



MEDIA RELEASE

AUSTRALASIAN PROFESSIONAL FORESTERS SUPPORT MEASURES TO REDUCE DEFORESTATION (17122008)

Following conclusion of the fourteenth Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Poznan, Poland, the Presidents of the Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA), Dr Peter Volker, and the New Zealand Institute of Forestry (NZIF), Dr Andrew McEwen, have jointly expressed support for international recognition of activities to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) within the post-2012 Kyoto framework.

IFA and NZIF represent Australasia's forest scientists, forest educators and forest land managers, with a combined membership of over 2000 professionals.

REDD is a proposed mechanism whereby developed nations can encourage reduced emissions in developing countries by helping to improve their forestry practices.

Emissions from deforestation are currently estimated to result in approximately 20% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions.

IFA members attending the conference in Poznan noted the widespread support for incorporation of a REDD mechanism to help meet the objectives of the UNFCCC.

Critics of REDD have argued that timber harvesting, particularly of native forests, should be stopped in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Dr Volker acknowledged that old growth forests store very high levels of carbon, but noted that when properly managed, timber harvesting only temporarily reduces the amount of carbon stored in part of the forest, while maintaining a constant reservoir across the entire forest estate.

"In addition, what also needs to be better recognised internationally is that when timber is harvested, carbon is transferred from the forest to the harvested wood product, where it continues to store carbon for long periods of time" said Dr Volker and Dr McEwen. "If reforestation activities follow harvesting then the storage capacity of the forest is restored, leaving the carbon stored in wood products as a net removal from the atmosphere" they said.

Given the very low emissions associated with timber production followed by reforestation, the IFA and NZIF consider that it would be a perverse greenhouse outcome to substitute the use of wood products with more greenhouse intensive materials such as aluminium, steel and concrete.

"The optimal approach to implementation of REDD is a combination of well-managed reserves, alongside a timber harvesting estate with secure tenure, in which sustainable forest management is practiced" they said.

While the Presidents noted that REDD can be implemented using technologies that are already available, significant capacity-building efforts are required to assist implementation in developing countries. "As part of a global network of skilled forestry professionals, we are well-placed to provide technical assistance in implementation of REDD in developing countries." They added that successful implementation of REDD will require skills in the areas of forest measurement, monitoring, remote sensing, policy and community stakeholder consultation.

In response to concerns expressed by indigenous groups that REDD could potentially to displace or fail to provide benefit to indigenous peoples, the Presidents stated "the IFA and the NZIF would support a REDD framework with the broadest possible participation of indigenous peoples, where benefit flow to forest-dependent communities is maximised." "The traditional owners of the land have a wealth of knowledge from centuries of implementing sustainable forestry practices, and we should draw on this knowledge in implementation of REDD."

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Supporting note - IFA/NZIF Media Release (17122008)

Note for Editors:

Background to the Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA)

The Institute of Foresters of Australia is a professional body with 1350 members engaged in all branches of forest management and conservation in Australia. The Institute is strongly committed to the principles of sustainable forest management and the processes and practices which translate these principles into outcomes.

The membership represents all segments of the forestry profession, including public and private practitioners engaged in many aspects of forestry, nature conservation, resource and land management, research, administration and education. Membership is not restricted to professional Foresters. Other forestry professionals are welcome to join IFA.

The main 'Objects' for which the Institute is established are:

- To advance and protect the cause of forestry
- To maintain a high standard of qualification in persons engaged in the practice of forestry
- To promote professional standards and ethical practice among those engaged in forestry
- To promote social intercourse between persons engaged in forestry
- To publish and make educational, marketing and other materials available to those engaged in forestry
- To provide the services of the Institute to forestry organisations inside Australia and in overseas countries as the Board may deem appropriate.

Background to the New Zealand Institute of Forestry (NZIF)

- The NZIF was founded in 1927. It has over 830 members, whose qualifications and areas of expertise reflect the diversity of disciplines involved in managing a modern forest resource from traditional forestry degrees through economics, law, micro-biology, hydrology, engineering and resource management. Around 80 members have passed the more stringent requirements for registration, which is recognised as the cornerstone of professionalism within forestry. NZIF members include consultants, forest managers, wood processors, those working within companies, research institutes, government agencies and educational institutions, those with an interest in forestry and students.
- NZIF is committed to serving the practice of forestry and the wider community through education, accountability and its code of ethics and performance standards. Increasingly it fulfils a quality assurance role, setting the benchmark for professionalism and the quality of advice and practice by which members and others in the profession are measured. Sustainable management is now recognised as the key to conserving the world's natural forests and the expertise of NZIF members in sustainable management of plantation and indigenous forests is widely respected.