



Partnership to sustain tropical forests launched ITTO, JICA to work together towards common goals

Yokohama, 3 September 2010. The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) signed an agreement today to closely collaborate over the coming four years.

Mr. Emmanuel Ze Meka, ITTO Executive Director, stated at the signing ceremony: “We all recognize the importance of conserving and sustainably using tropical forest resources, and their important role in the overall sustainable development of the countries in the tropics. Tropical forests host a large majority of biodiversity on earth; representing an invaluable asset for the people and especially for the local communities that depend on them for their livelihoods. Based on this Agreement, we expect to increase our cooperation with JICA to further promote the sustainable use and conservation of tropical forest resources.” Mr. Kenzo Oshima, JICA Senior Vice-president, concurred, noting that “ITTO and JICA share common goals and it makes sense that we build on our many collaborative activities to date to ensure the most effective delivery of our programs in the tropics.”

The key purposes of the agreement are to:

1. Identify, develop and implement targeted joint activities on the sustainable use and conservation of tropical forests in support of the overall sustainable development of ITTO developing member countries which are assisted by JICA and in accordance with their national development policies; and
2. Promote capacity building in ITTO developing member countries and facilitate information exchange between the Parties and interested countries, to advance the implementation of sustainable forest management in the tropics.

Several areas for cooperation are identified in the agreement, including:

- Joint project development and financing at sub-national, national and regional levels;
- Provision of services by ITTO for JICA project implementation in countries where ITTO has comparative advantage due to extended field experience;
- Joint activities in dissemination of information and sharing of experiences in the field of sustainable forest management in the tropics;
- Opportunities for the dissemination of Japanese technology and know how for the sustainable use and conservation of forest resources, the sustainable development of forest industry; and the promotion of trade and marketing of sustainably produced and legally harvested forest products;
- Promotion of markets and market-based approaches to increase the value of tropical forests through the payment of environmental services, including carbon sequestration and carbon stocking;
- Forest fire prevention and management, and development of regional early warning and detection systems; and
- Forest management for mitigation and adaptation to climate change including REDD+ .

The two organizations will liaise closely to raise funds for joint activities. Subject to the availability of financial resources, joint activities to be undertaken during the first year of the agreement (2010-2011) may include:

1. Development and implementation of joint activities in tropical countries of common interest including PNG, Gabon and Brazil, in the context of the ITTO Thematic Programme on Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation and Enhancing Environmental Services in Tropical Forests (REDD+ES) and JICA's program for natural resources and forests;
2. Organization of joint capacity building and information events for knowledge management and sharing at relevant international meetings and in the framework of the International Year on Biodiversity 2010 and

the International Year on Forests 2011, including side events at the 10th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 10) to be held in Nagoya, Japan (October 2010); the 16th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP 16) to be held in Cancun, Mexico (December 2010); and the 9th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF9) to be held in New York, USA (January 2011); and

3. Promoting the development, and dissemination of publications of common interest, including the ITTO/IUCN Guidelines for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in tropical timber production forests, and a REDD+ booklet to foster understanding amongst the general public on the importance of REDD+ as well as ITTO and JICA's initiatives addressing related issues.

The agreement will be in force until December 31 2014, and can be extended if mutually agreed.

International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)

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 60 members are signatories of the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) – the only legally binding, UN-based instrument on tropical forests. They represent about 80% of the world's tropical forests and over 90% 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. ITTO develops internationally agreed policy documents to promote sustainable forest management and forest conservation and assists tropical member countries to adapt such policies to local circumstances and to implement them in the field through projects. In addition, ITTO collects, analyses and disseminates data on the production and trade of tropical timber and funds a range of projects and other action aimed at developing sustainable forest management practices and forest industries at both community and industrial scales.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

JICA is exclusively responsible for the implementation of Japan's bilateral aid in three forms: technical cooperation, loans, and grants. With its stated vision of "Inclusive and Dynamic Development", JICA offers international cooperation to developing countries in a broad range of fields. JICA recognizes the conservation of the natural environment as one of the highest priorities of international cooperation. With the objective of "achieving harmony between human activities and conservation of natural environment", JICA cooperates with developing countries in creating mechanisms in which those nations themselves can protect their natural environments. In the field of environmental conservation, Forestry and Nature Conservation Group in Global Environment Department of JICA carried out 88 technical cooperation projects, 11 grant aid projects, and 28 ODA loan projects between fiscal years 2000 to 2010. Through the implementation of many ODA projects, JICA has come to adopt and promote what is termed the "co-benefit approach", which contributes to efforts to mitigate global warming and to ensure sustainable development in developing countries. The conservation of natural resources including forests has multifaceted benefits, contributing to measures to mitigate global warming as well as protecting biodiversity, maintaining water sources, and

providing sustenance to local communities. JICA implements co-benefit projects that maintain a balance between the environment and development by encouraging the sustainable use of natural resources by local communities.

For more information on ITTO's projects and programs, go to www.itto.int. For information on JICA, go to www.jica.or.jp.