



FREITAS: IT MAY ACTUALLY BE GOOD THAT NOBODY LIKES CONTROLLED WOOD!

“If nobody is happy, but most can accept the result, then we have found at good compromise” said the Executive Director of FSC Andre de Freitas in his opening speech at the FSC general assembly.

“FSC needs to find compromises between very different and often conflicting interests - this is the basic nature of FSC. Clearly nobody likes the controlled wood requirements, so probably this indicates that we have found a good compromise.”

Freitas was referring to the most debated topic in the corridors and at the side meetings of the FSC General Assembly on Tuesday.

Most NGOs want to get rid of it, many members of Economic Chamber North find the rules to strict and impossible to implement, while some South members of the same chamber find that it should never have been introduced and results in unfair competition.

Shortly before the deadline, compromise motions were prepared by a working group. One motion looks into short-term steps to strengthen the enforcement of the current requirements, while a second motion suggests conducting a feasibility study on the possibility to phase out Controlled Wood in the supply chain.

In contrast to the controlled wood issue, it seems like there’s broad support to motions related to the performance of certification organisations.

A working group with representatives from each of the FSC chambers has been discussing the issue and agreed on modified motions expected to go through to the final voting. These include evaluating certification organisations according to performance indicators, increased intensity of auditing certification bodies with performance issues, and enabling FSC to suspend certificates immediately in case of problems.

Today's highlights:

Key social challenge: creating equitable access to certification
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FSC expands its focus on smallholders and community forests
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FSC chambers update
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NEED FOR EXCLUSION OF WORST PRACTICES IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN

By Søren Dürr Grue, NEPCon

While respecting core ILO conventions is mandatory in FSC forest certification, no such requirements are present in the chain of custody rules applying to the rest of the supply chain. This leaves the consumer with the paradoxical risk of buying an FSC certified product from forestry having high social standards, which might still have been produced under grossly irresponsible conditions further down the chain. At the moment, there are no at least basic procedures or rules to prevent for example the use of child labor among FSC chain of custody certificate holders.

As FSC certification starts to grow in developing countries with an increased risk of such situations, it is becoming increasingly evident that the FSC system should set a limit and prevent worst-case practices also among chain of custody certified companies ultimately protecting companies from potential law suits down the road. This is the right time for FSC to start developing some mechanism for dealing with this issue.



FACILITATING STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN THE FSC SYSTEM

INTERVIEW FSC-Germany
FSC Germany is the organisation behind two projects focusing on stakeholder involvement in the FSC system: “Baltic 2” which is completed and the on-going follow-up project “Baltic 3”. CWU talked to Uwe Sayer, director of FSC Germany and project leader.

How do your projects seek to improve stakeholder involvement?

“There’s a lack of user-friendly materials about the FSC system for stakeholders with limited resources – many NGOs have concerns but do not understand properly how the system works. Our projects are working on that issue in a targeted way”, explains Uwe Sayer, Director of FSC Germany.

“It is in the nature of certification schemes that things will sometimes go wrong on the ground.

Stakeholders of responsible forestry will notice non-compliance with the FSC rules and start to complain. Formally, there is a requirement for certification bodies to involve stakeholders and to address their complaints, but this is not always done in a proper way. The problem is that the stakeholder feels excluded at this point because he doesn’t know where or how to further address his complaint”, says Sayer.

“Recognizing this key problem, we felt that there was a need for a simple paper which could be handed out to stakeholders, saying “this is what you have to do”. Our first project developed a guide for stakeholders on how to participate in the FSC system, including guidance on how to use the FSC complaints system”.

Feedback to FSC

How do your projects feed into the FSC system?

“We have organized two workshops for NGOs, resulting in a long

list of suggestions for improving stakeholder involvement in the FSC system. The list was submitted as input to the FSC governance review, and it is my impression that these inputs are being taken very seriously by FSC”, says Sayer. “Besides, FSC and ASI are already becoming much stricter with certification bodies. It may not be so visible yet to many NGOs, but the past 2-3 years have seen a lot of improvement in the control and enforcement of a higher CB performance level”.

