

FOREST LEGALITY WEEK 2021

June 22 – 24, 2021 | Online meeting

Event Summary

The Forest Legality Initiative, a project of the World Resources Institute (WRI), convened partners and stakeholders in June 2021 in an online event, to share information and advance dialogue related to the international trade in timber. The three-day event drew more than 400 attendees from 39 countries. Topics addressed included the impact of the pandemic on timber supply chains and due diligence processes, in particular for small and medium enterprises (SMEs); demand-side policies for forest and commodity supply chains; updates on recent developments in Vietnam; and new early warning deforestation alerts. Side events held before the start and after the close of the main event included a presentation on measuring illegal logging and associated trade in Peru, a presentation on a new report assessing the extent and nature of illegal deforestation for commercial agriculture, a discussion on leveraging the outdoor community to stop timber theft, and a presentation on bringing science-based traceability to forest-connected supply chains. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) provided generous support for the event. Below is a summary of the conference presentations and discussions. The recordings and presentations from the sessions can be found [here](#).

Tuesday, June 22, 2021

Welcome & Event opening

Opening statements were given by **Charles “Chip” Barber**, *Director of WRI’s Forest Legality Initiative* and **Alicia Grimes**, *Natural Resource Officer and Senior Forestry Advisor at USAID’s Center for Energy, Environment and Innovation, Natural Climate Solutions Division*. Mr. Barber welcomed participants to the first online format of Forest Legality Week (FLW) and presented the agenda for the day. Ms. Grimes then highlighted the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on indigenous peoples and other forest guardians, as well as the impact of commercial agriculture on deforestation, especially in Brazil, Indonesia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. She also spoke about the challenges of meeting legal requirements for the logging industry, in part due to data issues and the translation of regulations into local languages.

Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on due diligence

Moderator: Guillermo Navarro, Coordinator of the FAO-EU-FLEGT Program in Latin America

Panelists:

Rupert Oliver, Director, Forest Industries Intelligence

Joe O’Donnell, Director, Government and Public Affairs, International Wood Products Association

Dan Wackerman, President & CEO, John A. Steer Company

Rob Shaw, Technical Manager, Soil Association Certification

Guillermo Navarro opened the first session of FLW by presenting the opportunities resulting from the increased number of home improvement projects during the pandemic and construction of new homes in the second half

of 2020. However, he also mentioned that timber companies are facing shortages in materials, supplies, and personnel. He then introduced the four panelists and explained that their presentations would focus on logistics and production factors; the flow of timber and what this means for consumers; how travel restrictions have affected audits, legal enforcement, and compliance; and private sector responses to this situation.

Rupert Oliver delivered the presentation, "[Global Wood Products Trade in the Context of FLEGT & COVID](#)," on behalf of the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Independent Market Monitor. Mr. Oliver shared the current situation in Indonesia's timber trade flows into the EU as well as the current global context of the FLEGT policy processes, including an analysis of the state of VPA (Voluntary Partnership Agreement) negotiations and implementation in Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Mr. Oliver indicated that the advantages of the FLEGT process and its clear focus on timber and forest products, scale, and engagement should not be forgotten. He shared statistics related to the evolution of the global tropical forest trade over the past four years, highlighting that, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the value of exports in 2020 was still higher than in 2019. He attributed this, in part, to increases in prices and demand and the corresponding increase in exports from Vietnam to the U.S. Meanwhile, exports from Indonesia and Vietnam during this period account for nearly 50 percent of the entire global export value, and Cameroon is the greatest African exporter of tropical wood products. He noted that all these countries have been involved in the FLEGT-VPA processes.

On the consumer side, the impact of due diligence, legality, and verification requirements is also visible, since over 60 percent of global imports enter into countries with these requirements. Mr. Oliver then presented the main "winners" and "losers" in EU and UK tropical timber imports from 2014-2016 versus 2017-2019, after the first FLEGT licenses were issued, including Vietnam and Indonesia, which are both implementing VPAs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, logistical problems – getting containers out of southeast Asia – influenced who the "losers" were in exports (e.g., furniture from Vietnam and Indonesia). Mr. Oliver concluded by indicating that FLEGT has increasing global coverage, that the Indonesian case has demonstrated that the system can be implemented and is exemplary. There is also a need for continued focus on incentives in the EU and UK, especially in the context of the pandemic. This could be done, for example, by promoting the link between FLEGT, good forest governance, and sustainability and promoting the leading role of the wood products sector in support of innovative regulation and a low carbon future.

During the second presentation, "[The COVID-19 Pandemic's Effects on the U.S. Market for Globally Sourced Wood Products and Remote Due Diligence](#)," **Joe O'Donnell** shared data on how the U.S. economy had rebounded from 2020 to 2021. He explained that U.S. imports and consumption of tropical hardwoods decreased during 2020 in response to the pandemic, but later experienced growth due to the increase in homebuilding and home improvement projects using hardwood lumber. Mr. O'Donnell also indicated that the pandemic had created challenges around due diligence, which limited importers to desk reviews or remote audits with document review. An advantage of this situation has to do with the ease of access to documents, but he emphasized that nothing can replace having "eyes on the supplier" or "walks on the factory floor," especially in cases where there is distance, or where there are cultural and language barriers. He did however mention that flexibility and virtual tools have been used to overcome some of these setbacks. Mr. O'Donnell closed his participation by stressing that when regulations are involved, doing something is always better than doing nothing and that due diligence did not pause with the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

Dan Wackerman delivered the presentation on [“The Steer Company, Logistics Briefing COVID Impacts and Outlook,”](#) highlighting challenges related to supply chain disruptions caused by the pandemic. All supply chains have been challenged to the point where there has been a paradigm shift that will take years to be addressed. All shipping links are interrelated, so any part of the chain that gets disrupted affects the entire supply chain. There had been an important volume increase in imports in the U.S. in the years leading up to the pandemic, but COVID disrupted port operations, truckers, ships, space availability in ports and airports, staffing, booking dates, and rates. Significant external impacts included the closure of the Suez Canal, which disrupted the shipping industry and COVID outbreaks in ports, among other challenges. Through the end of this year, severe shortages of bookings and space are expected, as well as rate increases. Mr. Wackerman indicated that in the long term (2022 and beyond), recovery will be slow and will require government intervention. More strategic management will be needed, and carrier space will still be limited, rates will remain high, and this will continue to result in price increases along the whole supply chain. He closed by indicating that this new normal will require new strategies.

Rob Shaw presented on [“Soil Association Certification Forestry and the Impacts of the Pandemic.”](#) Mr. Shaw indicated that during 2020, 17 percent of audits were carried out remotely, and staff were trained to work with a revised Salesforce database and virtual tools. He mentioned that it was a constant struggle to plan, organize, and deliver or delay these audits. After almost a year of struggles and analyzing remote/hybrid options, the Soil Association’s key takeaways were that remote and hybrid auditing offers a low-impact option, but must be credible; digital transformation requires collaboration, international data standards, investment, and customer-centric approaches; large corporations are looking to de-risk their supply chains, so the agile, “digitally-savvy” certification bodies will prosper; costs need to reduce, but complexity is increasing.

