

Media Release

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More sustainable forest industries essential to meet global 2050 carbon neutrality goal, says new UN FAO Forestry Advisory Chair, Ross Hampton

The newly installed Chair of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization's (UN FAO) Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries (ACFSI), Ross Hampton, has made it clear that increasing sustainable forestry and timber industries is key to achieving the global 'Carbon Neutral by 2050' goal.

Mr Hampton, who is also Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) said, "The world is increasingly turning to renewable resources such as timber and fibre-based packaging to meet both sustainability and climate goals. This trend must be turbo charged if we are to meet the ambition of carbon neutrality by 2050.

"The carbon stored in forests is also stored in the products produced from those forests. Done to certified world best practice in which re-planting or regeneration follows harvest, forestry and forest industries are a continuous production line for the climate friendly, sustainable products which we all need.

"Timber is far less energy-intensive to produce than steel and concrete, making it the 'green' choice for construction. But despite some outstanding breakthroughs in innovative engineered timber products, the shift to medium and high-rise timber buildings has been too slow. If we are to make a meaningful impact on climate, every major city authority with a climate action plan should be demanding developers use more timber.

"Forest products also play a huge role providing biodegradable alternatives to single use plastics which are choking our waterways and oceans. This transition also must accelerate. Bioenergy and biomaterials are also an area which has far greater potential to be a force for good."

Secretary of the ACFSI, based in Rome, Sven Walter said, "We are proud to be launching the new ACFSI 2020-2030 Strategic Framework. I am confident that with Ross's leadership the private forest sector will help realise the ACFSI's aim of catalysing innovative forest-related actions through partnerships between FAO, the private sector and other stakeholders."

FAO Forestry Officer, Australian Lyndall Bull said, "I am thrilled to welcome Ross as the new Chair for the ACFSI. The ACFSI has an ambitious work program to help ensure that the global forest sector can maximise its contribution to the sustainable circular bioeconomy. I am looking forward to working with Ross to implement that program as a step towards a carbon neutral world."

Mr Hampton concluded, “I would like to pay tribute to outgoing Chair, Carina Hakansson, Director General of the Swedish Forest Industries Federation, who has provided outstanding leadership of the ACSFI for the last two years. I also am very pleased to welcome into the Vice-Chair role José Carlos da Fonseca Junior, who is Executive Director of the Brazilian Tree Industry Association (Ibá).”

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A biography and image of Mr Hampton is attached.

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