

Press release

CAMPUS DU JARDIN D'AGRONOMIE TROPICALE DE NOGENT-SUR-MARNE, 2 MAY 2017

ATIBT international Forum in Dubai : a 20th unusual edition up to the expectations

The 20th edition of the International Forum of ATIBT has been held this year in Dubai, from 4 to 6 March 2017. Gathering around 130 participants of the tropical timber-forest industry, its general theme was : « *Tropical forest : timber, and so much more* »

Organised around every two years by ATIBT, the International Forum gathers experts of the tropical timber-forest industry. Since his launch in 1982 in Rome, it has traveled many cities around the world. However, it had never taken place in the Middle East. It is now done, with a 20th edition from 4 to 6 March in Dubai, an emblematic city of the United Arab Emirates. A destination that could be surprising, but which proved to be very interesting, as Dubai is a place of business and a logistics hub with access to the Gulf States, Iran, Pakistan, East Africa. In addition, Dubai has been hosting since 16 editions a major wood trade in the Middle East, the Dubai WoodShow, which was held just after the Forum, and which ATIBT was associated with.

No local timber production then, but a lot of international trade due to the exceptional geographical location of Dubai, along with a **real interest from the authorities for legality and timber certification issues**, with the opening of the Forum by the Ministry of the Economy of the United Arab Emirates, presenting the commitments of his country regarding the environment. Because "*Tropical Forest, [this is] timber, and so much more*".

This general theme, resonating with the objective of the marketing program currently implemented by ATIBT, aimed at valorizing, in its different aspects, a resource that is too little known, tropical timber, as well as the global approach of the profession of forest manager, who is committed to a threefold stake of economic profitability, preservation of the resource and respect for local populations.

The Forum brought together industry experts from the public and private sectors, academia and research, as well as civil society and NGOs from both the producing countries (mainly the Congo Basin) and consuming countries, to intervene in five sessions:

1. The future of the tropical forest and its population
2. Training in the timber professions
3. Legality, certification, global warming and the responsible purchase of timber
4. Logistics, challenges and opportunities
5. African timber market in the world and in particular in the Middle East

There were 130 participants from the Congo Basin (Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Republic of Congo), but also Nigeria, Vietnam, United Arab Emirates, Greece, Germany, United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland, to attend to these very lively round tables. ATIBT was pleased to include in the speeches the official address of Her Excellency Mrs. Estelle Ondo, Minister of Forest Economy, Fisheries and Environment, responsible for the protection and sustainable management of Gabon's ecosystems, as well as that of Mrs. Lucie Berger, from the Delegation of the European Union in Abu Dhabi.

The day after these two very intense exchange days, ATIBT held a stand at the Dubai WoodShow, in a collective booth with several of its members. This presence proved to be very fruitful, as the stand stayed full of visitors during the three days of the show, with visitors from Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, India, China, Turkey, Australia, Brazil...but also from Europe or North America. Visitors curious about the activities of ATIBT and tropical timber, or interested in buying its latest User Guide for Eco-certified African timber, its General Tropical Timber Nomenclature, its Tropical Timber Atlas by continent, or its tropical timber sample boxes. Some of them have even joined the Association since.

About ATIBT

Founded in 1951 and located in the Campus of the Tropical Agronomy Garden of Nogent-sur-Marne, the International Technical Association of Tropical Timber (ATIBT) brings together 130 members from 20 tropical timber consuming and producing countries. It is both a technical and scientific leading authority on tropical timber resource, representing the industry's professionals to the various stakeholders (States, international organizations, NGOs...) and a manager of international programs dedicated to sustainable and responsible management of tropical forests. Working with ATIBT means sharing its mission: contributing to the sustainable and responsible development of the tropical forest-timber sector, from the forests to the market, a mission that simultaneously ensures economic viability, and social fairness in producing countries and preservation of forest ecosystems.

For more information, please visit :

- The ATIBT website : <https://www.atibt.org/en/>
- ATIBT twitter account : https://twitter.com/ATIBT_Aso

Contact ATIBT

Christine Le Paire

Head of Communication and Marketing Program Coordinator

Christine.lepaire@atibt.org

01 43 94 72 67