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PRESS RELEASE

European forestry owners say “choose sustainable timber to tackle climate change”

At the beginning of first ever European Forestry Week, the European forest owners’ organizations call on decision makers, business leaders and the public to recognize forestry as a key sector in combating climate change.

European forests grow over 770 million cubic meters per year and absorb at same time the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide. This offsets around 10% of the EU’s total annual carbon emissions. Harvested wood and wood products can replace carbon intensive materials which have an unfavorable impact on the climate.

The forestry sector however can provide more. There is a lot of unused potential in the benefits that European forests provide. Forests cover over one third of land area of Europe and continue to expand. At the same time only 60% of the annual growth of EU forest is harvested.

Mr. Throe, the secretary general of CEPF, addresses the essence of this problem – *curbing deforestation and illegal logging in tropical countries is key to both mitigating climate change as well as gaining an overall positive image on the multiple values of forests on a global scale. We should encourage the consumers to use of all kinds of wood products and assure politicians on the merits of wood in order to avoid possible counterproductive regulations.*”

“Promotion of renewable wood has to be at the forefront in the sustainable development of our Union” added Mr. Pesonen, secretary general of COPA-COGECA.

Mr. Kosenkranius, executive director of EUSTAFOR, sees many positive roles for forestry in addition to carbon sequestration - for example clean drinking water, clean air and protection of human settlements against natural hazards.

“At the same time we all need to understand that adapting sustainable forest management to the changing climate is the key issue for protecting forests

themselves against natural disasters” says Mr. Näräkkä from the Bureau of Nordic Family Forestry.

The European Forestry sector is ready to contribute to the big challenges of the future. But in order to do this the sector needs more political recognition as well as a wider understanding by society of the benefits it can bring to citizens.

Therefore representatives of European Forest Owners’ organizations call on:

- **European citizens** to choose wood and wood based products whenever possible,
- **Business** to invest for a carbon free economy and to contribute to forestry development,
- **European politicians** to commit themselves to the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) as the leading high-level political process for developing sustainable forest management in Europe.

The initiative of European Forestry Week was welcomed in 2007 by 46 signatory countries of MCPFE together with many stakeholders. European Forest Owners are actively contributing to the initiative and see this event as a great opportunity to increase public awareness of the benefits which the European Forestry can offer.

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