

永續林業·開創雙贏

經濟專利與政治偏見不容剝奪第三世界的發展權益

【对再一次于世界林业中心演说,我深感荣幸,记得我们上回于墨尔本讨论了森林在气候演变中的角色,那是将近12个月前举行的大会上。

森林资源可以在不牺牲经济发展需要的情况下,对减缓温室效应提供助力;林业推动经济发展对许多拥有丰富森林资源的发展中国家尤为重要,包括处在刚果盆地的国家及经济势力正在崛起中的东南亚国家。

——丹斯里张晓卿



真正原因:政治偏見

是的,对理想中的世界而言,所有发展中国家的森林业都应该经过审核,符合永续森林管理规格,而且环境管理的制度也应该落实在所有的运作上,然而,这些却需要时间来循序渐近。

发展中国家的林业已经逐步朝向可持续模式迈进,譬如在巴布亚新畿内亚,常有机团在该国成为首家实施木材合法性审核制度的公司,这看来是一小步,但是,对世界最穷国家之一的地方,却是一个重大的发展迈进,在马来西亚,根据国际规格的审查制度也实施了,印尼已有机构决定采取措施跟进,与此同时,中国也准备要看齐。

对一些绿色理想主义者,审核与发证件制还嫌不够,一些绿色运动甚至非议抵制非政府组织所推荐的类似制度,某些主要的国际性非政府组织也表示撤回它们原本对有关制度的支持,即使世界著名稽查机构所推荐的制度也面对一些反

非政府组织和一些政府鼓吹以绿色概念来限制森林商业化作业,根据此一点,发展中国家的森林应该说得像天然博物馆,他们坚持森林不可以大量或根本就不可以开采作商业用途,一切应该“封锁”起来,社区居民必须沿袭“传统”生活模式……至于社区要存活率高不高、生活品质的要求低不低及医药、教育设施差不差皆全非他们的考量。



对动作。纽西兰政府在木材原料供应的政策上有所改变,跟著该国绿色运动不变。事实上,过去几年来受到许多国家政府和非政府组织所推崇的一些保障制度突然之间,变得不受欢迎了。

就此,我们必须询问:为什么是这样?不,这完全不在于寻找不合法的原因,这也无关林业可持续与否;真正的原因仅仅是,一些团体和政府反对商业化的林业操作。

这观点既非出于科学,也不是经济考量,它只是个政治的偏見。

接下来要问的:我们可以做些什么?

再不回应,前途堪虞

有些人永远都不相信,林业对世界可以带来正面和积极的影响,不过,有些许理性的人会聆听,有些政府肯聆听,也有些商业伙伴愿意聆听。

政府和支援机构是可以被说服的,接受“可持续的林业发展比把整个林业业断能带来更大的经济与社会实惠”,我以巴布亚新畿内亚举为实例。为了在该国落实合法化认证的审核制,林业跟世界热带木材组织缔结伙伴关系,并且也跟澳洲政府携手合作,这种关系就是我所诠释的良好企业社会责任;不过,发展中国林业规格的不断改进仍需要一些时间和精力付出。

我们在不同国家从事相关工作,我们为绿色组织在巴布亚新畿内亚抢走一艘船只对在纽约的一位硬木地板经销商,是不会有什么影响的。然而,间中的因素却是互相牵连在一块的,任何在美国、英国及欧盟对有关合法伐木之立法,将影响到我们所有人如何进入出口贸易,任何气候演变的全球协定都会影响我们如何管理我们林业的运作,最为重要的是,我们必须把我们的情况或例子上报政府,带给世界各地的生齿伙伴明了,以作为我们的回应,否则,我们这个行业的前途将陷入险境厄运。

欲置林业于死地

尽管森林资源可以在适当管理下,明显地取得双赢局面,可是却有许多团体组织和政府欲置森林业于死地而后快,所谓的“非法伐木”之魂魄依然不散,东南亚的林业尤其首当其冲,遭受责难;指控行动不只是针对马来西亚,且已从巴布亚新畿内亚蔓延到印尼和中国大陆。

绿色组织(Greenpeace)竟然在巴布亚新畿内亚向海监般地掠夺一艘被指控载满非法木材的船只,然而,事实并非如此;令人惊讶的是,一个擅自侵占与破坏别人物品的团体却口出恶语告别人犯下罪行。

这种动作作其量只不过是了为争取媒体眼球的噱头,毕竟此伎俩乃属这批人的专长,可是不幸的,他们的确受到世界的注目。

现在,不只是一些偏激的外围组织指控发展中国家非法伐木,连最近崛起的美国农牧法案也企图修改在该国存在了108年来的莱西法令,要把植物产品概括在内,这是一项要取缔的“非法木材”名目于美国登堂入室的法律修正。

