

## **Congratulatory address from Director-General of Forestry Agency**

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Date: Friday, December 10, 2009 Venue: Mokuzai Kaikan, Shinkiba, Tokyo, Japan  
(Tokyo Lumber Wholesalers' Association)

I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations on this grand occasion that marks the start of the Symposium on the Promotion of Wood and Wood Products with Verified Legality. First, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all of you here today for your unyielding, extraordinary understanding and support of forestry administration. Please allow me to take a moment to thank and welcome Dato' Dr. B. C. Y. Freezailah, former Executive Director of the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO), Mr. Alexander Nikolaevich Sidorenko, Chairman of the Association Dalexportles, Mr. Michael Snow, Executive Director of the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) and Mr. Zhu Guangqian, Chairman of the China Timber Distribution Association in particular, for traveling all the way to Japan to take part in the Symposium.

As we gather here today, COP15 (the 15th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) is being held in Copenhagen, Denmark. How to respond to ongoing deforestation in developing nations in the context of climate change is one of the important topics of the conference.

In particular, illegal logging is one of the direct causes of deforestation and forest degradation. At the same time, it damages the forest ecosystem and is considered to be a major obstacle to biodiversity and sustainable forest management. It is an issue that the world community should resolve together to conserve the global environment.

Moreover, the presence of illegally sourced timber which is often unfairly priced, undermines forestry and timber industries of importing countries including the North America., Europe and Japan.

Against this backdrop, the Japanese government introduced a legal action that only wood and wood products with verified legality and sustainability (goho) will be considered for government procurement based on the idea that illegally sourced timber should not be used. The organizer of this Symposium, Japan Federation of Wood Industry Associations, has played a major role in organizing a system of goho wood supply, with almost 7,500 timber-related entities having joined the system by the end of March this year to allow for the stable supply of goho wood. This move has produced measurable results. We are currently working to encourage the population at large, such as private-sector businesses and ordinary consumers, to use goho wood.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask all related parties for even greater cooperation in tackling the problem of illegal logging.

In closing, I hope that this symposium will spark a breakthrough in anti-illegal logging efforts, and wish you much success and good health in the future. Thank you.

Taisuke Shimada  
Director General of Forestry Agency,  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries