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DIVULGAÇÃO BRACELPA

A POSITIVE FUTURE WITH NEW CHALLENGES

The forest based industry is more competitive, significantly transformed and has in front of it important new business opportunities, after facing the international financial crisis. This is the conclusion of the 5th Global CEO Roundtable, the event that put together in May, in Montreal (Canada), around 60 leaders of the pulp, paper and other forest products industry. At the meeting, promoted by the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations (ICFPA), Brazil was represented by Antonio Maciel Neto, CEO of Suzano, and by Carlos Aguiar, president of Fibria, besides Bracelpa.

By the evaluation of participants from around the world, the recovery signs of the forest based industry are very positive.

The factors that contributed to this strengthening were the significant improvement in productivity levels of the companies, the increasing globalization of business, the search for new markets and the progress in environmental performance.

Debates also disclosed the growing interdependence of the global supply chain of the sector and showed high levels of governmental intervention in the industry and in the economy, in many countries. Regarding this second issue, we emphasize the importance of free markets and the reduction of subsidies and protectionist measures as essential for the business evolution.

The presidents of the Brazilian companies promoted, during the Roundtable, a debate about the importance of the tree biotechnology and the scientific progresses to adapt the pulp and paper industry to the present global context, where new business models come up, based on environmental guidelines. Among the topics justifying this work, we highlight the importance of broadening our understanding of genetically modified organisms, addressing potential benefits, possible risks and the establishment of biosecurity measures.

Ongoing scientific studies show that the tree biotechnology will allow forest planting on degraded areas, on poor or high salinity soil, among other conditions. It will also increase the wood productivity indexes. Furthermore, it will favor the reduction of energy and water consumption and the use of chemical products at the industrial process. Still, it is important to highlight that the use of biotechnology at the planted forests may contribute for the mitigation of the climate changes effects.

Thus, further knowledge and debate on the matter will be crucial in order to establish procedures and mechanisms for the responsible use of these new technologies.

With well defined governmental policies, investments and strategic partnerships, the forest based industry will be capable of integrating such new opportunities into the traditional production operations for producing pulp, paper and other wood products. This way it will move into a new economy, based on bioproducts and bioenergy.

The discussion about tree biotechnology is one of the main challenges of the sector all over the world and will be determinant for the future of the forest based industry. Therefore, it must enter the agenda of international forums related to this activity. In this sense, representatives from Brazil and New Zeland will propose, at the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) General Assembly, which will take place from June 25th on, in Malaysia, the creation of a Working Group for studying the matter.

The motion to be presented proposes that the work is based on scientific studies in progress and has the support of experts and scholars from internationally recognized universities and research institutes.

The initiative has already gained support of entities from the United States, Canada, Australia, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, South Africa and European countries. ■

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