欧盟上个月还一度想要考虑采取某些措施阻止所谓的“非法木材”,一名英国议员动议对售卖“非法木材”的经销商判处5年徒刑,也有一些银行已经推出措施,阻止所谓“非法伐木”有关的公司缔结伙伴关系。

越俎代庖以讹传讹

何谓“非法木材”?典型的非政府组织之诠释不只是违反法律,它们还牵扯到直接与间接受影响的方方面面,还要一切运作都得符合国际协定与税务法案,此外,也要求提供工人的健康保障规定跟美国模式相等,就此,世界上大多数国家都认为,有关非政府组织所提出的种种根本都是属于政府所干的事。

尽管如此,世界上到底有多少“非法伐木”?被拿出来的具体数据至今却非常少,倒是可以明确地说,“非法伐木”的案例被夸大渲染得非常厉害,美国森林和纸业协会刊登一则非法伐木的报导,世界各地的非政府组织和政府都引为根据。这报导指出全球12%的出口软木及17%的硬木都是来自可疑的源头,此一数据竟然变成政府和相关行业圈内流传的“复制资讯”;若探究下去,原来是连实际的勘察都没进行过,就出现此研究结果。不仅如此,这过程中,出口国家的立法根本也未受到检视,法律有没有在源头受到破坏亦未置之不理。

冻结资源开发,剥夺穷人权利

该则报导其实是根据其他报导的轶事式证据和估计来撰写的,而所引用的根据与估计又大多取自非政府组织的报告,所以说,有关世界上比较明显与具体性的非法木材活动其实非常缺乏证据基础。

既然如此,那么,非法伐木的例子为何使到许多政府为此敲锣动呢?

主要原因有二:

(一) 先进国家的国内林业急于保护它们的那一小块专利,促成立法的那一部分并不一定是绿色组织团体,还有像工会组织,这点是可以理解的,毕竟发展国家的制造业和出口量日增,经济力量的崛起已经对全球市场带来令人震惊的冲击,木材行业并不是唯一受影响的领域,其他行业也一样为新经济版图而力拼竞争,尽管如此,利用环境条例来指控发展中国家非法伐木却是一种具有前根影响的保护主义,许多发展中的国家只拥

有森林产品作为有潜能的出口项目,也只有通过善用天然资源的助力,生活水平才得以提升,事实上,在不同客观条件下,强调向第三世界实行世界第一等的劳工和公平标准无疑导致竞争场景更加不公平。

(二) 非政府组织和一些政府鼓吹以绿色概念来限制森林商业化作业,根据此一点,发展中国家的森林应该说得像天然博物馆。他们坚持森林不可以大量或根本就不可以开采作商业用途,一切应该“封锁”起来,社区居民必须沿袭“传统”生



(本文乃摘自张晓卿上周发表于美国举行的世界森林中心发言之讲词)

SPEECH BY DATUK TAN SRI TIONG HIEW KING
At World Forestry Centre, October 19, 2008

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests.

It is with great pleasure that I once again address the World Forestry Centre.

Almost twelve months ago in Melbourne, we discussed the role of forestry in climate change.

Forestry has a huge potential to assist in reducing greenhouse gases without sacrificing economic development.

This is significant for developing nations with large forestry resources. These include countries in the Congo Basin, and emerging economies in South-East Asia.

Yet, even with a clear win-win outcome presented by forestry, there are still many groups and governments that want to see our industry shut down.

The "illegal logging" bogeyman continues to rear its head.

Our industry – particularly in South-East Asia – has been constantly accused of illegal logging.

It has happened on so many occasions that we in the region have lost count.

It's not just Malaysia. The claims go from Papua New Guinea, to Indonesia, through to China.

Greenpeace committed an act of piracy in Papua New Guinea. It seized a boat, claiming it was carrying illegal timber. And as far as we could tell, the timber wasn't illegally logged.

It seems odd that Greenpeace, a group that specialises in trespass and damage to property was trying to accuse people of criminal activity.

The act was a stunt designed to get media attention. We are all familiar with this kind of activity.

Unfortunately, these stunts have been getting attention all over the world.

Now it's not just fringe groups like Greenpeace accusing developing nations of illegal logging.

Recently, the US Farm Bill included an amendment to the 108-year-old Lacey Act to include plant products. The amendment is squarely aimed at so-called "illegal timber" entering the US.

Last month, the EU was supposed to consider proposed measures to prevent the import of so-called "illegal timber".

A UK MP recently introduced a Bill that proposed to penalise retailers with five years' jail for selling so-called "illegal" timber.

Some banks have introduced policies that would preclude entering into relationships with companies engaging in so-called "illegal logging".

But what is this "illegal timber"?

