



## MEDIA ALERT

**Media Conference on  
TIMBER TRADE, FOREST LAW COMPLIANCE  
and GOVERNANCE  
at Asia-Pacific Forestry Week**

**WHAT:** Media Conference, during the *Dialogue on Timber Trade, Forest Law Compliance & Governance*  
**WHEN:** Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 10:00 – 10:30am  
**WHERE:** National Convention Centre, Hanoi, Vietnam (room 313)

The most important decisions that will determine the future of Asia's forests, and the millions of people who depend on them, will ultimately be made in corporate board meetings and parliamentary assemblies.

Introduced by **Dr. Boen Purnama, Secretary General, Ministry of Forestry Indonesia**, and moderated by **Mr. Rico Hizon, BBC Asia Business and Finance Correspondent**, this crucial dialogue will bring together world-renowned experts and key decision-makers to help ensure that such decisions are as thoroughly informed and as balanced as possible.

The Asia Forest Partnership invites media to participate in this plenary session (to be held from 08:30 – 12:00) and to attend a media conference that will be held during a half hour interval (10:00 – 10:30).

Representatives available to provide a broad cross-section of perspectives related to sustainability in the trade of timber and forest products, will include:

- **Dr. David Cassells**, Director, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Asia Pacific Forest Program & Chief of Party, Responsible Asia Forestry and Trade (RAFT)
- **Dr. Boen Purnama**, Secretary General, Ministry of Forestry Indonesia
- **Ms. Frances Seymour**, Director General, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)
- **Mr. Hugh Speechly**, Coordinator: Forest Governance and Trade Programme, Department for International Development (DFID)
- Representative from Vietnamese Government or private sector (tbc)

### Media Enquiries:

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

*Embargoed until 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2008*

### **International Dialogue on Timber Trade, Forest Law Compliance & Governance**

Hanoi, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2008 – Delegates from all over the world will meet today to discuss issues surrounding timber trade, forest law compliance and governance. The dialogue will be held as part of Asia Pacific Forestry Week, currently being staged in Hanoi.

Forests in Asia account for over half a billion hectares, around one percent of which is being cleared per year (FAO, 2006). Recent concerns about forests to climate change have added to already intense debate around forest law enforcement, industrial wood demand and other complex dynamics that impact on logging, both legal and illegal.

"The future of Asia's forests is no longer just the concern of scientists and NGOs fighting for the survival of these vital ecosystems and their charismatic fauna," said David Cassells, Director of The Nature Conservancy's Asia Pacific Forest Programme and the Responsible Asia Forestry and Trade (RAFT) initiative. "Forest management and use effects the lives of millions of people. It is big business and forests are high on the agenda for mainstream economic policy in a carbon constrained world.

"Many of the decisions that affect forests take place far away from the forests and the millions of people who depend most directly on them," added Mr Cassells. "Historically, the decisions taken in boardrooms and government offices have led to over exploitation, forest loss and degradation.

"The policies and incentives that guide the actions of the private sector must be re-aligned so that business becomes part of the solution, not an ongoing source of the problem. Businessmen, foresters, NGOs and communities must talk and work together to secure a sustainable future for Asia's forests. This is why an event like this one is so important."

The dialogue will provide a platform for participants to advance policy solutions, industry incentives and practical on-the-ground initiatives. Issues to be addressed will include trends affecting regional and international timber trade, sustainability and legality standards, and timber procurement policies.

"Many people think we could halt deforestation if we just stopped illegal logging," said Frances Seymour, Director General, the Center for International Forestry Research. "But there are a number of complex factors that drive forest law, many of which originate outside of the forestry sector, and we have to be careful that law enforcement efforts do not harm the millions of people who rely on forests for their livelihoods," added Ms Seymour.



"Solving the problems will require cooperation across national boundaries and the involvement of a large number of stakeholders. Dialogues such as this one can help build a consensus among these many actors about what needs to be done."

So, sustainable management of forest resources is not just an environmental issue, but a social, political and economic one too. And sustainable management of forests in Asia is not just the responsibility of countries in Asia, but for developed countries whose seemingly insatiable demand for timber products often drives illegal logging.

"This demand impacts heavily on the economies of developing countries and the livelihoods of their rural communities," said Hugh Speechly, from the Department for International Development's (DfID) Forest Governance and Trade Programme.

"Timber-producing nations lose more than \$US15 billion a year due to uncollected royalties, and trade in illegally procured timber is estimated to depress world prices by up to 16%, making it difficult for legal operators to compete.

"The UK's Forest Governance and Trade Programme is confronting this problem by harnessing market leverage in timber consuming countries to encourage governance reform in producing countries. We see this dialogue as an important part of these efforts," added Mr Speechly.

The Dialogue will be introduced by Dr. Boen Purnama, Secretary General, Ministry of Forestry of Indonesia, and will be moderated by Mr. Rico Hizon, BBC Asia Business and Finance Correspondent.

A selection of presentations will be followed by an open forum. A media conference will also be held during a half hour interval (10:00 – 10:30am), providing local and international media with the opportunity to question a diverse panel.

The event will be hosted by the Asia Forest Partnership (AFP), a multi-stakeholder alliance to facilitate and promote discussion, information exchange, and collaborative action for the sustainable management of forests in the Asia-Pacific region. AFP was launched in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

It has been organised by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), the Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Department for International Development (DfID) and the Ministry of Forestry of Indonesia (MoF).

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