



## Press release

### Forest-based industries - unique potential to fight climate change

Jointly by CEPI and CEPF from COP15

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recognizes the significant potential of forests in mitigating climate change. In its 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report, IPCC clearly concludes that *“a sustainable forest management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, fibre or energy from the forest, will generate the largest sustained mitigation benefit”*

Representatives of the European forest owners as well as the pulp and paper industries urge the negotiating parties at COP15 to take into account the IPCC recommendations and include them in its conclusions towards an international climate change agreement.

European forest owners and industry have been implementing sustainable forest management principles. They call for these practices to be recognized in forestry policies to be put in place to achieve national commitments for carbon reduction.

To this end, CEPI and CEPF call for accounting improvements in LULUCF (Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry). The accounting rules need to be practical as opposed to the current mixture in approaches which is highly inconsistent. The existing rules for forestry are not a long term solution. They do not send the right forest management signals to a sector, which is critical for achieving a global solution to climate change.

Copenhagen is a key opportunity to put in place some more realistic and rational rules for forestry. This opportunity must be taken. The alternative is to agree to continue with the unsatisfactory existing rules which will be opposed by many; or that we will simply end up with no agreement on forestry rules.

Accounting for forest management by Annex 1 countries is optional under the existing rules. These countries have chosen either to include or exclude forest management and to take this into account when setting their commitment targets for the first commitment period. If we are to move to a situation where forest management accounting is mandatory, then a new framework must be established whereby additional and verifiable forest sequestration can be recognized and encouraged but no windfall gains are provided for what would have happened anyway

“We need supportive policies to enhance the contribution of family forest owners to sustainable forest management and harvest of wood, as a carbon neutral activity with positive climatic effect”, Mr Christer Segerstéen President of CEPF states.

Current negotiations on post 2012 arrangements have a focus on reducing deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) as leading causes of global warming. “No doubt, this is a key issue to be dealt with. But we should bear in mind that sustainably managed forest can offer much more, and the sustainable use of wood can greatly increase our contribution in fighting climate change. In the past sustainably managed forests were only able to provide ecosystem services in terms of biodiversity and climate, as well as all the other important

forest functions. In addition the forest sector generates vital income for the rural community. This is what policy makers should encourage to continue. Europe's forest sector is part of the solution", says Philipp Guttenberg, board member of CEPF.

Forest-based products offer the most efficient and 'green' solution for the reduction of emissions and producing renewable energy, thus helping countries to meet their targets. Promotion of sustainable forest management and use of forests- and wood-based products has never been more crucial. It is indeed ironic that industries with products that compete with wood are being, to varying levels, protected by governments under emissions trading schemes around the world, while a real benefit from forestry is currently not recognized.

"While emissions reduction should remain the priority to mitigate climate change, responsible management of forests and sustainable use of these resources should not be ignored in the endeavour to curb global warming. Fair and transparent accounting rules applicable not only to forests, but also recognising the benefits of harvested wood products, would support this effort, hence confirming the IPCC conclusions", added Teresa Presas, Managing Director of Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI).

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