

**Statement by the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) to ITTO 45th Session held in
Yokohama, Japan from 9 – 14, 2009**

Distinguished Chair, Honorable Ministers, Executive Director, Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

CSAG would like to thank the Government of Japan and the ITTO for hosting this event. We would like to thank the Executive Director of ITTO for his support to CSAG that allowed us to bring together nearly all of the governance team of CSAG to this Council session. CSAG takes very seriously our important role for civil society as a contributor to ITTO's policy development, as collaborators in and contributors to activities implemented by member governments and others, and as potential implementers of ITTO activities, including projects.

CSAG was formally established at the 32nd Session of Council in 2001. Over the years, CSAG has developed a governance structure and has ensured adequate representation of diverse civil society and our relevance to the ITTC. Towards this end, we renewed our governance structure and elected new representatives at the Yaoundé conference in May 2009. The current governance team of CSAG includes the two Co-Chairs, representing the producer and consumer countries; Regional Focal Points: two each from Africa, Asia and Latin America, and ex-officio advisors from RRI, IUCN and RECOFTC, consisting of individuals who served previously as CSAG representatives. Our new Governance Team looks forward to working with the Council and various country members of ITTO.

We are appreciative of the confidence that the ITTC and ITTO Secretariat has placed in us in exploring an expanded role. We are interested in helping to expand the range of stakeholders with whom ITTO is engaged in its deliberations, strategic analysis and projects, in providing more regular input on key issues facing tropical forests and trade in their products, and, we are also willing to review projects and programmes as well as continue to help organize special meetings and conferences. We hope that ITTO regional staff will draw upon our networks as appropriate. Should ITTO funding permit, CSAG is available to assist with orientation of civil society actors to the ITTA 2006.

We believe that there are many civil society actors and community enterprises and their organizations with proposals of interest to ITTO for support. We see a potential to expand the range of proposals reaching the ITTO and national focal points, with a more proactive process of training and communication. We also see a strong role for ITTO regional staff in Africa and Latin America, and the Secretariat in Asia, to provide national and regional information sessions and guidance on preparation of project proposals to the national focal points so that government actors as well as civil society and community organizations are well informed and able to actively participate. This should be in addition to the provision for capacity building that is already a mandated part of the ITTO projects proposal formulation.

We would like to thank TAG for the excellent event on timber trade and trends in key producer countries. This reinforces CSAG's conviction that domestic and regional markets will play an ever increasing role in the economy of many of the ITTO producer and consumer countries. We envision this issue, as well as tenure and community management and enterprise, and gender, gaining ever more prominence for the ITTO member countries as the climate change dialogue, impacts and response mechanisms evolve. We see an opportunity to contribute to the policy discussions on SFM, REDDES, TFLEGT, etc. related to these issues. We look forward to

enhancing our collaboration with existing ITTO partnerships with CITES, FAO, CPF, CBPF, etc.

We are also very heartened by the strong commitments announced in this session for the launch of two new thematic programmes: Community Forest Management and Enterprises, and Trade and Market Transparency. We encourage the timely ratification of the new ITTA by the member countries, so that this mandate and work program is secured. We further strongly encourage ITTO member countries to act upon Decision 6 (XLIV) from its 44th ITTC meeting, and start implementing the adopted ITTO/IUCN Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Tropical Timber Production Forests.

CSAG supports activities and projects that provide practical tools and policy guidance and increase the capacity of ITTO member country governments and stakeholders in key areas. These areas include: forest landscape restoration, maintaining biodiversity, increasing the transparency, value and benefit streams of the forestry and timber trade; and supporting the transitions in forest tenure, governance and community enterprise, including gender dimensions. We are particularly enthused by the strong commitment from Indonesia to hold a similar conference for Asia to that hosted by the Government of Cameroon, entitled Forest Tenure, Governance and Enterprise: New Opportunities for Central and West Africa. This conference, like the Rio Branco Conference in 2007 in Brazil will facilitate ITTO and its member countries to engage actively with civil society and forest communities in Asia and share lessons on tenure and governance reforms. We look forward to taking an active role with ITTO in the region to ensure its success. We have attached the key recommendations/action points from the Yaoundé Conference for your attention, the recent impacts of which were well summarized by the Government of Cameroon.

Thank you for your support and substantive deliberations.

