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News Release

WWF /World Bank Forest Alliance launches ambitious program to reduce deforestation and curb illegal logging

New York, May 25, 2005. WWF and the World Bank (WB) today announced an ambitious global program aimed at reducing global deforestation rates by 10% by 2010. The announcement was made at the fifth meeting of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) both as a call to action for the international community and to mark the renewal of their cooperation agreement covering the Alliance for another five years. The present rate of global deforestation is more than 14 million hectares (about 54,000 square miles) per year, roughly equal to the size of Greece. Most of the losses occur in the tropics.

Known as the World Bank/WWF Alliance for Forest Conservation & Sustainable Use (Forest Alliance), the program will support the establishment of new forest protected areas such as national parks, more effective management of forest protected areas, and improved management of forests outside of protected areas. The Alliance also will help to facilitate regional cooperation and the adoption of policies in support of more effective forest management.

*“Ecologically and economically valuable forests in places like the boreal forests of Russia’s Far East, the lowland forests of Sumatra, and the rainforests of the Amazon and the Congo are disappearing quickly to forces such as illegal or poorly regulated logging and agricultural clearing,” said **Claude Martin, WWF’s Director General.** “By renewing the Forest Alliance, we are committing the World Bank and WWF to working with a governments and a wide range of forest stakeholders to develop effective solutions to these forest threats.”*

World Bank studies estimate that US\$15 billion in tax revenues is lost annually in developing countries due to illegal logging. *“This is money that governments in poor countries could have used for social services and health. These practices need to be stopped,” said **Ian Johnson, Vice President, Sustainable Development, World Bank.** “The World Bank and WWF are committed to work with all involved parties to establish effective and equitable regulation of forest practices.”*

Since the Forest Alliance was first created in 1998 it has contributed to the establishment of 50 million hectares (193,000 square miles) of new protected areas, improved management for 70 million hectares (270,000 square miles) of protected areas, and responsible management of some 22 million hectares (85,000 square miles) of commercially harvested forests. These accomplishments have been achieved in pursuit of measurable targets, which the Forest Alliance has updated and expanded to drive further achievements by 2010.

The Forest Alliance has played a pivotal role in facilitating regional initiatives in the developing world and has been actively working with the private sector to promote responsible forest practices, through programs such as:



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- Support for the Brazilian Government's Amazon Regional Protected Area Program (ARPA). This ten-year program will protect 12 percent of the Brazilian Amazon and establish a US \$220 million trust fund to support the on-going management of this protected areas network. The scope of ARPA is equivalent to building the entire U.S. national parks system in 10 years. ARPA has already added new protected areas totaling more than 17 million hectares (69,000 square miles) to the system of Amazonian protected areas in Brazil.
- Support for the 1999 Yaounde and 2005 Brazzaville Heads of State Forest Summits. These landmark meetings have resulted in a cooperative among the leaders of Congo Basin countries which has resulted in extraordinary cross-border cooperation on forest conservation and responsible management. A U.S. State Department initiative of US \$53 million to promote forest conservation, and 3.5 million hectares [13,000 square miles] of new protected areas, have been established in the Congo Basin since the first summit in 1999 was convened with support from the Forest Alliance.
- Groundbreaking analytical work that has led to the development of a systematic approach for the detection, prevention, and suppression of illegal logging in Indonesia. This approach has brought together a wide range of stakeholders and helped develop a constituency for change. A tangible outcome that has developed from this work was the recently released Presidential Instruction to combat illegal logging.
- Collaboration with forest products companies committed to practicing responsible forestry. WWF's Global Forest & Trade Network, with support from the International Finance Corporation (IFC, the private sector arm of the World Bank) is providing technical assistance and support to the business community to improve forest management practices.

The Forest Alliance will continue to work closely with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to put in place innovative financial mechanisms to fund a suite of initiatives and field projects that are helping to protect the global environment by leading to measurable improvements in forest conservation and management around the world.

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Editors Notes:

For more information on the World Bank/WWF Alliance for Forest Conservation & Sustainable Use, visit <http://www.forest-alliance.org>.

Or, www.worldbank.org/sustainabledevelopment.

Known in the United States as World Wildlife Fund and recognized worldwide by its panda logo, WWF leads international efforts to protect endangered species and their habitats and to conserve the diversity of life on Earth. Now in its fifth decade, WWF, the global conservation organization, works in more than 100 countries around the world.