

conventional wood products and novel emerging products such as engineered wood products and mass timber.

With global demand for wood products projected to grow by 37% between 2020 and 2050, FGTs in planted forests are expected to meet most of this increased demand. It is estimated that an additional 33 million hectares of highly productive plantations may be needed by 2050 to close the "wood gap."

FGTs contribute significantly to climate change mitigation by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. They also improve livelihoods for rural communities, contributing to poverty reduction, and deliver various environmental services that support sustainable food systems and enhanced resilience. However, realizing these benefits depends on a proper understanding of FGTs' characteristics and their suitability to different ecosystems.

Scientific advancements are crucial in advancing the bioeconomy, particularly in Africa. These include genetic improvements for increased productivity and resilience; remote sensing and monitoring technologies; improved forest modeling; mixed-species research; and pest and disease management strategies.

The International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment (IPC), placed within the FAO framework, help countries grow sustainable wood, ensure plant and environmental protection, and improve livelihoods. The Commission brings together policy and science to support FAO Member Countries in responsibly and sustainably expanding the management of fast-growing forests and trees.

This collaboration is further enhanced by interdisciplinary networks like IUFRO, which facilitate knowledge sharing and cooperation among scientists, practitioners, and stakeholders worldwide. Through these efforts, sustainable management practices are being developed that balance productivity with environmental and social concerns in planted forests.

In Africa, where population growth and urbanization are rapidly increasing the demand for wood products, FGTs can play a crucial role in developing a sustainable, forest-based bioeconomy. By focusing on appropriate species selection, improved genetics, and sustainable management practices, African countries can leverage FGTs to meet their wood product needs while addressing concerns about biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The IPC, along with its partners, is well-positioned to support African countries in developing and implementing strategies for sustainable FGT management. This includes facilitating the exchange of knowledge and genetic materials, developing guidance frameworks and standards, supporting policy reviews, and piloting specific technologies tailored to African contexts.

The Wood for Globe Project

Following the Ministerial Call on Sustainable Wood launched in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in 2022 during the XV World Forestry Congress, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management (BML) engaged with the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the Centre for Bioeconomy at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU) through the WOOD for GLOBE project. Acknowledging the wealth of experiences accumulated in countries, international organizations, research centers, and private companies, **the project's primary goal is to promote systematic knowledge and policy exchanges, including through the establishment of a Global Wood Policy Platform to support the increased use of sustainable wood with a view to creating a carbon-neutral bioeconomy worldwide.**

In July 2024, at the policy dialogue "WOOD for GLOBE: Leading Pathways to Carbon Neutrality and Resilience", high-level forest officials took stock of progress on sustainable wood as a viable pathway to carbon-neutral and resilient societies. The event generated a common statement to renew and broaden country commitments to implementing sustainable wood pathways and to join forces to promote enhanced policy and technical dialogue and exchange among producer and consumer countries and key stakeholders. It was signed by five countries, nine Heads of Forestry and technical experts, and seven organizations and initiatives. In this statement, signatories recognize that the "benefits delivered by sustainable wood products are dependent on the sustainable management of natural resources and, therefore, efforts to promote increased use of wood must be accompanied by sustainable forest management, sustainable land-use planning and management, increased reforestation, forest restoration, afforestation and tree planting, as well as enhanced efficiency in forest management, harvesting, and processing of trees.

Objectives of the Dialogue

Assess policy and science guiding expansion of sustainable wood use as part of the bioeconomy through facilitating exchange of perspectives and lessons learned on opportunities, challenges, and pathways to increase access to and benefits from FGTs in the context of the transition to the Bioeconomy in Africa.

Agenda

Moderation: Faustine Zoveda, Forestry Officer, Forestry Division, FAO

- **Background and introduction** (5 minutes) – Thais Linhares-Juvenal, Secretary of the IPC and Senior Advisor Governance, Economics and Production, Forestry Division, FAO
- **Keynote address** (15 minutes) – H.E. Rosalie Matondo, Ministry of Forest Economy of Republic of [Congo](#)
- Q&A (5 minutes)
- **Panel discussion:** Challenges, opportunities and the way forward for upscaling FGT for wood production
 - **Needs and opportunities for wood production from FGT in Africa**, facilitated Giuseppe Nervo – Chair IPC Working Party Policy (5 minutes)
 - **Uganda** (10 minutes), Issa Katwesige, Assistant Commissioner, Planning and Development, Forest Sector Support Department, Ministry of Water and Environment
 - **Ghana** (10 minutes), Mr. Gordon Kofi Sarfo-Adu, Corporate Planning Manager, Forestry Commission
 - **Kenya** (10 minutes), George Muthike (PhD), Deputy Director, Forest Products and Entrepreneurship Development, Kenya Forestry Research Institute
 - Q&A and discussion on **contributions of FGT to bioeconomy, research and policy gaps**, facilitated by Joris van Acker, Chair of the IPC Working Party "Production" and Laboratory of Wood Technology, Ghent University, Belgium (20 minutes)
- **Summary and launch of Unasylyva French version** (5 minutes) – Faustine Zoveda, Forestry Officer

- **Conclusion and closure** (5 minutes) – Thais Linhares-Juvenal

Expected outcomes

Increased understanding of the gaps and opportunities to foster sound, responsible and resilient upscaling of the sustainable wood production and use in Africa, including concrete actions and priority FGT species for IPC to engage.

Participants

All participants to the IPC Plenary Session and associated Technical Sessions are welcome to attend. The audience will be constituted of government officers, researchers, development partners, private sector players and others involved in the management of FGTs globally.