, (iii) forestry information system developed and validated by the stakeholders, (iv) the administrator's guide of the database, (v) the instruction manual of the database, (vi) the new framework of harmonized reporting, and (vii) the analysis report of the variability of the weight and volume of charcoal bags in the Republic of Benin. Over 200 foresters have been trained to use the database and on reporting procedures. All studies have been validated by stakeholders in the forestry sector.

A project extension for five months without additional funds from ITTO was requested by the Executing Agency to finalize the remaining activities and approved by ITTO. These activities included communication and dissemination of project results, a final workshop of review/dissemination of results at the end of the project extension period, and carrying out the final financial audit of the project accounts and submitting all reports to ITTO.

The Secretariat reported that the completion report, technical reports and final financial audit report have been submitted to the Secretariat and approved.

The Committees duly declared the project completed.

### **Committee on Forest Industry**

PD 433/06 Rev.3 (I) Sustainable Model for the Brazilian Wood Flooring Production Chain (Brazil)

The delegate of Brazil reported on the completion of the project, as all activities had been carried out and outputs achieved satisfactorily.

The project contributed to increasing the efficiency of the Brazilian wood flooring industry by integrating lesser used timber species (LUS) into the production chain, improving drying and manufacturing processes, adding value and quality to the product, and by making use of wood residues.

The Executing Agency has satisfactorily submitted the completion report, technical reports, dissemination material and a final financial audit report.

The Committees duly declared the project completed.

PD 540/09 Rev.2 (I) Support to Improve the Productivity of the Peruvian Timber Industry for the Production of Higher Value-added Products (Peru)

The delegate of Peru reported on the completion of the project, as all activities had been carried out and outputs achieved satisfactorily.

The project contributed to improving the level of efficiency in the wood and furniture industries, and thereby increase the volume and value of their exports, by linking the sustainable management of 12 million hectares of productive forests into the supply chain. The specific outputs of the project are: (i) improved business management and marketing, (ii) upgraded timber industry with value-added product processing, and (iii) increased export of timber products and furniture.

The Committees duly declared the project completed.

PD 700/13 Rev.2 (I) Development of Intra-African Trade and Further Processing in Tropical Phase I Stage 1 Timber and Timber Products – Phase I Stage 1 (ITTO)

The Secretariat reported on the completion of the project, as all activities had been carried out and outputs achieved satisfactorily.

The results of this project contributed to the removal of the main identified constraints in the expansion of further processing of tropical timber into value-added products and trade development, particularly through intra-African trade through nine areas of action: facilitation of trade; elaboration and implementation of national strategies for industrial and trade development; business development in pilot enterprises; improvement of market transparency; trade promotion measures; training; strengthening of national industry and trade associations; innovative financing; and technology transfer.

To achieve the specific objective of the Project's Phase 1, the next stage (Stage 2) of the Project needs to be implemented.

The Committees duly declared the project completed.

## 8. Ex-post Evaluation

### **(A) Ex-post Evaluation Reports**

To facilitate the sharing of experiences and lessons learned from ex-post evaluation of projects among members, the consideration of ex-post evaluation reports was undertaken in a Joint Session of All Committees. There were no ex-post evaluation reports on projects under CEM and CFI. The Committees took note of the presentation by the ITTO Secretariat on the ex-post evaluation of PD 270/04 Rev.2 (F) under the Thematic Group of Teak as contained in document CRF(L)/4. The summary of this presentation is contained in document CRF(L)/6.

## **(B) Selection of Projects for Ex-post Evaluation**

The Secretariat informed the Committees that due to the financial impairment, it would not be possible to select projects for ex-post evaluation at this session.

### 9. Policy Work

Five issues/activities under the CEM and three issues/activities under the CFI were discussed by the Committees.

#### **Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets**

##### (i) Market Access

The Secretariat reported on recent developments relating to market access for tropical timber in 2015-2016. In accordance with the requirements of the previous session of the Committees, the updates will be focused on developments in the free trade agreements (FTAs) relating to tropical timber, particularly for ITTO Producers.

According to WTO data, regional and bilateral trade agreements (RTAs) have risen dramatically in recent years, including a notable increase in agreements under negotiation. As of December 2015, there were more than 250 RTAs in force in WTO member countries and more than 100 ongoing RTAs involving one or more ITTO Producers.

Free trade agreements (FTAs) accounted for 90% of RTAs. In 2015, there were 9 FTAs coming into force, all involving ITTO members, and 3 FTAs involving ITTO Producers, namely ASEAN-India FTA, Mexico-Panama FTA, and Republic of Korea-Vietnam FTA. There were 3 FTAs involving ITTO Producers in 2016, which were Republic of Korea-Colombia FTA, Costa Rica- Colombia FTA, and EU-Côte d'Ivoire FTA.

