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PLANTED FORESTS: THE EMERGENCE OF A GLOBAL SECTOR

Brazil's pulp and paper industry is implementing an ambitious project: to create a common global agenda for the planted forests sector among several countries. The objective is to increase visibility of forest plantations for commercial purposes throughout the world, so that they be perceived as part of the solution for future demands, from food to energy.

Conceived by Bracelpa, the Planted Forests Project - The Global Agenda proposes creating a strategic plan in partnership with associations from other countries, based on the identification of current and future challenges in each region.

We are inviting sectorial entities from Argentina, Australia, Chile, China, India, Indonesia, New Zealand, Portugal, South Africa, Spain and Uruguay to participate in the project. So far, the feedback has been very positive. It is an encouraging first step, considering cultural differences and territorial distances.

As a producer of pulp and paper, Brazil detains a privileged position in several senses. With vast areas for planting, favorable climate, abundance of water and a seven-year growth cycle for trees, on average, as well as programs to protect native forests, forest management programs and small producer incentive programs, the country has registered major advancements toward sustainability. All this translates in benefits for communities that live around forests.

Thanks to the seriousness of actions on the part of Brazilian companies over the years to protect the environment, the sector has achieved the respect of various institutions, both in the government and in civil society, including NGOs.

But this is not the reality in all countries. In some regions there are still serious environmental problems and, in others, social issues were not well conducted, and so forth. But there are those that are headed to a higher level, perceiving planted forests as a center of solutions for a not too distant future, which will come with world population growth.

Despite the different levels of evolution, we want to compile the most important subjects for each country in a document that will

be part of this global agenda. We believe that this is the moment to create an identity and to care for the image of the planted forests sector worldwide, and this will only be possible by collaborating and exchanging experiences among producers.

As such, we defend further discussions around two important themes for Brazil's industry: forest carbon credits and tree biotechnology, the debates of which began during Rio+20 and are now on the agenda of the following entities: Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), Forest Dialogue and also the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD).

However, in order for this discussion to gain mass, it is necessary that the more structural issues begin being resolved. Therefore, we need to work several forums at the same time, under a mutual objective.

There already exists an open path with these institutions, in which the Brazilian sector has been working to create synergies, both internally and internationally. This should facilitate the proposing of themes of interest to the group in broader discussions.

After presenting the project to associations in the above-mentioned countries, the next step will be to create a portfolio of plantations and define key themes for each participant, in order to then prepare an action plan. In addition to establishing annual goals, this plan will define actions with governments, NGOs and certification systems in each country, as well as participation in international forums.

FAO estimates point that two billion people around the world depend on forest biomass for survival and, as such, strengthening the planted forests sector on a global level is of utmost importance. It is necessary to produce more in shorter and shorter time frames without depleting raw material sources. In other words, improve productivity and reduce costs by satisfying the global population's demand for the so-called 4Fs (food, fuel, fiber and forests). All this without forgetting to protect native forests and, consequently, the environment. ■