

# **Dialogue on Forest Certification: Maximizing Potential from Lessons Learned**

## *Co-Chairmen's Summary*

**October 16-18, 2002  
Geneva, Switzerland**

**Convened by The Forests Dialogue (TFD)**

TFD Co-Chairs:

Nigel Sizer - The Nature Conservancy

Scott Wallinger - MeadWestvaco Corporation

Facilitated by the Meridian Institute with support from Yale University's  
Global Institute of Sustainable Forestry and the Program on Forest Certification

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On October 16-18 2002, The Forests Dialogue (TFD) convened a meeting in Geneva, Switzerland on forest certification (hereafter referred to as the Geneva Dialogue).<sup>\*</sup> To our knowledge this was the first time such a broad, international cross-section of forest certification leadership and advocacy met for informal discussion to achieve the following objectives:

- Share aspirations and strengthen working relationships.
- Discuss the goals of forest certification programs and the success or inability of existing programs to achieve their goals.
- Identify and explore how to apply lessons learned from the first ten years or more of experience with forest certification.

The Geneva Dialogue participants recognize and respect the important and legitimate value differences that exist within society regarding the complex subject of sustainable forest management and certification. While attendees in the Geneva Dialogue participated as individuals, rather than official spokespersons of their organizations, many important perspectives were represented at the meeting. These include several of the most prominent forest certification programs, forest products companies from Europe, North America and South America, non-industrial forest landowners from Europe and North America, social and environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) based in Asia, Europe, and North America, an international trade union, a prominent retailer of consumer products that depends on forest products, foundations that fund forest certification, and academic experts in the field.

As Co-Chairmen of this meeting, we prepared this summary to convey our understanding of the conclusions and accomplishments of this informal event. Soon, a more detailed summary will be prepared and made available. Given the nature of the groundrules that were used for this facilitated dialogue, and out of respect for the formal decision-making processes of forest certification programs in particular, the statements and conclusions contained in this document should not be interpreted as binding commitments or obligations on the part of the home organizations of the meeting participants. Rather, it is our sense that the participants in the Geneva Dialogue are personally committed to acting on the ideas and informal conclusions of this meeting. A list of meeting participants is attached. While this list includes the organizational affiliations of the attendees, we include these affiliations for the sole purpose of clearly identifying the meeting participants.

The Geneva Dialogue participants believe forest certification is a powerful tool that has and will continue to play an important role in our collective efforts to make tangible progress toward the *shared goal of sustainable forest management*. They affirmed the value of continuing the constructive dialogue that was initiated in Geneva and intend to continue action-oriented, multi-stakeholder processes, with the following objectives:

1. Continue to build positive working relationships among the leaders, users (forest land owners, producers, processors, and retailers), stakeholders, and implementers of forest certification programs.
2. Develop a compelling vision and partnerships that will lead to improvements in forest certification programs and contribute to these programs achieving their potential globally.

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<sup>\*</sup> For more information on the meeting, please contact one of the people listed on the last page of this document. For more information on The Forest Dialogue please see <http://research.yale.edu/gisf/tfd> and the attached list of Steering Committee members.

3. Gain greater understanding of the themes that emerged from the Geneva Dialogue. This requires moving beyond anecdotal information to more systematic sharing of experience. It will also require a better understanding of the similarities and differences between forest certification programs, and the identification of lessons learned from the development and implementation of forest certification with the aim of applying these lessons to the improvement of all forest certification programs. Some of the major themes that were discussed in the Geneva Dialogue include the following:
  - The relationship between forest certification and other institutions that are essential to moving toward the shared goal of sustainable forest management. Participants agreed that a more complete and thorough understanding was needed of the institutional contexts within which forest certification programs are being developed and implemented. Important lessons can and should be learned about how forest certification can be used to reinforce rather than detract from the important role that other institutions (including governments, laws and regulations, universities and other capacity building institutions) should play in creating a more sustainable future.
  - In the North America and Europe, one or more of the certification systems appear to have certified most of the more easily certifiable industrial forestland. While certification of the much larger population of private, non-industrial forest owners has been prominent in Europe and, to a lesser extent, the United States, it will require much more creative and collaborative efforts among private and other institutions to work with non-industrial forest landowners to provide supporting information and services to promote improved practices, make the case for the value of certification, and provide low-cost means of certification.
  - In the developing world, significant progress in forest certification will require more creative and collaborative efforts to develop the legal, research, and educational institutional capacities that provide the context within which forest certification can be used to help improve forest management practices.
  - A more nuanced and refined qualitative and quantitative analysis of the business case for forest certification is needed. Third-party certification will continue to be an important element of marketing industrial forest products. Product labeling may be more important for smaller producers who have less name recognition and who sell through channels where the retailer itself is not the primary “brand.” However, a growing number of parties will pursue certification as a means to demonstrate they are practicing forestry under locally and more broadly acceptable terms.
  - Exploration of a broader, more ambitious vision for certification that goes far beyond the capacity of any of the existing systems to address the challenges of forest management globally and the role that wood fiber and other renewable resources from forests can and should play in a sustainable future.

Participants in the Geneva Dialogue believe the issues outlined above must be addressed if forest certification programs are to achieve their full potential as a means of promoting sustainable forest management.