From a geographical perspective, ITTO Asian and Latin American producers appeared more active in participating in FTAs. In Asia, India was involved in 14 FTAs while Malaysia and Indonesia participated in 13 and 8 respectively. For Latin American producers, Costa Rica, Mexico and Colombia participated in 13, 12 and 9 FTAs respectively.

A recent development is an increase in FTAs either under negotiation or reaching agreement. It is notable that in the Asia-Pacific region, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement, currently between 12 parties (4 from ITTO Producers), has made significant progress. However, following the finalization of negotiations in October 2015, and the signature of agreement in February 2016, ratification and implementation are uncertain.

A FTA may lead to a reduction in tariff and non-tariff measures for goods and services including timber products, in relevant HS chapters. Although there may be some exceptions for sensitive items, most FTAs are aimed at eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers for all goods including timber products, which impact on market access for involved parties, including ITTO Producers and Consumers.

##### (ii) Forest and Timber Certification

In 2015, according to the statistics collected, the total area of certified forests in ITTO Producer Member Countries was 28.9 million hectares, which accounted for 6.3% of the world's total area of certified forests of about 458 million hectares. The number of Chains of Custody (CoCs) in ITTO Producer Member Countries was 3,105, which accounted for 7.7% of the total number of CoCs in the world.

The two international certification systems, namely FSC and PEFC, continued to be the main schemes being implemented in ITTO Producer Member Countries. The situation in 2015 for ITTO Producer Member Countries in FSC and PEFC was as follows:

The FSC certified forest area reached 18 million hectares in ITTO Producer Member Countries by the end of 2015, which accounted for about 9.7% of the total FSC certified forest areas in the world. Meanwhile, the number of CoC certificates reached 2,603 in ITTO Producer Member Countries, accounting for 8.7% of the total in the world. The top three countries with the highest FSC certified forest area in ITTO Producer Member Countries are Brazil, the Republic of Congo and Indonesia.



Brazil remained the largest, with 6 million hectares of FSC certified forest, while the Republic of Congo took the second position with 2.4 million hectares, while Indonesia increased to 2.2 million hectares. Brazil had the highest number of FSC-CoC certificates which totalled 1,089, while Vietnam had 481 certificates and India 293 certificates.

The PEFC-certified forest area in ITTO Producer Member Countries reached 8.2 million hectares by the end of 2015, accounting for about 3% of the global PEFC-certified forest areas. Three countries, namely Malaysia, Brazil and Indonesia had PEFC-certified forest area in ITTO Producer Member Countries. Malaysia maintained its 4.7 million hectares of PEFC-certified forests and Brazil's area increased to 2.8 million hectares, while Indonesia increased to 0.73 million hectares. Regarding PEFC-CoC certification, the number of CoC certificates reached 497 in ITTO Producer Member Countries, accounting for 4.6% of the world total.

As in previous years, PEFC continues to be the largest certification scheme in the world, with two-thirds of all certified forests globally. However, FSC held the biggest share of certified forests in ITTO Producer Member Countries in 2015.

In addition, there were three national certification systems in ITTO Producer Member Countries in 2015: CERFLOR in Brazil, MTCC in Malaysia, and IFCC in Indonesia. These three certification systems had been endorsed by PEFC, and their certification statistics had been covered by PEFC. IFCC, which was endorsed by PEFC in October 2014, was increasing rapidly in the first half of 2016.

Additionally, two more national schemes of Indonesia are currently in operation. The Indonesian Ecolabelling Institute (LEI) had 2.6 million hectares of certified forest, while the Indonesian Timber Legality Assurance System (the SVLK) had issued 318,521 V-Legal documents by the end of 2015.

Following the report by the Secretariat, the delegate of USA asked if updated information would appear in a document or the ITTO website. The Secretariat responded that relevant information will be included in the Committee report as well as the ITTO Annual Report 2016.

(iii) Selected Data and Analysis from ITTO Biennial Review and Assessment of the World Timber Situation

Ms Frances Maplesden, consultant, presented selected data and analysis from the draft Biennial Review and Assessment of the World Timber Situation 2015-2016, focusing on (a) results of the 2016 Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (JFSQ) and (b) the global trade in secondary processed wood products. This year the Secretariat only had responses to the JFSQ from 43 out of 72 ITTO member countries, with full information from 10 member countries. The overall quality of the JFSQs received from both Consumer and Producer countries was regarded as satisfactory although the quality of information on tropical timber was generally unsatisfactory.

The consultant urged non-respondents to provide completed JQs to the Secretariat by June 2017. The consultant also presented information on the secondary processed wood products (SPWP) trade, noting the difficulties in tracking the volume of trade in tropical SPWPs. Some of the tropical exporters had recorded significant growth in exports of SPWPs, particularly Vietnam, although it could be assumed that a proportion of China's exports were of tropical origin, given the volume of imports of tropical primary wood products. China accounted for nearly one-third of global wooden furniture exports in 2015, although its cost competitiveness was declining, leading to a shift in lower cost manufacturing to some of the other Asian tropical producer countries. Demand for SPWP imports continued to be dominated by the USA, EU countries and Japan, and closely linked to construction activity in those markets. While US housing starts and growing consumer confidence had pushed up demand levels in the US markets, in the EU construction activity overall had remained subdued with low demand levels leading to intense competition.

