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**Forest Stewardship Council™ Welcomes EU Timber Regulation;
Confirms Role to Ensure Compliance**

BONN -- On 3 March 2013, the European Union (EU) Timber Regulation will enter into force, making it a crime to introduce illegally harvested timber and products into the EU market. Importing companies are required to have a “due diligence system” to avoid this crime.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) published its amended Directive on Chain-of-Custody Certification today, including three Advice Notes to assist companies that import FSC certified or controlled materials into the EU to comply with the Regulation. These Advice Notes regulate duties to collect and pass through information to the EU importers, to prevent “minor components” of unknown origin from being included in imported FSC-certified products, as well as compliance with trade and customs laws of the exporting countries.

Illegal logging is big business in many parts of the world. UNEP and Interpol, in a recent publication, estimated that illegal logging represents between 10 and 30% of total timber harvesting. In most cases it has a devastating impact on the forests and undermines the rights and livelihoods of the local people.

Kim Carstensen, General Director of FSC said, “FSC welcomes the EU initiative as an important step towards banning destructive illegal logging practices across the planet. The EU follows the USA and Australia, and hopefully more countries will join the effort.”

Carstensen continued, “Compliance with national laws is the first step toward sustainable forest management, and an essential part of FSC’s certification requirements. We hope this new regulation will help producing countries with their enforcement.”

The EU Timber Regulation does not accept certification from any private scheme as an alternative for a due diligence system. So even companies that import FSC certified materials must take steps to comply with the law. In the past months, FSC has prepared measures to help companies and to ensure that FSC certification, with its controls at every stage of the supply chain, continues to serve as a reliable risk assessment and risk mitigation tool.

John Hontelez, Chief Advocacy Officer of FSC explained, “The adaptations we made to our system help importers of FSC certified materials to comply with the EU Timber Regulation and make their life easier. We are certain the inspectors enforcing the law will agree that FSC is a reliable system for assessment and mitigation of risks regarding involvement with illegal harvesting in third countries. The measures we took will also assist relevant companies in complying with the US and Australian laws.”

Kim Carstensen concluded, “Existing legislation in timber producing countries does not guarantee ecologically and socially sound forest management practices, protection of High Conservation Value Forests, and prohibition of natural forest conversion. That is why FSC encourages importers to look for FSC certified materials, not only to comply with the EU Timber



Regulation, but also to contribute to mainstream sustainable forest management everywhere in the world.”

For more details on the measures FSC has taken, and guidance about how importers can use the FSC system to comply with the EU Timber Regulation, visit www.fsc.org/timber-legality.492.htm. There you will find also the revised Directive on Chain of Custody Certification (<https://ic.fsc.org/download.fsc-dir-40-004-en-directive-on-chain-of-custody-certification.a-594.pdf>), which is meant to enhance the tools available to importers.

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About FSC

The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) is an independent non-profit organization that promotes environmentally sound, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world’s forests. FSC develops standards, ensures monitoring of certified operations and protects the FSC trademark so that businesses and consumers can choose products that come from well-managed forests that meet the social, economic and ecological needs of present and future generations. For more information visit www.fsc.org