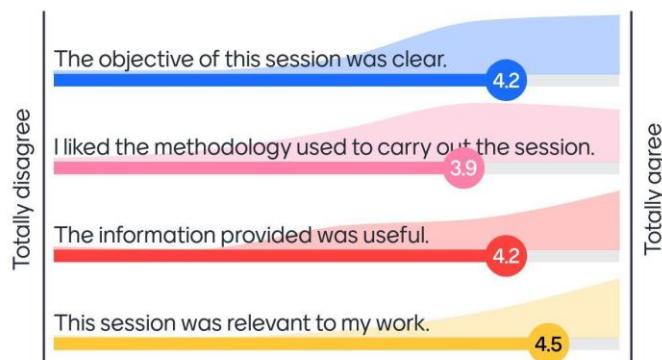
After this final presentation, Mr. Navarro wrapped up the first session by presenting the key takeaways from the presentations:

- FLEGT, Timber legality assurance systems (TLAS), and trade due diligence measures have significant and increasing global coverage and should be built upon. They must continue to be consistent with offering market incentives to producers.
- The U.S. market of wood products has increased during the pandemic due to home improvement projects. China imports have decreased, and this market has moved towards other countries. It is very important to protect advances in governance and compliance.
- All global supply chains are related and have been impacted. Many of these changes are here to stay and will change the way business is done.
- The panelists shared important ideas related to hybrid monitoring practices, and certification bodies must adapt and grow with elements of digital transformation and become more customer centric.

After this summary, 45 participants evaluated the session through a Mentimeter survey:

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Mentimeter



45

The Ppandemic and the timber trade: Views from SMEs

Moderator: David Hopkins, CEO, UK Timber Trade Federation

Panelists:

Jaime Chuchon Remon, General Manager, Aquamodel, Peru

Moussa Njidam Nguepnang & Martial Djiagueu Vendji, Assistant PDG, Dino & Fils SARL, Cameroon

Budi Hermawan, Director, PT. Kayu Lapis, Indonesia

David Hopkins opened this session by highlighting how the COVID-19 pandemic had large impacts on personnel, shipping, and logistics. He stated that participants would learn how different countries faced the pandemic and what they learned from the disruption, including positive aspects. The session was organized in a roundtable format, in which Mr. Hopkins posed a series of questions to each of the panelists.

Q: *Can you give an introduction to your business operations in the pandemic, and how you have responded to the challenges?*

Budi Hermawan: At the start of the pandemic, with the movement restrictions, we experienced a reduction in our production. Then we started screening workers for COVID, doing our best to manage COVID in our factory compound. Rather than with market or demand, we have had problems with supply, which we work hard to address every day. We were also affected by the complexity in trade rates, which caused prices to soar. We hope it improves, but not abruptly. More recently, the Indonesian forest has also been experiencing a lot of rain, and as a result, loggers have been submitting smaller quotas.

Njidam Nguepnang Moussa and Martial Djiagueu Vendji: In Cameroon, we have encountered many challenges. Our clients' ongoing contracts were halted, and we lost 30 percent of clients because of border closures. We have seen a 25 percent drop in business, while we had to continue investing in certifications and other expenses. The situation for the company was complex, with a drop of 40 percent in production and extremely restricted cash flows. After the severely strict period of 6-7 months, we are seeing a slight increase in demand, but we must keep in mind that COVID has changed many things in our organization; it has impacted our client portfolio and

our export sales—everything has changed for us. Now we want to find the best balance between social, labor, and financial issues.

Jaime Chuchon Remon: The city of Iquitos was one of the hardest hit in the region, and the first to achieve herd immunity. The first shock for the company was the loss of key personnel; we faced enormous human loss which has proved challenging. We continue to experience challenges related to COVID in the context of the second and third waves, which are being addressed with vaccinations, controls, and preventive measures in the face of high exposure to the virus. Some of the most notable economic impacts have to do with transportation to and from the factory, meaning that many people had to stay in the forests, and we had to send food, and, with no health services, and other “jungle diseases,” many people got sick in the forests. During the last five months, business has started to pick up, and now we sell through investors who reach the markets for us. We are now being supported by associates who serve as brokers between national and international markets. There is a lot of interest and high demand in legal logging, and we are working so that in that process, we don't make the same mistakes as producers in the past. Now, the authorities that oversee us can do the traceability with technology, to ensure the companies of the legality of the timber they are purchasing and to support getting new business and customers this year.

Q: What would you like to see from other stakeholders to support or boost timber trade?

Njidam Nguepnang Moussa: The Government, through the Forest Ministry, is already taking action, but we really need support with our workforce. We need operators for our processing—no matter how many machines we import, if we don't have sufficient machinists, we lose the capacity to operate. We need support with legality and traceability, organizing forest management, tax policies, and with investments that support social development in our communities located in the forest. It would be good to be able to sit around the table together to discuss these issues.

Budi Hermawan: In Indonesia, because of the FLEGT process, we do not have legality issues. What was affected during lockdown was the logistics of the forest operation. Luckily, there was only one lockdown; later the government decided to recommend only social distancing. We tried to contain the virus in our factory, but on our customer side—for example, when they locked down in Holland, or India—the prices were affected. We asked our government to focus on COVID and help us get over this situation; now we are more impacted by rain and climate change—factors that are out of our control, and logging can only adapt. We also never know when a country will go into lock down in the context of the pandemic. However, it is not that we are losing money, we are just looking at lower profit margins. Volume has decreased due to the rainy season in the forest and the west winds in the seas: for example, in January we only worked 7 days.

Q: How is the situation in Iquitos now? Can you get your products to market?

Jaime Chuchon Remon: One hundred percent of our current market is local, and our biggest buyer is a funeral establishment. The increased demand for timber was directly related to increased mortality in the population, which has led to the need to produce more coffins. After the pandemic-related deaths dropped, we needed to invest in technology, capacity building of our staff, and we hope the government does not forget the timber sector. The government, together with forest concessionaires, co-funded a forest inventory of the plots where we are currently harvesting. The government supported the hiring of engineers and surveying the entirety of the area. This has given us the ability and freedom to be able to extract the wood and has been a significant means

of support during such a hard time because this work resulted in an approved operations plan to carry out the work during the dry period.

Q: *How important is training for your business in Cameroon?*

Martial Djiagueu Vendji: We want better yield, quality, and sustainable management in our country and our business, and for that we need training, schools, and tools to train personnel, to update certifications, to learn from other countries' legality systems. We welcome NGOs who bring training for logging and correct operations, which is helpful for sustainable management.

Njidam Nguepnang Moussa: There are needs beyond training in logging; we also need training for technicians and operators in processing and production, which will help us improve yields.

Q: *What are some positive impacts and learnings in the sector in your country?*

Budi Hermawan: We have lost some competition and are working with experts to find what comes next. We are trying to understand what new things we can do; what technologies and species we can use that can give us better yields; what technologies can make soft wood hard; and similar things that the market wants. We will focus on the sustainable wood industry. In Indonesia we believe in wood; the demand has been strong, even during the pandemic. Legality has enabled the response. Demand for legality and sustainability comes from the buyer, so when we comply with these demands for good governance we win—it helps us in the market.

