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WWF-ACE Stakeholder Workshop on the Draft Timber Regulation

In 2005, the WWF - European Policy Office (WWF EPO) and the Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment (ACE) signed a cooperation agreement. Since then, WWF EPO and ACE have been working together on issues of common interest in order to generate mutual understanding and promote measures that are capable of delivering positive outcomes for both partners. These relate to forest policies and environmental footprints. The partnership was renewed in July 2009 for a three-year period.

On forestry, we are engaged in the promotion of sustainable forest management practices and the fight against the trade of illegal timber products which causes damage to forests, biodiversity, and local communities. Our two organisations are also promoting the role forests play in climate change mitigation.

The workshop today, initiated by WWF and ACE, is hosted by Members of the European Parliament Bas Eickhout (standing in for Caroline Lucas, rapporteur) and Gerber-Jan Gerbrandy aims to develop a better understanding of the respective positions with regard to the draft regulation on the trade of timber products in the EU, and in two specific areas:

- Coverage of operators
- Due diligence requirements

The aim of the regulation is to prevent the trade in illegally harvested timber and timber products in the Union. It is an important step towards a sustainable procurement of timber products, and a better protection of forests and their biodiversity.

We trust that the event will provide a useful platform for discussion with the stakeholders engaged in the fight against illegal logging.

WWF-ACE joint views

WWF and ACE fully support the development of EU legislation to halt the trade in illegal timber and timber products with the following elements:

1. Coverage of all operators and traceability in the supply chain

WWF and ACE support the implementation of:

- *a full due diligence system for operators placing timber and timber products for the first time on the European market, together with*
- *a simple "traceability" system for subsequent operators along the supply chain.*

2. Strong due diligence systems, including stringent and independently verifiable criteria for a reliable EU risk assessment procedure and a thorough definition of risk

The systems in place need to be efficient and should take into account the circumstances of small operators. We call for the development of clear requirements for due diligence systems, including: quality criteria and principles that require operators to establish sufficient and effective due diligence systems.

3. Applicable legislation – definition of 'legal' timber

The area of applicable legislation should be improved, and clearly defined to ensure legal certainty for the operators.

4. Harmonised approach on penalties and sanctions

Sanctions and penalties should be defined at EU level to guarantee a level playing field for operators.

5. Exemptions

No timber and timber products should be completely excluded from the scope of the regulation in order to avoid any loopholes, which would undermine the aims of the legislation.

We hope that you enjoy this workshop under the chairmanship of Bas Eickhout and Gerber Jan Gerbrandy and that it will enable a better understanding of the respective positions of the stakeholders involved, and ensure the adoption of a strong regulation to address the problem of illegal logging effectively.