

World BioEconomy Forum goes virtual – live from Ruka!

Press release 28.04.2020. **This year's third World BioEconomy Forum (WCBEF) will be broadcast live from Ruka on September 10th, 2020. Due to the current global pandemic the Advisory Board has decided to take a cautious approach and will provide delegates with a high-quality, interactive virtual event which will be moderated from Ruka in Finland. The event will deliver the usual high-level content, while at the same time as providing a unique experience for all bioeconomy stakeholders from around the world.**

The full programme will be six hours in duration and will consist of four dedicated sessions: **Regulators and Climate Change, Global Leaders and Financial World, Bioproducts around us, and Looking to the Future**. In each of these sessions the WCBEF has once again attracted the most prominent speakers in their respective fields to share their views. The audience can contribute interactively on message walls and arrange online meetings with the other participants using the technology and channels provided.

"The main focus of the forum will once again be the importance of the bioeconomy and the growing use of renewable biological resources for a better and healthier planet at the same time as creating a more sustainable global economy for the future." Says **Dr. Christian Patermann**, known as a "Father" of European bioeconomy. Christian is also a former Director EU Commission and Advisor to the German Government on bioeconomy matters.

The Covid-19 pandemic has emphasized the importance of the bioeconomy even further. **Aida Greenbury** co-founder of WCBEF says, *"The links between pandemics and the climate emergency, including escalating emissions and deforestation rates, have been reported worldwide. Countries have been issuing numerous economic stimulus packages valued at around 10% of their respective GDPs to rescue the world from economic collapse. The question 'how are we going to pay back these debts while ensuring that future pandemics will be avoided?' has been in the minds of many country leaders. We can't continue to pay our debts through further environmental destruction. The bioeconomy community can play an important role in shaping the future global economy by addressing these environmental issues head on."*

Speakers and panellists already lined up include Commissioner **Mariya Gabriel** from the **EU Commission**, **Petter Taalas** Director General of the **WMO** and **Mette Wilkie** from the **FAO**. On the enterprise side, CEO of pulp giant **Suzano**, **Walter Schalka** will join the forum, along with General Partner **Michael Nettersheim** of the **European Circular BioEconomy Fund** and **Ahmed Fahmi** Chief of the Section of Innovation and Capacity Building in the Natural Sciences sector at **UNESCO**. Only a few examples showing diversity of the speakers and the program, which focusing on circular bioeconomy and climate change. Like always the event will end up with joint declaration.

"All of us are facing major changes in our lifestyle and future perspectives during this major turbulence that COVID 19 brought to the world. After the emergency health period it's clear that bioeconomy will have and even more important role on the required changes and priorities on our global society" emphasizes **Walter Schalka**, CEO of Suzano who will join for the session Global Leaders and Financial World.

Global reach is important. We will hear voices from each continent.

Honourable **Pohamba Shifeta**, Minister of **Environment, Forestry and Environment of Namibia** also comments on the importance of global agendas in the environmental field, especially during these special times: *"As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Earth Day this year under the theme "Climate Action", it gives me great pleasure to recognize the WCBEF's noble actions in the global agenda. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown us how humanity has impacted the environment. Reduced human activity during this period has allowed us to see the "hidden stars, mountains and cities" from afar. Going forward, every effort must be put to good use to ensure environmental sustainability."*

The event organisers agree that this is not just a high-level programme, but that the latest communication technology will reinforce the forum this year to have wider global reach and be interactive for the delegates and participants. The core WCBEF team will be orchestrating the event from Ruka, Finland.

“COVID-19 has put us into a completely new situation and we need to act in a responsible way. First, I thought that this would hit us hard regarding our proposed event in Ruka this year, but now I see our virtual event as a great opportunity. We can reach an even larger audience.” says Founder and Chairman of the Board **Jukka Kantola**. He adds, *“We are excited about the new format and see this global platform as an opportunity to reinforce our message and our influence on the global bioeconomy and climate change agenda.”*

More information: Jukka Kantola, Founder and Chairman of the Advisory Board

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Background

The World BioEconomy Forum (WCBEF) was born in Finland in 2018. The founders of the forum are a team of global experts - including experts in technology, marketing, stakeholder engagement and sustainability in forestry, pulp and paper industry - who realised that sustainable, circular, forestry bioeconomy is our future. In the last two years, WCBEF has been providing the global platform for Circular Bioeconomy stakeholders to get together, exchange views and come up with a joint agenda on this increasingly important topic.

WCBEF 2020 goes virtual. The Forum will be broadcasted from Ruka, Finland. Finland has been selected the happiest country in the world by the United Nations (<https://worldhappiness.report>) – for 3rd year in a row. The Finns themselves voted Ruka and Kuusamo area the most beautiful region in Finland (<https://www.is.fi/kotimaa/art-2000006251850.html>). Under these challenging pandemic times, WCBEF will work to rebuild global economy in a more sustainable way.

Advisory Board 2020



Dr Christian Patermann, also known as the "Father" of the European bioeconomy. He is a former director at the EU Commission, and acts as an advisor for the German government on bioeconomy issues.



Aida Greenbury, Sustainability Advisor with more than 20 years of experience in sustainability and forestry management. She prominently contributes to global debates about sustainability and is involved with several organizations focusing on environmental issues.