Mr. Jorge Malleux, Vice-Chairperson of CEM, requested the reasons for poor response rates to the JFSQ over a long period and why the quality of responses had been inconsistent. A delegate of Indonesia reported that Indonesia has good quality data, with new online databases (Timber Legality Information System/SILK) having been developed for new certification requirements, but the data units were inconsistent with the requirements of the JFSQ. A delegate of China stated that there had been problems with channelling of the questionnaire to the appropriate agency in China.

(iv) Strengthening the participation of the private sector in the work of ITTO

The Committees took note of the proposed activity presented by Mr. André de Boer, representative of TAG, that this policy work be included in ITTO BWP 2018-2019. The work advances the discussion on greater private sector participation with ITTO and includes options for blending the intellectual, managerial, physical and financial resources of the private sector with those of ITTC and ITTO to help further advance the aims of ITTO for the mutual benefit of all parties. The Netherlands based EU Sustainable Tropical Timber Coalition has offered to host the proposed working group if funds could be provided by Council.

(v) Items on Policy Work for 2017

The Committees considered and agreed on the following items for policy work in 2017:

- Market access;
- Forest and timber certification;
- Selected data and analysis from the ITTO Biennial Review and Assessment of the World Timber Situation; and
- Strengthening the participation of the private sector in the work of ITTO.

**Committee on Forest Industry**

(i) Development of Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) for Three Tropical Wood Products

The Chairperson of CFI informed the Committees that this policy work was cancelled due to the impairment of ITTO investment. The Committees agreed to exclude this item for further discussion at the next session of the Committees and took note that the Secretariat will report on the progress of the related EPD activity under the potential extension to 2017 of the ITTO BWP 2015-2016 in the event that new funding will be made available by donors.

(ii) Demonstration and Adoption of Credit Schemes for Small-Medium Forest Enterprises

The Executing Agency (Natural Resource Development Center of Indonesia) made a presentation of the related activity under the ITTO BWP 2013-2014 and 2015-2016 (Activity No.3) which included:

- a. Background of the activity
- b. Development of small-medium wood-based industry in the location of the activity implementation (Ciamis District)
- c. Mechanism of the credit scheme
- d. Facts, findings and ways forward

Findings from the field indicated that there were many operating small industries in need of bank loans for their working capital. However, the requirements established by the banking system to get loans are difficult to fulfil. During the implementation of the activity, it was observed many small industries did not have viable assets in the form of lands/buildings that can be used as collateral.

Following this presentation, the delegate of EU stressed the importance of further discussion on this item. Considering the challenges encountered in working with the banking system for credit scheme in Indonesia, he proposed the development of a knowledge base on credit schemes that that will be a source for lessons learned, scaling up and replication of the activity in different countries.

The delegate of Cote d'Ivoire expressed her concern about additional funding to enable the activity to be implemented in other regions/countries.

(iii) Items on Policy Work for 2017

The Committees considered and agreed on the following item for policy work in 2017:

- Demonstration and adoption of credit schemes for small-medium forest enterprises.

10. Biennial Work Programme of the Committees for 2017-2018

The Committees proposed the following activities under the ITTO BWP 2015-2016 to be prioritized and continued in 2017:

**Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets**

- Activity No. 17 Continue to publish the ITTO Market Information Service (proposed by the delegates of the Netherlands/TAG and USA)
- Activity No. 23 Creation of web-based 'One-stop' interactive profiles of the world based industry, trade and forestry sectors in producer member countries to support tropical timber market transparency and diversification (proposed by the delegates of Sweden and the Netherlands/TAG)
- Activity No. 25 Promote trade in tropical timber and tropical timber products from sustainably managed and legally harvested sources (proposed by the delegate of Sweden)
- Activity No. 29 Enhance the technical capacity of member countries, particularly developing member countries, to meet the statistics and reporting requirements (proposed by the delegates of Sweden and USA)
- Activity No. 33 Enhance the cooperation between ITTO and World Customs Organization (WCO), through the Preparation of Guidelines for Frontline Customs Officials in Combatting Illegal Timber Trade (proposed by the delegates of Malaysia, PNG, Sweden, and USA)

The Committees took note of the proposal from Indonesia on the inclusion of a new activity for the BWP 2018-2019 entitled 'Promoting ITTO Member Countries' Capacity on the Implementation of Timber Legality Assurance'.

**Committee on Forest Industry**

- Activity No. 24 Development of Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) for selected tropical wood products (proposed by TAG)

The Committees took note of the proposal from Indonesia on the inclusion of a new activity for the BWP 2018-2019 entitled 'A Preliminary Study on Assessing Economic Impacts of Improved Efficiency of Timber Processing and Quality of Timber Products'.

