



Concept Note

International Symposium to Combat Illegal Logging and Associated Trade

Date: Friday, 12 June 2015, 13:30-16:30

Venue: U Thant Hall, United Nations University, Tokyo, Japan

1. Background

The issue of illegal logging first came to the attention of the international community in the 1980s as one of the causes of tropical deforestation and forest degradation. In 1998, the G8 initiated action in Birmingham, United Kingdom, by adopting the G8 Action Programme on Forests. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002, Indonesia and Japan, supported by several international non-governmental organizations, launched the Asia Forest Partnership, one of the major action areas of which was to tackle illegal logging. Since then, both exporting and importing countries have made considerable efforts to reduce illegal logging and ensure the legality of timber and timber products, including by involving a range of stakeholders.

Several major timber-importing markets, including those of Australia, the European Union, Japan and the United States, have introduced timber procurement and legality assurance measures with the aim of restricting the importation and use of timber and timber products lacking credible evidence of their legality. In response to concern in international markets, major tropical timber-exporting countries, such as Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Indonesia and Liberia, have also introduced timber legality assurance measures and participated in initiatives in collaboration with tropical timber-importing countries.

Despite the efforts and the achievements of the international community, recent reports by the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) indicate that illegal timber and timber products are still widely traded in markets, especially in local markets in tropical countries. The issue of illegal logging and timber legality is also being discussed in broader contexts, including in relation to forest governance, the sustainable livelihoods of local communities, climate change, environmental and social safeguards, commodity trade, corporate social responsibility, and international crime and terrorism.

Discussions are taking place in the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) on the future International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) and the post-2015 development agenda, including the development and implementation of forest-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and associated targets and indicators. These international deliberations provide a good opportunity and new challenges for further action to combat illegal logging and develop credible timber legality assurance systems. This symposium is being convened to take stock of progress in timber trade legality assurance and to help address these new opportunities and challenges.



2. Objectives

The major objectives of this symposium are to:

- Disseminate information on the status of legality assurance measures taken by major timber-importing countries for imported timber and timber products.
- Share knowledge of the actions taken by tropical timber-producing countries to reduce illegal logging and to develop legality assurance systems for the timber and timber products they harvest, process and export.
- Explore opportunities and challenges for further reducing illegal logging in the tropics and enhancing legality assurance for tropical timber and timber products.
- Contribute to the promotion of trade in legally harvested, processed and traded tropical timber and timber products at the international, regional and national levels.

The symposium is also expected to increase the visibility of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and its efforts to assist its producer member countries to combat illegal logging and enhance the legality of tropical timber and timber products.

3. Organizers

The symposium is organized by the Committee for Wood Utilization Caravan to Bridge Forest and City of Japan in cooperation with ITTO under the sponsorship of the Forestry Agency of Japan.

4. Target audience

The symposium is targeted at the following stakeholders:

- Officers of national and local governments in Japan in charge of the procurement of timber and timber products and international cooperation on forests.
- Staff members of private enterprises and industry organizations in Japan engaged in importing, processing, distributing and using timber and timber products.
- Members of research institutions and lecturers and students of universities in Japan engaged in studies on timber trade, sustainable tropical forest management and other related areas.
- Staff of non-governmental organizations in Japan, including consumer groups and civil-society organizations, interested in the legality of timber and timber products.
- Members of diplomatic missions and timber-related foreign enterprises operating in Japan, particularly those engaged in importing timber and timber products into Japan.

The symposium is expected to be attended by 300 participants.



5. Language

The symposium will be primarily conducted in Japanese. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in English and Japanese throughout the symposium.

6. Agenda

Time	Programme	Presenter
13:30–13:35	Address (5 min)	Representative of MAFF (TBD)
13:35–13:40	Address (5 min)	Mr Emmanuel Ze Meka, Executive Director, ITTO
13:40–13:55	Presentation: Historical overview of actions taken at the international level to reduce illegal logging and enhance timber legality assurance (15 min)	Dr Takeshi Toma, Head of Partnership Promotion Office, FFPRI
13:55–14:10	Presentation: Global outlook of actions taken by major timber-importing countries on legality assurance, including legal procurement (15 min)	Mr Rupert Oliver, Coordinator of ITTO's "Independent Market Monitoring of FLEGT Licensed Timber" (IMM) Project
14:10–14:25	Presentation: Background, outline and effects of timber procurement measures in Japan, and the country's actions to reduce illegal logging (15 min)	Mr Shunsuke Miyazawa, Director, Wood Products Trade Office, Forestry Agency
14:25–14:40	Presentation: Actions taken by tropical timber-producing countries to reduce illegal logging and meet timber legality assurance requirements (15 min)	Mr Arbi Valentinus, National FLEGT Expert for Indonesia
14:40–15:00	Refreshments (20 min)	-
15:00–15:20	Questions and answers on presentations (20 min)	All presenters
15:20–16:20	Panel discussion on the achievements of, and challenges and opportunities for, further action to reduce illegal logging and enhance timber legality assurance (60 min)	All presenters, Dr B.C.Y. Freezailah, Chairperson of ITTC, Ms Erika Suzuki, Green Spatial Designer, and Mr Tatsuya Sasaki, Editorial, Yomiuri Shimbun
16:20–16:30	Wrap-up remarks (10 min)	Mr Tatsuya Sasaki, Editorial, Yomiuri Shimbun

Mr Tatsuya Sasaki, Editorial of Yomiuri Shimbun will serve as Facilitator for the panel discussion, and Mr Takeshi Goto, Assistant Director, ITTO will serve as Master of Ceremonies for the symposium.

7. Distribution materials



The following materials will be distributed at the symposium:

- symposium programme, including the background and objectives of the symposium and brief curricula vitae of presenters and panellists (300 copies in both Japanese and English)
- copies of all PowerPoint presentations (300 copies of Japanese version and 300 copies of English version)
- *Tropical Forest Update* (Volume 24 Number 1 on public procurement policies and timber legality verification) (250 copies of Japanese version and 50 copies of English version)
- Sheet for questions from the audience (300 copies in both Japanese and English)
- ITTO brochure (250 copies of Japanese version and 50 copies of English version)

Besides the above publications, ITTO general promotion video, which will be shown during the refreshments and before and after the symposium, may be produced.

8. Outputs

The symposium will generate the following results:

- Increased awareness and knowledge of achievements in reducing illegal logging and promoting timber legality, both in tropical timber-importing and tropical timber-exporting countries, and the status of actions to achieve these ends.
- Greater recognition of the opportunities and challenges for further action to address illegal logging and develop timber legality assurance systems, and increased momentum towards such action.
- A full-page article on the symposium in one of the major Japanese newspapers.
- Improved visibility of ITTO and its efforts to reduce illegal logging, enhance the legality of tropical timber and timber products and increase capacity in its producer member countries.

9. Contact persons

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Secretary

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