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Role of Forests in Global Economy and Sustainability Featured at Rio+20

WASHINGTON, D.C. /RIO DE JANEIRO - Global sustainable development is the focus of the United Nations Rio+20 conference. By providing food, fuel, fiber, medicines, and other necessities, forests and the forest products industry present a solution for a viable, sustainable future for our planet and its citizens.

At the Rio+20 side-event titled “Forests: The Heart of a Green Economy”, a range of high-level speakers and experts participated in panels highlighting the potential of forests in the bio-economy to boost global economic sustainability, the role of forest certification programs in the green economy, and the contribution of the forest industry to rural development and livelihoods.

Organized and co-hosted by the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations (ICFPA), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation and the Brazilian Pulp and Paper Association, the event emphasized the role forestry plays in promoting a green economy.

“The forest products industry leadership in sustainable development is essential to achieving the goals set here at Rio+20 for next ten years,” said ICFPA President Donna Harman. “This event generated the dialogue that will help create a path forward to global forestry being a positive social, economic and environmental change agent.”

“It also gave us the opportunity to discuss biotechnology and environmental services, like forestry carbon credits, as options for the future we want to build,” added Elizabeth de Carvalhaes, CEO of Bracelpa.

Harman identified innovation, collaboration, partnership and dialogue as the key words of the event and noted the role they share in and between businesses, governments, and non-governmental organizations.

“We are all responsible for the future,” stressed Eduardo Rojas-Briales, Assistant Director General of the FAO Forestry Department. “We all must ensure that we realize the full potential for forestry as a solution to the world’s needs for necessary products that improve the quality of life for our generation and for those to come.”