Jim Philp, Policy Analyst, Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation at OECD. Mr Philp started at OECD in 2011 and has responsibilities in several fields such as industrial and environmental biotechnology and biomass sustainability.



Mark Rushton, a freelance editor focusing on the pulp, paper and bioproduct industries. Mr Rushton has been reporting on bioindustries globally for over 20 years and is involved with several organizations including leading technical associations and industry information providers.



Prof. Matthias Zscheile, Managing Director at BioEconomy Cluster Management GmbH. He has over 20 years of experience in the European bioeconomy and wood industry and today focuses on the development of bioeconomy clusters.



Teresa Presas, the former Director General of CEPI (Confederation of European Paper Industries) and a current board member of The Navigator company. She has over thirty years of history in the paper industry and international business, and one of her areas of expertise is sustainability and its surrounding issues.



Dr Mark Rudnicki is currently a Professor of Practice in Forest Biomaterials in the School of Forest Resources and Environmental Science at Michigan Technological University where he engages in and coordinates research in forest biomaterials. He has also been the Executive Director of the Michigan Forest Biomaterials Institute since its establishment in 2016.



Marcello Brito. With more than 30 years of experience in the oils and fats industry, Mr Brito currently serves as President of the Brazilian Agribusiness Association (ABAG) and as a member of the executive board of the Brazilian Organic and Sustainable Association (Organis). He is also a member of the Advisory Board of Conservation International Brazil.



Dr Tjama Tjivikua has been at the forefront of higher education development in Namibia for more than 23 years. He was appointed in 1995 as the Founding Rector of the Polytechnic of Namibia and became the Founding Vice-Chancellor of the Namibia University of Science and Technology [NUST] in 2015 upon the transformation of the Polytechnic.



Prof. Ludo Diels, Research Manager, Sustainable Chemistry at the Flemish Institute for Technological Research (VITO). Dr Diels has been involved in several projects concerning global bioeconomy and has been strongly driving the transition towards sustainable chemistry and clean technology.



Mario Bonaccorso, the Founder and Editor in Chief of Il Bioeconomista, The First Bioeconomy Blog focusing on bioeconomy news, politics and business. He is well-connected within the bioeconomy scene worldwide and has long worked to promote global collaboration.



Mika Aalto, Director General at The Chemical Industry Federation of Finland, has over 15 years of experience in working at Tekes (now known as Business Finland). Before his current position, he worked several years at the Ministry of Employment and the Economy of Finland, focusing on bio and circular economy.



Michael Carus, the Founder and Managing Director of nova-Institute, has over 20 years of experience in working in the field of Bio-Based Economy. One of his areas of expertise is the political and economic framework for bio-based processes and applications, and he has authored several reports and policy papers on Bio-based Economy in the EU.



Jukka Kantola, CEO of NC Partnering Ltd and the Chairman of the Advisory Board. Mr Kantola has broad experience of the woody biomass related industries and has held various executive positions in Europe and in Asia. He is a persistent advocate for bioeconomy, and the founder of World BioEconomy Forum.



Declaration, Ruka September 2019

The second World Bioeconomy Forum held in Ruka in northern Finland, ended today with a number of declarations agreed to by all participants.

The declarations were made after delegates and stakeholders, including industry players, NGOs, researchers, policy makers and academics engaged in the circular bioeconomy from all over the world met in Ruka over the course of this week. The discussions that took place were mainly centred around the importance of the bioeconomy sector in efforts to reduce climate change, which is increasingly being recognised as an emergency of our times.

The declarations agreed upon today are:

- 1. To manage the circular bioeconomy with a particular view to the health of the planet as the No.1 priority**

The bioeconomy is right at the heart of solutions to climate change. Through its strategy and actions, stakeholders must be committed to the bioeconomy with the knowledge that it is a crucial tool to mitigate climate change and to operate as such.

- 2. Ensure that the circular bioeconomy is economically sustainable**

Stakeholders must engage in the holistic use of feedstocks for example certified, sustainable forestry, green energy generation during production, reduction of consumption, and high recycling rates, along all steps of the value chains. Business plans by industry must also take these requirements into account.

- 3. Agree to, wherever possible, to use the bioeconomy to create jobs for rural and urban communities.**

Important to emphasize that the circular bioeconomy is inclusive of welfare of people as well as the planet.

- 4. Share knowledge between North, South, East and West**

Stakeholders need to meet regularly, share ideas, best practice and progress at events such as the World Bioeconomy Forum – and then put shared knowledge into action.

- 5. Accelerate circular bioeconomy evolution by endorsing smart bioeconomy policies and strategies, including accountable action plans**

Use smart and coherent policies as a tool to speed up development towards a sustainable circular bioeconomy.

Circularity is a must – for new products and applications need to take into account recycling and reuse requirements in product/value chain design.

6. To make bio-based value chains explicit and traceable

Consumers should be made aware of the products they are offered to allow them to make the right buying decisions.

7. Acknowledge that renewable carbon is the key for a sustainable chemical and plastic industry

Chemicals and plastics need carbon – it is about the right carbon source. This is renewable carbon from biomass, direct CO₂ utilisation and recycling. This must be acknowledged in any future legislative framework in Europe.

8. Agree on the emphasis of replacing fossil-fuel material and not to promote biomass burning

It is vital that the fiber value chain goes beyond simply the burning of biomass for energy. Priority must be given to producing high-end, sustainable products such as chemicals, plastics and textile fibers.