



**Avrim Lazar**  
President & CEO FPAC

**“This single-biggest thing in trying to address climate change if you’re in forestry is keeping the forest.”**

Listen to **Avrim Lazar, President & CEO of FPAC (Forest Products Association of Canada)** and keynote speaker on Forests and Climate Change at the XIII World Forestry Congress in Argentina.



[\[watch the video\]](#)

**Ottawa – FAO headquarters, Rome.** The advances in CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction by the forest products industry have been variously addressed and discussed. Can the forest products industry be more successful in its efforts to become a green oriented sector? This question is of particular relevance to the XIII World Forestry Congress, which has envisaged a full day Special Event on Investment and Financing, targeting the private sector. Avrim Lazar, President and CEO, Forest Products Association of Canada (**FPAC**), answers it, also in his capacity as key-note speaker on Forests and Climate Change at the XIII WFC:

“This single-biggest thing in trying to address climate change if you’re in forestry is keeping the forest. If you keep the forest growing and healthy, it sequesters carbon. And we all know that if a community can make a living from their forest, they’re going to try and keep it. If they can’t earn their living from the forest, then they’re going to put it to alternative use, like chopping it down and growing crops. So the single-biggest thing we can do is make certain that communities around the world who live in and near forests can prosper by keeping their forests healthy and growing. If you go down the main street of a small town in rural Canada, you’ll see many people whose families have lived there for generations. And for many years, they were able to think of this as their home and be able to control their lives more or less from within their community.

But this is no longer true. Everyone who lives in a small town in a rural community anywhere in the world lives at the intersection of their community and the global environment. How does the global environment affect a small town somewhere in the far north of Canada? Well, very simply, the climate is changing and changing their ecosystem. Canadian forests feel the impact of a changed climate dramatically through outbreaks of pestilence, new insects, change in growing patterns. And as this happens, the capacity of these communities to live the way they have in the past begins to disappear. Their forest they’ve enjoyed for recreation and spiritual support is starting to change. And very directly, their capacity to harvest trees and make a living by selling products - both wood, paper and pulp - in the global markets is changing because a changed climate is reducing the capacity of those forests to be productive.

So people who live at this intersection begin to realize that addressing climate change is the single-biggest imperative for the future generations that hope to enjoy lives in forest communities. In Canada, what we have done is try to take a cradle-to-grave approach, ensuring that for every tree that is taken, another is planted. And net deforestation rate in Canada from forestry is now zero. But just replacing the trees is not enough. We process the trees in factories, using energy and replacing fossil fuels with

green waste-based biofuels is absolutely essential. So far in Canada, we've gone to a 60-per-cent utilization rate of waste-based biofuels.

But our objective, and we intend to meet it, is to be 100 per cent green energy in our mills. We could easily say that's enough if we replace all the trees and use green energy for processing, we've done our job. But it wouldn't be true because when the product leaves the factory and goes to the consumer, it still has a life and that life affects the climate. The good news is for as long as it's in use, the carbon in the paper, the carbon in the wood is sequestered and kept out of the atmosphere.

But at the end of life, it can follow two roads. It could be used for fuel or recycled, and that keeps it within nature's balance. Or it can go to landfill where it will turn to methane which has 30 times the impact on the climate than carbon dioxide and become an environmental menace. So our responsibility is from cradle to grave to ensure that trees are replanted and make our mills entirely dependent on bioenergy and to work with our customers, consumers, and municipalities to ensure that at the end of the life cycle, the product is responsibly put back into nature's carbon cycle."

**Avrim Lazar**, President & CEO of the **FPAC**, also Chair of the National Business Association Roundtable and Past-President of the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations (ICFPA). While holding senior positions in several Canadian Ministries, before taking up his current post, he was responsible for national policy in areas as diverse as climate change, biodiversity, child poverty, employment insurance and labour force training.