



Joint statement on the role of the forest-based sector in mitigating climate change

Message to UNFCCC – COP 14 in Poznan, 1-12 December 2008

The forest-based sector as a whole is part of the solution in mitigating climate change.

The 4th Assessment Report of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) recognises the importance of the forest-based sector for climate change mitigation. The report states that a “sustainable forest management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, fibre or energy from the forest, will generate the largest sustained mitigation”.

This statement puts in the right context the inherent incentive for the European forest-based sector to keep, renew and expand the forest, thus avoiding deforestation and its negative impact on climate change. It also supports the sector’s commitment to sustainable management of forests, which are a renewable resource.

The European model of sustainable forest management and the efforts of Europe’s forest-based industries towards a neutral carbon footprint are based on the natural carbon cycle: CO₂ is captured during tree growth and stored in wood and wood-based products. When carbon is released at the end of product lives, after possibly several recycling loops, it is also sequestered again by existing and new forests.

However, for the forest-based sector to live up to its full potential, further steps are required. At the occasion of a joint seminar titled ‘From forest management to wood products and paper: The unique link against climate change’, held in Brussels on 25 November 2008, the three European confederations CEI-Bois (the European Confederation of Woodworking Industries), CEPF (the Confederation of European private Forest Owners) and CEPI (the Confederation of European Paper Industries) jointly call for further action.

First, the fact that the forest-based sector as a whole is part of the solution to climate change needs more recognition and awareness, particularly amongst policy makers. The role of wood-based products in carbon storage can serve as a model for renewable materials, something which deserves special mention. Solutions for wood-based products must be found during COP 14 in Poznan and followed up until the final negotiations on the post-Kyoto regime take place at COP 15 in Copenhagen.

Second, the sector supports the development and implementation of mechanisms and instruments to promote its mitigation contributions. However, instruments need to be carefully evaluated and selected, as they should be aimed at adding value to the forest-based value chains. International climate change policy must not reward those who have initiated forest loss and degradation in the past, at the expense of the sectors which have invested in sustainable forest management and certification systems.

Signed in Brussels, 25 November 2008,

Christer Segerstéen
President, CEPF

Mikael Eliasson
Chairman, CEI-Bois

Magnus Hall
Chairman, CEPI