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Seminar on  
**STRATEGIES FOR THE SOUND USE OF WOOD**  
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**Sound use of wood: new markets or new obstacles to trade?**

Session V

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**Summary**

The development of international trade at present is strongly influenced, among other factors, by environmental issues. The growing public awareness of environmental matters plays an increasing role in purchasing decisions of consumers thus making business operators to take seriously into account an environmental impact and performance of their corporations

As a result of such “green product” demand a new generation of international standards, a family of generic environmental management standards (ISO 1400 series), has been elaborated and a significant number of national and regional sectoral environment-related standards, guidelines and certification schemes appeared on various markets.

The purpose of numerous “eco” certification schemes including forest certification is to reward producers who meet the consumer demand for environmentally friendly products by allowing them to increase sales or even creating new market/niches, or charging a price premium on such products.

At the same time traders, in particular from developing countries, are getting increasingly worried about market access and trade distortions effects of such schemes that could be used as a means of discriminating imported against products and foreign suppliers.

In the area of forest certification there are significant variations in the demand for “sustainably produced” wood from sustainably managed forests on particular markets. Final importer/retailer requirements and definitions on “what is and what is not sustainably produced wood” also vary. Hence exporters wonder about the cost of adjustments to different markets, about expenses of testing and inspection depending on final destinations of their exports.

There is also a growing understanding among environmentally cautious producers and traders that proliferation of eco schemes leads to confusion not only among exporters but, more important, among consumers thus undermining credibility of existing schemes and could have a negative effect on international trade in organic goods including not sustainably produced wood.

The objectives of this session should be to discuss and share experiences on how to reconcile trade and environmental matters in the forest sector, namely:

- To promote the positive image of forest certification among consumers and producers,
- To avoid proliferation and competition between certification schemes;
- To ensure the real voluntary nature of forest certification so that it does not become a trade barrier to market entry;
- To identify issues of concern to main players for further analysis and debate.

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