

Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) Activities and Governance Structure

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1. Introduction

The CSAG Governance Group met in Yaoundé, Cameroon in May 2009 during the International Conference on Forest Tenure, Governance, and Enterprise: New Opportunities for Central and West Africa . During these meetings, the Governance Group reviewed the governance structure and mandate of the CSAG and made decisions to strengthen the role and effectiveness of CSAG in the ITTO. The meetings also produced recommendations for new biennial workprogram

This note summarizes the history and current status of the CSAG and the updated governance structure, including institutional membership and leadership. CSAG looks forward to a strengthened structure and role in the ITTO and active involvement in the next bi-ennial workprogram, and action plan, and overall in providing civil society advice and participation to the ITTC.

2. History and Summary of Activities to Date

The ITTO formally established the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) at the 32nd Session in 2001. The original decision 9 (XXVIII) called for the CSAG to organize a panel on sustainable forestry at the next Council session.

In 2002, at the 33rd session in 2002, the Council decided (Decision 2(XXXII)) to: *(a) invite the CSAG to initiate its activities, (b) authorize the Executive Director to publicize the launch CSAG on the ITTO website to attract broader civil society participation in the ITTO (and CSAG) and explore opportunities for CSAG input and participation in Council Sessions in a manner similar to those of the Trade Advisory Group (TAG); (c) encourage CSAG and TAG to collaborate on activities, programs and projects and showcase examples of collaboration between Civil Society and forest concessionaires and industry; (d) invite CSAG to organize a relevant panel session at (each) Council session; and (e) authorized the Executive Director to seek voluntary contributions from Member countries to meet the financial requirement of this Decision, not to exceed US\$ 50,000.*

During the 35th session in 2003, CSAG established a governance structure and clarified its mandate as a body to represent the views of civil society organizations in Council sessions, and increase their participation and input to the implementation of the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA). Its purpose is to provide advice and recommendations at each ITTC session. It organizes panels to bring civil society voices and new thinking to the session. It carries out ad-hoc activities

with the ITTO, such as the Community Forestry Enterprise study and conference, which took place in July 2007.

Its governance structure was established to reflect that it is not a forum to represent specific country interests but a platform to pursue the interests of larger civil society that includes forest communities, and other historically under-represented constituencies including the indigenous peoples and community forest enterprises, in addition to the environmental and development groups. The first governance group consisted of two co-chairs, one each from producer and consumer countries (Andy White, RRI, and Alberto Chinchilla, ACICAFOC), and two focal points from each region of Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Yam Malla, Chen Hin Keong, Mimbimi Parfait, Cleto Ndikumagenge, and Hildebrando Ruffner).

Over the years CSAG has advocated for greater ITTO engagement in, and support of independent certification, addressing illegal logging and trade, supporting payments for ecosystem services, supporting community and small-scale forest enterprises and tenure and policy reforms that recognize indigenous peoples and other forest communities rights. More recently the CSAG has recommended that the ITTO: (a) provide real, robust support to community forestry and policy reform, (b) review and revised the criteria and implementation of projects to make sure that communities are consulted and that their rights are respected, (c) the establishment of funding mechanisms that are directly accessible to communities; and (d) the formal establishment of CSAG with clarification of its role and authority.

CSAG has participated actively in the ITTC Council sessions, as well as in interim sessions, in the elaboration of the ITTO Bi-ennial Workplans and the ITTO five-year Action Plan 2008-2013, organizing panels and presentations at various ITTC sessions including in Republic of Congo in 2005 on roles of African CS in SFM, Merida in 2006 on community forest enterprises, Papua New Guinea in 2006 on country perspectives on the forest industry, Ghana in 2008 on tenure and small-scale enterprise. CSAG jointly conducted an ITTO Workshop on Illegal Logging and Illegal Trade with the Trade Advisory Group (TAG) in 2004, co-organized an International Conference on Community Forest Enterprises in Rio Branco, Brazil in 2007 and an International Conference on Forest Tenure and Governance in Yaoundé, Cameroon in May 2009.