Sayer adds: “Without the NGOs, the FSC system will lose in the long term. It is vital for the system’s credibility that the NGOs play their NGO cards at local level in each country”.

You can view and download the leaflet “Stakeholder involvement in FSC certification – guideline for stakeholders for active participation in FSC certification” in English and other languages at www.stakeholder-involvement.org



The leaflet “Stakeholder involvement in FSC certification” is available in six different languages both online and in a printed version. Go to www.stakeholder-involvement.org



Social issues are key at the Scanco factory in Vietnam.

KEY SOCIAL CHALLENGE: CREATING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO CERTIFICATION

INTERVIEW OF THE DAY

Equitable access, inclusion of core ILO conventions in the supply chain and protection of indigenous and marginalized people's rights are core challenges when looking ahead.

Dual FSC and Fair Trade (FLO) certification

In the opinion of Alan Smith, Social Program manager and Network coordination team leader of FSC International, the FSC system needs to deliver more benefits to the small forest operations. "So the challenge is for us to develop a way to differentiate the community products in the marketplace", says Smith.

"One option is being developed by FSC in collaboration with the Fairtrade Labelling Organisation FLO - "Fairtrade Forest Products". A recent survey by an independent research institution showed that the market for Fairtrade Forest Products exists".

However, Alan Smith points out that this needs to be backed by

capacity building of producers. FSC IC and FLO are about to launch a pilot project, which aims to test the concept of dual FSC-FLO models for cost effective certification".

Core ILO conventions in the CoC system?

"At the moment, FSC does not have a mandate from the membership to implement ILO core requirements in the CoC standards.

However, there are clearly ethical issues and a latent threat to the image of FSC. At the last general assembly held in Manaus, a motion was carried to conduct a feasibility study. The study is now completed. The report is not yet published, but one of the main recommendations based on this work is to incorporate abuse of the ILO conventions in the FSC's Policy of Association, so that CoC certificates could be terminated in case of such abuse.

It will be more complicated to incorporate the ILO core standards into a system designed for traceability only.

Protection of indigenous peoples' rights

"The third issue that needs to be addressed is the protection of indigenous peoples' and marginalized forest populations rights", Smith continues.

"The scope and implementation of Principles 2 and 3 will no doubt become subject to review after the General Assembly.

As we have seen in the session this morning on FSC certification in Africa, the requirement under Principle 3 for concessions to obtain free and informed consent from indigenous groups in the Congo Basin has proved an effective means of ensuring participation of forest peoples in the certification process.

Nevertheless, there needs to be considerable support, not least from certification bodies, for effective application of these two social Principles where clarity of interpretation is often lacking".



FSC LEADERS WELCOME DELEGATES TO THE FOREST CONFERENCE AND REAFFIRM CONTINUED COMMITMENT

FSC welcomed delegates to the first day of the Forest Conference with opening remarks from FSC Board of Directors Chairman Roberto Waack.

Mr. Waack began by extending gratitude to the delegates for participating in the GA and for their overall commitment to FSC. He highlighted the milestones that FSC celebrates at this General Assembly of members, including almost 15 years of vision in action and FSC benchmarks such as 100 million certified hectares, nearly 1000 forest management certificates and more than 10,000 Chain of Custody certificates around the globe.

Acknowledging the complex nature of the FSC system, Mr. Waack

encouraged delegates to continue the commitment with strong focus on raising standards, as well as assuring stability and credibility. Highlighting the implementation of the FSC Global Strategy, released in 2007, he reaffirmed the focus of FSC to provide leadership in responsible forest management; to ensure equitable access to the benefits of FSC; to secure the integrity, credibility and transparency; to create more business value than products from non-certified forests; and to strengthen our global network to deliver these goals.

While highlighting the Global Strategy, Mr. Waack addressed areas where FSC continues to face challenges. Among them he pointed to establishing a solid presence in

Africa, the development of small forest holders and communities, and also how to better facilitate productive dialogue on FSC certified plantations.

“Recognizing our failures is the beginning of the way to fixing the situations that are not properly addressed. I have no doubt that the most important element to address the failures is through the membership participation,” he told delegates.