Co-Chairs

Chen Hin Keong, Producer Country co-chair and official contact person for CSAG
Augusta Molnar, Consumer Country Co-chair

Asia Focal Points

Yati Bun, FPCD, Papua New Guinea
Christine Wulandari, Community Org., Indonesia

Latin America Focal Points

Alberto Chinchilla, ACICAFOC, Costa Rica
New focal point to be selected

Africa Focal Points

Cecile Ndjebet, Cameroon Ecology, Cameroon
Francis Colee, Green Advocates, Liberia

Ex-officio Advisors

Andy White, RRI
Cleto Ndikumagenge, IUCN
Stewart Maginnis, IUCN
Mimbimi Parfait Esono, FSC-Cameroon
Yam Malla, RECOFTC

Annex: Forest Tenure and Governance: New Opportunities for Central and West Africa

Conference Outcomes and Recommendations

With a vision towards 2015, as the agreed timetable to achieve all recommendations at the May 2009 Conference in Yaoundé, CSAG appreciates the opportunity to remind this honorable gathering of the ITTO about the priorities established by the multi-stakeholder participants at Yaoundé:

Key Issues on forest tenure, governance and community enterprise in Africa:

1. Insecure forest tenure experienced by African communities in many countries slows social and economic development, hampers sustainable forest management and leads to resource conflicts.
2. Over the past 400 years the African continent has experienced extreme trauma as colonial rule refused to recognize customary law and tenure rights in order to establish state control over natural resources and to pursue economic goals.
3. The legacy of colonial control over resources passed over to the post-independence African states, who have maintained the state claim of ownership over forest lands.
4. There is a legal pluralism of tenure in most of Africa in which the formal law dominates over varied customary systems and limits the rights of communities to access and own what they consider to be their natural resources.
5. Reforms are taking place throughout the world and in several African countries in response to a growing movement of communities claiming rights to participate in the processes regarding resource use and conservation, but where these reforms have taken place their implementation has been slow;
6. Women's tenure rights under customary and formal laws remain largely unrecognized; their rights are insufficiently considered in policy and law reforms and in the related international agenda;
7. Similarly, socially disadvantaged ethnic groups that depend on forests for their livelihoods continue to live with insecure resource tenure and unrecognized human rights;
8. The institutional orientation of forest agencies does not address rights-based development and tenure; institutional capacity is therefore inadequate for the effective use of tools for rights-based development and to respond to tenure issues.
9. Government institutions have been structured in a manner that separates the regulation and management of agricultural land from that of valuable natural resources such as timber or minerals.
10. In many African countries several barriers block the creation of small and medium forest enterprises (SMFEs) of community forest enterprises (CFEs) in particular. A lack of support for financing, technology, and the integrated use of timber and non_timber forest products restrict the economic possibilities for local communities.
11. Due to a lack of appropriate channels and tools, communities have difficulty expressing and documenting their customary rights in order to interact with formal legal systems.
12. Support for forest tenure reform, forest governance and community forestry enterprise development has been neglected by international donors and funding institutions.

13. New and evolving global issues such as climate change and potential mitigation initiatives, biofuels production, initiatives such as VPA/FLEGT, and the global economic crisis will have an impact on forest tenure.

Action Plan 2015:

Yaoundé recommended the following actions by governments and social actors to catalyze Reforms in Africa:

- a.) Prioritize forest tenure reform as a national development issue in all African countries by 2015 based on the necessity to ensure respect of human and historical rights of ownership and access to land and resources, by strengthening political will, and engaging parliamentarians and land, and other relevant ministries and agencies in the reform processes;
- b.) Reverse the assumption that all lands are state owned and perform an inventory of the lands that are actually under state ownership and management;
- c.) Fully recognize the human rights of all ethnic and minority peoples by 2015, including their rights to land and access to resources;
- d.) Empower communities to claim their rights by expanding participatory mapping of community land rights, and only then develop land use plans and zoning;
- e.) Through multi-stakeholder processes, set ambitious targets for community ownership of forest lands (e.g. a percentage to be reached by 2015) and develop strategies and plans to achieve those targets. In countries where no forest lands are under community ownership, establish an ambitious target for 2015 for the legal recognition of community owned forest lands. In countries where communities already own some percentage of forest land set a target of at least doubling areas under community ownership by 2015;
- f.) Address constraints to community and small-scale enterprises, markets and trade, and increase percentage of benefits shared from all commercial activities on their lands; towards at least quadrupling community incomes from all forest operations by 2015;and
- g.) Strengthen political will and action to advance forest tenure reforms by regional forest, land and governance institutions, the ITTO and donors, by encouraging their adoption and support for these recommendations and this Objective 2015.