11. Review of Projects and Pre-projects in Progress

The Committees considered the Report of Projects and Pre-projects in Progress as contained in documents CEM-CFI(L)/3 and took note of progress in the implementation of the following projects and pre-projects:

**(A) Projects and Pre-projects under implementation**

**Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets**

1. PD 599/11 Rev.1 (M) Development and Testing of National Forest Stock Monitoring System (FSMS) with Improved Governance Capabilities at all Levels of the Forest Administration (Philippines)
2. PD 621/11 Rev.3 (M) Traceability of Timber Produced by Forest Concessions and Native Communities in Madre de Dios and Ucayali (Peru)
3. PD 692/13 Rev.1 (M) Implementation and Operationalization of a National Information System for the Sustainable Management of Forest Resources (Côte d'Ivoire)
4. PD 756/14 Rev.1 (M) Development of a Business Management Services Program of Forest MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) in Guatemala (Guatemala)
5. PPD 167/13 Rev.1 (M) Feasibility Study on the Certification of ONAB's National Plantation Estates (Benin)

**Committee on Forest Industry**

1. PD 73/89 (M,F,I) Assistance for Project Identification and Formulation (ITTO)
2. PD 506/08 Rev.1 (I) Reviving Forestry Education in Liberia (Liberia)
3. PD 600/11 Rev.1 (I) Model Capacity Building for Efficient and Sustainable Utilization of Bamboo Resources in Indonesia (Indonesia)
4. PD 687/13 Rev.1 (I) Strengthening the Performance of the Wood Processing Sector in Guyana, through Building Local Capacity and Enhancing National Systems that Promote Forest Products Trade and Sustainable Utilization of Forest Resources (Guyana)
5. PD 722/13 Rev.1 (I) Capacity Building and Reduced Impact Logging (RIL) in Dry Inland Forest in the Permanent Forest on Peninsular Malaysia (Malaysia)

**(B) Projects Pending Agreement**

**Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets**

1. PD 732/14 Rev.2 (M) Improve Forest Governance in Mozambique (Mozambique)

**Committee on Forest Industry**

1. PD 737/14 Rev.1 (I) Developing Supply Capacity of Wood-based Biomass Energy through Improved Enabling Conditions and Efficient Utilization of Degraded Forest Lands Involving Local Communities in North Sumatra Province of Indonesia (Indonesia)
2. PD 770/15 Rev.1 (I) Promotion and Sustainable Management of Lesser-Used Timber Species (LUTS) in the Moist Forests of the Departments of Atlantida, Colon and Northern Olancho in Honduras (Honduras)

**(C) Projects and Pre-projects pending financing**

**Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets**

1. PD 124/01 Rev.5 (M)  
Phase III Stage 3 Promotion of Sustainable Management of African Forests (ITTO)
2. PD 751/14 Rev.2 (M) Sustainable Forest Management in the Chimbo River Basin, Ecuador: Conserving Forest Resources and Agroforestry Systems as a Mechanism to Strengthen the Economic Inclusion of Community Families, Particularly Rural Women, Settled in the Area (Ecuador)
3. PD 796/15 Rev.2 (M) Establishing a System for the Collection, Storage, Processing and Dissemination of Forest and Wildlife Statistics in Cameroon (Cameroon)

**Committee on Forest Industry**

1. PD 700/13 Rev.2 (I)  
Phase I Stage 2 Development of Intra-African Trade and Further Processing of Tropical Timber and Timber Products – Phase I Stage 2 (ITTO)
2. PD 709/13 Rev.2 (I) Enhancing Bali Wooden Handicraft Industry by Improving the Quality of Planted-Wood Raw Materials and Complying to Legality Standard (Indonesia)

3. PD 761/14 Rev.2 (I,M) Promoting Partnership between Farmer Group and Forest Industry (Indonesia)
4. PD 771/15 Rev.2 (I) Genetic Conservation, Utilization and Management of Gall Rust Resistant Strains of *Falcataria moluccana* Growing in the Philippines (Philippines)
5. PD 788/15 Rev.2 (I) Achieving Sustainable Forest Management through Enhanced Competitiveness of Small & Medium Wood Industries (SMWIs) in Ciamis District of West Java Province, Indonesia (Indonesia)

The Committees held discussions on the following projects:

#### **Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets**

- PPD 167/13 Rev.1 (M) Feasibility Study on the Certification of ONAB's National Plantation Estates (Benin)

The Secretariat reported that the pre-project started in July 2014 and the activities related to the pre-project ended in April 2016. All activities of the two outputs were completed during the implementation of the pre-project. However, the main output of the pre-project which was a full project proposal PD 821/16(M) "Certification of forest plantations managed by the Office National du Bois (ONAB)" was rated as category 4 and not recommended by the Fifty-first Expert Panel for Project Technical Appraisal.

