



FSC RECONFIRMS ITS COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING WORKERS' RIGHTS

Bonn, Germany (30 September 2014) – The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) has strong rules to ensure the protection of workers' rights and is committed to finding a stakeholder-based solution to how these rules can be implemented in practice in all FSC-certified organizations.

This renewed statement of commitment follows the contentious failure of a motion at FSC's recent General Assembly of its global membership. The [motion](#) would have required all relevant bodies inside FSC to interpret compliance with the rights of workers in accordance with the jurisprudence of the ILO.

FSC Director General, Kim Carstensen, explained that the failure of the motion was not a rejection of the principles of the ILO Conventions.

“FSC remains committed to these principles, which are key to protecting workers' rights. The principles are clearly inscribed in fundamental FSC rules, and nothing has changed in these. Enhancing forest workers' social and economic well-being is, and remains one of FSC's ten principles,” said Mr. Carstensen.

Criterion 2.1 of the FSC Principles demands that FSC certificate holders: “shall uphold the principles and rights at work as defined in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998) based on the eight ILO Core Labour Conventions”.

The motion was strongly supported by members of FSC's social chamber and the environmental chamber members. However, it did not pass the economic chamber, and decisions in FSC's [three-chamber democracy](#) need approval in all three chambers to pass.

“The ideas expressed in the failed motion are still on the table in FSC's continued discussions on how workers' rights can be protected in practice in FSC-certified organizations across the world. We have strong rules already, but for FSC rules are just the starting point. The important thing is to ensure that the rules are also implemented.

“As has been agreed long before the General Assembly, we are establishing a chamber-balanced working group to look into exactly these issues. Those who voted against the motion are engaged in using the working group as a vehicle to an agreed solution. This is how we work in FSC: Getting our members together, across chambers, to find an agreed solution. I look forward to working with the trade unions and all



other stakeholders inside FSC to identify solutions that can protect workers' rights in practice all over the world," explained Mr. Carstensen.

The new working group is tasked with recommending a globally-applicable solution to this complex issue, including auditable indicators, to FSC's board of directors. It is expected this working group will make its recommendations to the FSC Board in early 2015

The FSC General Assembly is held every three years, and is the organization's highest decision-making body. It brings together around 600 FSC members representing social, environmental and economic interests in a three-chamber democracy.

For more information:
Karen Bennett Van der Westhuizen
Communications Director
FSC, Bonn, Germany
k.bennett@fsc.org