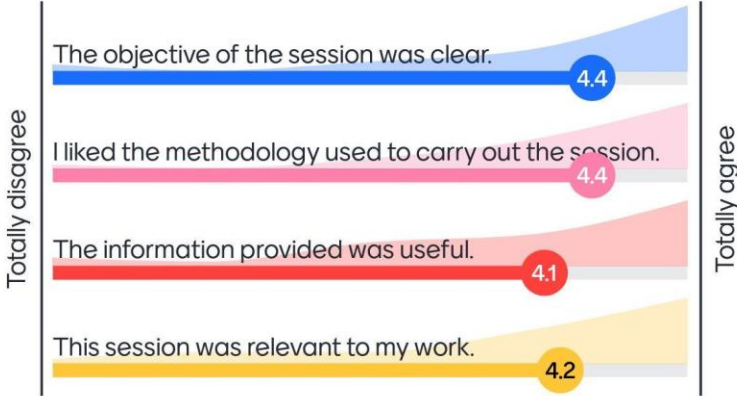
Njidam Nguepnang Moussa: The most important lessons led us to reorganize our teams – with social distancing, increased hygiene, and reduced staff – we were able to reorganize our production, and train and coordinate our staff. We had to adapt to technology, video conferences, and promote more participatory collaboration. We had to stop working in silos and have more coordination and oversight of the whole production process. We have been able to revise some procedures, such as hygiene. We were able to focus on our certification, and to train our staff because we had more time.

Jaime Chuchon Remon: We had two main positive impacts. First, we had greater exposure because of our process towards legality, so now we have a greater range of investors in our three concessions. The second positive aspect was that, thanks to these investors, we now have sufficient capital for the next few months, which gives us a new, better outlook of the future.

Mr. Hopkins closed out this discussion by commenting that investment in training and education in all parts of the business are necessary. He also highlighted that the impacts of the pandemic differ based on where people and businesses are located.

To finish the session and the first day of Forest Legality Week, 34 participants evaluated the session through a Mentimeter survey:

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:



Wednesday, June 23, 2021

Welcome & Event Opening

Ruth Noguerón, Senior Associate at WRI, welcomed participants to the second day of Forest Legality Week and shared highlights of the previous day's sessions.

Supply chain policy I: Updates and recent developments

Moderator: Charles (Chip) Barber, Director, Forest Legality Initiative, WRI

Panelists:

Ambassador Arif Havas Oegroseno, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to the Federal Republic of Germany
Hugo-Maria Schally, Head of Unit, "Multilateral Environmental Cooperation," DG Environment, European Commission

Helen O'Connor, Head, Reducing Demand on Nature, Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs, UK

Rick Jacobsen, Manager, Commodities Policy, Environmental Investigation Agency

David Saddington, Head of International Nature Campaign COP26, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, UK

Charles Barber opened the day's sessions by highlighting how the increased focus on agricultural commodities as drivers of deforestation is motivating the discussion around regulating imports of agricultural commodities linked to forest conversion and degradation. He also mentioned the relevance of timber regulations and how they might be adapted and applied. Mr. Barber indicated that in the first Supply Chain Policy session, participants would learn more about proposed demand- and supply-side measures. He also announced that there would be updates on proposed regulatory approaches and perspectives from the EU, Indonesia, UK, and the U.S. Furthermore, he mentioned that panelists would respond to such questions as: *How do proposed regulations respond to different commodities? What may be the impact for timber and pulp from plantations? What role will those markets that have yet introduced regulations (such as China) play?* In the second Supply Chain Policy session, Mr. Barber indicated that NGO and private sector representatives would join the discussion. He then ended with a word of caution highlighting the complexity of these issues, and that, although they did not expect to reach consensus, all participants already agreed that halting deforestation is of key importance; production and consumption of forest and agricultural commodities are main drivers of tropical deforestation and play an important role in sustainability; and solutions need to consider all stakeholders and must be just and equitable.

Ambassador Arif Havas Oegroseno presented "[Does EU Breach Treaty Obligation on FLEGT-VPA with Indonesia?](#)" He began by describing his experience with the FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) negotiation and process of verification in Indonesia. He highlighted the pillars of the FLEGT VPA: good forest governance; sustainable forest management; legal agreements for trading timber products; fulfilment of workers' rights; environmental impact assessment; and compliance with environmental and social aspects. He also mentioned Indonesia's commitments and legal obligations, including the formal implementation of the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR). The Ambassador described Article 13 of the FLEGT VPA, which outlines the market incentives and stressed that the EU must promote the timber products covered under the agreement in EU markets. He then recounted the process of sending letters to the 16 states and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in Germany asking why Article 13 – related to market incentives – was not being implemented. The letters were mostly ignored or rejected, for lack of awareness about the requirements of Article 13. He also highlighted the settlement mechanisms that are available to discuss and legally address violations of the FLEGT–

VPA by the EU. The Ambassador then outlined Indonesia's position on Trade and Sustainable Development: it should be comprehensive (all products included), robust (right to complain), and deep (receive preferential treatment). The Ambassador finished his intervention by reiterating the need for fairness and justice in implementing the agreements and stressing his belief that the EU is not complying sufficiently with the legal requirements of FLEGT's Article 13.

Hugo-Maria Schally began his presentation by reminding participants that Indonesia is the only country that has issued FLEGT licenses to verified legal timber products exported to the EU. With his presentation, "[Minimising the Risk of Deforestation and Forest Degradation Associated with Products Placed on the EU Market](#)," he presented the five priority areas in the development of the FLEGT-VPA and EUTR regulations to address deforestation: 1. Look at the demand side, consumption, and its role in deforestation; 2. Work in partnership with producer countries to address the causes of deforestation; 3. Work in multilateral fora on trade policy; 4. Redirect finance to support sustainable land uses ; and 5. Improve the scientific basis and data gathering of forests and commodity supply chains. He stressed that this meeting's purpose was to discuss how to create sustainable, transparent, and accountable supply chains and the relationship to timber trade resonates in the context of the EU Green Deal, G20 discussions, and COP26. In his presentation, Mr. Schally presented the EU's work related to priority areas 1 and 2, describing their work on a regulatory "Fitness Check" on the effectiveness of the EU Timber Regulation and FLEGT Regulation, as well as an impact assessment to minimize the risk of EU markets contributing to deforestation. He indicated that VPAs and licensing are very time consuming, and he proceeded to describe the objectives of an "improved" proposed legislation in development, and the deforestation-free criteria that would form the basis of a new regulatory approach. He also shared that this new legislation will use elements from the FAO's definition of deforestation, the Accountability Framework (UNFCCC) plus High Carbon Stock approach, a conversion cut-off date of 2015 or 2020, and commodities. He mentioned that they were focusing on palm oil, soy, wood, cacao, rubber, cereals, and coffee, which are the commodities with the highest contribution to deforestation and have high levels of consumption in the EU. Mr. Schally emphasized the policy measures to be studied, and mentioned partnerships with producer countries.

Helen O'Connor's presentation, "[The UK Environment Act, GRI and Due Diligence](#)," provided background on the Global Resource Initiative (GRI) and plans on due diligence legislation in the UK. The GRI was created in response to supply chain and deforestation issues; government consultations showed an urgent need to develop and implement legislation, which is how the GRI came to existence in 2019. She explained how due diligence measures are expected to create a common ground based on legality and provide a consistent framework for due diligence across geographies and commodities used in supply chains in the UK, among other measures. Ms. O'Connor also mentioned that the legislation introduces core requirements on regulated business in terms of prohibitions, due diligence system, and reporting on due diligence to reduce the UK's impacts on deforestation and other environmental degradation and align with the COP26 environment-related plans. She indicated that non-compliance by businesses could imply both fines and civil sanctions. Ms. O'Connor finished her presentation by sharing GRI's upcoming events: Environment Bill Royal Assent expected for autumn of 2021; Consultation on Due Diligence for late 2021; and Secondary Legislation for early- to mid-2022.

