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Press Release

IGES and ITTO Strengthen Cooperation on Tropical Forests

The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) will work more closely together in assisting tropical countries and stakeholders to conserve and sustainably manage their forests under a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed today by IGES President Takeuchi Kazuhiko and ITTO Executive Director Sheam Satkuru.

Tropical forests are essential for planetary well-being and for solving global problems such as climate change and biodiversity loss. However, large areas of the world's tropical forests are being degraded and lost, and action is needed to reverse this and to boost the livelihoods of forest-dependent people.

Under the MOU, the two Japan-based organisations will identify, develop and implement joint actions to support ITTO producer member countries in the conservation and sustainable use of tropical forest resources. They will also jointly promote capacity-building, information exchange and experience-sharing with developing countries to advance sustainable tropical forestry.

Ms. Satkuru said the MOU is an opportunity to take advantage of complementarities between ITTO and IGES.

"Our two organisations are strong supporters of tropical countries and their efforts to use and conserve their forests as part of sustainable development," she said. "It makes sense for us to combine forces in areas of mutual interest, thereby magnifying our impacts."

ITTO was established in 1986 under the International Tropical Timber Agreement, and it is headquartered in Yokohama, Japan. The Organisation has a mandate to promote the expansion and diversification of international trade in tropical timber from sustainably managed and legally harvested forests and to promote the sustainable management of tropical timber-producing forests. ITTO will explore opportunities through the MOU to

implement elements of its Strategic Action Plan (2022–2026) and the piloting of its new programmatic approach.

IGES was created in 1998 as an initiative of the Government of Japan with the aim of achieving a new paradigm for civilization and to conduct innovative policy development and strategic research for environmental measures. It is based in Kanagawa, Japan.

“Forests are essential, not only for solving global problems such as climate change and biodiversity loss, but also for our wellbeing,” emphasised Prof. Takeuchi. “However, the world's primary forests, especially tropical forests, continue to decline, and there is concern that global population growth and economic development would lead to increased demand for food and energy, and continued ecosystem loss. It is our great hope that this partnership would result in a comprehensive, synergistic and environmentally and socially sensitive approach that promotes the conservation and sustainable use of tropical forests.”

“This is an exciting moment for our two organisations because we bring complementary skills, experience and expertise,” said Ms. Satkuru. “We also both benefit from the strong support of the Government of Japan, and the close proximity of our two headquarters is another strength that will enable us to work especially closely together.”

Potential areas of cooperation between the two organisations include:

- joint contributions to achieving the Paris Agreement on climate change, the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the Global Forest Goals, land degradation neutrality and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration;
- enhancing policy recommendations to promote sustainable forestry, climate-change mitigation and adaptation and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;
- promoting REDD+ under Japan’s Joint Credit Mechanism and internationally transferred mitigation outcomes under the Paris Agreement;
- restoring degraded tropical forest landscapes in support of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration;

- promoting markets and market-based approaches to increase the value of tropical forests through payments for ecosystem services;
- building capacity for legal and sustainable supply chains in ITTO producer member countries;
- disseminating information and the sharing of experiences in sustainable tropical forestry; and
- cooperating on knowledge management and sharing.

IGES and ITTO will be creating a working group on forests to review and update the activities undertaken under the MOU and to propose new joint initiatives.

About the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) is a collaborative research and outreach organisation working to accelerate the transition to a sustainable, resilient, shared, and inclusive Asia-Pacific region, both across borders and within the world at large. Our strategic research and operations are defined by a mission — to drive action on the world’s most critical environmental and social challenges through the delivery of trusted expertise on sustainable development and resilience. IGES operates as an agent of change. Together with key international organisations, governments, academic institutes, business and civil society leaders we seek to foster a world where planetary boundaries are fully respected, a green economy is flexibly implemented, and the well-being of people is steadily improved. In so doing we emphasise workable and inspired approaches to cross-cutting global development issues ranging from climate change, natural resources and ecosystems management, and sustainable consumption and production, among many others. The Institute — established in 1998 with support from the Japanese government and Kanagawa Prefecture — maintains its international headquarters in Hayama, Japan. With offices and local centres in Tokyo, Kansai, Kitakyushu, Beijing, Bangkok and New Delhi, IGES supports a regional and global network for groundbreaking sustainable development research and practice. More information can be found at: <https://www.iges.or.jp/en/>

About the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)

The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) is an intergovernmental organization promoting the sustainable management and conservation of tropical forests and the expansion and diversification of international trade in tropical timber from sustainably managed and legally harvested forests. For more information contact itto@itto.int or visit www.itto.int.

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