The completion report was submitted in June 2016 and the final audit report on 26 August 2016. Subsequently, ITTO Secretariat provided comments on the final audit for revision, but the revised audit was not submitted for further review and approval before the Committee Session.

The Committees decided that, in the event that the revised final report is submitted and deemed satisfactory prior to its next session, the Committees will declare this pre-project completed.

#### **Committee on Forest Industry**

- PD 73/89 (M,F,I) Assistance for Project Identification and Formulation (ITTO)

The objective of this project is to improve the project identification and formulation capability of personnel in ITTO Producer Member Countries in order to expand their national capacity to invite investment and aid into the forestry sector. The importance of the project is inscribed in Decisions 2(X), 2(XI), 6(XIII), and 8(XVIII) of the Council, reminding and encouraging ITTO Members to use the expert facility available under the project to enhance their ability to identify and formulate sound projects.

The project is closely linked to other ITTO activities, particularly the Expert Panel and implementation of the Project Cycle, which together seek to enhance quality in the structure and implementation of ITTO projects. Several independent consultancies to assist ITTO members in project formulation and several training workshops have been funded and organized under this project.

The Secretariat reported that the Committees, at its Forty-ninth Session in November 2015, noted that the project budget had been exhausted and agreed to recommend this issue to be raised in the CFA at its next session. Due to the lack of time, it has not been possible to raise this issue at the CFA, and as there has been no funding for this project for two years.

The Committees duly declared the project completed.

- PD 506/08 Rev.1 (I) Reviving Forestry Education in Liberia (Liberia)

This project is aimed at supporting the reestablishment of forest education activities for middle level forestry technicians of the Forestry Training Institute (FTI) located in Tubmanburg. This involves the establishment of a functional curriculum, training of trainers and immediate practical training of the currently registered students of FTI. In addition, the project supports a national working group to conduct a strategic process on overall forest education in Liberia.

The Secretariat informed the Committees that at its Forty-ninth Session in Kuala Lumpur in 2015, the Committees had been informed that the Executing Agency is working on the final report (completion,

technical and financial audit reports). However, no progress/final reports were received on the use of these funds to date despite repeated requests.

The Committees agreed to recommend to the Council that this project be terminated.

PD 687/13 Rev.1 (I)                      Strengthening the Performance of the Wood Processing Sector in Guyana, through Building Local Capacity and the Enhancing National Systems that Promote Forest Products Trade and Sustainable Utilization of Forest Resources (Guyana)

The project is aimed at building the capacity of stakeholders (Management, Operators and Regulators) within the wood processing sector to improve sustainability, efficiency and competitiveness, and enhance the national system for inspection and certification. The Development Objective is to contribute to the enhancement of the efficiency and competitiveness of Guyana's wood processing sector as a means for sustainable utilization of timber resources and national development. The Specific Objective is to strengthen the performance of the wood processing sector through building local capacity and enhancing national systems that will promote and facilitate efficient trade and utilization of lumber for both local and export markets.

The Secretariat reported that all project activities had now been successfully completed and all outputs/objectives achieved. The full completion report, technical reports and financial audit report have been satisfactorily submitted by the Executing Agency.

The Committees duly declared the project completed.

PD 700/13 Rev.2 (I)                      Development of Intra-African Trade and Further Processing of Tropical Timber and Timber Products – Phase I Stage 2 (ITTO)

Considering the importance of the project to the ITTO Producer Member Countries in African Region, the delegate of Cote d'Ivoire requested that funding be made available to enable the implementation of the project Phase I Stage 2.

PD 722/13 Rev.1 (I)                      Capacity Building and Reduced Impact Logging (RIL) in Dry Inland Forest in the Permanent Forest on Peninsular Malaysia (Malaysia)

The delegation of Malaysia reported that all project activities had been completed and all necessary reports will be submitted to ITTO in due course.

The Committees took note of the intention of Malaysia to submit the project proposal for the next phase to ITTO.

12. Election of Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons for 2017

Following the usual consultations undertaken by the producer and consumer groups, Mr. Jorge Malleux (Peru) was elected Chairperson of the CEM and Mr. Björn Merckell (Sweden) was elected Vice-chair for 2017. Mr. Lokossou Achille Orphée (Benin) was elected Chairperson of the CFI for 2017.

13. Dates and Venues of the Fifty-first and Fifty-second Sessions of the Committees

The Fifty-first Session of the Committees will be held in conjunction with the Fifty-third Session of the International Tropical Timber Council in 2017.

The Fifty-second Session of the Committees will be held in conjunction with the Fifty-fourth Session of the International Tropical Timber Council in 2018.

14. Other Business

The Chairperson of CEM informed the Committees that the Chairperson of ITTC for 2016 received a letter from the Executive Director, Ms. Rachel Butler, of the Global Timber Forum (GTF) to acknowledge the cooperation made by her Organization with ITTO. The Committees agreed to include this letter as Appendix C to this report.

