

Government Initiative Aims to Increase Support for Sustainable Forest Management

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STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- The ‘Vancouver Invitation on Forest Products for a Better Future’ calls for recognizing and promoting the value of sustainably produced wood products as “environmentally friendly materials with which to build the future”.
- The Invitation states that forests and their sustainable management can have a “positive impact on most if not all SDGs,” and describes the contribution of forests to many Goals.

Government officials and representatives from the wood products and construction sectors and civil society have supported the ‘Vancouver Invitation on Forest Products for a Better Future.’ The Vancouver Invitation is a statement of intent that aims to create a larger community of stakeholders in support of sustainable forest management (SFM), maintaining forests and creating sustainable forest value chains for achieving the SDGs. Canada developed the Invitation (ECE/TIM/2018/3) with input and support from the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) countries. Governments, industry representatives and civil society then endorsed the Invitation at the 76th Session of the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI), which convened in Vancouver, Canada, from 5-9 November. In the Invitation, COFFI member States invite others to recognize and promote the value of sustainably produced wood products as “environmentally friendly materials with which to build the future.” The Invitation argues that the view of the wood products sector as a sector with negative environmental impacts and decreasing economic benefits is “seriously outdated.” Instead, the Invitation emphasizes the “essential role” of the forest product sector in the planet’s future, explaining that traditional and innovative wood products and applications, when combined with SFM techniques, can provide environmental, economic and social benefits.

Traditional and innovative wood products and applications can provide environmental, economic and social benefits. The Invitation describes the benefits of forests, ranging from air purification and biodiversity conservation to clean water and carbon storage, among many others. The Invitation states that forests and their sustainable management can have a “positive impact on most if not all SDGs.” As an illustration, forests can contribute to provision of renewable energy under SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), invigoration of rural economies and communities in forested areas under SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), efficient and innovative processing techniques and products under SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), incorporation of socially and environmentally responsible practices using circular production chains under SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) and afforestation and reforestation under SDG 15 (life on land), among other SDGs. The Invitation further outlines the contributions of forests to SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and SDG 13 (climate action). In a press release, the UNECE further elaborates on how the global forest products sector has continued to grow in the northern hemisphere while simultaneously increasing carbon stock. For example, coniferous forests have provided one billion cubic meters of wood annually while increasing their carbon stock. According to the UNECE, one cubic meter of wood stores the equivalent of one tonne of carbon dioxide (CO₂), which is stored over the lifetime of trees and then in wood that is used as long lasting wood products. [UNECE Press Release on Vancouver Invitation] [UNECE Press Release on Carbon Storage in Wood] [Vancouver Invitation].

SOURCE:-<http://sdg.iisd.org/news/government-initiative-aims-to-increase-support-for-sustainable-forest-management/>