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PEFC General Assembly Minutes

(Virtual meeting with online voting)

Wednesday 17 November 2021

11:00 - 14:00 Geneva time

26th General Assembly

PRESENT:

- Peter Latham - Chair
- David Ford – 1st Vice Chair
- Riikka Joukio - 2nd Vice Chair

National Governing Bodies from:

Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay, United States, Vietnam

International Stakeholder Members:

APP Timber, Association Technique Internationale des Bois Tropicaux (ATIBT), Building and Wood Worker's International (BWI), Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF), Double A, European Panel Federation, International Council of Forest and Paper Associations (ICFPA), International Family Forestry Alliance (IFFA), Metsä Group, Mondi, Purinusa Ekapersada (APP), SAPPI, Stora Enso, Suzano Pulp and Paper

Members of the Board

Lena Ek, Mohd Nurudeen Iddrisu, Brian Kernohan, Sarah Khatib, Fatimah Mohammad, Kurt Ramskogler, Eduardo Rojas Briaes, Suzette Weeding, Dradjad Wibowo.

APOLOGIES:

- **National Governing Bodies**
 - Bosnia Herzegovina
 - Cameroon
 - Congo
 - Lithuania
 - Macedonia
 - Portugal

- **International Stakeholder Members**

- APRIL
- Bioenergy Europe (formerly AEBIOM)
- CEETAR
- Celulosa Arauco
- CEPI
- ETS
- ETTF
- European Pulp Industry Sector
- Olam
- Recofc
- Smurfit Kappa
- UPM Kymmene
- USSE
- WestRock
- Weyerhaeuser

- ***Extra-ordinary members:***

- CEI-Bois, ELO, FECOF, MECSEA, and UEF

- ***Members of the Board***

- Gerard Pfiffinger
- Josien Tokoe

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Ben Gunneberg - Secretary General and CEO- PEFC International
- PEFC International Staff
- Invited guest from Brazil and Vietnam

Of a total of 139 eligible votes, 113 votes were present (82%)

1. AGENDA

Unanimously Agreed:

- To approve the Agenda of the 26th General Assembly.

2. MINUTES OF THE 25TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Agreed:

- To approve the minutes of the 25th General Assembly held on 11th November 2020 virtually.

*85 votes "For" and 1 vote "Abstain"
(Switzerland)*

3. PEFC REFLECTIONS

Chair's reflections (link to speech on Podio): Mr Peter Latham recalled the challenges and opportunities that Covid had provided for the organisation with loss of face-to-face meetings but a greater participation in virtual meetings by more members, more training sessions, webinars and new ways of sharing experiences and information. The pandemic had also highlighted new and more effective ways of working which would bode well for PEFC in general. He highlighted the opportunities and challenges facing the forestry sector including communications re mitigating climate change including tree planting; carbon storage potential and improved water management of forests and products; petrochemical product substitution with forest-based products; increased public awareness of forestry matters in general combined with romantic notions of how forests should be; and increasing corporate and financial sector interest in the sector. Greater awareness meant that PEFC would need to cooperate more with other soft commodity sectors concerning policy developments; speed up and innovate our standards development cycles; push innovation to drive down costs and meet customer expectations; enhance collaborative internal working more as had been demonstrated by the MCA and demonstrate the impact as well as the integrity of certification with more transparent and available data. Peter thanks the members, the Board, and staff for all their support over the years

The Secretary General message (link to speech on Podio): Mr Ben Gunneberg focused on the steps that PEFC should take to become a policy influencer rather than a reactor to policy. The focus now was on the impacts of SFM on tackling global issues such as climate change, deforestation, poverty reduction and the delivery on the SDGs. The strategy review was an ideal time for PEFC to focus on social issues and linking the small holders and forest managers on the ground, right through the supply chain to the decision makers, to influence the decisions being made about their lives. Innovation including modular approaches; embracing the fourth industrial revolution (including data and knowledge) to influence the global debates; engaging with other soft commodity sectors and challenging stakeholders and advocating the impacts of SFM in a proactive manner would be essential to deliver the mission and vision of PEFC.

4. FINANCES

4.1 Year-End Accounts 2020

The PEFC Secretary General, presented the report on the year end accounts.

Agreed:

- To approve the audited accounts for the period 1 January to 31 December 2020, as prepared by Interexperts SA.

81 votes "For" and 6 votes "Abstain" (Russia and ICFPA)

4.2 Budget 2022 (including Membership Fees 2022)

The chair noted that there had been lengthy discussion during the members only meeting the previous day and asked for any additional comments. Several clarifications were sought, and responses given on the one-off expenditure proposal for the quality assurance / integrity program and the funding of the Board's working group, the MCA (Marketing Communications and Advocacy).

In addition, several members made comments including PEFC NGBs from Belgium, France, Italy, Russia and Spain, concerning the need for the Board's membership fee task force to complete its work; the proportion of members still receiving a reduction; the issue of both the voted and statutory Cap on membership fees;

the need to grow chain of custodies in all countries; the fairness of the current system to SMEs, and smaller members in earlier stages of their development, and the increase proposed in general. There was a request for a fuller discussion on options for a fairer membership fee when all members met face to face in Ireland and Switzerland the following year. There was also a request to accelerate the work of the strategic funding working group.