15. Recommendations to the International Tropical Timber Council

- (i) The Committees recommended that funding be made immediately available for the following projects approved under the time-bound electronic no-objection procedure for the spring project cycle 2016:

**Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets**

- PD 751/14 Rev.2 (M) Sustainable Forest Management in the Chimbo River Basin, Ecuador: Conserving Forest Resources and Agroforestry Systems as a Mechanism to Strengthen the Economic Inclusion of Community Families, Particularly Rural Women, Settled in the Area (Ecuador) [US\$166,914]
- PD 796/15 Rev.2 (M) Establishing a System for the Collection, Storage, Processing and Dissemination of Forest and Wildlife Statistics in Cameroon (Cameroon)[US\$567,627]

**Committee on Forest Industry**

- PD 761/14 Rev.2 (I,M) Promoting Partnership between Farmer Group and Forest Industry (Indonesia)[US\$508,693]
- PD 788/15 Rev.2 (I) Achieving Sustainable Forest Management through Enhanced Competitiveness of Small & Medium Wood Industries (SMWIs) in Ciamis District of West Java Province, Indonesia (Indonesia) [US\$569,710]

- (ii) The Committees recommended that additional funding be made immediately available for the following projects approved and (partially) funded at earlier Sessions:

**Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets**

- PD 124/01 Rev.5 (M) Promotion of Sustainable Management of African Forests (ITTO)  
Phase III Stage 3 [Phase III Stage 3 – US\$573,325]

- (iii) The Committees recommended that funding be made immediately available for the following projects approved at earlier Sessions:

**Committee on Forest Industry**

- PD 700/13 Rev.2 (I) Development of Intra-African Trade and Further Processing of  
Phase I Stage 2 Tropical Timber and Timber Products – Phase I Stage 2 (ITTO)  
[US\$3,759,256]
- PD 709/13 Rev.2 (I) Enhancing Bali Wooden Handicraft Industry by Improving the Quality  
of Planted-Wood Raw Materials and Complying to Legality Standard  
(Indonesia) [US\$540,008]
- PD 771/15 Rev.2 (I) Genetic Conservation, Utilization and Management of Gall Rust  
Resistant Strains of *Falcataria moluccana* Growing in the Philippines  
(Philippines)[US\$1,248,913]

- (iv) The Committees recommended that the following project be terminated at this Session:

**Committee on Forest Industry**

- PD 506/08 Rev.1 (I) Reviving Forestry Education in Liberia (Liberia)

16. Report of the Session

The Committees adopted this report for submission to the Council, with due acknowledgement to the work of the Secretariat under the able guidance of the Chairpersons of the Committees.

## APPENDIX A

### REPORT ON THE ITTO ANNUAL MARKET DISCUSSION - 2016 “Free Trade Agreements – Challenges and Opportunities for the Tropical Timber Trade” 9 November 2016, Yokohama, Japan

The theme of the 2016 Annual Market Discussion organised by the ITTO Trade Advisory Group (TAG) was “Free Trade Agreements - Challenges and Opportunities for the Tropical Timber Trade” and the discussion was moderated jointly by Mr. Jorge Malleux (Peru) and Mr. Barney Chan (TAG Coordinator).

Six speakers addressed the Council on this theme:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Mr. André de Boer<br>Secretary General<br>European Timber Trade Federation, The Netherlands   | <i>FTA'S - The Promotion of Tropical Timber in Europe</i>                              |
| Mr. Erik Luis Fischer Llanos<br>Presidente del Comité Forestal<br>Asociación de Exportadores (ADEX), Peru   | <i>The Impact of Trade Agreements on Tropical Timber Trade</i>                         |
| Mr. Joe O'Donnell<br>Senior Manager for Government and Public Affairs<br>Intl. Wood Products Association (IWPA)                                     | <i>On the Brink of Historic Agreement, Skepticism Colours Trade Debate in the U.S.</i> |
| Prof. Labode Popoola<br>Forest Economics/Sustainable Development University<br>of Ibadan, Nigeria and<br>President, Forestry Association of Nigeria | <i>Free Trade Agreements and Wood Export in West Africa: Nigeria as a Case Study</i>   |
| Mr. Jirawat Tangkijngamwong<br>Chairman, Thai Timber Association<br>Director of Deesawat Industries Co. Ltd/<br>Deesawat Design Co., Ltd, Thailand  | <i>Open Trade Drives Finished Product Exports and Design Opportunities</i>             |
| Mr. Enrique Téllez Pacheco<br>Presidente<br>Cámara Nacional de la Industria Maderera, Mexico  | <i>Free Trade Agreements: Impact on the Tropical Timber Trade in Mexico</i>            |

Presentations made during the 2016 ITTO Annual Market Discussion can be accessed on ITTO's homepage.

#### **Interventions and Discussion**

A delegate from the EU noted that there were many challenges facing tropical producer countries in relation to trade in tropical timber and asked how it was possible to develop advanced technologies to overcome the challenges associated with attracting investment in wood processing and trade.

