



BRACELPA/ CAROL CARQUEIRO

BY ELIZABETH DE CARVALHAES,
 EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT OF THE BRAZILIAN
 PULP AND PAPER ASSOCIATION (BRACELPA)
 ✉: FALECONOSCO@BRACELPA.ORG.BR

THE LEGACY OF RIO+20

Despite criticisms in relation to the final document of Rio+20, which could have been more audacious in certain issues, one cannot deny that the United Nations Conference, ended June 22, changed the way society perceives sustainability.

Rio de Janeiro received roughly 100,000 people from governments, industries, socio-environmental organizations, organized civil society and press from all over the world, whose interests converged around the single theme: the future of the planet. Obviously, there were differences in terms of how to take action, but not in relation to the event's objectives.

As such, the document *The Future We Want*, approved by 193 countries, is an important starting point, a project for the next few years as President Dilma Rousseff defined quite well, which shall be put into practice by each United Nations member state. By 2014, negotiators will have to establish work goals for pursuing a new path towards achieving a green economy and eradicating poverty.

For Brazil's industry, which for years has implemented actions to benefit the environment, one of the most surprising facts identified during Rio+20 is perhaps the image it has. It went from being perceived as a villain to be seen as a producer of consumer goods and a generator of wealth and jobs, that adopts sustainable practices in its productive processes.

The dimension of how much Brazil's industry has evolved can be seen by the positive repercussion at three events. In the pulp and paper sector, the seminar *Forests: the Heart of a Green Economy*, promoted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations (ICFPA) and the Brazilian Pulp and Paper Association (Bracelpa), highlighted good practices and reiterated the commitment of associated industries worldwide toward sustainability.

The event consolidated the concept that planted forests are a very important solution for future demands that the world's populational growth will require. At present, one forest can offer more than 5,000 items for use by human beings and much

more productive forests will be necessary to substitute products stemming from fossil fuels for renewal fuels, which is a task for all nations, particularly developed countries.

The *Business Day* debates promoted by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), among other institutions, placed emphasis on how to ensure that, by 2050, 9 billion people will be able to live on the planet, stressing that any new challenge must consider planted forests.

The third event was the Industry Meeting for Sustainability, promoted by the National Confederation of Industry (CNI), which highlighted good practices of 16 productive sectors in industry - one being the pulp and paper sector - that represent more than 90% of Brazil's GDP. The entity produced a document with emphasis on key actions and investments in sustainability, executed in a strategic manner by each sector. With this, it was possible to see that Brazil's industry is, without a doubt, paving the way towards sustainability, increasingly integrating and balancing the three pillars: economic, social and environmental.

It was clear during the United Nations Conference that the country's industrial complex has undergone major transformations and modernization in the recent past, having taken on an important role within the global scenario. Brazil is a global benchmark in forest management, it has the most sustainable planted forests, which absorb large quantities of carbon, and adopts the actions that promote social inclusion the most. This is a good example.

Now is the time to consolidate these achievements and expand environmental and social actions of companies. To take advantage of the positive atmosphere from Rio+20 and lead the industry to the cutting-edge of sustainability. For the pulp and paper sector, this means further discussing forest carbon credits and tree biotechnology, which themes began being discussed at the Conference by the sector, Brazil's government, international organizations and other players involved in sustainability.

Rio+20 was just the beginning. There is still a long path to be trailed without losing perspective of the common objective: sustainability for the planet. ■