

18 May 2017

Report on ICFPA Session - 16 May 20178 - Berlin

The document “Celebrating 15 years of ICFPA” achievements was tabled. It documents the development of policy statements, sustainability reports, and the integration with the UN FAO. Some 35 countries are directly involved or represented and the document is a great testimony to the maturing of the organisation.

<http://www.icfpa.org/uploads/Modules/Publications/icfpa15years.pdf>

Summary of the activities over the last year

The annual activity report was also tabled. Key points:

- Numerous international fora engaged with, including engagement with the World Business Council and participation in the Climate Change Conference of the Parties meeting in Morocco (www.icfpa.org/mediaroom/56/23/ICFPA-Newsletter_Issue-15)
- The establishment of the Blue Skies Innovator’s award
- A workers safety meeting in Washington

Sustainability Report

A profile of the global industry was also tabled. This had been completely revamped from last year. It covers topics such as sustainably managed hectares, recovered and recycled fibre, investing in workers and communities, innovation and providing environmental management (water, CO₂, energy intensity). There is generally a trend of improvement globally, although in some areas we appear to be approaching some limits i.e. recycling in Japan is at 80%. This report can be found on the ICFPA website - <http://www.icfpa.org/uploads/Modules/Publications/2017-icfpa-sustainability-report.pdf>.

There is a weakness in that we don’t have data from China and Russian and South Korea. Nonetheless, there is a story to tell.

It is proposed to try and make more mileage out of this with an event timed for International Paper Week in November in Brussels, rather than relying on press releases.

I recommended that it also be directed at non-paper audiences and there is a sustainable wood event being organised by the UN FAO which it was agreed would be ideal for broadcasting this report (17/18 October).

Purpose

A review of the purpose of the ICFPA was undertaken by a working group and differs somewhat from the Mission Statement (the what). The purpose (why we exist) – To benefit global society through collaboration with industry, government and non-governmental organisations on public policies that facilitate the manufacture of sustainable products from virgin and recycled forest-based resources that meet human needs for information, packaging, housing, hygiene, energy and other innovative products - something of a mouthful and it relies on “benefit global society” to capture all aspects of sustainability, but is well supported.

Communication

A session explored ways of trying to achieve a broader reach, and in particular greater involvement of the full ICFPA group than just the Steering Group countries. A PowerPoint presentation was delivered to the group from Brazil. A question was also raised about the extent to which members of the respective associations may find his information beneficial. I reported on the initiatives that New Zealand has taken through Don Carson to establish a forest journalism award. This was enthusiastically received and I suspect will be replicated elsewhere.

Top Issues

An interesting exercise for all participants to comment on their one key issue:

South Africa	-Wood for energy
USA	Carbon neutrality / trade policy. Recently had a win where wood considered carbon neutral. Renegotiation of NAFTA high on the agenda
New Zealand	New planting in line with government desire for afforestation and biosecurity
Japan	Energy – nuclear energy being phased out so the alternative sources become a concern for industry
Brazil	Labour reform. Biggest number of companies in court for workers’ rights issues in the world. Political crisis is improving, but economic crisis is deepening
Europe (Germany)	Energy. The cost of renewable energy
UK	Brexit. What will be the policies on water, climate change, and trade. A lot of uncertainty
Europe (Finland)	Positive. Increased government/industry investment. Collective agreements are old-fashioned and an issue



Chile	Forest fires. Huge fire last year (400,000 ha burnt!). ENGO pressure has increased as a consequence.
Russia	Biofuel a growth industry (pellet and briquettes) but financial investment is a constraint
Sweden	Climate change
France	New government. Macron expected to be more business friendly and labour market reformed. Pro digital leaning of the president, but there is a concern this could lead to unfortunate messaging around paper
CEFI	Energy / climate. Defining the operating environment going forward. Access to raw material – virgin fibre, recycled paper – a paper industry concern

Blue Skies Award

A reminder of the objective - to remove perceptions of the industry being staid and old-fashioned – and young and innovative. 2 candidates submitted by New Zealand. Judges included Mike Wingfield. The committee watched the video of the three leading candidates (Japan Oji Fibre – nano solutions); France (forest monitoring and measurement); Brazil (nano solutions).

I questioned the length and focus of the videos which ranged from 8 to 12 minutes and concentrated on the innovative research not the researcher. It was acknowledged that we have to appeal outside the industry, but the group is also interested in seeing forestry CEOs as an audience to be informed by new research.

There will be lessons to be learned but overall everyone agreed it was a very good initiative.

Workers Safety

There is a strong universal interest in sharing information on the survey ICFPA carried out in February 2017. Some comments arising from the discussion:

- Workers are equally responsible for safety
- Not all countries have specific policies on worker safety
- Certification may have a role, but along with the US, I cautioned about relying on FSC, PEFC or ISO to help resolve these issues

The suggestion is that we share safety alerts internationally or possibly on a member only part of the website. FAO are also going to look at what they might be able to do in collecting data internationally.



Certification

- i. FSC – Preparations underway for the General Assembly in Vancouver. ICFPA is now a member of FSC. Brazil invited the Northern Economic Chamber to a meeting and later Social and Environmental chapters. The intent was to develop motions for the GA under the new rule that motions must be supported by all three chambers. So motions 25 economic, 24 Social, 11 Environment (Intact Forest)
For CEPI there are 2 contentious issues – the Intact Forest Landscapes (IFL) and controlled wood.
Proposed that a working group be established.
Brazil is having a meeting in July to determine what the priority motions are for the Economic Chamber.
- ii. ISO – CEPI raised an ongoing concern with the ISO initiative around a tension between the paper industry and the printing industry and a letter is being sent to ISO requesting it be sorted out.



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