



General Assembly

Distr.: General
29 July 2025

Original: English

Eightieth session

Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the eightieth session

Observer status for the International Tropical Timber Organization in the General Assembly

Letter dated 25 July 2025 from the representatives of Angola, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, Finland, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Peru and Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to refer to rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and to decision 49/426 of the Assembly, of 9 December 1994.

Our Governments have decided to submit a request for the granting of observer status in the General Assembly to the International Tropical Timber Organization, an intergovernmental organization founded in 1983 and currently based in Yokohama, Japan.

As an intergovernmental organization dedicated to promoting the sustainable management and conservation of tropical forests and the expansion and diversification of international trade in tropical timber from sustainably managed and legally harvested forests, the International Tropical Timber Organization brings together the governments of producing and consuming countries responsible for about 90 per cent of the global tropical timber trade and more than 80 per cent of the world's tropical forests.

We are confident that the International Tropical Timber Organization meets the legal and substantive criteria for the granting of observer status, given its composition and regular participation in multilateral activities related to international trade, commodities and sustainable development at large.

In the light of the foregoing, we have the honour to request the inclusion in the agenda of the eightieth session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Observer status for the International Tropical Timber Organization in the General Assembly".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, enclosed herewith are an explanatory memorandum (annex I) and a draft resolution (annex II). Attention is also drawn to the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 2006.*

* See [TD/TIMBER.3/12](#).



We should be grateful if the present letter and its annexes could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Mateus Pedro **Luemba**
Deputy Permanent Representative of Angola

(Signed) Gregor Wilfried **Kössler**
Permanent Representative of Austria

(Signed) Sérgio **França Danese**
Permanent Representative of Brazil

(Signed) Robert **Rae**
Permanent Representative of Canada

(Signed) Andrés Efren **Montalvo Sosa**
Permanent Representative of Ecuador

(Signed) Elina **Kalkku**
Permanent Representative of Finland

(Signed) Antje **Leendertse**
Permanent Representative of Germany

(Signed) María José **del Águila Castillo**
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Guatemala

(Signed) Carlos **Rojas Santos**
Deputy Permanent Representative of Honduras

(Signed) Hari **Prabowo**
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Indonesia

(Signed) **Yamazaki** Kazuyuki
Permanent Representative of Japan

(Signed) Ahmad Faisal **Muhamad**
Permanent Representative of Malaysia

(Signed) Carolyn **Schwalger**
Permanent Representative of New Zealand

(Signed) Gustavo Lino **Adrianzén Olaya**
Permanent Representative of Peru

(Signed) Nicola **Clase**
Permanent Representative of Sweden

Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

I. Background

The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) is an intergovernmental organization promoting the sustainable management and conservation of tropical forests and the expansion and diversification of international trade in tropical timber from sustainably managed and legally harvested forests.

The organization was first established under the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 1983, which was negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and came into force in 1985. The successor agreement to the 1983 Agreement was negotiated in 1994 and came into force on 1 January 1997. The 1994 Agreement retained the same focus as in the 1983 Agreement. In addition, it contained broader provisions for information-sharing, including data on the trade in non-tropical timber, and allowed for the consideration of issues involving non-tropical timber as they related to tropical timber. Negotiations for a successor to that Agreement were concluded in 2006, again under the auspices of UNCTAD, and the resulting Agreement entered into force on 7 December 2011. The 2006 Agreement builds on the foundations of the two previous agreements, focusing on the world tropical timber economy and the sustainable management of the resource base, simultaneously encouraging the timber trade and the sustainable management of the tropical forests.

ITTO is an action- and field-oriented organization with more than 30 years of experience. It has funded and assisted in the implementation of more than 1,200 projects and other activities addressing the many aspects of sustainable forest management, such as: forest restoration; efficiency in the use of wood; the competitiveness of wood products; market intelligence and transparency in the tropical timber trade and tropical timber supply chains; forest law enforcement and governance; illegal logging; biodiversity conservation; climate-change mitigation and adaptation; the contributions of non-timber forest products and environmental services; and the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities.

II. Objectives

The objectives of ITTO, as set out in the 2006 Agreement, 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-producing forests by:

- (a) Providing an effective framework for consultation, international cooperation and policy development among all members with regard to all relevant aspects of the world timber economy;
- (b) Providing a forum for consultation to promote non-discriminatory timber trade practices;
- (c) Contributing to sustainable development and to poverty alleviation;
- (d) Enhancing the capacity of members to implement strategies for achieving exports of tropical timber and timber products from sustainably managed sources;
- (e) Promoting improved understanding of the structural conditions in international markets, including long-term trends in consumption and production, factors affecting market access, consumer preferences and prices, and conditions leading to prices which reflect the costs of sustainable forest management;

(f) Promoting and supporting research and development with a view to improving forest management and efficiency of wood utilization and the competitiveness of wood products relative to other materials, as well as increasing the capacity to conserve and enhance other forest values in timber-producing tropical forests;

(g) Developing and contributing towards mechanisms for the provision of new and additional financial resources with a view to promoting the adequacy and predictability of funding and expertise needed to enhance the capacity of producer members to attain the objectives of the Agreement;

(h) Improving market intelligence and encouraging information-sharing on the international timber market with a view to ensuring greater transparency and better information on markets and market trends, including the gathering, compilation and dissemination of trade-related data, including data related to species being traded;

(i) Promoting increased and further processing of tropical timber from sustainable sources in producer member countries, with a view to promoting their industrialization and thereby increasing their employment opportunities and export earnings;

(j) Encouraging members to support and develop tropical timber reforestation, as well as rehabilitation and restoration of degraded forest land, with due regard for the interests of local communities dependent on forest resources;

(k) Improving marketing and distribution of tropical timber and timber product exports from sustainably managed and legally harvested sources and which are legally traded, including promoting consumer awareness;

