

# Media Release

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## Public perception the key to harnessing *wise man's timber*

*Shanghai World Expo, China, 14 July, 2010* – A gathering of corporate, community and government leaders tonight agreed that enlightening public perception is an important prerequisite if bamboo is to realize its potential as “the wise man’s timber”.

The International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR), an intergovernmental organization that promotes environmental conservation and sustainable development through bamboo and rattan, premiered the short film *10 Facts About the Wise Man's Timber*. The film highlights the versatility, durability and sustainability of bamboo by illustrating some of its lesser known applications, and the role it can play in protecting the environment and reducing poverty.

The film was followed by a panel discussion, moderated by Shanghai television personality Steven Weathers, which addressed the question: “How can national leaders develop policies that facilitate sustainable product design and technology using bamboo?” Fittingly the event was held at the India Expo Pavilion, which features the world’s largest bamboo dome.

“Bamboo has always been important for rural communities, but for urban consumers it has had something of an image problem,” said Coosje Hoogendoorn, INBAR’s Director General. “There is a perception that bamboo is a poor man’s timber, but modern technology now enables bamboo to be used in literally thousands of products; from luxury homes to gourmet cuisine; high street fashion to surfboards, skateboards and bicycles. And it has added environmental and social benefits.

“There is a lot that governments can do to develop the bamboo sector in ways that protect the environment and reduce poverty, for example through financial incentives and technical training” added Hoogendoorn. “But it must start with consumer awareness. If we see policy as an extension of public will, we must show the public that in many cases bamboo is a genuine and exciting alternative to timber, plastic, concrete and other materials. We must build demand for a resource that is eco-friendly, pro-poor and high in quality.”

Bamboo helps to protect forests, harbor biodiversity, restore landscapes and fight climate change; it supports the livelihoods of more than 1.5 billion of the world’s poorest people; and it can underpin many developing world economies, already generating more than US\$5 billion in annual global trade.

Also participating in the panel discussion was Lin Hai, President of Dasso Industrial Group, one of the world's leading manufacturers of engineered bamboo flooring and laminate products, with export markets including the USA, Europe, Russia and Australia.

"China's bamboo sector is now recognised worldwide as not only high quality, but also environmentally friendly," said Mr Lin. "The Chinese Government has been very proactive in including the bamboo sector in its strategic planning and has provided strong support for small and medium sized enterprises. Similarly, bamboo entrepreneurs have taken the responsibility for building a sustainable industry and we are working hard to address environmental issues like climate change."



Other panelists included D.R. Naidu, architect of the India Expo Pavilion; and Manu Rubio, Director of the Madrid Pavilion, which showcases the role of bamboo in Madrid's social housing programme, one of the largest and most progressive in Europe.

*10 Facts About the Wise Man's Timber* was inspired by the technical innovations using bamboo at the Shanghai World Expo. The pavilions of Spain, India, Indonesia, Norway, Vietnam, Peru, Madrid and the German-Chinese House all showcase the enormous potential for modern bamboo construction and epitomize the Expo's theme: *Better City, Better Life*.

The film was produced by Television Trust for the Environment (tve), a UK-based not-for-profit company that works with partners worldwide to make films which inspire change.

For more information, to arrange an interview or to receive a copy of the film, please contact:

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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](http://www.inbar.int) or [www.inbarworldexpo.com](http://www.inbarworldexpo.com)

### **10 Facts about the Wise Man's Timber**

1. Bamboo is unique
2. Bamboo protects the planet
3. Bamboo binds the earth
4. Bamboo is strong
5. Bamboo is flexible
6. Bamboo is beautiful
7. Bamboo is cool
8. Bamboo is profitable
9. Bamboo is versatile
10. Bamboo presents opportunities