He noted changes in the forest debate such as issues around carbon, land use, biofuel, environmental services, new financial schemes and new monitoring technology. The best path to prioritize new challenges, he said, was through guidance from the membership at the General Assembly.

As the responsibilities placed upon FSC continue to grow, Mr. Waack encouraged delegates to continue to believe in and support FSC. In closing, he pointed to the opportunities at hand such as embracing the strengths of the FSC system, working constructively with critical feedback and continuing to lead responsible forest management.



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FSC EXPANDS ITS FOCUS ON SMALLHOLDERS AND COMMUNITY FORESTS

In 2008, the FSC International Center expanded considerably its activities related to smallholders and community-based forests.

The purpose was twofold: first, to improve the access of these stakeholders to the benefits of FSC certification, and, second, to expand the supply of FSC-certified dimension lumber and fiber from the large portion of the world's forests that is controlled by smallholders and communities. One part of these activities consisted of a workshop in May 2008 in Lisbon, Portugal, in which more than 60 participants analyzed the challenges and proposed a series of new activities that will be needed to achieve the goals specified above. On November 2nd and 3rd more than 100 FSC members and other participants in the General Assembly gathered to follow up on the recommendations that had emerged from the "Lisbon Process for smallholders and community forests" that the May meeting had set in motion

The GA Side Event was divided into two sessions. The first part focused on analyses and other new work that has taken place since the Lisbon meeting. The second session focused on two principal topics: prioritizing further activities to encourage smallholder certification, and work on GA motions that could



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Forest workers logging for the COATLAHL cooperative in Honduras.

affect smallholders and community forests. The key activities for future attention that emerged from this second session include two that are underway and three that should be initiated:

- a. Create a new working group to review, clarify, and propose changes in standards for Small and Low-intensity Managed Forests (SLIMFs);
- b. Create a new working group on greater flexibility in approaches to group certification structures;
- c. Continue to develop user-friendly information for small-holders, community-based forests, and other less-sophisticated players in the FSC system;

- d. Work on providing more training and training materials for improve the capacity of group managers, group CoC operators, and auditors; and

- e. Continue to pursue improved market access through linking community-based and small-scale forests to Fair Trade and other distinguishing mechanisms in the marketplace.

The final work on GA motions led to the creation of a 9-person, 3-chamber working group that will provide guidelines for immediate use in seeking modifications to proposed motions so that they respond better to the perceived needs of smallholders and community forests.



Can FSC improve and ensure strict implementation of the existing CW system? If CW is phased out, what is the suitable timeframe? How will this impact FSC markets? Is there a better alternative to CW?

WILL CONTROLLED WOOD MAKE OR BREAK FSC?

SIDE MEETING REPORT

Controlled Wood has been one of the key topics during the first days of the FSC General Assembly. The results of motions proposed on this issue will have critical impact on the development of the FSC system for years to come.

The concept of FSC Controlled Wood (CW) was first introduced in 2004 along with the FSC credit system. The credit system allows utilization of FSC certified raw material by companies such as pulp mills and particle board producers, for whom physical separation of certified from non-certified material during processing is complicated or impossible. The purpose of the CW concept is to avoid the most controversial types of material from products carrying the FSC-mixed labels.

Growth and setbacks

While the introduction of CW along with the credit system has enabled fast growth of FSC certificates,

the success has not come without setbacks. Superficial implementation and weak enforcement of the CW requirements has resulted in very controversial fibers entering into FSC labeled products.

FSC has taken several steps to improve the rigour of the CW system including revision of the CW standard in 2006, publication of an advice note in April 2008 and requesting ASI to put more focus on certifiers' performance. In parallel, additional evidence on misuse of the CW system has been uncovered. This has led Greenpeace and others to propose abolishing the CW concept and mixed production options from the FSC system. However, the possible return to a scenario where only products made entirely from FSC certified raw material can be FSC labeled creates concern among economic stakeholders.

Stakeholder concerns

For many companies, this would mean exclusion from FSC system

until all raw material can be sourced as certified. The time period when this becomes a reality is uncertain, especially in Europe where a large share of raw material originates from small operations with smaller incentive to get certified. Different opinions have also emerged within the same chamber. For example, Northern members of the economic chamber are more interested in maintaining CW than their Southern counterparts, as CW is not used very much in the South.

