



**INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER ORGANIZATION**

# **NEWS RELEASE**



## **ITTO, BirdLife International agree to pursue common goals on tropical forests Focus to be on biodiversity**

Yokohama, 24 January 2012. The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the non-governmental organization BirdLife International today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the objective of enhancing cooperation and collaboration and to facilitate implementation of the two organizations' respective work programs.

The key purpose of the MoU over the period 2012-2015 is to enhance co-operation between ITTO and BirdLife International through activities relating to the conservation and sustainable use of tropical forest biodiversity in accordance with the work programmes of both organizations. Several areas for cooperation are identified in the agreement, including collaborative efforts to:

- identify, develop and support implementation of joint site-based projects (e.g. forest restoration, biodiversity safeguards in REDD+, improving local livelihoods);
- develop and support implementation of projects and best practices addressing global and regional drivers of deforestation;
- facilitate involvement of other relevant organizations and agencies in programme and project implementation;
- identify and mobilise relevant expertise for joint activities;
- develop and test monitoring approaches and indicators for deforestation, forest degradation and forest restoration; and
- organize awareness raising and educational activities to mobilise public support for forest conservation, restoration and sustainable management.

The signing ceremony took place in Tokyo and was witnessed by Japan's Princess Takamado, Honorary President of BirdLife International. Emmanuel Ze Meka, ITTO Executive Director, stated after the signing that: "We all recognize the importance of conserving and sustainably using tropical forest resources, and their important role in the overall sustainable development of the countries in the tropics. This MoU will be an important tool in helping both ITTO and BirdLife International to attain their shared objectives of promoting conservation and sustainable management of tropical forests and the vast biodiversity contained in them." Marco Lambertini, Chief Executive of BirdLife International, concurred, noting that "Working together ITTO and BirdLife International can deliver a future for tropical forests, and the people that depend on the services they provide."

Joint activities proposed for the next biennium (subject to funding availability) include:

- The development and implementation of site based and/or demonstration projects in preventing deforestation and promoting forest restoration as part of both ITTO's Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and Enhancing Environmental Services (REDD+ES) thematic program and BirdLife International's Forest of Hope Program.
- The development and implementation of joint awareness raising activities on the conservation of forest biodiversity.
- The development of a project for enhancing appropriate and robust biodiversity indicators for deforestation, forest degradation, and forest restoration.
- An international workshop on forest restoration.

The two organizations will liaise closely to raise funds for such joint activities. The MoU will be in force until December 31 2015, and can be extended if mutually agreed.

For more information on ITTO's projects and programs, go to [www.itto.int](http://www.itto.int). For information on BirdLife International, go to [www.birdlife.org](http://www.birdlife.org)