

INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER ORGANIZATION



NEWS RELEASE



ITTO, UNFF agree to pursue common goals on tropical forests

Focus to be on community forestry

Nagoya, 26 October 2010. The Secretariats of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the objective of enhancing cooperation and collaboration between the Secretariats and to facilitate implementation of the organizations' respective work programs.

The key purpose of the MoU over the period 2010-2015 is to:

- a. Identify gaps and challenges relating to community forestry as well as to develop and implement targeted joint activities on promoting community-based forest enterprises for sustainable development and poverty alleviation in forest communities;
- b. Identify, develop and implement joint activities on promoting markets for community-based forest enterprises;
- c. Identify, develop and promote tools for the full valuation of forest products and services, in particular environmental services and non-timber forest products and the extent to which timber can benefit from the emerging green economy;
- d. Identify and implement joint activities in tropical timber producing countries in conjunction with the International Year of Forests (2011); and
- e. Facilitate effective and continuing information exchange between the Secretariats.

The signing ceremony took place at a side event jointly hosted by ITTO, UNFF and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) during the 10th Conference of the Parties to the CBD currently underway in Nagoya. Mr. Emmanuel Ze Meka, ITTO Executive Director, stated after the signing that: "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. This MoU will be an important tool in helping both ITTO and UNFF to attain their shared objective of promoting sustainable development." Ms. Jan McAlpine, Director of the UNFF Secretariat, concurred, noting that "ITTO and UNFF share common goals and it makes sense that we collaborate to attain them. ITTO has been a steadfast supporter of UNFF since its inception and this MoU will further strengthen this important relationship."

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

- Working cooperatively on the development and implementation of programs to support community-based forest enterprises, particularly in strengthening their capacity for sustainable forest management, production, processing and marketing of forest products and services. This activity will also seek to develop leadership within communities and provide opportunities for sharing information and lessons learned on the development and management of community forest enterprises;
- Utilizing opportunities offered by the International Year of Forests in 2011 to improve communications and outreach programs for forests, particularly in raising awareness of the important links between forests and the environment, employment creation, poverty reduction and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the UN Millennium Development Goals;
- Working cooperatively to gain a better understanding of the potential contribution of the forest sector to the green economy and develop appropriate tools to support governments, the private sector and communities;
- Working together in collaboration with other partners on forest financing and improving the flow of resources for sustainable forest management;
- Supporting technology transfer through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation; and
- Collaborating to advance the understanding of the cross-sectoral nature of forests.

The two organizations will liaise closely to raise funds for such joint activities and also to allow ITTO to continue to second a staff member to the UNFF Secretariat as it has done since UNFF was created in 2000. The agreement will be in force until December 31 2015, and can be extended if mutually agreed.

For more information on ITTO's projects and programs, go to www.itto.int. For information on UNFF, go to www.un.org/esa/forests/.