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NEW ASSOCIATION: EXPERIENCE, REPRESENTATIVENESS AND CHALLENGES

Strengthen the industry of planted forest-based products, both institutionally and politically, by expanding its scope. This is the main objective of the New Association (NA) of Brazil's industry of planted forest-based products, which will start up in 2014.

As the result of a merger between the Brazilian Association of the Wood Panel Industry (ABIPA), the Brazilian Association of Planted Forest Producers (ABRAF) and Bracelpa, NA will promote the 7 million hectares of eucalyptus and pine forest plantations and their various applications: pulp and paper, wood panels, laminates and energy forests, as well as Timber Investment Management Organizations (Timos).

The entity starts out with the advantage of combining the experience of three active associations, with expertise in specific and complementary areas, which will lend more negotiation power with their main stakeholders.

The idea of making the sector's representation more robust came from José Luciano Penido, Chairman of Bracelpa's Decision-Making Council, which in 2011 created an Executive Group to discuss the planted forests sector, analyze the industry's scenario and perspectives, how the sector operates in other markets and good practices on the part of entities from different areas for benchmarking purposes.

This Group gathered CEOs and executives from Suzano (pulp and paper), Duratex (wood panels), Brookfield (independent planted forest producers), Gerdau (energy forests) and Reflore (States Planted Forest Associations), as well as Carlos Aguiar, Fibria Board Member; Sérgio Alípio, Chairman of the ABRAF Supervisory Board; and Penido himself.

STPC, a consulting firm specializing in the forestry, environmental and engineering sectors, was then hired to conduct a study among various publics, such as the custody chain and international forest based associations that the sector already maintains ties. The study showed that the bundling of planted

forest based associations into a single Brazilian entity would conquer some very positive opportunities for the institutional strengthening of the sector, as well as increase representativeness before government bodies and other stakeholders.

The proposal to create the New Association, based on research results, was presented to companies that produce planted forest-based products and, subsequently, to members from ABIPA, ABRAF and Bracelpa for purposes of approving the entity's creation.

Known as "NA", until concluding the Branding, Positioning and Visual Identity construction process, the Association will begin operating in February 2014. Members of the Advisory and Decision-Making Committees have already been defined. In the Decision-Making Committee, each business segment will be represented by a vice president. Chairman of the Advisory Committee will be Daniel Feffer, Corporate Vice President of Suzano Holding, while Carlos Aguiar, member of Fibria's Board of Directors, will chair the Decision-Making Committee.

Of the executives participating in the process, the feeling is of considerable optimism with the arrival of the New Association, particularly with regards to defining the most relevant themes for the entire production chain. By attributing more importance and visibility to the planted forest sector, there exists an expectation that challenges will be even bigger, especially in making Brazil one of the biggest references worldwide in relation to the multiple uses of planted forests, which is one of NA's objectives.

Thanks to the high productivity of forest plantations, Brazil already stands as one of the main global players of various wood-based products. The next step will be to establish that the multiple uses of forest plantations become a fundamental element in combating hunger throughout the world, which will see its population grow to 9 billion inhabitants by 2050. With this, the forest plantation sector shall take on an increasingly more important role within Brazil's economy. ■