While the diversity of participation in the Geneva Dialogue was broad, some interests and regions were not represented as strongly as we would like if we are to achieve the objectives outlined above. A preliminary assessment of the stakeholders that should be better represented in future steps of the multi-stakeholder process that was initiated in Geneva include:

- More stakeholders from developing countries who are involved in creating and supporting sustainable forest management and certification programs, as well as the sources of development capital that are assisting in these efforts.
- Social and environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that share the overarching goal of sustainable forest management and are willing to contribute constructively to the objectives outlined above.
- More and different scales of businesses that purchase and sell products that are dependent upon wood and wood fiber.
- Governmental and inter-governmental organizations that share and are willing to contribute to the above objectives for forest certification.

Questions about the Geneva Dialogue and the multi-stakeholder process described in this summary document should be addressed to the Co-Chairs of TFD and the Geneva Dialogue – Nigel Sizer of The Nature Conservancy and Scott Wallinger of MeadWestvaco; the TFD Secretariat – Gary Dunning of Yale University's Global Institute of Sustainable Forestry; or Tim Mealey of the Meridian Institute, who served as facilitator of the Geneva Dialogue. Contact information of these individuals can be found following the attached list of attendees.

## **Participant List**

**Nigel Sizer** - The Nature Conservancy (*TFD and Geneva Dialogue Co-Chair*)  
**Scott Wallinger** - MeadWestvaco Corporation (*TFD and Geneva Dialogue Co-Chair*)  
**Mubariq Ahmad** - University of Indonesia and World Wildlife Fund – Indonesia  
**Steve Bass** - International Institute for Environment and Development  
**Hank Cauley** - Innovative Environmental Technologies, Inc.  
**Michael Conroy** - Ford Foundation  
**Joseph Crochet** - Confederation of European Forest Owners  
**Linda Delgado** - World Resources Institute  
**Richard Donovan** - Rainforest Alliance  
**Chris Elliott** - World Wildlife Fund International  
**James Griffiths** - World Business Council for Sustainable Development  
**Ben Gunneberg** - Pan European Forest Certification Council  
**Claes Hall** - Aracruz Celulose S.A.  
**Timo Heikka** - Stora Enso Oyj  
**Olav Henriksén** - UPM-Kymmene Corporation  
**Peter Johnson** - Canadian Standards Association International  
**Rachel Jordan** - Certified Tree Farmer, American Tree Farm System  
**Thomas Jorling** - International Paper Company  
**Tage Klingberg** - University of Gävle and Forest Landowner  
**Heikko Leideker** - Forest Stewardship Council International  
**Martin Lillandt** - Finnish Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners  
**Thor Lobben** - Norske Skog Industrier  
**Errol Meidinger** - State University of New York, Buffalo Law School  
**Michael Northrop** - Rockefeller Brothers Fund  
**Carlton Owen** - Sustainable Forestry Board of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative  
**Cassie Phillips** - Weyerhaeuser Company  
**Simon Rietbergen** - IUCN – World Conservation Union  
**Carlos Alberto Roxo** - Aracruz Celulose S.A.  
**Robert Simpson** - American Tree Farm System  
**Clifford Schneider** – MeadWestvaco Corporation  
**Christer Segersteen** - Swedish Forest Owners Association  
**Justin Stead** - Global Forest and Trade Network  
**William Street, Jr.** – International Federation Of Building and Wood Workers  
**Gudmund Vollbrecht** - IKEA  
**Paul Wooding** - Canadian Forest Products Ltd.

### **Geneva Dialogue Support , Research and Facilitation Team**

**Benjamin Cashore** - Program on Forest Certification, Yale University  
**Gary Dunning** - Global Institute of Sustainable Forestry, Yale University  
**Tim Mealey** - Meridian Institute  
**Emily Noah** - Program on Forest Certification, Yale University  
**Shawn Walker** - Meridian Institute

### The Forests Dialogue Steering Committee

Nigel Sizer	(Co-Chairman) The Nature Conservancy, Indonesia
Scott Wallinger	(Co-Chairman) MeadWestvaco, USA
Mubariq Ahmad	World Wildlife Fund, Indonesia
Steve Bass	International Institute for Environment and Development, UK
Linda Delgado	World Resources Institute, USA
Kerstin Canby	The World Bank, USA
Joseph Crochet	European Confederation of Private Forest Owners, Luxemborg
Claes Hall	Aracruz Celulose, Brazil/Sweden
Olav Henriksén	UPM-Kymmene, Finland
Thomas Jorling	International Paper Company, USA
Thor Lobben	Norske Skog, Norway
Tage Klingberg	University of Gävle, Sweden
Stewart McGinnis	IUCN - World Conservation Union , Switzerland
Cassie Phillips	Weyerhaeuser, USA
Gisbert Schlemmer	Intl. Confederation of Building and Wood Workers, Germany
Robert Simpson	American Forest Foundation (Tree Farm System), USA
Justin Stead	Global Forest Trade Network, UK
Changjin Sun	Livelong Environment Corporation, China
Justin Ward	Conservation International, USA
Alexey Yaroshenko	Greenpeace, Russia
Gary Dunning	TFD Secretariat, Global Inst. of Sustainable Forestry, Yale University, USA

**For more information, please contact:**

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