Mr. Pacheco considered the problem to be complex and that in Mexico the underlying issue was that many forest owners are indigenous communities where forests are managed through customary procedures and that production is inefficient and fractionalised. To achieve improvements in productivity requires engagement with these communities. It is necessary to understand their needs and design programmes and suggest technologies which are appropriate to their needs and capabilities. The building of trust with these forest communities should be an essential aspect of any development programme as forest communities in Mexico have had bad experiences in the past.

Regarding attracting investment in the wood processing industries, legal security is a fundamental requirement for all potential investors, said Mr. Pacheco. He emphasised that when investment involves communities living in or close to the forest it is necessary to ensure the benefits are fair and evenly distributed. Mr. Pacheco noted that in Mexico, despite the many challenges, forest communities were welcoming investment in forestry and wood processing activities.



A delegate from Thailand noted that market transparency was key to SFM and a legal trade and many of the speakers had discussed the extent of illegal logging and trade in their respective countries. Against this background he asked whether free trade agreements were indeed enhancing transparency and eliminating illegal trade.

Professor Popoola responded that trade was business and profit motivated and that investment flows to where a profit can be made. He said government involvement was required to introduce equity in trade.

On the same issue it was suggested that there was an over-emphasis on illegal logging and the associated trade in efforts to achieve SFM and that more emphasis should be put on the underlying structural issues of poverty and the need to enhance the value of tropical forests.

A speaker asserted that current control measures were not necessarily improving the development of the tropical timber trade. It was suggested that there was a need to reward best production and trade practices rather than the current situation where certification systems penalise the non-conforming suppliers.

In response to the many challenges pointed out by Mr. Fischer Llanos in Peru's forestry sector in achieving benefits from the United States-Peru Free Trade Agreement (PTPA), a delegate from the USA outlined the many benefits she considered arising from the PTPA and the positive changes in the forestry sector in Peru which, in the long term, should benefit the timber industry in Peru.

On the issue of illegal logging, a delegate from PNG noted the importance of clarity regarding definitions of illegal logging and that countries needed to look at their own country perspective in defining illegal logging. Mr. de Boer responded that the EU Timber Regulation's definition of legality was clear. EU importers must ensure imports are in compliance with the national laws in the producing country and that importers are obliged to undertake due diligence to ensure that shipments are legal. He said the conclusion of VPAs and issuing of FLEGT licenses will ensure access to EU markets.

A delegate of Guatemala acknowledged the cooperation with ITTO that enable the country to invest on development of technology that focused on online market statistics and electronic verification systems (SEINEF). This development has opened the possibility of strengthening the work on the chain of custody. The SEINEF has contributed to increase the availability of forest products since 2014, as well as to improve information for local markets. The delegate of Guatemala indicated their desire to participate in the ITTO Market Discussion 2017.

A delegate from Mexico commented that his government is introducing a strategy for promoting SFM. This strategy has five goals: social inclusiveness, forest management for biodiversity conservation, economic development and monitoring and reduction of poverty and these are expected to support expansion of the legal trade in wood products.

The question of whether free trade agreements were benefitting communities that depend on forests for their livelihoods was raised by an observer who asked how they can be improved to lift the poor in forest communities from the informal and often illegal trade into the formal and legal sector.

A delegate from Germany commented that movement of wood products across borders requires verification of origin and species. He informed that Germany supports the Global Timber Tracking Network which is facilitating and promoting the use of DNA and stable isotope markers and timber tracking technologies as a tool to ensure a legal timber trade. He suggested that the success recorded in eliminating the trade in illegal timber achieved through the application of these technologies warrants wider replication.

### **Annual Trade Statement**

The 2016 Trade Statement prepared by the ITTO TAG can be found in Appendix B of this document.

The TAG suggested the following theme for 2017 Annual Market Discussion: "Sharing Experiences on promoting investment in tropical timber industries and tropical forestry".

## APPENDIX B

### STATEMENT OF THE TRADE ADVISORY GROUP (TAG)

Presented at the 2016 Annual Market Discussion by  
Barney Chan (TAG Coordinator)  
9 November 2016

Chairperson,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Trade Statement is prepared and made on behalf of the Trade Advisory Group (TAG) in ITTO.

These are indeed difficult times for both the tropical timber sector and our Organisation. We were shocked in Kuala Lumpur, when we last met, to learn that a huge amount of the Organisation's funds had been lost because the financial rules of the organisation were ignored. This is very disappointing. The members of the TAG are acutely aware how difficult it is to raise funds and we understand how this loss would impact on the confidence of donors as well as other government agencies and organisations which work with ITTO.

In view of this severe setback to ITTO, we in TAG want to work closely with ITTO Members to move our Organisation forward beyond this crisis.