(l) Strengthening the capacity of members for the collection, processing and dissemination of statistics on their trade in timber and information on the sustainable management of their tropical forests;

(m) Encouraging members to develop national policies aimed at sustainable utilization and conservation of timber-producing forests, and maintaining ecological balance, in the context of the tropical timber trade;

(n) Strengthening the capacity of members to improve forest law enforcement and governance, and address illegal logging and related trade in tropical timber;

(o) Encouraging information-sharing for a better understanding of voluntary mechanisms such as, inter alia, certification, to promote sustainable management of tropical forests, and assisting members with their efforts in this area;

(p) Promoting access to, and transfer of, technologies and technical cooperation to implement the objectives of the Agreement, including on concessional and preferential terms and conditions, as mutually agreed;

(q) Promoting better understanding of the contribution of non-timber forest products and environmental services to the sustainable management of tropical forests with the aim of enhancing the capacity of members to develop strategies to strengthen such contributions in the context of sustainable forest management, and cooperating with relevant institutions and processes to that end;

(r) Encouraging members to recognize the role of forest-dependent Indigenous and local communities in achieving sustainable forest management and develop strategies to enhance the capacity of those communities to sustainably manage tropical timber-producing forests;

(s) Identifying and addressing relevant new and emerging issues.

III. Membership and organizational structure

The governing body of ITTO is the International Tropical Timber Council, which comprises all the Organization's members. The Council meets once a year to develop forest-related policies and approve and finance field-level projects. The Council is the main governing and decision-making body of ITTO and is the body through which the Organization exercises its legal functions.

The Council is assisted by four committees: the Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets, the Committee on Reforestation and Forest Management, the Committee on Forest Industry and the Committee on Finance and Administration. Those committees usually convene during sessions of the Council.

The current membership of ITTO under the Agreement comprises 76 members, including the 27 States members of the European Union and the European Union in its own right.

The membership of ITTO represents about 90 per cent of the global tropical timber trade and more than 80 per cent of the world's tropical forests.

It includes the following 37 producing members and 39 consuming members:

<i>Producing</i>	<i>Consuming</i>
Africa (14)	• Albania
• Angola	• Australia
• Benin	• Canada
• Cameroon	• China
• Central African Republic	• European Union (27)*
• Congo	– Austria
• Côte d'Ivoire	– Belgium
• Democratic Republic of the Congo	– Bulgaria
• Gabon	– Croatia
• Ghana	– Cyprus
• Liberia	– Czechia
• Madagascar	– Denmark
• Mali	– Estonia
• Mozambique	– Finland
• Togo	– France
Asia and Pacific (10)	– Germany
• Cambodia	– Greece
• Fiji	– Hungary
• India	– Ireland
• Indonesia	– Italy
• Malaysia	– Latvia
• Myanmar	– Lithuania

<i>Producing</i>	<i>Consuming</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papua New Guinea • Philippines • Thailand • Viet Nam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Luxembourg – Malta – Netherlands (Kingdom of the) – Poland
Latin America (13)	– Portugal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brazil • Colombia • Costa Rica • Ecuador • Guatemala • Guyana • Honduras • Mexico • Panama • Peru • Suriname • Trinidad and Tobago • Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Romania – Slovakia – Slovenia – Spain – Sweden
	<p><i>* The European Union is a member of the Organization in its own right</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japan • New Zealand • Norway • Republic of Korea • Switzerland • United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland • United States of America

IV. Reasons for requesting observer status in the General Assembly

ITTO shares and supports the goals of the United Nations initiatives on sustainable development and has supported the work of several United Nations entities, such as the United Nations Forum on Forests, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the secretariat of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations.

Being granted observer status in the General Assembly will enable ITTO to gain access to and receive updates on current global policy developments of the United Nations agencies and programmes on environmental and socioeconomic issues, including climate change, agriculture and food security, which are related to sustainable forestry, and on issues related to trade and livelihood issues that are the focus of UNCTAD and other United Nations entities.

At the same time, ITTO will be able to contribute to the General Assembly by sharing the information and knowledge of its tropical member countries, their challenges and successful programme approaches, and the results of experiences in the field. ITTO will also be able to share its expertise on policy development in relation to tropical timber industries and sustainable forest management.

The present request for observer status in the General Assembly is being submitted in accordance with decision 5(LX), adopted by the International Tropical Timber Council at its sixtieth session, on 6 December 2024.

V. Legal criteria

As an intergovernmental body composed primarily of States Members of the United Nations – as reflected, *inter alia*, in the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 2006, – ITTO satisfies the legal criteria set out in General Assembly decision 49/426 of 9 December 1994, in which the Assembly, on the recommendation of the Sixth Committee, decided that the granting of observer status in the General Assembly should be confined to States and to those intergovernmental organizations whose activities covered matters of interest to the Assembly.

It should be further noted that ITTO has international legal personality under its founding instrument. Article 38 of the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 2006, provides as follows: “The Organization shall have legal personality. It shall in particular have the capacity to contract, to acquire and dispose of movable and immovable property, and to institute legal proceedings”.

VI. Conclusion

Accordingly, we request that ITTO be granted observer status in the General Assembly. Such status would not only strengthen the Organization’s ability to support and advance the interests of its member countries, but also enhance the collaborative efforts between the organization and the United Nations towards achieving their common goals. ITTO is committed to contributing its expertise and resources to the global community, and observer status would significantly bolster those efforts.

We look forward to positive consideration being given to our request and to the opportunity to further our collaborative engagement with the General Assembly and Member States.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status for the International Tropical Timber Organization in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the International Tropical Timber Organization,

1. *Decides* to invite the International Tropical Timber Organization to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;
 2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the action necessary to implement the present resolution.
-