

Statement by the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) to the ITTO 52th Session held in Yokohama, Japan from 7-12 November 2016

Distinguished Chair, Honourable Minister, Executive Director designate, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

CSAG would like to thank the Government of Japan and the City of Yokohama and the ITTO for hosting this event.

CSAG wishes to join ITTO members in congratulating Dr Gerhard Dieterle, the new Executive Director designate of ITTO. We had very strong candidates for the Executive Director's position and we hope all the candidates would continue to be supportive of the organisation, by contributing their ideas, enthusiasm and motivation. We urge all the members to come together in support of the new ED.

We look forward to working with Dr Dieterle and his team and Council on various issues that CSAG's members are interested in: sustainable forestry, legal, transparent and equitable timber trade, gender, tenure, community forest enterprise development and other social forestry aspects especially for indigenous peoples and local communities including women.

We would also like to express our disappointment in the selection process of the ED. The selection process is detrimental to the reputation and operations of the organisation. We continue to urge Council to develop a proper procedure and mechanism for the election of an ED in the future as carried out by the private sector and other organizations as Council cannot afford to be bogged down with politics and negotiations on the leadership of the organization each time a new ED selection has to be carried out.

CSAG continues to encourage Council to be open to the acceptance of all observers from the civil society as the organization strives to be open, transparent and engaging with all stakeholders, even if the views and messages are anathema to the views of any governments present.

CSAG urges ITTO to work with CSAG to develop an ITTO/CSAG strategic framework for collaboration to ensure the successful implementation of the ITTO strategic action plan, programmes and projects. CSAG is encouraged to note the signing of an MOU between ITTO and a CSAG member, TRAFFIC at the side-lines of the CITES Conference of the Parties recently. This is a step that can be taken either collectively with CSAG or with individual members of CSAG.

We look forward to working with the new ED, and taking an active role with the Council and Secretariat to ensure the success of ITTO. Thank you for your support and substantive deliberations.

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