Rick Jacobsen began his presentation, "[Progress on U.S. Regulatory Measures to Tackle Deforestation and Environmental Crimes](#)," by listing the existing U.S. laws requiring supply chain due diligence to address human rights, environmental, and governance issues through trade, including the Tariff Act prohibition of forced labor; the Magnusen-Stevens Act prohibiting imports of illegal fish and seafood, Section 1502 of the Dodd-Frank Act

that limits certain minerals associated with financing of armed conflicts, and the 2008 Lacey Act Amendments to include plants. Mr. Jacobsen also indicated that in March 2021, the Schatz-Blumenauer Bill was announced – and might be introduced this year – which aims at tackling global deforestation by prohibiting the importation of commodities from illegally deforested lands (cattle, soy, palm oil, rubber, cocoa, and pulp) and establishing related due diligence obligation for importers. The bill will also create new avenues for engagement with and support for producer countries, as well as enforcement and crime denomination provisions. Finally, he mentioned state-level efforts in California and New York to pass public procurement requirements for avoiding deforestation in supply chains.

David Saddington's presentation, "[Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade \(FACT\) Dialogue](#)," described the objectives of the FACT dialogue to discuss and agree on actions for sustainable forestry via sustainable trade. The statement on principles for collaboration resulting from the government-to-government dialogue has been signed by 24 countries and endorsed by the G7. The statement has also received support from indigenous peoples, businesses, and civil society organizations who are part of a multi-stakeholder taskforce led by the Tropical Forest Alliance. Mr. Saddington ended his presentation by indicating that thematic working groups for this Dialogue have been created to address trade and markets; smallholder support; traceability and transparency; and research, development, and innovations; and that a roadmap of actions should be in place by COP26.

Ambassador Arif Havas Oegroseno closed the panel by reminding participants that FLEGT VPA is a legal document which both parties must comply with, and that should benefit both parties. The current Indonesian government is committed to halting deforestation for future generations. He requested clear messages from the EU regarding markets and sustainability.

Supply chain policy II: What are the implications for forest governance for NGOs and the private sector?

Moderator: Charles (Chip) Barber, Director, Forest Legality Initiative, WRI

Panelists:

Hugo-Maria Schally, Head of Unit, "Multilateral Environmental Cooperation," DG Environment, European Commission

Helen O'Connor, Head, Reducing Demand on Nature, Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs, UK

Catherine Karr-Colque, Division Chief for Forests, U.S. Department of State

Caroline Duhesme, Manager, Association Technique Internationale des Bois Tropicaux

Alec Dawson, Forest Campaigner, Environmental Investigation Agency

Obed Owusu-Addai, Co-Founder and Managing Campaigner, EcoCare Ghana

Julia Christian, Campaigner, Fern

Charles Barber opened the second supply chain policy session by highlighting the importance of developing partnerships in order for solutions to work between producer and consumer countries. He explained that legality vs. sustainability is not an either-or issue, stating that, "Legality is what you must do, and sustainability is an aspiration, and should be built on legality." He then posed the following questions for panelists to respond to in their presentations: *How do you reconcile forest legality issues – which have been in place for a while – with a new set of approaches for agricultural commodities? How do we deal with this related problem, while preserving the progress made on forest legality?*

Caroline Duhesme provided an overview over the evolving responses to deforestation. Her association promotes a sustainable management model among producer countries in West and Southern Africa. She explained that wood is one of the commodities that contributes to tropical deforestation, but this should be nuanced; improving local forest management could address deforestation in the trade of tropical timber products. She emphasized that legal forestry already exists in the Congo Basin, and it can be guaranteed through legality and sustainability certifications, and that the EU can help develop this sustainable market. Ms. Duhesme repeated the need to implement measures of due diligence and avoid unlawful competition, relying more on private certifications and better communication on these guarantees. She also indicated that, based on Mr. Schally's presentation, she would like to know what the role of private certifications would be under the new and "improved" legislation. She ended by highlighting that sustainable forest management is a solution to preserve tropical forests in the Congo Basin.

In his presentation, "[Response to the Interim Conclusions from the EUTR and FLEGT Fitness Check](#)," **Alec Dawson** described the interim conclusions, implications, evidence for impact of the VPAs, and remaining questions for the European Commission (EC) in regards to the Fitness Check process. He mentioned that the Fitness Check is a review process that was conducted by the EU on the main regulations tackling illegal timber: the EU Timber Regulation and the FLEGT VPAs. For the latter, the main interim conclusions have demonstrated positive results in stakeholders' participation and governance; however, the report indicated that there was no evidence that VPAs have contributed to reducing illegal logging in partner countries or in the EU's consumption of illegally harvested wood. The Fitness Check identified a possible way forward through alternate support mechanisms to enable partner countries to comply with requirements (i.e., forest partnerships) without the licensing component. He indicated that the potential implications of these findings include possibly replacing VPAs with alternate support mechanisms, removal of licensed timber from partnerships, and uncertainty of how the EU's support for improved forest governance will look. However, Mr. Dawson highlighted that some countries do present evidence in favor of VPAs, particularly the licensing agreement in the Indonesia case, as well as better participation and recognition of communities. He wrapped up his presentation by sharing the questions for the EC: *Have the interim conclusions changed after response from NGOs and civil society? How will the EC ensure progress made through VPAs is not lost? What will happen with VPAs that are already implemented, as is the case of Indonesia and Vietnam?*

Obed Owusu-Addai presented, "[Voluntary Partnership Agreements, Why it Needs to Continue – Perspectives from a Stakeholder in Producer Country](#)." Mr. Owusu-Addai began by stating that any form of regulation needs to be fair and equitable. In producer countries, beyond licensing, VPAs have helped achieve important reforms like those in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Liberia related to community empowerment, establishing timber traceability systems, improving access to information, creating space for stakeholders, and improving effective management planning. He explained some of the objections of producer countries to the Fitness Check, including that the process "spooks" stakeholders that have invested time and effort to undertake irreversible legal and structural changes to their forest management and governance systems. Mr. Owusu-Addai closed his comments by highlighting that these processes are slow and recommending that impact and results be measured based on milestones and not just outcomes. He also stressed the need for the EU to create market incentives for FLEGT licenses and clearer procurement processes to engage the private sector.

