



The World Bank



International Finance Corporation



World Business Council for Sustainable Development



FOREST TRENDS



PROFOR

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## GLOBAL FORUM CALLS TO CURB ILLEGAL LOGGING AND PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE FOREST INVESTMENT

**WASHINGTON, October 23, 2003**—With a call to curb illegal logging – which today represents worldwide annual losses in revenues and assets in excess of \$10 billion – and to increase responsible forest investments in developing countries and economies-in-transition, a two-day multistakeholder *Forest Investment Forum* ended today in Washington.

A statement issued by the sponsoring organizations – the World Business Council on Sustainable Development (WBCSD), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Forest Trends, Program on Forests (PROFOR), the World Bank, and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) – emphasized that this gathering, which included leaders of multinational forest companies, governments, ministries, international development and financial institutions, and environmental and civil society organizations was a crucial platform to move ahead a sustainability agenda for the forest sector.

*“We must act now to implement sustainable forest management, as forests are fundamental in the fight against poverty and the maintenance of biodiversity,”* said **Ian Johnson, World Bank Vice President for Sustainable Development.** *“I am grateful that so many leaders have joined us in this Forum to seek answers to the challenges facing us all.”*

It is estimated that some 1.6 billion people worldwide depend on forests for their livelihoods. 60 million indigenous peoples depend on forests for their subsistence. Forest resources also represent a survival base for as many as 200-300 million small farmers around the world.

*“Inaction is not an option,”* said **Odd Gullberg, Chief Operating Officer for the World Business Council on Sustainable Development.** *“Population growth, rising standards of living, and industrialization are placing pressure on forest products and services. Investment in forestry, which increases each year, can support responsible forestry if businesses, governments, financial institutions, and NGOs work together.”*

Forests worldwide harbor 90 percent of land-based biodiversity, including numerous threatened and endangered plant and animal species. Forests provide valuable goods like timber and medicines, and important services such as regulating climate change by storing carbon and filtering drinking water. Despite their importance, many of the world’s richest forests are rapidly disappearing.

*“This Forum was a critical junction in the road to productive dialogue between*

*international investors in forestry, governments, development institutions, and environmental organizations,” said **Brooks Jaeger, Vice President for Global Threats at WWF**. “These leaders have chosen to collaboratively explore the links between financial performance and forest conservation, and work toward solutions that will sustain the world’s forests for generations to come.”*

Attached, please find the statement released at the conclusion of the Forum.

For information on participants, a complete agenda of the Forum, coverage of panel/plenary sessions, and one/one interviews please be in touch with the contacts listed above or the following websites:

[www.worldbank.org/sustainabledevelopment](http://www.worldbank.org/sustainabledevelopment)

[www.panda.org](http://www.panda.org)

[www.wbcsd.org](http://www.wbcsd.org)

[www.ifc.org](http://www.ifc.org)

[www.profor.info](http://www.profor.info)

[www.forest-trends.org](http://www.forest-trends.org)