

PRESENTATION TO THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF  
ENVIRONMENT ON THE NEED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A  
NIGERIA TIMBER AND FOREST PRODUCTS CERTIFICATION  
COUNCIL

BY

FOREST PRODUCT ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (FPAN)

Executive Summary:

Forest Product Association of Nigeria is a body of forest owners and users who share the same principle on sustainable forest management in Nigeria.

There is no gainsaying that Nigerian forests are invaluable to the worlds' resource base supplying an array of wood and non-wood goods and services to the worlds markets. Our forests are however not managed sustainably to keep up with the production and supply of goods and services due to the level of deforestation.

Awareness on the extent of continuous deforestation and degradation of our forests has directly impacted on export trade activities of mainly wood and wood products in recent times. The impacts range from loss of lucrative international markets, to loss in bargaining power of Nigerian wood products exporters and a spate of suspensions from governments (federal and states). Government regulations and policies coupled with non-governmental organisations pressure to ensure legality and sustainability has brought about both positive and negative consequences.

Part of the positive consequence has been the renewed interest of stakeholders in the wood and wood product export trade to pursue the business of taking care of the forest that caters for their livelihoods with vigour by collaborating with government and non-governmental institutions to take steps to establishing a framework for sustainable and legal trade of forest and timber products by setting up a National Timber and Forest Products Certification Council.

This presentation outlines in brief the proposed objectives of the council in the certification of timber products with a view to deliver a national endorsement by Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).

## The Nigerian Timber Certification Council:

We are proposing the establishment of The Nigerian Timber and Forest Products Certification Council (NTFPCC) with the overall objective of establishing a Nigerian Timber and Forest Products Certification Scheme (NTFPCS) for implementation of sustainable forestry in Nigeria creating: ecological balance; respect towards cultural and social values; and economic efficiency.

The NTFPCC once established is envisaged to work in line with objectives of the International Tropical Timber Organisation which are to promote the expansion and diversification of international trade in tropical timber from sustainably managed and legally harvested forests and to promote the sustainable management of tropical timber.

The council shall have a Board that decides the overall policy and direction in carrying out NTFPCC's activities. The members shall be representatives from the timber industry, non-governmental organisations (social and environmental interests), academic and research and development institutions, and government agencies.

The council shall also have a Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) which will be an independent committee established by the Board to deal with disputes which are submitted to NTFPCC for investigation and resolution.

Proposed Organisational Chart:

The Council once established shall play the role of the National Governing Body (NGB) for the NTFPCS; it shall be supported in its duty by a proposed body that shall be known as the Forest Standard Agency of Nigeria (FSAN) - The National Accreditation Body. FSAN shall be superintended by FRIN in collaboration with environment based non-government organisation and third-party certification bodies. The FSAN shall be responsible for accrediting State Forest Standards - SFS.

National Governing Body

As the NGB, NTFPCC shall be responsible for the following:

- (i) overall responsibility to develop, govern and administer the NTFPCS;
- (ii) notification of accredited SFSs;
- (iii) supporting and coordinating the standard setting process; and
- (iv) establishment and implementation of the procedure for the investigation and resolution of disputes related to its role as the NGB.

## The National Accreditation Body

As the Accreditation Body, FOREST STANDARDS AGENCY of NIGERIA shall be responsible for the following:

- (i) accrediting SFSs to the requirements of and specifying other requirements for SFSs;
- (ii) ensuring that the auditors of the accredited SFSs satisfy the requirements of the NTFPCS with regard to their knowledge and experience related to forest management certification and/or chain of custody certification; and
- (iii) establishing procedures to deal with complaints and appeals regarding the accreditation decision.

Proposed Institutional Arrangement for NTFPCS:

## The Benefits of the NTFPCC:

### Financial Benefits

Price premiums for wood products originating from certified forests have long been a goal of forest certification. Yet such market differentiation has not yet produced price premiums on a large scale. Conventional thinking is that certified wood will receive the *going market* price, while wood that is not certified will receive a lower *docked* price. Heightened public awareness and/or growing demand for certified wood products, particularly if environmentally friendly green building

initiatives increase, may affect long-term pricing for certified wood. Financial benefits, many superficial at present, can include:

- (i) Huge monitor and control revenue generation means for the nation
- (ii) Potential price premium
- (iii) Access to certified wood markets
- (iv) Access to developing ecosystem markets, such as carbon sequestration credits
- (v) Conserving or saving costs of forest ownership due to the lessening of burdensome regulation
- (vi) Interaction with professional foresters who can offer forest management recommendations.

## Environmental Benefits

The environmental benefits of forest certification can be more apparent than the financial benefits. Some research has shown that the environmental benefits of certification rank higher as reasons for certifying than the financial benefits. Improved wildlife habitat, enhanced timber productivity, and protection of the environment are the three most reasons for certification.

- (i) Improved forest management practices
- (ii) Enhanced better and excellent participation of Nigeria in Green Bond, Great Green Wall Project, National Afforestation Programme, UN-REDD++ Programme and Carbon credits among others
- (iii) Enhanced tracking and absolute control of indiscriminate deforestation that is alarming in the country presently
- (iv) Increase in the nation's forest cover through mandatory forest plantation establishment and management by all stakeholders involved
- (v) Improved wildlife habitat
- (vi) More healthy forests
- (vii) Protection of soil and water resources

## Social Benefits

Forest certification offers a number of benefits to the greater society in addition to those given above. Some of these benefits include: protection and value addition of

cultural assets, protection of livelihood and the opportunity to demonstrate third-party verified sustainable forest management.

## CONCLUSION

The awareness of the need for sustainable forest management is worldwide but agreement on the potential role of timber certification in achieving this goal is by no means equally widespread. Any viable timber certification scheme will need to be seen to be credible, objective with measurable criteria, reliable and independent and, most important, covering all types of timber. Participation must be voluntary, non-discriminatory in nature and adaptable to local conditions, cost effective, practical and transparent. So far, timber and forest products certification has not been applied on a wide enough basis to prove its practicality in application, its effect on the market or its contribution to good stewardship of the forest. The issue remains highly political in nature and will no doubt continue to be a subject of active international and intergovernmental debate for some time before a solution is found.