Julia Christian presented, "[Using Supply Chain Policy to Support Good Forest and Land Governance](#)." Fern, the organization she represents, supports regulations on deforestation in supply chains and hopes to see similar

measures in the U.S., UK, and other consumer markets. Ms. Christian emphasized that they would like for the EU to reach out to the seven countries that produce the vast majority of forest-and-ecosystem-risk commodities imported to the EU; producer countries and national stakeholders working together to develop a roadmap of necessary changes; and that this roadmap be tied to trade incentives. Among her statements, she suggested that the EU should work on a broader strategy of how to use the regulation to achieve positive changes in producer countries. She recognized that although some parts of FLEGT have not worked, there are aspects that should be applied to future agreements, such as multi-stakeholder partnerships, discussion on national laws and governance, and using market access as a strategy. Furthermore, she indicated that the lever of market access should be reproduced, with some adaptations, to the agricultural commodity sector. Ms. Christian also agreed with comments from previous speakers, stating that the EU must “hold their end of the bargain,” not only in the enforcement of the EUTR and FLEGT VPAs for producer countries, but they should lead by example by tackling forest degradation in Europe as well.

Following these discussion and presentations, Mr. Barber opened the floor for responses from the panelists from both supply chain panels to questions from participants posted in the chat and additional questions he posed in his role as moderator.

Mr. Schally indicated that the thoughts shared by participants in the chat were the same as those brought up in the intense months of stakeholder consultation, which received over 1.2 million replies from the public, mostly in the EU. He also mentioned that they are in the process of finalizing the consultation processes, and when finished, the resulting information would be shared. One of the main messages identified in these sessions is around the idea that if things are going well, why reinvent? It is important to not abandon things that work. However, he emphasized that although legality requirements are necessary, they are not enough. There is a need to look at performance: is there deforestation or not? If there is, this timber will not come into the EU market. For producer countries to be able to prove that they are compliant with a no-deforestation requirement, a comprehensive process is needed, with well-coordinated policy guidelines. Currently, the idea is to maintain what has worked, but with better incentives for sustainable, deforestation- and forest degradation-free products.

Q: *Are there any differences between the UK and EU approaches? What are the main differences and commonalities in the approach? Is the UK focusing on legality and the EU on a broader approach to sustainability?*

A: Ms. Helen O’Connor indicated that the UK has made the decision to focus on legality based on the recent evidence that timber and agricultural commodities are still a big cause of forest conversion. National and subnational laws also need to be understood vis-à-vis the legislation, and what they say about how land is managed. She informed participants that the UK will have programs with producer countries to think about their own legislation, focusing on partnerships. She also indicated that they will be working out what can be done in the UK markets, and what needs to be done in partnerships and round tables with producer countries. She concluded by mentioning that issues of due diligence and legality are only a part of a bigger picture, and in that sense, there is a lot of overlap with the EU approach.

Mr. Barber then introduced Ms. Cathy Karr-Colque, who indicated that the U.S. government will continue to focus on illegal logging and associated trade and implementing requirements related to law enforcement, use of technology, capacity building, data management, etc. The U.S. is operating under a new context with its new administration, which allows the possibility to align illegal logging with deforestation and climate change through

high-level engagement and additional commitments. There is a new focus on commodity-driven deforestation which is an entry point to begin conversations with producer countries and find integral solutions. Ms. Karr-Colque mentioned that they are currently exploring what the agreements mean for a country's governance and its right to decide what to do with their lands for agriculture or forestry, how practical the steps are, and what the trade implications are.

Q: How would you address the issues of domestic markets and deforestation?

Mr. Schally stated that creating linkages between the legislative frameworks of different countries is important, because legislation in a single market does not solve all the problems. There is a need to engage with consumer markets and producer countries to fight deforestation, and all deforestation, not only tropical. Markets must produce the right incentives and governments send the right messages through financial, due diligence, taxonomy, and investment regulations. Mr. Schally indicated that there are several tools being applied – the “big headache” is how to ensure that the issue of sustainability is appropriately covered in free trade agreements. He suggested an important test case will be dealing with Mercosur. There are issues of retroactive legalization in countries like Brazil. However, he mentioned that his main message is that although we have different opinions on how to address the same objective – addressing deforestation and forest degradation – collectively we can achieve this common aspiration; there is no dissonance on the objective, only on how to get there.

Ms. O'Connor echoed Mr. Schally's statement about having a common objective, suggesting that they are all going roughly in the same direction. She also presented two additional points. First, going back to legality versus sustainability, she highlighted the need to support countries so that their legal frameworks include principles of sustainability and in general to assist them in defining that legal framework. Secondly, the issue of valuing nature and how people benefit from environmental services, conservation payments, and incentives. She added that there are interesting conversations going on in the UK, regarding how the valuation of nature can be supported. Finally, Ms. O'Connor spoke about the issue of domestic and international markets, the need to think more collectively, and the challenges for domestic and regional markets.

Mr. Owusu-Addai went on to make a distinction between Forest Partnerships and the FLEGT VPA. He suggested that the VPA is more effective for African countries because of the internal consumption–domestic markets standard provisions. His second observation was related to the difficulties posed by the definition of “forests,” which in Ghana does not include remnants of forest cover in agricultural lands, only protected areas. In countries like Ghana, Liberia, and others, more timber comes from agricultural lands than protected forests. He recommended having more comprehensive conversations on standards and how to best develop these regulations.

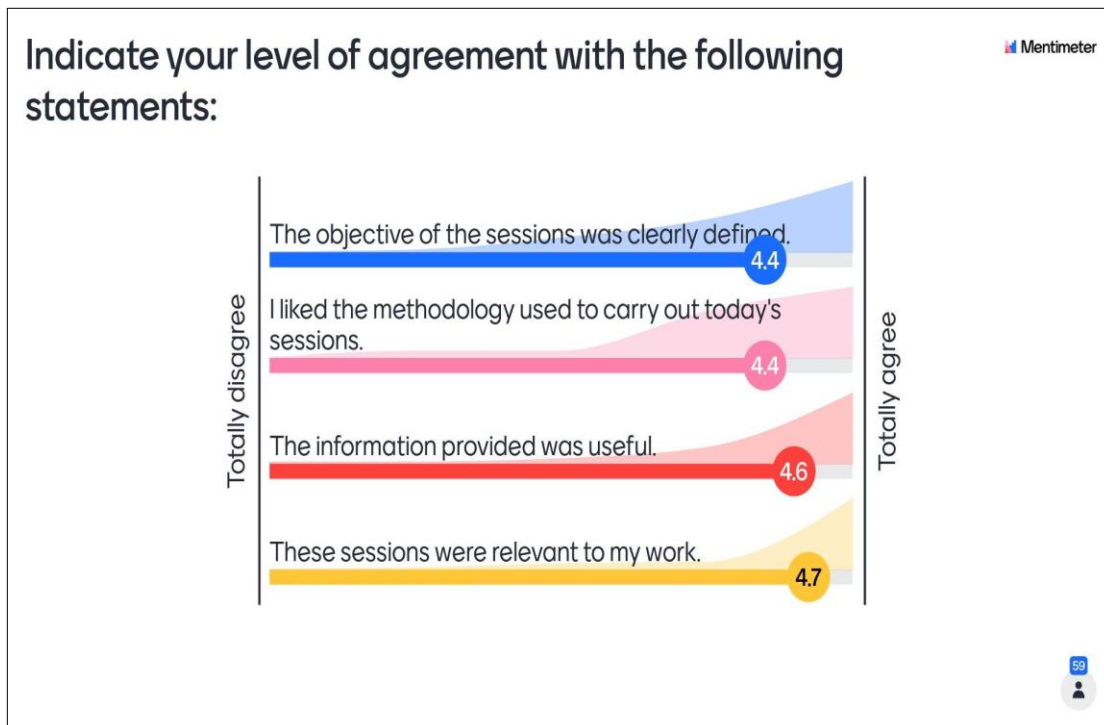
Q: In countries like Brazil, where deforestation is largely driven by commodity conversion for cattle and soy, and less than 10 percent of lumber is for exporting, wouldn't it be better to incentivize Brazil to conserve forests as forests than to burden EU importers of Brazilian timber with inspections that keep getting more aggressive?

