



## Forest Certification – a hidden contribution to the SDGs

SDG 15.2. requires to achieve sustainable forest management globally, by 2020. The indicator for reporting simply says “progress with sustainable forest management”. Not so known is that this indicator in fact is subdivided in five, of which one is “forest area certified under an independently verified certification scheme”. [see The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018, page 28],

### The importance of forest certification for the SDGs

Recognition of voluntary forest certification is good news. It is more than an indicator for progress. It is, first and for all, a tool to guide foresters to improve their forest management practices, verified by independent auditors. It is a tool for change.

Moreover, forest certification schemes connect foresters with consumers, and the processing industries in between. In particular, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) labels on furniture, copying paper, tissues, packaging and other products, have dramatically scaled up demand for verified sustainable forest management practices. In this way, forest certification contributes also to SDG 12, on sustainable production and consumption patterns, with specific attention for “sustainable management and efficient natural resource use” (SDG 12.2.)

However, the importance of sustainable forest management goes beyond these two SDGs. Forests play a key role in global and local climate trends. They create resilience against the impacts of extreme weather, they store carbon, water, fertile soils and house the largest number of species in the world. They determine the livelihood for hundreds of millions of people. They are sacred places for some, relaxation sources for others.

### The contribution of the Forest Stewardship Council

In a special publication, FSC presents its contribution to 35 targets under those 11 Goals. It shows how FSC forest certification also contributes to clean water provision, climate mitigation and adaptation, decent work, improved livelihoods, empowerment of affected peoples, etc.



By June 2018, more than 200 million ha. of the world's forests are FSC certified, in 85 countries. These forests contribute some 23% of all industrial roundwood production (or 11% of all wood production, non-commercial fuelwood included). An important driver for the about 120.000 foresters to apply the FSC forest management requirements is the demand from industries, retailers, private and public consumers for products carrying the FSC logo. Currently some 60.000 companies are playing their role in the FSC supply chain for that purpose.

FSC certified forests apply management requirements focusing on legality, work safety, gender equality, fair wages, customary rights of indigenous and other local peoples, high conservation values, biodiversity, climate protection and other ecological services forests bring to people. It is the most trusted scheme in the world, with clear support from global and local environmental organisations, trade unions, indigenous peoples organisations. More and more companies express their commitment to use and support FSC as the, currently, most effective tool to implement the SDGs in the forest sector, see the Vancouver Declaration <https://ic.fsc.org/en/for-business/vancouver-declaration>

FSC works with three on-product labels. The FSC 100% label is for products made from wood from FSC-certified forests only. FSC Recycled means that 100% of the wood components are reclaimed material. FSC introduced this label as it supports efforts for resource efficiency and as its global third-party verification scheme can ensure non-abuse of the term "recycled". For FSC recycling is important because the pressure on forests will continue to increase with population and prosperity growth as well as climate-motivated trends of increasing use of wood for construction and new types of bio-based products.

The third label is FSC Mix. While products with this label have at least 70% content from FSC certified forests and/or reclaimed materials, up to 30% can consist of so-called "Controlled Wood". The origin of such wood is checked in risk-assessment processes led by FSC itself and complemented, where needed, by individual companies. FSC ensures that controlled wood is coming from countries/regions with low risk of illegal harvesting, deforestation, violation of customary rights, degradation of high conservation values, or use of GMOs. The national risk assessments validated by FSC are the most robust existing at a global scale.

At the upcoming High Level Political Forum, FSC will have an exhibition on the 1st Floor, opposite the East Lounge. Present is: John Hontelez, Chief Advocacy Officer, [j.hontelez@fsc.org](mailto:j.hontelez@fsc.org) mobile: +32 486512127