The typical NGO definition of illegal logging isn't just to do with laws being broken. Their definition requires consent from all directly and indirectly affected parties. It requires compliance with international treaties and taxation law. It requires provision of health insurance to workers – which may

be the norm in the US, but in most parts of the world we consider that a function of government.

Yet there is very little concrete data on how much "illegal timber" there is in the world.

It could be safely said that the "illegal logging" case has been greatly exaggerated.

There is just one report on illegal logging, published by the American Forest and Paper Association, that is relied upon by NGOs and governments around the world.

This report claimed that 12 per cent of global softwood exports and 17 per cent of global hardwood exports are of suspicious origin.

These numbers have become 'factoids' circulated in government and industry circles.

Yet, there was no fieldwork undertaken as part of the study.

There was no examination of legislation in exporting countries.

In fact, there was no first-hand account of laws being broken.

Instead, the report relied upon anecdotal evidence and estimates from other reports. And most of these estimates came from NGO reports themselves.

So, there is very little solid evidence on the apparent levels of illegal timber in the world.

Why, then, is the illegal logging case being carried by governments around the world?

There are two main reasons.

First, domestic forestry industries in the developed world are keen to protect their own patch.

The proponents of legislation have not always been green groups. They are also industry associations.

This is understandable.

We all know that increasing manufacturing and export capacity in the developing world and emerging economies has had an astounding impact on global markets.

Timber is not the only industry that is affected. All sectors have to compete in this new economic landscape.

But using environmental regulation or accusing developing countries of illegal logging as a form of protectionism has negative impacts.

Many developing countries only have forest products as a potential export. It is only through this use of natural resources that living standards can be raised.

Imposing first-world labour and accounting standards on third world countries makes an uneven playing field.

Which leads me to my next point.

Second, the Green ideal of restricting commercial forestry is being pushed by NGOs and Governments around the world.

According to this view, forests in developing countries should resemble natural museums.

Little or no forests should be exploited for commercial use. They should be 'locked up', and the local communities should continue their 'traditional' ways of life.

If forests are to be harvested, it must be done according to developed world standards.

Never mind that infant mortality is high. Or that life expectancy is low. Or that medical and educational facilities are poor.

Yes, in an ideal world, all forestry in the developing world would use certified sustainable forestry management, and use environmental management systems in all operations.

But these things take time.

The industry in the developing world is gradually moving towards sustainable forestry.

In Papua New Guinea for example, Rimbunan Hijau is implementing the country's first legality verification scheme. It seems like a small step, but it is a significant development in one of the world's poorest countries.

In Malaysia, the Malaysian Timber Certification scheme is being assessed for conformity with the PEFC.

Similarly, in Indonesia, the Ekolabel Indonesia has taken a decision to apply for conformity under PEFC.

By all accounts, China is looking to do the same.

But for some Green idealists, even certification is not enough.

There have been Green campaigns launched against the FSC system of certification – the system that is preferred by NGOs.

Some major international NGOs have withdrawn their support for the system.

There have also been campaigns launched against legality verification systems managed by SGS, one of the world's most respected auditing companies.

And, the New Zealand government excluded MTCC certified timber from its procurement policy – a move heavily supported by the Greens in that country.

These assurance systems that have been pushed by Governments and NGOs around the world for years have suddenly fallen out of favour.

Again, we must ask why.

No, it's not because the harvesting might be legal or illegal.

And it's not because the forestry might be sustainable or unsustainable.

It's because some groups and governments simply oppose commercial forestry.

This view is not based on science or economics. It is a political view.

This poses another question: What can be done?

There are some people that will never be convinced that forestry can have a positive impact on the world.

However, reasonable people will listen. Governments will listen. Business partners will listen.

Governments and aid agencies can be persuaded that sustainable forestry can provide greater economic and social benefits than simply cutting an industry off. Again, I bring up the example of PNG.

To develop a legality verification system in PNG, the industry there has partnered with the ITTO. It has also partnered with the Australian Government.

If banks are so concerned about the state of the world's forests, they can be persuaded to work in partnership with forestry companies to improve standards.

That's what I would define as good corporate social responsibility.

But, as with improving forestry standards in developing countries, these things take time and effort.

It requires making a case on a global level.

Many of us operate in different countries. We assume that Greenpeace taking over a boat in PNG will not impact a hardwood floor retailer in New York.

But they are all interconnected.

Any legislation on illegal logging in the US, UK and EU will impact on how all of us import or export.

Any global agreement on climate change will impact on how we manage our forestry operations.

If we are to sustain our industry into the future, we must stay alert and aware of these developments.

Most importantly, we must respond by making our case to Governments and business partners around the world.

If we don't, the future of our industry will be in peril.

Thank you.