Ms. Duhesme responded by indicating that the selective logging certification approach is a way to ensure the protection of forests. There is, however, the issue of consistent application of these regulations and that local specificities of ecosystems are not considered. She suggested that we need to ensure that the application of the regulations by businesses, and the added attention and investment this represents, is reflected sufficiently by consumers in the market. Forest operations should be supported by being paid more for the ecosystem services they provide.

In closing, Ms. Christian indicated that the key issue is not the legality issue, but the definition of “no deforestation;” and although FLEGT licensing should be conserved for timber, they do not see it as extending to other sectors. She also highlighted the three key elements that have worked well in FLEGT and need to be replicated: 1) the national conversation on governance issues, 2) that this happens through a multi-stakeholder process, and 3) that it is tied to trade incentives. She indicated that these are the most important factors, and that we need to make sure they get applied in similar forthcoming regulations and measures for the agricultural sector.

Mr. Schally closed his remarks by commending the high level of the discussions in the two sessions and that the atmosphere to discuss these issues has come a long way forward. He commented that for the EU it comes down to “making peace with nature.” He also thanked WRI for facilitating the conversation and a great exchange of different approaches in a civilized and pleasant conversation.

Before closing the second day of Forest Legality Week, 59 participants evaluated the session:



Thursday, June 24, 2021

Welcome & Event opening

Charles (Chip) Barber welcomed participants to the third and final day of Forest Legality Week. Dr. Barber presented a summary of the previous day's sessions, indicating that the expansion of agricultural commodities is the main driver of deforestation in tropical forests. The main markets for these products—the UK, the U.S., and the EU—are working to limit the imports of these kinds of commodities. The first session of the second day of panels was mostly dedicated to presenting the proposals to achieve this and how these countries are taking those proposed measures forward. During the second session, panelists representing NGOs, the private sector, and the U.S. State Department shared reactions to those presentations, and there was a frank and constructive debate. In summary, Dr. Barber's reflections were: 1) Combating illegal logging is necessary but not enough; to solve the deforestation challenges, we must find ways to feed the world without damaging our forests, 2) The need to think about legality versus sustainability. We must go from what is legal towards what is green and sustainable, without sacrificing what has been achieved so far in terms of timber legality, and 3) This problem will not be solved unilaterally; saving the planet is a collaborative endeavor.

Vietnam: At the crossroads of timber legality

Moderator: Phuc Xuan To, Senior Policy Analyst, Forest Trends/Australian National University

Panelists:

Ngo Sy Hoai, General Secretary, Vietnam Timber and Forest Products Association (VIFORES)

Vũ Thị Bích Hợp, Head, Sustainable Rural Development (SRD)

Phuc Xuan To introduced this session with the presentation, "[Vietnam's Timber Sector: Background and Policy Environment](#)." He indicated that the country's wood products market is growing exponentially, and because of this, Vietnam must import logs and sawn wood for domestic products and export. The Vietnamese government has translated the VPA into domestic legislation, the VNTLAS (Vietnam Timber Legality Assurance System), issued in September 2020. The U.S. Trade Representative's Office has launched a Section 301 investigation into the Vietnamese timber sector, including imports from China. Mr. Xuan To highlighted that in this panel, participants would learn about how Vietnam's timber sector has developed and what the country is doing to mitigate the issue of illegal timber trade. He presented the background and policies related to the timber sector, beginning with timber input and output in Vietnam in 2020, when Vietnam exported close to 12 billion USD of timber in various forms. He then described the policy and market environment for timber in Vietnam, including the objectives of the VPA and the VNTLAS. He also provided details of the ongoing U.S. investigation, indicating that the Vietnamese are responding quickly and cooperating with the authorities in this investigation into their imports. Vietnam imports timber from several high-risk countries in Africa, and around 70 percent from low-risk geographies. In the case of imports from high-risk areas, they demand additional documentation on the legality of the timber to be imported and request additional licensing to mitigate the risk of illegal timber.

Finally, he posed the question: *What have the government, timber associations, and NGOs been doing to mitigate legality risks and to facilitate the sector's sustainable development?* To answer the question, he introduced the panelists.

Mr. Ngo Sy Hoai focused his presentation, "[Vietnam at the Crossroads of Timber Legality](#)," on an overview of Vietnam, the concerns of Vietnam's forestry and wood industries, the process towards sustainable forest

management and forest legality, the development of the wood industry, and the issue of timber legality. Vietnam, with a total land area of over 33 million hectares and a population of more than 100 million, is one of the top countries facing the impacts of climate change. The two main concerns for the Vietnam wood industry are natural disasters (exacerbated by deforestation) and timber legality and trade protectionism. Mr. Hoai described the development of forestry, since the Vietnam War and the associated severe deforestation, moving through the reforestation process, land tenure reform, the ban on logging of natural forests in 2016, and the testing of financing mechanisms (payment for ecosystem services schemes (PES); reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+); and Forest Carbon Partnership Facility programs). He also presented data on wood exports and which commodity groups are exported, as well as imports from the U.S. He indicated that Vietnam is now the second-largest importer of U.S. hardwoods.

Mr. Hoai also described the strategies the country is implementing to avoid timber legality problems and errors: the government ratified its FLEGT-VPA agreement in 2019 and has an ambitious forest certification program, among other actions; the private sector is implementing joint actions to say no to illegal timber, promoting strict compliance with the Lacey Act and going into partnerships with plantation farmers to avoid locally-sourced illegal timber, among other actions; and civil society is raising awareness and campaigning on timber legality and monitoring and auditing the implementation of VNTLAS. He concluded by stressing that the future of Vietnam's forests and wood industry must become increasingly environmentally sustainable and achieve higher assurance on the legality of wood. As Vietnam emerges as a global hub of wood furniture, they must continue their successful pursuit of reforestation and initiatives towards increasingly legal forestry, and, given the importance of the mutually beneficial wood trade between the U.S. and Vietnam, the country is willing to keep providing information on their imports and the legality of the wood traded.

Ms. Vũ Thị Bích Hợp presented "[Forest Governance and Illegal Logging in Vietnam—Perspectives from Civil Society Organizations](#)." In her presentation, Ms. Hợp described Vietnam's legal framework related to forest governance and illegal logging, progress in the implementation of the VPA-FLEGT, and the role of civil society organization (CSOs) in the VPA-FLEGT M&E framework. In terms of the legal framework, Vietnam has a 2019 Forestry Law, a circular from 2018 on tracing forest products, a Land Law from 2013, the 2020 Environmental Protection Law, the VNTLAS decree from 2020, and the VPA FLEGT M&E Framework approved in 2020. Forest governance in Vietnam has improved through two initiatives: the Voluntary Partnership Agreement on Forest Law Enforcement, Forest Governance and Trade (VPA/FLEGT) and the Participation Governance Assessment (PGA) under the support of the UN-REDD Program. The two initiatives (FLEGT and PGA) have been addressing issues of transparency, benefit sharing, and have worked to decrease imports from Africa, Laos, and Cambodia. Ms. Hợp also described the objectives of Sustainable Rural Development (SRD) and the VNGO-FLEGT Network, which associates over 60 CSOs. She highlighted the importance of the objective around evidence-based research for its role in identifying important issues for policy dialogue and capacity building. She then mentioned the research and publications accomplished by the network since its establishment in 2012. Ms. Hợp finished her presentation by providing key recommendations for government and CSO engagement in the implementation and enforcement of legal timber and forest lands conflict resolution: independent monitoring and auditing of CSOs must be defined in the M&E VPA framework; the government must improve and enforce its mechanisms to support forest and forest lands conflicts resolutions; and government and CSOs must strengthen community consultations on forest management, protection, and development.

