



Media Release

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Bamboo and Rattan Bring Sustainable Urban Solutions to Expo 2010

Expo showcases bamboo and rattan as a viable solution for enhancing urban living, protecting the environment and reducing rural poverty

Shanghai, China, 20 May, 2010 – The International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR) today joined forces with its pavilion partners to highlight how bamboo and rattan are being used at the Shanghai World Expo to demonstrate technical innovations in construction that epitomize the Expo's theme: *Better City, Better Life*.

“The pavilions of Spain, India, Indonesia, Norway, Vietnam, Peru, Madrid and the German-Chinese House are all amazing structures that have transformed the Expo into the world's largest demonstration of the incredible versatility, durability and sustainability of bamboo and rattan,” said Coosje Hoogendoorn, INBAR's Director General. “The Spanish pavilion, for example, represents the most incredible use of rattan I've ever seen. It uses 8,500 individual rattan panels, handmade by craftsmen in Shandong Province, China, to create a giant, hand-woven rattan basket, which to me resembles the skirt of a flamenco dancer.”

“When you consider that the key objective of the Expo is to showcase how to enhance urban living, while protecting the environment, the message couldn't be clearer. Bamboo and rattan are a genuine solution,” added Hoogendoorn. Through INBAR's participation in Expo 2010, the international development agency aims to further promote the use of bamboo and rattan as resources for environmental protection and poverty alleviation, whilst promoting fairer trade.

Against this backdrop, the organization today launched the 2010 INBAR Congress on Bamboo and Rattan, which will bring together policy makers, experts and enthusiasts from all over the world to discuss ways to harness the enormous potential of bamboo and rattan to deliver environmental, social and economic outcomes, and to address challenges that are hindering growth in the sector. Bamboo and rattan help to protect forests, harbor biodiversity, restore landscapes and fight 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. The Congress was inaugurated today and will continue on May 21-22 at the Westin on the Bund.

The press conference to announce the Congress took place in the German-Chinese House, a unique bamboo membrane building at the World Expo, created by German designer and installation artist Markus Heinsdorff, as part of the bilateral initiative *Germany and China – Moving Ahead Together*. “The physical properties of bamboo are exceptional in that it's as strong as steel and yet incredibly flexible,” said Heinsdorff. “But bamboo's qualities go far beyond the material. Its inherent beauty lends grace and flair to architectural design, while its organic beauty makes us realize the potential for sustainable living.”

The World Expo provides a unique opportunity to demonstrate the use of bamboo in high-end constructions, but it can also help to bring attention to the role that it can play in disaster prevention and recovery. “Bamboo not only offers an accessible and affordable option for post-disaster housing, bamboo

structures have proven especially resilient to earthquakes because of their strength and flexibility,” said Guo Hengxiao, Deputy Director General, Sichuan Forestry Department. “We’re working with INBAR and the European Commission to strengthen the bamboo sector in the wake of the 2008 earthquake.” The Sichuan community has also worked closely with the Common Fund for Commodities, an intergovernmental financial institution established by the United Nations, to develop bamboo housing since the earthquake.

The country with perhaps the richest tradition of building with bamboo is Colombia. Innovations from architects like Simon Velez have combined indigenous design, avant-garde technology and ecological processes. “I consider bamboo as ‘vegetal steel’, and am confident that any architectural structure that an engineer can build with steel, I can do with bamboo,” said Velez. “In Colombia we have included bamboo in building standards pertaining to earthquake resistant construction and this kind of recognition is essential if we’re to legitimize and develop the bamboo industry to realize its potential.”

The INBAR Congress on Bamboo and Rattan is sponsored by the Government of the People’s Republic of China, the European Commission, Anji County, Suichang County, Ascott China and the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development.

As well as launching the Congress on Bamboo and Rattan, INBAR unveiled their pocket guide to *Experiencing Bamboo and Rattan at Shanghai World Expo 2010*, which points visitors to some of the most exciting pavilions at the Expo site that feature bamboo and rattan.

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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 or www.inbarworldexpo.com

“Germany and China – Moving Ahead Together”

“Germany and China – Moving Ahead Together” is an initiative of the Federal Republic of Germany in China under the joint patronage of Chinese president Hu Jintao and federal president Horst Köhler. It aims for mutual understanding as well as the joint search for solutions for the future as a base for a successful cooperation. From 2007 until 2010, the event series has made stops in five important regional centers in China. This exchange now continues at the EXPO, the last station, where the initiative presents itself as a bi-national cooperation in the spectacular “German-Chinese House”. The bamboo membrane building is an artistic encounter with the theme of sustainable urbanization, which was the focus of the three-year event series. The “German-Chinese House” was designed by the German designer and installation artist Markus Heinsdorff. For more information, go to www.germany-and-china.com