

Statement by the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) to the ITTO 57th Session held virtually in Yokohama, Japan from 29 November – 3 December 2021

Thank you Chair. CSAG congratulates the Council, Chair and the Secretariat on the successful organizing of the second virtual Council session. We continue to pray that the COVID-19 situation will improve very soon, and pray for everyone's safety and good health.

We will go straight to the point to present CSAG's views for Council's consideration.

We note the Annual Market Discussion this year – Challenges in Manufacturing and Trade during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This is a very timely topic. However, CSAG continues to advocate to Council that the Market Discussion should be a joint session with CSAG. The views of the panellist are very business oriented, while we know business and markets do not work in isolation from health, conservation, sustainability, livelihood, IPLCs, etc. CSAG brings our expertise and knowledge that can enhance the knowledge sharing and recommendations from such a platform to Council.

CSAG support the draft policy documents CFA(XXXVI)7 Rev 1. and the amendments resulting from Council's deliberations as it covers areas of interest to civil society such as combatting fraud, corruption, receiving complaints, data protection, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority, etc. This is a human rights issue and a universal challenge, which has to be addressed by everyone.

The Climate Change Conference of the Parties COP26 just concluded in UK. There are a number of decisions and declarations that impact forests and recognise the critical role that forestry plays towards mitigation and adaptation. The Forests, Agriculture and Commodity Trade (FACT) Dialogue has identified a roadmap of actions; Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, particularly to halt and reverse forest loss by 2030. We have also seen governments make financial commitments to the Global Forest Finance Pledge and double finance for adaptation. CSAG recommends that ITTO commission a paper that outlines how ITTO members, the Secretariat, private sector and TAG, civil society, including CSAG, can contribute towards adaptation and mitigation in concrete ways. Our collective work on forestry supply chains and the best ways to promote the sustainable use and management of forest resources makes us well placed to assist the international community in developing nature-based solutions that harness the power of the natural world to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and also help communities adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Forests were and are still being poorly managed, their resources over-exploited and are being lost. Strategies and action plans were created, studies were carried out while ITTO member Governments pledged to move towards Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). How can ITTO members work towards actions to implement the many relevant Guidelines, policies, and reports produced over the years? The paper can outline how each stakeholder can do this. Currently, member countries do not seem to be using ITTO resources in any concrete way where these resources can contribute.

We recommend Council prepares a decision for the Secretariat to conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of SFM in collaboration with CSAG and TAG, perhaps through an annual questionnaire survey of ITTO members on progress towards implementation of the guidelines developed by ITTO, with appropriate field observations from CSAG and TAG and other stakeholders and to share the results with Council yearly.

Forest biodiversity is being threatened and lost, continued to be over-exploited, illegally harvested and traded, and species are going extinct at an alarming rate, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities living in the forests and margins of forests are being threatened, and most of our focus has been to increase raw materials for GDP growth, revenue, and jobs. Markets and supply chains are only one aspect of the massive issue of habitat loss.

There are other interventions beyond climate change considerations. ITTO can play a role in implementing global commitments, especially in the implementation and delivery of the current Aichi

Targets under the CBD Strategic Plan 2011-2020 and, under other conventions such as CITES, assessing and monitoring CITES Non-Detriment Findings (NDF) implementation. We note ongoing negotiations in the finalization of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, including relevant draft targets such as Target 10 on ensuring forestry is managed sustainably and target 15 on businesses moving towards the full sustainability of extraction and production practices, and sourcing and supply chains. We urge that consideration be given to examine how we can support governments implement the ambitious and transformative targets. Addressing timber and forest resources over-exploitation and amplifying conservation and livelihood benefits from sustainable use and trade should be integrated in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

ITTO Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2022 – 2026 – is a very comprehensive document. We are concerned about the increase in deforestation and illegal and unsustainable trafficking. The prevailing economic development policy towards extractivism in the Strategic Action Plan, on the economic results of the member countries and not necessarily regional and national conservation and species range states preclude the development of a comprehensive vision of their conservation status and without accounting for actual/ sustainable levels of extraction according to the resilience of the ecosystem and species. The ITTO, on the one hand, must strengthen and / or generate some mechanism or establish agreements or alliances with other instruments or arrangements that can supply information, results and articulate these needs. There is an urgent need to incorporate and promote the development of diversified sources of timber and non-timber forest products, based on the regenerative capacity of the species and ecosystems and not on business sustainability.

The Market Discussion illustrates clearly that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected many countries where harvest, supply and consumption have been severely affected, leading to job losses, impact on livelihood and social cohesion of society in many ITTO member countries, especially in the developing world. Sustainable and responsible use of forestry resources and tackling illegal and unsustainable use must be an integral part of COVID-19 recovery strategies if the world is to 'build back better' towards a more sustainable and resilient future.

Jobs, revenue, livelihood, cultural integrity and sustainability of the resource and supply should not be looked at in isolation. The critical challenge should not only be focused on technical forestry aspects; we cannot leave the problems of SFM to the foresters and technicians at the forest level. Council has set aside in this virtual Council's limited time resource to discuss political issues such as the ED's position. How about setting aside time to talk about the elephants in the room – where, what, and why is SFM falling behind? All of us in the Council have sat in many workshops and read reports that show the issues and problems facing SFM are not related to the technical aspects of forest management.

Thank you.

CSAG

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