DISCUSSION

Q: *How do you determine the classification of low- or high-risk countries? And is Hong Kong in the positive list?*

Mr. Hoai: Countries that do not have VPAs or systems to control timber legality are high-risk, while other countries (currently 51) have regulations established by their governments to control legality in their timber supply. There are three criteria for positive or non-positive classification: the country's index of forest governance, if they have VPAs, and if there is a Vietnam-recognized wood legality system. Currently, Hong Kong is considered positive, but, since the list is frequently revised, any country could be taken off the list – or added to it – in the next review.

Q: *What are some government policies that support the wood sector in Vietnam?*

Mr. Hoai: The government supports the sector by aiding in labor and imports of raw wood to increase value-added products. They also provide support related to digitalization, incentives to develop a market economy, and, for country people with land tenure, incentives include reforms and technical assistance for the introduction of forestry certification schemes. He also indicated that the implementation of agreements such as FLEGT and VPA helps the market as well.

Q: *What will happen to CSOs in Vietnam if the VPA process is put on hold?*

Ms. Høp: CSOs work in forest governance and their presence and support for small enterprises and villages in Vietnam will never stop. The government would have to make a greater effort to prove legality for timber exports and imports. We are focusing on forest governance and benefits sharing.

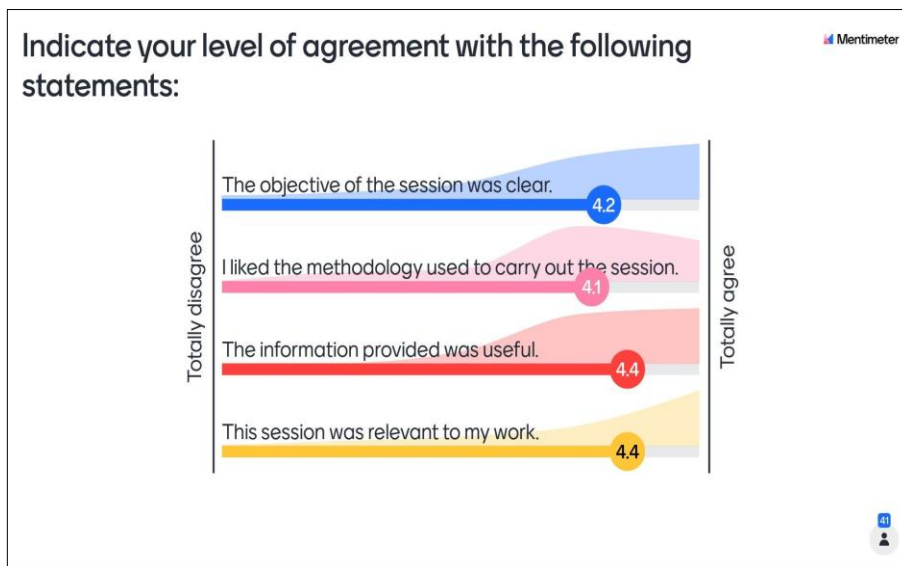
Q: *Is there any NGO in Vietnam working to monitor and report in a systematic manner the import and export of illegal timber?*

Ms. Høp: We do not yet have a mechanism for civil society to engage in monitoring and evaluation of illegal timber. There is only impact evaluation, so international NGOs such as Forest Trends are the ones who monitor exports and imports. A challenge for the future is having a monitoring and evaluation framework that CSOs can use.

Q: *In the understanding that there are around 1.2 million forest operators in Vietnam, of which around 90 percent are smallholders or individuals—could you comment on procedures for verifying legality across such a fragmented supply base?*

Mr. Hoai: In Vietnam there are over 1 million families and small households involved in plantation farming, which is very fragmented, and makes certification and quality assurance challenging. One way to address this is to encourage farmers to apply for certification. With Acacia logging, the risk is lower for illegal logging and transportation. We have problems with imported timber from Cambodia, Laos, and African countries. Vietnam must consolidate control over imported tropical hardwood. With locally sourced timber, we can focus more on sustainability than legality. U.S. wood is considered trustworthy, and therefore this wood is becoming popular for consumption in Vietnam.

At the end of the session, 41 participants completed an evaluation of the morning's panel:



Remote sensing and deforestation alerts: State of play

Moderator: Mikaela Weisse, World Resources Institute

Panelists:

Tom Bewick, *Director of Peru Program, Rainforest Foundation U.S.*

Idelfonso Riquelme, *Subdirector, Agency for the Supervision of Forest Resources and Wildlife (OSINFOR, in Spanish)*

Benita Nathania, *Sustainable Commodities and Business Research Assistant, WRI Indonesia*

Mikaela Weisse opened the session with the presentation, “[Remote Sensing and Deforestation Alerts](#).” She indicated that the Global Forest Watch platform has made three main improvements to its real-time monitoring systems: improved deforestation alert products; increased access to regularly updated, high-resolution imagery; and new research into detecting selective logging and identifying drivers of tree cover loss. She explained how the resolution and frequency of updates has increased, going from using the GLAD Landsat system to GLAD S2 (incorporating Sentinel 2 imagery) and Radar Alerts for Detecting Deforestation (RADD), and the combination of the three systems for an increasingly accurate alert system. Ms. Weisse presented Norway’s International Climate and Forests Initiative (NICFI) high-resolution imagery data program and the research on drivers of forest loss (e.g., illegal logging and conversion to forest-risk commodities). She also highlighted research in progress on the detection of selective logging within concessions, refinement of global data on annual forest loss drivers, and near-real-time mapping of alert drivers. Ms. Weisse closed this introductory presentation explaining the workflow for following up on deforestation alerts: detection of deforestation alerts from satellite imagery → alerts are shared, downloaded and/or analyzed → on-the-ground response to document deforestation → alert authorities or publicize the event (if appropriate).

Tom Bewick in his presentation, “[Rainforest Alert: Information into Action](#),” described the case study on the verification of deforestation alerts by indigenous monitors and how they used these alerts to contrast with a company’s forest management plan. The Rainforest Alert system delivers information to the communities including zoning information for community titles and protected areas, logging management plan, forest census, and satellite images and alerts. With this information, community monitors confirm the location of tree species

with GPS, verify tree measurements, and report any illegal activity they detect to the authorities. He shared the results from a randomized control trial to determine the causal effect of alerts on deforestation rates and community management. This study, carried out from 2017 to 2020, found significant reductions in tree cover loss in participating communities, monitors became recognized as authorities, and that the most successful monitoring combined incentives and training for monitors. In conclusion, Mr. Bewick spoke about the scaling out and scaling up of the system. He indicated that Rainforest Alert is highly scalable to other domains with similar conditions and variables, especially those involving similar deforestation rates, proximity to roads and rivers and actors' capacities.

