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2021 UNFSS Academic Advisory Council Annual Meeting:  
 Research Frontiers on the Adoption, Impact and Effectiveness of VSS  
 4-5 November 2021  
 Hosted at the EUI, Florence, Italy + hybrid

The **UNFSS 2021 Academic Advisory Council (AAC) annual meeting** brings together an international mix of academic and policy experts from various disciplines and backgrounds to consolidate the knowledge on VSS and contribute to a comprehensive understanding of VSS impact and effectiveness.

Academic and policy sessions are held to foster the debate on VSS as a tool to enhance sustainable development. The sessions discuss the role of VSS in international trade, the impact of VSS on socio-economic and environmental sustainability, the role of VSS in public policy, and the future of VSS. While the meeting mainly aims to foster the knowledge on VSS, it also seeks to link researchers to policy makers in a way that assists in creating informed policies through research. In addition, it intends to provide inputs to empirical and theoretical research and develop a common foundation upon which further research can be conducted.

The UN Forum on Sustainability Standards (UNFSS), a joint initiative of UNCTAD, FAO, ITC, UNEP and UNIDO, working on VSS as a market-based policy tool to achieve the SDGs. UNCTAD is the Secretariat of UNFSS.

**4 November 2021, Time (CET)**

9:30	Arrival
9:45-10:00	<b>Opening Remarks by AAC Co-Chairs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bernard Hoekman, EUI</li> <li>• Santiago Fernandez de Cordoba, UNFSS/UNCTAD</li> </ul>
10:00-11:30	<b>Academic Panel 1: VSS in International Trade</b> <b>Chair:</b> Elisabeth Tuerk, UNECE <b>Presentations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To trade, or not to trade, that's the question: Insights on the trade effects of food standards</b> Miet Maertens, Janne Bemelmans, KU Leuven</li> <li>• <b>Child Labour &amp; GVCs</b>, Marcelo Olarreaga, University of Geneva</li> <li>• <b>Voluntary Sustainability Standards and trade agreements with environmental provisions: complements?</b> Mattia Di Ubaldo and Vikrant Shirodkar, University of Sussex Business School</li> <li>• <b>No Logo? The Failure of Salmon Labelling by the Aquaculture Stewardship Council in Norway and the UK</b>, Lars H. Gulbrandsen, Fridtjof Nansen Institute</li> </ul> <b>Commentator:</b> Vera Thorstensen, Fundação Getulio Vargas
11:30-12:00	Coffee Break

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12:00-13:00	<p><b>Policy panel 1: From Research to Policy Actions</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Bernard Hoekman, EUI  <b>Impulse givers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sustainability Standards: A new deal to build forward better</b>, Joseph Wozniak, ITC</li> <li>• <b>Better Trade for Sustainable Development: The role of VSS</b>, Santiago Fernandez De Cordoba, and Niematallah Elamin, UNCTAD</li> <li>• <b>Informing Action for a Sustainable Future</b>, Karin Kreider, ISEAL</li> </ul> <p><b>Commentators:</b> Mercedes Aràoz Fernández, Universidad del Pacifico</p>
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00 -15:45	<p><b>Academic Panel 2: VSS and Sustainability Concerns</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Steven Stone, UNEP  <b>Presentations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>VSS &amp; the SDGs: Mapping transnational linkages for Sustainable Development</b>, Clara Brandi, DIE</li> <li>• <b>Status of living wages in VSS</b>, Elisabeth Bennett, Lewis &amp; Clark College</li> <li>• <b>The contribution of corporate protected areas to biodiversity conservation in tropical commodity crop landscapes</b>, Robert Heilmayr, University of California</li> <li>• <b>Accounting for Nature: Agriculture and Mitigation in the Era of Global Climate Change</b>, Shaila Seshia Galvin, Graduate Institute of Geneva</li> <li>• <b>Explaining compliance with VSS</b>, Thomas Dietz, University of Münster</li> </ul> <p><b>Commentator:</b> Eve Fouilleux, French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development</p>
15:45-16:00	<p><b>Conclusion of day 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ruby Lambert, UNCTAD; Charline Depoorter, KU Leuven</li> </ul>

**5 November 2021 (Time CET)**

10:00-11:15	<p><b>Academic panel 3: VSS What next?</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Emilie Vandercandelaere, FAO  <b>Presentations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Future of VSS Growth: Adoption Dynamics of the FSC</b>, Charline Depoorter, and Axel Marx, KU Leuven</li> <li>• <b>The impact of VSS to vulnerable groups and the possible way forward</b>, Li Li, University of International Business and Economics</li> <li>• <b>Four Faced: Does improved compliance to VSS undermine environmental sustainability?</b> Benjamin Cashore, National University of Singapore</li> </ul> <p><b>Commentator:</b> Philip Schleifer, University of Amsterdam</p>
11:15-11:45	Coffee Break
11:45-13:00	<p><b>Policy Panel 2: VSS and Due Diligence</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Ariel Macaspac Hernández, DIE; Clara Brandi, DIE  <b>Impulse givers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Luca Maiotti, OECD</li> <li>• Archana Negi, Jawaharlal Nehru University</li> </ul> <p><b>Commentators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Axel Marx, KU Leuven</li> <li>• Engela Schlemmer, University of the Witwatersrand</li> <li>• Jorge Pérez, Universidad Anáhuac</li> </ul>

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13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-15:30	<p><b>Academic Panel 4: VSS in public policy</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Bernardo Calzadilla-Sarmiento, UNIDO  <b>Presentations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Myth of Democratic Legitimacy</b>, Hamish van der Ven, University of British Columbia</li> <li>• <b>A policy mix approach to biodiversity governance: the case of Colombia</b>, Eric F. Lambin, Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment</li> <li>• <b>Pan-tropical insights on the contextual effectiveness and equity of forest-focused supply chain policies</b>, Rachael Garrett, ETH Zürich</li> </ul> <p><b>Commentator:</b> Santiago Fernandez de Cordoba, UNCTAD</p>
15:30-15:45	Coffee break
15:45-16:45	<p><b>Policy Panel 3: The role of National VSS Platforms in Policy Action</b>  <b>Chair:</b> Ruby Lambert, UNCTAD  <b>Impulse givers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manish Pande, Quality Council of India</li> <li>• Hussalmizzar Hussain, Standards Malaysia</li> <li>• Dolores T. Brito, INMETRO Brazil</li> <li>• Vivian Xia, China Association for Standardization</li> </ul>
16:45-17:00	<p><b>Concluding session by AAC Co-Chairs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mercedes Aràoz Fernández, Universidad del Pacifico</li> <li>• Axel Marx, KU Leuven</li> </ul>