

# INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER ORGANIZATION



## NEWS RELEASE

### **ITTO and Japan to support forest rehabilitation in Côte d'Ivoire**

Tokyo, 14 May 2013 –The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the Government of Japan today signed diplomatic notes and a Grant Agreement for funding of 183 million Japanese yen (approximately USD 1.8 million) to implement a large project to support the rehabilitation of forest lands degraded during civil warfare in Côte d'Ivoire that took place from 2002-2005 and 2010-2011.

ITTO Executive Director Emmanuel Ze Meka stated after the signing ceremony that “This project, with the generous support of Japan, will ensure not only the rehabilitation of the damaged forests but also the recovery of the daily livelihood of the displaced people and local communities damaged from the warfare.”

H.E. Toshiko Abe, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of Japan, expressed that the project will contribute to both the rehabilitation of forest and restoration of biodiversity in the forest of Côte d'Ivoire, and subsequently to improve the livelihoods and stability of its society, therefore being a very meaningful one, and reason for which the Japanese Government wishes to further collaborate with ITTO.

The western part of Côte d'Ivoire was the scene of violent clashes during the successive crises of 2002-2011. The warfare generated many refugees and internally displaced people and led to the establishment of refugee camps in forest reserves. The Duékoué and Scio forests (52,675 ha and 88,000 ha respectively) in the west of the country were not spared. They were literally plundered with displaced people and local communities engaging in uncontrolled wood harvesting. There is an urgent need to take steps for the recovery of these and other degraded forest lands, and to involve displaced people and local communities in this work.

To achieve this goal, the project, to be implemented by Côte d'Ivoire's Forest Development Corporation (Société de Développement des Forêts, or SODEFOR) with the involvement of displaced people and local communities, will include: 1) rehabilitation of 2,000 ha of degraded forest lands through the establishment of taungya agroforestry plantations, 2) production and dissemination of high quality seeds and seedlings, 3) subcontracting of forest rehabilitation work with local communities and 4) distribution of processing equipment to facilitate the marketing of food products from the agroforestry plantations.

#### **About agroforestry**

Trees play a crucial role in almost all terrestrial ecosystems and provide a range of products and services to rural and urban people. As natural vegetation is cleared for agriculture and other types of development, the benefits that trees provide are best sustained by integrating trees into agriculturally productive landscapes — a practice known as agroforestry (World Agroforestry Centre). Taungya agroforestry plantations include planting short-term crops along with trees.

#### **International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)**

The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) is an intergovernmental organization promoting the conservation and sustainable management, use and trade of tropical forest resources. It was established in 1986 under the auspices of the United Nations, and has its headquarters in Yokohama, Japan. Its members, which are signatories of the International Tropical Timber Agreement 2006 (ITTA 2006), represent a majority

of the world's tropical forests and nearly all of the global tropical timber trade. In its work, ITTO facilitates discussion, consultation, field projects and international cooperation on issues relating to the international trade and utilization of tropical timber and the sustainable management of its resource base. For more information on ITTO's projects and programs visit: [www.itto.int](http://www.itto.int). For additional information on this press release, please contact: Takeshi Goto on +81 45 223 1110 or at [rfm@itto.int](mailto:rfm@itto.int).