

Agreement between the Federation of Swiss Door Producers (Verband Schweizerische Türenbranche - VST) and Greenpeace Switzerland / WWF Switzerland concerning the supply of wood and wood products*

19 July 2004

Preamble

VST and Swiss based Environmental Organizations share their views about the importance of forest conservation, particularly of primary forests. The destruction of primary forests is alarming and measures need to be taken at all levels to stop plundering of forest resources and to halt undue forest conversion.

The signing parties of this Agreement acknowledge both, the need for large and continuous forest protected areas, and the economical interests of many tropical timber-producing countries for using raw material wood. Illegal logging, which is widespread in many countries, jeopardizes sustainable forest management. Thus, governments, forest industry and civil society must combat illegal activities. The Environmental Organizations recognize the interest of forest industries in raw material wood, as long as its production follows ecological and social criteria and does not threaten the livelihoods of forest dependent peoples and the integrity of protected areas. VST and Environmental Associations support the sustainable management of tropical forests and acknowledge the corresponding efforts made by the Swiss Confederation. VST and Environmental Organizations recognize that only joint solutions, in which the people living in tropical forests participate, can make a lasting contribution to the preservation of tropical forests. The joint elaboration and implementation of the present Agreement and its corresponding action plan is an important step in this direction.

Action Plan

VST and Environmental Organizations agree upon the elaboration and implementation of a joint Action Plan. Through this Action Plan, the VST members are committed to respect the criteria 1 – 4 listed below regarding wood supply and information for clients. VST shall report annually on timber consumption, names of producers and certificates. Action Plans and reference data shall also be made accessible to the public by VST.

The present Agreement is a pilot project. For its implementation all Parties mentioned shall cooperate with the State Secretariat for Economy (seco) and the Intercooperation Foundation, which will back-up and monitor the process. Seco and Intercooperation shall jointly act as mediator in case of disputes. The signing parties declare that in case of a conflict, they will only go public if the attempt for a settlement has failed. Joint annual reports shall be elaborated on the progress of implementing the Agreement and the Action Plan.

Actions

VST supported by WWF Switzerland and Greenpeace Switzerland, is committed to implementing the following:

1. Declaration of origin

VST members commit themselves to process timber that has been provided with a certificate of origin.

In a first stage, a letter of the supplier, which states the place of origin of a delivery (forest concession, forest concessionaires forest area and country of origin), shall be sufficient as declaration of origin. These declarations of origin will be controlled through random samples by an independent controlling body. Furthermore, VST and Environmental Associations shall support actively the international efforts to introduce a generally acknowledged system of a "Certificate of Origin" for wood and wood products.

2. Product Declaration

VST members agree on the application of a voluntary product declaration concerning species and origin of timber.

The Parties are aware that these days information on a specific product constitutes an important and legitimate consumer demand. However, the Parties are also aware that a label on each and every semi-processed and final product is economically unfeasible. For that reason, VST members shall openly provide basic information (origin and species according to product assortment) in their sales documentation (information brochures, regularly updated websites, etc.) to everyone who is interested. Furthermore, detailed information shall be available on demand regarding origin and composition of a specific product.

3. Exclusion of illegally produced wood and illegally traded wood products

VST members strive to procure exclusively legally logged and legally traded timber and timber products.

This objective refers to criminal activities in the forestry sector and illegal logging according to the list in annex A of the Action Plan. It cannot be obtained by VST alone and requires information for and support by the Environmental Associations and seco. Declarations of origin will be controlled through random samples by an independent controlling body. The Action Plan specifies activities in this domain and describes the necessary measures and control mechanisms.

4. Certification of forest management/Chain-of-Custody

VST members strive for procuring, within a reasonable space of time, timber and timber products from forests and from providers, which are certified according to standards and criteria given by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). The concrete targets of the certification will be specified in the Action Plan.

VST supports systems that operate in line with the principles and according to the indicators of FSC or according to equivalent principles. The Parties acknowledge that there exist different certification systems. The Parties are aware that there is a need for urgent measures for wood coming from primary forests and that currently the offer of certified wood from primary forests remains small. The Parties agree to constantly monitor the situation and assess on an annual basis the feasibility to achieve set targets. Furthermore, the Action Plan shall describe concrete measures for promoting the certification of managed forests and the Chain-of-Custody, and it shall specify the cooperation of VST with seco and Intercooperation.

Communication

The coming into force of this Agreement and the launching of the Action Plan shall be communicated to the public. This communication will take place through media conferences, press releases and other means of communication. The information service of seco will be supportive in this regard. Annually the public and professional environmental and trade associations shall be informed jointly on the progresses made in implementing the Action Plan.

To come into force, the Agreement requires the approval of all undersigning Parties. The duration of validity of the Agreement is unlimited. The Action Plan serves as an operational instrument for its implementation. It comes into effect with the signature of the Agreement and finishes after two years, at the latest on September 1st of 2006.

* The Original Text is in German. The English text is a translation *mutatis mutandis* and not a negotiated text between the parties.