Ildefonso Riquelme in the presentation, "[Use of Technological Tools to Monitor and Inspect Areas Under Management](#)," described Peru's forestry context and OSINFOR's (Agency for the Supervision of Forest Resources and Wildlife) platform used to support forest monitoring and enforcement. Peru covers an area equivalent to 128.5 million ha (317.5 million acres), of which 53 percent are considered Amazon forests. Having provided this context, Mr. Riquelme indicated that OSINFOR's areas of intervention, monitoring, and use of technology add up to approximately 34.7 million hectares of forested area. He went on to indicate that OSINFOR's platform SISFOR (Geographic Information System for Forest and Wildlife Supervision) and its monitoring module help analyze land titles, forest loss across time periods, and generate online maps with a forest assessment of each area of interest. Images generated by SISFOR can show changes in forest cover, identify flood-prone areas, and allow for a multi-temporal assessment to establish responsibilities according to land title ownership. Mr. Riquelme explained that some of the limitations of these images are environmental factors such as clouds or fog which can hinder forest assessments and indicated that it is difficult to assess forest loss or degradation in smaller areas such as clearings, log yards, and gardens. However, he highlighted improvements made to the system include the use of algorithms to assess selective logging, use of high-resolution satellite images, and the use of drones to generate quantitative data (to assess forest roads, infrastructure, etc.). Mr. Riquelme closed his presentation by mentioning the main benefits of the SISFOR platform, which include increasing local actors' and the forestry sector's capacity to oversee their management areas; the timely detection of illegal activities; and the use of the results produced by the system as legal material to support the prosecution of environmental crimes, among others.

Benita Nathania's presentation, "[RADD in Action](#)," focused on the work of the Radar Alerts for Detecting Deforestation (RADD) consortium and their collaboration with the private sector and local government to follow up on alerts in two pilot districts in Indonesia. Work in the first pilot in Siak, Riau Province, began with a coalition of ten major palm oil producers and buyers that support the development of RADD. The objective of this partnership is to make it easier for companies and other stakeholders to see deforestation happening in near real-time and with greater accuracy, users can mobilize on the ground faster and work to improve the sustainability of commodity supply chains. RADD company partners have also agreed to work together to develop and pilot a collective approach for monitoring, verifying, and addressing alerts at the landscape/jurisdictional scale. Ms. Nathania indicated that during their first year working together, they agreed upon a verification protocol, implemented a series of training activities, and deployed extension workers to verify alerts once a month. They are currently working on a response protocol. She mentioned that the approach employed in the second pilot district, Aceh Tamian and Aceh Timur in the Aceh province, is slightly different. In this case, WRI Indonesia engaged with local government and other key stakeholders through existing and on-going initiatives led by the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH) and Leuser Conservation Forum (FKL). The local government was both supportive and committed to leading the monitoring initiative in the future. A verification protocol and a

first draft of the response protocol have been produced and currently the team is working on establishing a regional monitoring team that involves larger district agencies and in operationalizing field verification and producing reports on findings.

DISCUSSION

To kick off the Q&A session, Ms. Weiss asked Ms. Nathania and Mr. Riquelme for specific examples of results from the monitoring efforts they had shared. In response, Ms. Nathania clarified that they have not reached the point of receiving reactions to the alerts, but that it is expected to happen in the future. Mr. Riquelme indicated having certain experiences using images that allowed them to compare areas. He also mentioned that in conservation areas, the use of satellite images has resulted in community alerts and subsequent fines to the parties involved.

Q. *What have been some of the challenges in the implementation of the technology with companies, supervisors?*

Mr. Bewick: The main challenges are related to logistics and the connectivity issues in the Amazon, and in all tropical forests. Challenges on the ground include working through the indigenous government system, where they want to deal with the information through their internal governance systems. Another challenge is the understaffing and undertraining of the groups who work on the ground, and the existence of non-actionable alerts, such as landslides. We also must catch people “in the act,” and often by the time we arrive, the crime scene has been abandoned. Despite this, in year two of the study, there was a reduction in deforestation events in the control ; we think this was due to the positive impact of authorities’ presence and building of relationships and networks between communities and authorities. Also, these verified alerts help to attract media attention and to ensure authorities that it is not a waste of time pursuing these alerts.

Mr. Riquelme: Optimizing processing time and integrating into just one platform. We need to continue minimizing the need for downloads and storage space. **Ms. Weisse** complemented this response, indicating that their main challenge is access to enter certain areas; for example, some alerts might need access to private lands or concessions.

Q: *What apps are you using?*

Mr. Bewick: Mostly Locus Pro, adapted by the communities. We don't have our own apps; we want to use those that are adaptable and usable by communities, and which make it easy to upload and download information.

Mr. Riquelme: We have been developing our own apps, for example for reporting obligations. Another one supports the identification of wood species. A third app is used to strengthen surveillance in communal territories.

Ms. Nathania: We use three apps: one for data collection, HOB0 Collect; a second one to track the alert; and the third one, Telegram, to communicate and coordinate in the field. We have not had compatibility problems between the apps we are using and the smartphones that are being taken into the field. When a smartphone is not available, the person can fill in the survey by hand.

Q: *Have your field verifications benefited from the new transparent forest concession and harvesting data from the SVLK system? What limitations are there with this data? What other information would you like access to going into the field that you don't currently have?*

Ms. Nathania: We have not yet used the information from the SVLK system because we are still focusing on the palm oil sector and collaboration with palm oil companies. As for other data we may need, we need transparent and informative concession data for palm, mining, and logging concessions.

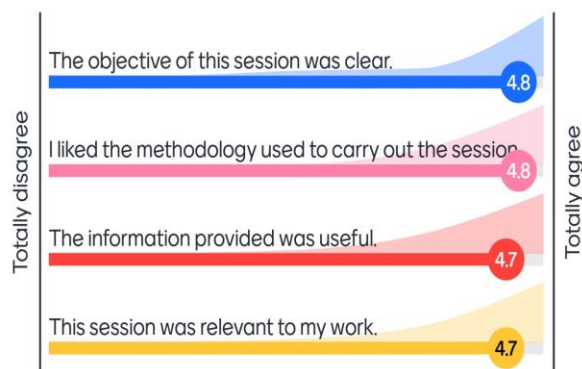
Q: *What is the process to exclude palm oil harvesting areas?*

Ms. Nathania: We are excluding land that is already planted with palm oil from our prioritizing alert system.

This session ended with a brief evaluation of its quality and participants were also asked three additional questions related to their overall experience participating in the 2021 edition of Forest Legality Week. The following are the results of the questions, which were answered by 31 participants:

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Mentimeter



31

I participated in...

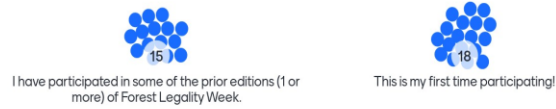
Mentimeter



25

How many editions of Forest Legality Week have you participated in?

Mentimeter



33

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements...

Mentimeter



31