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Forestry Companies Call for Radical Changes in Tropical Forest Management

Forestry CEOs' vision for 2015 contributes to discussions in Brazil on Post 2012 Climate Change Framework

February 18, 2008, Brasilia --- Senior executives of more than 15 of the leading forestry companies and organizations worldwide today announced their vision of tropical forestry for the year 2015. The announcement was released ahead of the major Climate Change Forum to be opened on February 20th by Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. The Forum will politically test, for the first time, a proposed post 2012 climate change framework that has been developed by the Global Legislators Organization for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE – www.globeinternational.org).

*“As senior executives of companies dependent on the integrity of tropical forests we understand and acknowledge the problems caused by tropical deforestation and degradation,” said **Andres Gut, Chairman of Precious Woods, a major timber producer in Brazil and Central Africa.** “We firmly believe that tropical timber production remains a vital economic activity but only when conducted on a sustainable basis and certified accordingly.”*

With the increased political focus on the role of forests and in particular following the UN Bali Conference climate agreement, the CEOs wanted to look at how their sector will change and the impact it would have on their business models – be it the timber producer in Africa or Latin America, or the timber importers such as Japan, Europe or the US, the building merchant or construction company.

*“We are working vigorously to implement credibly certified sustainable forest management practices, which conserve forest resources, protect the interests of local communities, and ensure long-term revenue generation from forest goods, such as timber, and services, such as carbon storage,” said **Herbert Reef, Chief Executive of Reef Hout, a timber producing company in Cameroon.***

The Forestry CEOs Group released their vision ahead of its formal presentation on February 21st to 100 senior lawmakers/legislators from the G8 and +5 countries (Brazil, China, India, Mexico, and South Africa) plus representatives from forest-rich countries in Africa and Asia. The CEOs have been participating in GLOBE's ongoing dialogue on Illegal Logging and sustainable forestry along with senior lawmakers and representatives of civil society and international organizations.

It is estimated that more than U\$15 billion dollars are lost per year in government revenues in the developing world due to illegal logging practices.

“Governments, legislators, forestry companies, local actors and consumers of forest products and services all need to work together to ensure the long-term integrity of tropical forests, which deliver such a wide range of values to society, both locally and globally,” Said Mr. Simon Fineman, Chief Executive Officer of Timbmet, the UK’s largest hardwoods importer.

The vision set out by the Forestry CEOs is based on six pillars:

- Credibly certified sustainable forest management
- Forest revenue generation that includes timber, non-timber products, and ecosystem services
- Collaboration between forest enterprises and local communities
- Coherent and efficient markets for forestry products worldwide
- Technology transfer to enable value-adding in timber producing countries to boost job creation
- Financing mechanisms tailored to the needs of the source countries

Commenting on the statement, Katherine Sierra, Vice President of Sustainable Development, World Bank, said *“It is critical for producers and importers of timber to move their business to the forefront of sustainability by endorsing socially and environmentally responsible practices. This statement of leading companies and their CEOs represents a significant step forward.”*

The CEOs propose a set of policy measures to be implemented now. These include improvements to public procurement policies in producer and consumer countries, specific legislation, access to capital, protection for investors, transparency, value-added processing, and development assistance. The Group also recommends developing new mechanisms in areas such as global product licensing, ecosystem service markets, and incentives for avoiding deforestation.

According to **GLOBE’s Forestry Dialogue Chairman, Barry Gardiner MP, also the UK PM’s special envoy on forestry**, who has been working closely with this group of CEOs, *“This vision from the private sector is not a public relations exercise; it represents a statement of genuine intent that will require radical change in the way business operates. This step from the industry will need to be matched by political commitments to develop new financing mechanisms that recognize the true value of forests, within eco-systems services.”*

The Forestry CEOs Group include amongst others:

- Balfour Beatty Group (UK & Global)
- DLH-tt Group (Global)
- Rougier (France, Cameroon, Gabon)
- Inter-African Forest Industries Association (representing 90 major timber producing companies)
- John Bitar & Co (Ghana)
- Precious Woods (Brazil, Gabon, Central America)
- Reef Hout (Brazil, Cameroon)
- Likouala Timber (Republic of Congo - Brazzaville)
- Timbmet Group (UK)
- Samartex & Plywood Company (Ghana)
- Saint Gobain Building Distribution (UK)

The two-day GLOBE Brasilia Forum organised by GLOBE International is the latest in a series of key global forums on climate change that link directly to the G8 process. It is being hosted by the Brazilian Congress on behalf of GLOBE International (www.globeinternational.org) and the Alliance of Communicators for Sustainable Development, COM+ (www.complusalliance.org). The meeting will include a session bringing together legislators from forest-rich African countries with Marina Silva, Brazilian Minister of Environment and Forestry, to agree specific measures to combat deforestation.

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What is GLOBE? GLOBE (Global Legislators Organization for a Balanced Environment – www.globeinternational.org) is a non-partisan global network of legislators that convenes high-level international Dialogues on climate change, forestry and ecosystems. GLOBE facilitates the contribution of senior legislators to G8 and +5 leaders. GLOBE aims to push the boundaries of what is politically possible.

What is COM+? The COM+ Alliance (www.complusalliance.org) is a partnership of international organizations and communications professionals from diverse sectors committed to using communications to advance a vision of sustainable development that integrates its three pillars: economic, social, and environmental. By offering a platform to share expertise, develop best practice, and create synergies, COM+ hopes to actively support creative and inspiring communications across the world to bring sustainable development closer to the public. *COM+ members include The World Conservation Union, UNEP, WB, CGIAR, GEF, Inter Press Service, BBC World Service Trust, Reuters Foundation, DEV TV, IFEJ, WBCSD, TVE, Southern Caucus of NGOs, Green Facts, Thomson Foundation, TVEAP, among others.*

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