

Media Release

20 May, 2010

Bamboo and Rattan Can Provide Win-Win Solutions for Conserving Biodiversity and Reducing Poverty

On the International Day for Biological Diversity, participants from more than 35 countries will convene in Shanghai to develop sustainable development pathways.

Shanghai, China, 20 May, 2010 – The International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR) will today commence the 2010 Congress on Bamboo and Rattan, to examine how to develop the bamboo and rattan sectors in such a way as to conserve biodiversity, while simultaneously providing long-term avenues out of poverty. The Congress will be inaugurated at INBAR's Honor Day ceremony at the Expo Centre, on May 20, before moving to the Westin on The Bund Hotel on May 21-22.

May 22 was proclaimed by the United Nations as the International Day for Biological Diversity, to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. Biodiversity is the term given to the variety of life on Earth, including plants, animals and micro-organisms, and the natural patterns it forms, including ecosystems that occur in forests, deserts, wetlands, mountains, rivers and landscape mosaics. 2010 has been declared the International Year of Biodiversity.

"There are 1200 different species of bamboo in the world, and nearly half of these grow in China," said Dr Lou Yiping, Director of INBAR's Environmental Sustainability programme. "Bamboo and rattan provide food and habitat for a large variety of wildlife, some of which are critically endangered. There are Mountain Gorillas in Rwanda, the rare Bale Monkey in Ethiopia, many bird and frog species and, of course, the iconic Giant Panda in China. These, for example, rely heavily on bamboo to survive, so it's important that we carefully manage the resource," said Yiping.

As well as protecting biodiversity, bamboo and rattan also provide other environmental services by restoring landscapes and fighting climate change; they support the livelihoods of more than 1.5 billion of the world's poorest people; and they underpin many developing world economies, generating more than US\$5 billion in annual global trade.

According to Congress Convenor, I.V. Ramanuja Rao, the theme of this year's World Biodiversity Day - "biodiversity, development and poverty alleviation" – is perfectly fitted to the role that bamboo and rattan can play in international and community development. "In many cases there involves a trade-off, or a compromise, between protecting the environment and providing incomes for the poor, especially the rural poor," said Rao.

"But in the case of bamboo and rattan, it's possible to deliver win-win solutions. For example, bamboo's incredibly fast growth rate means it can provide a more sustainable and renewable alternative to timber, while processing and transport of bamboo and rattan for housing and other products generally uses less energy."

May 21 will comprise of interactive plenary sessions to discuss the opportunities and challenges facing the bamboo and rattan sectors, including a Ministerial session on creating enabling policies in Africa, Asia and Latin America. May 22 will consist of working groups to examine how to apply lessons learned to the real world. For a full Congress program of sessions and speakers, go to:

http://www.inbarworldexpo.com/contenteditor_files/Congress_Program.pdf

INBAR extends a warm welcome to all members of the media who wish to attend the Congress. Many speakers at the Congress are multi-lingual, and will include:

- **Coosje Hoogendoorn**, Director General, INBAR (The Netherlands)
- **I.V. Ramanuja Rao**, Director, Livelihoods & Economic Development, INBAR (India)
- **Lou Yiping**, Director, Environmental Sustainability, INBAR (China)
- **Jolanda Jonkhart**, Director, Trade Development, INBAR (The Netherlands)
- **Shyam Paudel**, Coordinator, Global Bamboo Housing Programme, INBAR (Nepal)
- **Carmelita Bersalona**, Programme Officer, LED Programme, INBAR (The Philippines)
- **Rodney Cooke**, Director, Technical Advisory Division, UN-IFAD (United Kingdom)
- **Ali Mchumo**, Managing Director, Common Fund for Commodities (Tanzania)
- **Simon Velez**, pioneer of bamboo architecture and recipient of the 2009 Prince Claus Award for contribution to culture and development (Colombia)
- **D.R. Naidu**, architect for the India pavilion (India)
- **Budi Lim**, architect for the Indonesia pavilion (Indonesia)
- **Bella Roscher**, WWF International (Switzerland)

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

For English: Tim Cronin, (86)136 41385174 or tcronin@inbar.int

For Chinese: Jin Wei, (86)137 01218732 or wjin@inbar.int

For Spanish: Violeta Gonzalez, (86)139 11269783 or vgonzalez@inbar.int

The International Network for Bamboo & Rattan (INBAR)

The International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR) is an intergovernmental organization dedicated to improving the social, economic, and environmental benefits of bamboo and rattan. INBAR connects a global network of partners from the government, private, and not-for-profit sectors in over 50 countries to define and implement a global agenda for sustainable development through bamboo and rattan. For more information, go to www.inbar.int