

# **Key Outcomes – INTERNATIONAL FORUM – Together Towards Global Green Supply Chains – A Forest Products Industry**

## **Initiative**

Forests are crucial terrestrial ecosystems, providing essential environmental, social, cultural and economic services and functions on which humanity depends. Their restoration and sustainable management will contribute to the achievement of several of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to responsible consumption and production, climate action, and life on land.

Indeed, forests can contribute to solving many of the unprecedented global challenges we face today, including by mitigating climate change through carbon sequestration and storage. Sustainable forest management, particularly in the tropics, will reduce biodiversity loss and prevent the degradation of land and water resources while meeting rising demand for wood products from the rapidly growing global population.

Wood products, one of the main revenue earners of sustainable forest management, has been an essential material through history. It is used in housing, construction, shipbuilding and the furniture sectors, among many other applications. The latest special report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change states that sustainably managed forests and wood products are key elements for decarbonizing and moving towards a bio-based circular economy by sequestering carbon dioxide from the air and storing it in terrestrial sinks and forest products and by substituting the use of non-renewable materials and energy. This is of critical relevance to the forest industry gathered here today, because nature-based solutions to climate change involving trees and forests can only be fully achieved within the framework of legal and sustainable supply chains, from the forest to the market.

Harnessing the benefits of legal and sustainable supply chains will require the strong commitment of, and coordinated and well-documented actions by, the many actors in supply and value chains. Participants in this Forum identified the following key ingredients for achieving legal and sustainable supply chains: sufficient technical expertise, research, capacity building and know-how; fiscal and other macro-economic incentives for good business; access to finance at affordable interest rates; the availability of information and data for decision-making; stable legislation; and transparency and good governance.

To this end, the International Forum “Together Towards Global Green Supply Chains – A Forest Products Industry Initiative” held in Shanghai on 22–23 October 2019 highlighted the need to foster closer collaboration and exchange between all partners in global supply chains by sharing information and enhancing collaboration and know-how based on a voluntary network among forest managers, producers, traders, the processing industry and consumers. This network, referred to as the Global Green Supply Chain Network (GGSC Network), will be open to all interested supply-chain operators and related stakeholders.

The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), under its Legal and Sustainable Supply Chains Programme (LSSC), and the co-organizers of this forum are committed to supporting and facilitating the establishment and operation of the GGSC Network. The work will include the following immediate next steps:

- the development of modalities of work and collaboration by building on the existing experiences of the GGSC platform in China;
- the building of an information database accessible to all, including the existing Global Timber Tracking Network (GTTN);
- taking into account existing verification of legality and sustainability mechanisms within existing global rules and legal frameworks;
- supporting the implementation of a business-to-business communication and information exchange as part of the GGSC Network, building on the output of an ITTO project and making

this information publicly available on a monthly basis (including information and data on markets for timber and wood products).

The additional noteworthy key outcomes from this Forum are:

- Enhanced collaboration between the Union des Forestiers Industriels du Gabon et Aménagistes (UFIGA) and the Union Forestière des Industries Asiatiques au Gabon (UFIAG) in support of the establishment of GSSC Initiative and the commitment from the Gabonese forest industries in moving towards independent third-party certification of legality and/or sustainability for their forest operations within a three-year period.
- The establishment of an international entrepreneurs' and private-sector expert team who will communicate regularly to consolidate challenges, opportunities and measures to be taken to further the aims of legal and sustainable supply chains, to be fed into the GGSC Network.
- The enhanced collaboration between the International Tropical Timber Technical Association (ATIBT) and the Global Green Supply Chains (GGSC) Secretariat, based in China.
- The strengthened dialogue, collaboration and formalization of the working relationship between the ATIBT and the China Timber & Wood Products Distribution Association (CTWPDA) in order to increase the impact of sustainably produced wood from West and Central Africa.

The Forum acknowledges that markets for legal and sustainable wood products could further incentivize sustainable forest management, particularly in the tropics, and further acknowledges the important role of the private sector in connecting the various links of the supply chain. Therefore, we invite all stakeholders to join the GGSC Network, which aims to add value to forest resources through the full recognition of their economic, social and environmental values, and the incorporation of the concepts of legality and sustainability in all forestry operations with a voluntary stepwise approach. We further urge the private sector to embrace the multiple benefits above, requiring sustained efforts and participation at the global level and for current and future members of the GGSC Network to incorporate progress towards achieving legal and sustainable supply chains. The

joint efforts through this International Forum will contribute positively to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) Joint Initiative, Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World (SW4SW).

We call on all stakeholders to strive towards the common goal of achieving legal and sustainable timber supply chains, and we commit to convening again next year to report on progress and share experiences gained.

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