

Press Release

Distributed by WWF at the Forest Leadership Forum in Atlanta, Georgia on April 25, 2002

WWF event unites businesses, NGOs for responsible trade in forests products

Gland, Switzerland - The Forest Leadership Forum, a WWF organized event, opens today in Atlanta, bringing together for the first time the world's largest forest product companies such as International Paper and Weyerhaeuser, retailers like the Home Depot and IKEA, and environmental groups to promote responsible trade in forest products.

The Forest Leadership Forum was organized in recognition of the fact that the forest products industry can be part of the solution and can play an important role in combating threats to the world's forests such as illegal logging. Discussions at the Forum will focus on issues such as illegal logging, responsible management of production forests, and corporate purchasing policies.

"The world's forests and the timber industry's reputation can be protected at the same time," said Bruce Cabarle, Director of WWF's Global Forest Programme. "By bringing together diverse stakeholders in forest conservation and trade, the Forest Leadership Forum will reveal new ways to manage our global forests responsibly while meeting the foreseeable needs of wood products consumers."

In its report titled Forest Industry in the 21st Century, and published two years ago, WWF showed that destruction of the world's forests is not caused by forestry or wood consumption per se, but by poor forestry practices and over-exploitation in some areas. While the environmental community and consumers have increasingly held the biggest timber producers and retailers responsible for worsening forest conditions, the WWF study showed that with responsible forest management and improvements in efficiency, the forest products industry's requirements could be met from approximately one-fifth of the world's forest area.

WWF is encouraging responsible management and efficiency by forming partnerships with industry through its Global Forest and Trade Network (GFTN). This professional group of over 800 members consisting of timber producers, processors, and retailers, and environmental groups is committed to promoting sustainable forest management and trading and/or sourcing independently certified forest products.

For example, WWF International today announced a new partnership with the IKEA Group, one of the world's largest home improvement retailers. WWF and IKEA, which is already a member of WWF's Global Forest and Trade Network, are joining forces in a three-year venture to promote responsible forestry. The two organizations will carry out a series of forest projects that will promote responsible forestry in Russia, China, Romania/Bulgaria and the Baltic countries. By strengthening forest certification and promoting legal

compliance in forestry and trade, the projects are important steps in implementing IKEA's forest action plan and WWF's conservation goals. They include a methodology for the identification and management of forests of high conservation value, addressing issues like illegal logging in Russia and China, and helping to implement forest certification in producer countries.

Other members of the industry present at the event such as International Paper, the world's single largest processor of timber in the world, recognize the responsibility of the forest industry to engage.

"International Paper plays a defining role in the health of our global forest estate," said George O'Brien, Senior Vice President of International Paper. "Our company is sponsoring and participating in the Forum to help find creative solutions to unsustainable forest management and trade practices."

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Notes to the Editor

1. For more information on the Forest Leadership Forum, visit:
www.ForestLeadershipForum.org
2. WWF is co-hosting the Forest Leadership Forum with the Certified Forest Products Council (CFPC)? the North American network of companies who support responsible forest management and trade in certified products. For more information on the Certified Forest Products Council, visit: www.certifiedwood.org
3. WWF's report Forest Industry in the 21st Century can be found on WWF's Forests for Life international programme web site:
www.panda.org/forests4life
4. For more information on the Global Forest and Trade Network (GFTN) visit: www.panda.org/forestandtrade
5. The GFTN defines independently certified forest products as products that come from forests that have been independently assessed and certified as being well-managed according to a multi-stakeholder based forestry standard.
6. Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is the international organisation co-ordinating the independent certification of good forest management. Visit the FSC web site for more information:
www.fscoax.org

Learn more about the WWF and IKEA partnership