

”Sustainability transformations in the large scale tree plantations”

Sustainability Science Day 9 May 2019

Jorma Eloranta, Chairman of the Board, Stora Enso

Dear Participants, students and professionals,

Climate is changing, biodiversity is being threatened and we know our planet cannot sustain material consumption the way we know it today. To protect the climate and its biological diversity, and to fight the growing use of fossil-based materials, we need sustainable forestry today more than ever before.

We know that the global plantation area will double by 2050 to meet the World’s increasing demand for wood. Tree plantations are here to stay. Plantations are not inherently good or bad: everything depends on how and where they are established and managed. You are here today to discuss the different elements of sustainable tree plantations – from environmental, economic, social and cultural perspective.

When it comes to forests or tree plantations, there are sometimes conflicting interests, and how to find a sustainable balance between these interests is the most important question to tackle. It requires open stakeholder dialogues and genuine listening. It’s not always easy, but it’s definitely something the forest industry has been aiming to practice for decades.

As you know, I am the Chair of the Board at Stora Enso. Wood is Stora Enso’s most important raw material, so for us this is a business critical question. For example, Stora Enso was the first forest products company to set climate targets approved by the Science Based Targets initiative. At Stora Enso, sustainability is a key element of Stora Enso’s corporate Governance, promoted by the Board of Directors, the CEO and the Group Leadership team.

At Stora Enso we believe that as multinational companies work under strict stakeholder scrutiny and follow high international standards, they can help raise the bar for sustainability also locally. But it requires dialogue.

You cannot run sustainable business without the local communities and neighbors. You simply cannot run your business without having trust locally, as companies rely on local workforce and suppliers. But the local interests can be conflicting, local communities don't always agree with each other, and sometimes the interests of local authorities, experts and communities conflict in complicated ways. In a situation like this a company cannot step in and solve everything, but it must have the patience and ability to listen, and to communicate clearly what the company is doing or planning to do.

One great platform for this is the New Generation Plantations project that brings together governments and forest companies from around the world meet, discuss and learn. It is based on transparency – the participants lead by example in disclosing information about their current plantation practices. Stora Enso is a proud member of the New Generation Plantations, and we have taken stakeholders to see and review our tree plantations in Brazil and Laos.

This is what we see as the key to finding sustainable solutions: telling clearly what you do and why, and listening carefully what stakeholders have to say about it. It requires communication, courage, and a constructive attitude from all sides.

In this spirit of open dialogues I hope that you will have fruitful discussions during the day. The aim is to find out innovative opportunities and practices to facilitate sustainability transformations in the large-scale tree plantation sector. This is not an easy task but I hope that by the end of the day you will have a few new ideas. To achieve that, you need to step into today's session with open ears and an open mind.

I wish you a fantastic day.

Thank you!