



Federal Ministry
of Food
and Agriculture

In English

**Dr. Eva Mueller, Director General for Forests,
Federal Ministry for Food & Agriculture (BMEL), Germany**

Welcoming remarks

International Forum Together towards Global green Supply Chains

Mr. **Su, Chunyu**, Vice Administrator of NFGA

Mr. **Liu Nengwen**, President of CTWPDA

Excellency, Dr. **Lee White**, Minister for Forestry, Gabon

Mr. **John Leigh**, Chairman of ITTO

Mr. **Robert Hunink**, President of ATIBT

Mr. **Georges Mouncharou**, President COMIFAC

Mr. **Pierre Taty**, Chief of Staff, Forestry Ministry, Republic of Congo

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and honor for me to address you at this important conference as representative of the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture. I am happy to be back in China, a great country I have worked with and visited on numerous occasions. I also have a strong connection to ITTO, an organization I had the pleasure to work for during several years. And I am happy to see many old friends from my previous international work here.

Let me start by saying that Germany **welcomes the initiative of prominent Chinese companies** to launch, jointly with ITTO, the **Global Green Supply Chain** initiative.

We are happy to support this initiative by not only co-financing this Conference in Shanghai but also other related actions by ITTO, including follow up to this event.

As you may know, Germany has a long tradition of sustainable forest management and is a strong supporter of sustainable management of all types of forests globally.

Forests and the legal and sustainable use of wood are at the core of sustainable development and therefore embedded in many related global agreements including the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the UN Strategic Plan on Forests.

In Germany, **forests and sustainable use of wood are key elements** of the country's strategies on combatting climate change, on sustainability and the bioeconomy. Taking all this into account, we are currently developing a **new forest strategy for 2050**. Overall, we are on a good path, but recent extreme weather events have also shown us that we need to adapt our forests better to climate change.

When we look at the global situation, we must acknowledge that forests continue to be under pressure from both deforestation and degradation.

Frequent **reports on forest loss and degradation** through overexploitation in connection with gaps in law enforcement lead citizens and consumers in many countries to believe that it is better to **protect forests and leave them untouched**.

At the same time, science is confirming us that **without using the full potential of forests and timber, we will not be able to achieve our climate objectives**. Worldwide, the **demand for wood and fibre continues to grow**.

Governments are faced with the challenge of developing forest policies that balance different objectives and interests. Increasingly, the private forest sector is called upon to move towards **responsible business models**.

Domestically, in Germany, we have developed and are now implementing with the private sector and all stakeholders a **Charter for Wood**, which is closely interwoven with our recently agreed national climate strategy and other important strategies.

With this, the German government is acknowledging the important **role of wood and wood products** in the realisation of a **national post-nuclear bio-economy** and **achievement of climate neutrality**.

Ladies and gentleman,

As I mentioned earlier, consumers in many parts of the world, including in my own country, are worried by **continued reports on illegally sourced timber**. As a result, they may turn away from using wood products.

Germany is therefore putting emphasis on **promoting processes and tools** that help trade partners identify timber **from legal and sustainable sources**, including through timber tracking technologies.

Our Competence Center for Timber Origins at the Thünen Institute in Hamburg belongs to the world's leading institutes for the identification of timber species and timber origins. It is now a **port of call for timber traders and consumers** who make use of its expertise to verify timber origins and avoid legal conflicts.

At global level, Germany has initiated the **Global Timber Tracking Network, GTTN**. Over the past six years, we have supported numerous projects on timber fingerprinting with various innovative methods. We are also offering **capacity building for customs and other law enforcement entities worldwide**, both through training and by making available computer-based timber identification tools.

It is in the light of this, that we **support ITTO's mandate in promoting the use and responsible trade of sustainable and legally sourced tropical timber** and, more specifically, the vision of ITTO's Executive Director, Gerhard Dieterle, - of course supported by guidance of ITTO's Council - to step up efforts in mainstreaming timber-related policies with global climate and development policies.

We are pleased to see that ITTO and leading Chinese companies have joined hands in their efforts to promote global green supply chains, by jointly organizing this conference.

It is our expectation that his conference will **provide the kick-off for a more permanent and global platform** for the promotion of legally sourced and sustainable timber.

In our view, such a platform could provide a clear added-value to the private sector and both producer and consumer governments. It could offer a practice-oriented market place and match-making opportunity between suppliers and buyers of timber. At the same time, it could be connected to concrete tools like market analyses, certification and timber tracking.

We also welcome the strong participation and role of ATIBT in this conference, as one of the potential users of services that such a future platform could provide.

As a potential donor, we would like to see **a close link of this platform to ITTO's work** and, more specifically, the market discussion at ITTO's Council meetings. This would help avoid duplication and create necessary synergies.

Last but not least, I am personally keen to listen to the discussions and to hear your views. I am looking forward to clear and concrete outcomes that will help us move forward jointly. In this spirit, I wish all of us a very productive and enjoyable conference!