Agreed:

- To approve the 2022 budget

72 votes "For"; 6 votes "Against" (Russia and ATIBT) and 13 votes "Abstain" (China, Italy, Myanmar, Spain, Switzerland and ICFPA)

Agreed:

- To approve one-off expenditure of 335,000CHF from 2020 windfall and additional 60,000 CHF from reserves.

75 votes "For"; 5 votes "Against" (Russia) and 12 votes "Abstain" (Hungary, Malaysia, New Zealand, Spain, Switzerland, EPF and ICFPA)

Agreed:

- To an increase in membership fees to include a 5% increase in Rate per Hectare, Rate per CoC and ISM Membership Fees with the proviso that there will be no future increase in membership fee rates in 2023.

65 votes "For"; 13 votes "Against" (Belgium, Russia, Spain, Thailand, Ukraine and ATIBT) and 14 votes "Abstain" (India, Italy, Malaysia, Myanmar, Romania, Slovakia, South Africa, Switzerland, Uruguay and ICFPA)

Agreed:

- To a 5% increase in the current membership fee cap covering both 2022 and 2023.

61 votes "For"; 15 votes "Against" (Myanmar, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, Thailand, Ukraine, Uruguay, Vietnam and ATIBT) and 13 votes "Abstain" (India, Italy, Romania, Spain, South Africa, Switzerland, ICFPA and Stora)

4.3 Appointment of Auditor

Agreed:

- To appoint "Interexperts SA" as the PEFC Council Auditor for the year end accounts (as at 31 December 2020), in accordance with the PEFC Council Statutes, Article 5, Chapter 10, section V.

86 votes "For" and 7 votes "Abstain" (Russia, Switzerland and ICFPA)

5. ELECTIONS

5.1 Election of The Chair and Members of The Board

Mr Esa Härmälä, Chair of the PEFC Council Nominations Committee, presented the Nominations Committee report for 2021.

Unanimously agreed:

- To elect:
 - Eduardo Rojas Briales – as PEFC Chair 2021-2024
- To re-elect as members of the Board:
 - Gerald Pfiffinger - 2021-2024
 - Dradjad Wibowo - 2021-2024
 - Fatimah Mohammad – 2021-2024
- To elect as members of the Board
 - Guy Gleysteen – 2021-2022 (completing one year of a three-year term board member position being vacated by the incoming chair)
 - Sara El Kadri - 2021-2024

90 votes "For" and 1 vote "Abstain" (ICFPA)

It was also noted that Mr. Peter Crook had stepped down from his position on the PEFC Board due to the time commitments needed, and that the Nominations Committee would be seeking a replacement in due course.

Following the election, the new Board Members introduced themselves. Mr Eduardo Rojas Briales, the incoming chair made a speech at the end of the General Assembly (link to text available on Podio) thanking the outgoing chair Mr Peter Latham for all his dedication and hard work for the PEFC Council over the last ten years, as both a board member and then PEFC Chair. Mr Eduardo

Rojas Briales also outline a range of issues, following exploratory discussions with members, staff, and the board, that the organisation would need to address over the next few years, including the repositioning of PEFC as a sustainability organisation in the light of global challenges and political developments; the need to co-operate more with like-minded soft commodity sectors and certification systems to address these; enablers concerning the rapid growth of PEFC including regionalisation and reorganisation of PEFC's structures and processes; as well as the PEFC strategy review, GESI charter and both the outputs of the strategic funding (now Fundraising) working group and the membership fee task force.

Signed:



Peter Latham, Chair



Ben Gunneberg, Secretary General

5.2 Election of Nominations Committee

Unanimously agreed:

- To appoint Mrs Minnie Degawan as member of the Nominations Committee for a 3-year term (2021-2024).

*86 votes "For" and 1 vote "Abstain"
(ICFPA)*

6. MEMBERSHIP

It was noted that the two following ISMs:

- Connecting Natural Values and People Foundation (CNVP) and
- International Paper (IP)

had resigned during 2021.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

8. PEFC COUNCIL MEETING DATES & SUBMISSION DEADLINES 2022

The General Assembly noted the meeting dates and submission deadlines for 2022 as agreed by the Board.

8.1 Date and venue of 26th PEFC General Assembly

Wednesday 16th November 2022, Geneva, Switzerland.

**REPORT ON RESULTS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY
POSTAL BALLOT VOTES HELD IN THE PERIOD
BETWEEN 09TH NOVEMBER 2021 AND 09TH
DECEMBER 2021**

GA Postal Ballot 2 – 2021 (09 December 2021)

MOTION 1: To approve the endorsement of the Pan African Forest Certification - Congo Basin regional scheme.

For 95,6%, Against 0, Abstention 4,4%

**REPORT ON RESULTS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY
POSTAL BALLOT VOTES HELD IN THE PERIOD
BETWEEN 09TH NOVEMBER 2021 AND 09TH
DECEMBER 2021**

GA Postal Ballot 2 – 2021 (09 December 2021)

MOTION 2: To approve the endorsement of the SFI Small Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families and Communities.

For 89%, Against 0, Abstention 11%

**REPORT ON RESULTS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY
POSTAL BALLOT VOTES HELD IN THE PERIOD
BETWEEN 30TH NOVEMBER 2021 AND 30TH
DECEMBER 2021**

GA Postal Ballot 3 – 2021 (30 December 2021)

MOTION: To endorse the membership transfer from the Vietnam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST) to the Vietnamese Academy of Forest Science (VAFS) as of 1st January 2022.

For 100%, Against 0, Abstention 0.


