



FSC gives indigenous people a voice in forestry solutions

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To give a voice to Indigenous Peoples on the continued management and preservation of the world's forests, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) has established the FSC Indigenous Foundation. Source: Timberbiz

The Foundation is an extension of FSC's commitment to working with Indigenous Peoples to find solutions for the sustainable management of forests. It is a strategic and operative unit established to develop creative and innovative solutions to support Indigenous communities and enable them to build and guide the sustainable management of their land.

For supporting Indigenous Peoples, the Foundation will adapt an Indigenous cultural landscapes approach. This approach was developed by FSC in 2016, to acknowledge the social, cultural and economic value of Indigenous land. The approach appreciates the enduring relationship of Indigenous Peoples with the land, water, fauna and flora, and their spiritual significance to cultural identity, knowledge and livelihoods.

FSC's commitment to working with Indigenous Communities is part of its DNA and has always been central to its work. This commitment became explicit in 2011, with the establishment of the FSC Permanent Indigenous Peoples Committee, an advisory unit to the FSC board of directors, to ensure the voice of Indigenous Peoples is heard at FSC's decision-making level.

FSC Director General, Kim Carstensen explained that FSC's decades of experience were proof that Indigenous communities were one of the most important factors for the sustainable management of forests.

"I'm delighted that FSC's Indigenous members have wanted to come together with us to facilitate the establishment of this unique Foundation. It is Indigenous led and Indigenous governed and has a very strong link with FSC. For me, this is a major opportunity for forest-dependent Indigenous Peoples worldwide and is a breakthrough for FSC's mission and our global strategic plan, which is deliberately designed with Indigenous input at its core," Mr Carstensen said.

The Indigenous Foundation is headed by Francisco Souza, who is an Indigenous person himself with decades of experience working with environmental and Indigenous organizations particularly in Latin America. Souza aims to use his experience working with Indigenous communities across over 70 million hectares of Amazon rainforest to ensure increased Indigenous engagement in creating and leading sustainable forest-based solutions across the globe.

"We expect to increase the degree of engagement of Indigenous Peoples in the FSC certification system in a more strategic way by creating Indigenous community models with long-term safeguards for their rights and improved access to markets. At the same time, we will develop tools and promote business partnerships to improve forest management and income in indigenous cultural landscapes" Mr Souza said.

The results of the initiatives and projects carried out by the Foundation will strengthen the mission and long-term objectives of FSC to promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.

The FSC Indigenous Foundation is headquartered in Panama. The Permanent Indigenous Peoples Committee will continue its role as advisor to FSC's Board of Directors, and its activities will be serviced by the Indigenous Foundation.

Source: <https://www.timberbiz.com.au/fsc-gives-indigenous-people-a-voice-in-forestry-solutions/>