Firstly, let us not forget to appreciate the value and esteem of ITTO on the global stage. Members of TAG, both consumers and producers, recognise and appreciate the good work of ITTO. ITTO is one of the very few international organisations where the private sector has a voice and plays an active part. We can see how ITTO differs and has a much bigger impact when compared to other similar organisations. Let me mention just a few things that we in the private sector see as the winning difference.

- (1) ITTO does not preach or merely set out prescriptions on forest management. ITTO works with Members to develop guidelines which are field tested by Members. ITTO works with Member countries on projects according to such accepted guidelines. Over the years, we can see how such ITTO projects have helped Members on the ground, more critically, on the forest floor which is more important than having nice documents on the shelves.
- (2) ITTO has a fair and level playing field for all stakeholders to interact. Within this organisation, the NGOs and various environment organisations have a platform to discuss and work with the private sector on matters of importance to both parties: *good forest management*. This interaction is key to finding solutions that are not only successful on the ground, but that can endure over time.
- (3) ITTO delivers market intelligence through its Market Information Service reports which go out to a very wide international audience twice a month. This Report is deeply appreciated by the trade around the world as it provides continuous updates of trends, prices, trade news, production and export volumes, etc. Other stakeholders in the timber sector such as banks, equipment suppliers, logistics companies, etc also use the ITTO MIS Reports to keep updated and informed. No other international organisation provides such a valuable transparent service.

These are but three important reasons why ITTO is the world's premier organisation on tropical forestry and trade, and must continue to function. Therefore, TAG urges members and all stakeholders to close rank and rebuild this Organisation. We feel that our financial problems, difficult and painful though they may be, have also given us an opportunity to re-set this Organisation.

As Members deliberate, we urge you to re-visit our founding principles and let these guide your corrective actions. We must re-focus ourselves on our priority mission which is promoting sustainable trade in tropical timber and supporting the communities that rely on this trade for generations to come. We must bring ourselves back from wandering too far off our objectives, to retain our focus on solid tropical forest management. We must remember and admit our abilities and shortcomings, and work with other like-minded organisations; a good example of which is the excellent joint work of CITES and ITTO.

As you discuss the way forward please remember that we in the TAG recognise the enormous wealth of experience that the ITTC brings together and that this, combined with the skills and deep experiences of the ITTO Secretariat, is a formidable force that has and can continue to help shape the future of tropical forest management and trade.

In conclusion, we again ask you all to close rank, work together in a positive and speedy manner to select a new Executive Director. Our Organisation need an ED to work with us all to re-build our great Organisation.

Thank you.

## APPENDIX C

### LETTER FROM THE GLOBAL TIMBER FORUM (GTF) TO THE ITTC CHAIRPERSON



7<sup>th</sup> November 2016

Chairperson Jennifer Conje  
5th Floor Pacifico-Yokohama 1-1-1, Minato-Mirai,  
Nishi-ku, Yokohama, 220-0012 Japan

Dear Ms Conje

#### RELEVANCE OF INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER ORGANISATION

Climate Change is one of the greatest threats the world faces. To lose focus now on the major role tropical forests play in light of deforestation causes us concern. The International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) brings together an important political network focused on tropical forests. Whilst we recognise the seriousness of the situation in which the ITTO finds itself; we feel that there will be more detrimental consequences if this network is lost.

Many of us from within our network have had the pleasure of working with Dr Steve Johnson and his team and have faith in their expertise and commitment. GTF is therefore keen to see the ITTO not only survive but increase its efforts with enhanced governance put in place. In our view the GTF network and the work we do focused on communications and technical support is ideally placed to collaborate with ITTO. We look forward to the conclusion of deliberations on the selection of the Council to appoint an Executive Director and confirm commitment of the GTF to the future of ITTO at a time when the focus should not be diluted away from the importance of tropical forests.

Yours sincerely

RACHEL BUTLER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

On behalf of GTF Executive Board

1. Chair, Ms Cindy Squires – Executive Director, International Wood Products Association USA
2. Treasurer, Mr Andreas von Moller – President, European Timber Trade Federation
3. Ms Françoise van de Ven – Secretary General, Union Des Forestiers Industriels Du Gabon Et Aménagistes
4. Mr Francisco Escobedo Grotewold – Executive Director, Gremial Forestal de Guatemala
5. Mr John Halkett – Secretary General, Australian Timber Importers Federation
6. Mr George White – Operations Director



## **ABOUT GTF**

Global Timber Forum brings together a network focused on the forests and forest products sector. We have an international Executive Board and have been building the concept over a number of years focused on the tropical forests products trade. GTF is now registered as a not-for-profit company and has secured longer-term funding through the UK Department of International Development (Dfid), European Commission (EC) and Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) with the latter providing organisational oversight support. We are continuing to build (with FAO) a global database of associations and federations to develop the potential of the GTF. We are in process of formalising a much wider Advisory Committee to include private sector associations along with FAO and World Resources Institute. We would welcome ITTO to also be a member of this committee [www.gtf-info.com](http://www.gtf-info.com)