3. Current Activities and Recommendations to ITTO

In June 2009, following the Yaoundé conference, CSAG agreed to help ITTO to implement the recommendations made to the ITTO by participants in the Yaoundé conference, i.e.:

1. Collaborate on the development of guidelines for forest tenure reform;
2. Undertake the necessary efforts to implement the ITTO Thematic Program on Community Forest Management and Enterprises;
3. Develop an agenda to promote gender equity within tenure and forest enterprises;
4. Support the organization of a workshop on the same themes as the Yaoundé;
5. Conference for a group of Asian countries to share experiences and learn from each other on the same theme as the Yaoundé conference.

In addition to the above recommendations to ITTO, CSAG also requests for financial support to bring together the CSAG Governance Group to the next ITTC meeting in Yokohama in November 2009 so that CSAG can deliberate and provide further inputs and ideas to build into the Thematic Programs and Bi-ennial Program. This meeting, which would include organizations from social, environment and development backgrounds, would be able to synthesize and develop a consolidated and synergistic list of inputs and ideas to recommend to ITTO. CSAG also offers our support and

will undertake the necessary efforts to implement relevant aspects within all the ITTO Thematic Programs.

4. Updated Governance Structure and New Leadership

Following the International Conference in Yaoundé, Cameroon in May 2009, the CSAG Governance Group reviewed the current structure and role of CSAG with an aim to revitalizing the governance of CSAG, strengthening its membership, and clarifying the role of CSAG. As per its original mandate, CSAG will continue to advise ITTC on new frontiers, support more robust ITTO engagement with civil society, carry out and bring cutting-edge issues to ITTO members, and build space for civil society and community and small-scale producers to directly engage with the ITTO and its programs.

Governance Group structure: The Governance Group agreed to keep the current structure of one co-chair from consumer and one co-chair from producer countries, and two focal points from each region.

The criteria for membership in leadership positions in the Governance Group: The Yaounde meeting further clarified and detailed the criteria for nomination and selection and includes:

1. Prepared to serve as a volunteer, and not expecting that time on CSAG would be covered by ITTO;
2. Committed to constructive engagement with ITTC and ITTO;
3. Demonstrated knowledge and action in ITTC or ITTO;
4. Committed to advancing community, indigenous peoples, and women's rights agendas as well as trade and conservation in ITTC and ITTO;
5. Committed to advancing the common interests and agendas of CSAG, above and beyond the interests and agendas of own organization; and
6. Committed to increasing gender, indigenous peoples and community organization participation in CSAG governance, and to keeping CSAG governance representative of all civil society agendas, including conservation, sustainable development and trade.

Process of nomination of leadership: Given the strong interest from community and CSO representatives from producer countries, CSAG will allow for community and CSO groups to nominate focal points from each producer country and to formally identify which community organizations and NGOs are "members" of CSAG. The existing Governance Group will vet nominations based on the selection criteria and choose new representatives.

Organizational Affiliation: Organizations would self-nominate, in compliance with the above criteria identified for leadership. To date the list of CSAG "member" organizations includes:

1. RECOFTC
2. IUCN
3. TRAFFIC
4. RRI
5. FPCD
6. ACICAFOC

The participation of representatives from these organizations in ITTO events is to be encouraged, and CSAG encourages ITTO to finance their travel if possible.

***Ex-officio* advisors:** In addition, an “*ex officio*” class of CSAG advisors has been created, comprised of those who have served in leadership positions and have “rotated off” but still are active in ITTO and supportive of its work. RRI was formally requested by the Governance Group to continue providing secretarial services for CSAG and it accepted.

CSAG has the goal of attracting and regularly establishing new leadership, bringing on new voices to reinvigorate CSAG, and finding enthusiastic members who would volunteer their time to take CSAG to the next level. Dedicated regional focal points are needed to actively share and disseminate information from CSAG and ITTO to CSOs across their region. At the same time, former leaders can help advise CSAG and influence ITTC.

New Governance Group: The Yaoundé meeting reviewed nominations for co-chairs and regional focal points and selected a new leadership team. As of July 1, 2009, the new Governance Group is comprised of:

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
Yam Malla, RECOFTC