Can FSC improve and ensure strict implementation of the existing CW system? If CW is phased out, what is the suitable timeframe? How will this impact FSC markets? Is there a better alternative to CW? These are only some of the very challenging questions facing the global FSC community during this assembly. Hopefully, the delegates will once again demonstrate respect and cooperation to come up with balanced answers.



Prior to the final voting on motions by the FSC General Assembly on Thursday and Friday, all FSC chambers are busy discussing and prioritizing the motions.

DEMOCRACY - THE FSC WAY

FSC as a consensus seeking organisation has developed a very advanced system for submitting and voting on motions at the FSC general assembly. The purpose of the voting procedures is to ensure that no interest group can dominate the decision making process.

All FSC members are divided into 3 chambers – the environmental, social and economic chamber, according to their background. In order for a motion to be approved, it needs to have more than 2/3 of all votes and more than 50 pct in each chamber.

Thus, one chamber will not be able to push motions through without support from other chambers. This system forces all interest groups to negotiate and seek compromises with stakeholders from the two other chambers. This ensures broad support for all proposals accepted by the General Assembly.

FSC CHAMBERS UPDATE

CHAMBER MEETINGS REPORT:

Prior to the final voting on motions by the FSC General Assembly on Thursday and Friday, all FSC chambers are busy discussing and prioritizing the motions submitted by stakeholders, and already started negotiating with the other chambers.

Environmental Chamber

The environmental chamber includes the strong global NGOs WWF and Greenpeace, who often take the lead in discussions. The chamber went through the entire list of motions and voted on them – or decided if further clarification is needed. Then the motions were grouped according to topics. Chamber working groups have been established to deal with motions covering governance, controlled wood, CB performance

and smallholder certification, areas considered as top priorities for the chamber.

Social chamber

This is the smallest FSC chamber and does not possess the resources and global drivers known from the two other chambers. Furthermore, the chamber includes a very broad range of stakeholders ranging from trade unions to community organisations and indigenous peoples' organisations. A key topic for the chamber is to ensure a more active involvement of indigenous peoples' organisations including a motion to rewrite principle 3 covering indigenous peoples' rights. Other key topics are motions related to certification of small private operations and community forests as well as including social issues in Chain of Custody certification.

Economic chamber

With 32 motions submitted, the Economic Chamber has proposed than half of the total number of motions submitted for this general assembly. Many motions are submitted by companies or organisations with specific technical problems to fulfil certain FSC requirements, e.g. related to controlled wood and pesticide use. Controlled wood is the absolute top priority for the economic chamber, however internally opinions are divided over the issue: most companies from the South want to strengthen or phase out these rules, while most Northern companies find the rules much too strict. The second priority of the economic chamber is FSC and carbon, and the third concerns the role of FSC National Initiatives.

RAINFOREST OR BROCCOLI?



A



B

A is the broccoli B is the rainforest

DID YOU KNOW?

- Table Mountain towers 1,000m above the sea, surrounding Cape Town on three sides
- Cape Town houses more than 107 libraries
- The SA apartheid state lasted from 1910 to 1994
- After being released in 1990, Nelson Mandela made a speech of his hopes for an apartheid-free South Africa at Cape Town City Hall
- Cape Towns population density is 1,425 people per square kilometre (3,689/sq mi)

IF YOU WERE A TREE, WHICH SPECIES WOULD YOU BE?



Charles Thwaites
FSC UK

An oak tree

- I have always been fond of the great oaks, they are one of the few native English trees.



Ali Kriscenski
FSC International

A tamarac

- Unique because it looks like a typical evergreen, but is a deciduous conifer that sheds its needles each autumn

	6		1	4		5	
		8	3		5	6	
2							1
8			4	7			6
		6				3	
7			9	1			4
5							2
		7	2	6	9		
	4		5	8		7	

Tree quote of the day

He that plants trees loves others beside himself.

- Thomas Fuller (1654 - 1734)

The Sudoku puzzle is a fun Japanese logic game. Fill in the grid so that all nine rows, all nine column, and every single 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. No number can be used twice.



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