

**5-Jul-11**

## **Australia to Benefit from PEFC Global Expansion**

PEFC Secretary General Ben Gunneberg will arrive in Australia next week to update a wide range of stakeholders about recent significant developments in PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification), the world's largest forest certification system. The Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) has achieved PEFC-endorsement.

"PEFC is reaching a crucial tipping point, both in terms of standards development as well as in for sustainable forest management and chain of custody certification", said Mr. Gunneberg prior his visit to Australia. "With the recently approved revised standards, PEFC has introduced a number of unique criteria specifically focussed on advancing social aspects in forest certification. PEFC International's Sustainability Benchmarks are now world-leading, and perfectly placed to expand forest certification specifically in regions such as Asia, Africa and South America, which still make up less than 10% of the total global certified area."

The revised PEFC standards for sustainable forest management certification, chain of custody certification, and standard setting, approved in November 2010, add a number of requirements not found in any other global forest certification system. This includes references to essential international agreements such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the forest management standard or Agenda 21 in the standard setting requirements, and the incorporation of social requirements in the chain of custody standard.

"We are also at a verge of a major growth in certified area, having recently endorsed system in Uruguay and Latvia, and lifting the suspension of our Russian system. In addition, countries such as Ireland have applied for endorsement, and a range of countries in Eastern Europe have set up initiatives with the aim to develop national standards", Mr. Gunneberg continued. "We're also excited about developments in China and its commitments to PEFC as a major producer of forest products. China is also the country with the fastest growing forest area globally, and the country's efforts to sustainably manage its forest resources are to be welcomed."

Mr Gunneberg is visiting Australia from 11-15 July and will be accompanied by Miss Kayt Watts, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forestry Standard to meet various stakeholders from business, media, government and non-governmental organizations.

Industry Stakeholders also have the opportunity to hear Mr Gunneberg speak at three Breakfast forums being held in Sydney on 12<sup>th</sup> July, Melbourne on 14<sup>th</sup> July and in Brisbane on 15<sup>th</sup> July, to register for a forum go to [www.forestrystandard.org.au](http://www.forestrystandard.org.au) .

## NOTES

**Australian Forestry Standard** Limited is a Standards Development Organisation and a not-for-profit public company registered in July 2003. The company owns the standard development functions and manages the elements of the **Australian Forest Certification Scheme**. The Australian Standard for Forest Management will:

- provide Australian and overseas consumers with an independent, internationally recognised third-party certification scheme for forest management in Australia
- promote a culture of 'continuous improvement' of the sustainable forest management practices in Australia
- support a market for forest products that are a result of sustainable forest management practices and value adding processes that maintain the integrity of the source forest certification and promote the broader environmental benefits of using wood-based products.

**PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes)** PEFC is a framework for the mutual recognition of credible national or regional forest certification schemes that have been developed based on internationally recognised requirements for sustainable forest management. Since its launch in 1999, PEFC has become the largest forest certification umbrella organisation covering national schemes from all over the world, delivering hundreds of millions of tonnes of wood to the processing industry and then on to the market place from over 220 million hectares of certified forests. PEFC has strong grass roots support from many stakeholders including the forestry sector, governments, trade associations, trade unions and non-governmental organisations.

**Forest Certification** Forest certification is a process, which provides an assurance mechanism to purchasers of wood and paper products that the wood used in the products comes from sustainably managed forests. Sustainably managed forests are those whose management implements performance standards based on internationally agreed environmental, social and economic requirements.

## MEDIA CONTACTS

*For more information contact:*

*Kayt Watts, CEO Australian Forest Standard on (02) 6122-9000 or 0400 140303*

*Australian Forest Standard: [www.forestrystandard.org.au](http://www.forestrystandard.org.au)*

*Email: [ceo@forestrystandard.org.au](mailto:ceo@forestrystandard.org.au)*

*Thorsten Arndt , Head of Communications, PEFC International*

*World Trade Centre 1 10 route de L'Aéroport CH-1215 Genève Switzerland*

*Tel: +41 (0)22 799 45 40*

*[www.pefc.org](http://www.pefc.org)*

*[t.arndt@pefc.org](mailto:t.arndt@pefc.org)*