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ALPI and Tropical Forest Trust Work Together to Enhance Sustainable Forest Management in Cameroon

Italian Timber Company commits itself to best practice in forest management in critical forest areas bordering a globally significant National Park

Modigliana, ITALY (24 September 2007)— ALPI, the largest forest and wood processing company operating in Cameroon, has agreed to enhance its forest management program in partnership with the Tropical Forest Trust.

ALPI has operated since 1919 and is renowned for its development of unique decorative wood veneer products. It has been active in tropical forest management since the late 1980s and has always had an acute awareness of its environmental responsibilities. Incorporated in ALPI's internal philosophy is a commitment to operating in accordance with national and international norms and ensuring forest management activities exemplify global best practices.

"We know we have a great responsibility to ensure the forests we manage are there for the next generation; that the communities that depend on them for their livelihoods have access to them and that they can sustainably supply us with raw materials in perpetuity," said Vittorio Alpi, President of the ALPI Group. "We have today published our Environmental Policy Commitment and as part of that we're also announcing our partnership with TFT who will assist us to implement sustainable practices at our operations."

"ALPI is a serious company and with over 265,000 hectares of tropical forest under management, its actions can have a very positive influence at the local level but also on the national scene in Cameroon and more broadly throughout the Congo Basin," said Scott Poynton, TFT's Executive Director. "Two of its forest areas border the Lobeke National Park so its work to ensure that these forests are sustainably managed is a huge bonus to conservation. We're very pleased to be working with ALPI and we look forward to keeping people informed of progress."

ALPI and TFT have already started working together through their collaboration on the European Commission funded Timber Trade Action Plan (TTAP) Project. The TTAP project helps forest management and wood processing companies ensure that their operations comply with national laws. TTAP project staff visited ALPI's forest and factory operations during July 2007 and ALPI has already begun implementation of an Action Plan that will see them audited for full legal compliance.

About ALPI

Alpi is a major international industrial group operating in the timber sector, with over 50% of its production being based outside its native Italy. With 7 enterprises, 6 companies, 11 productive plants, and 2,400 employees (of which 1,800 in its African plants) Alpi has reached a dominant position in its sector thanks to its concrete global vision, made possible by its driving will to control the entire productive process, from access to raw materials through to final commercialisation. In this sense, its concessions in the African tropical forests (over 265 thousand hectares in Cameroon alone) are absolutely strategic and are the first step in the process that end up supplying quality panels, veneering, and multilaminar wooden products. Respect for the environment and responsible forest management have always been at the centre of the group's natural resources policy. For further information, visit: <http://www.alpi.it>

About the Tropical Forest Trust

Established in 1999, the TFT is a nonprofit international charity seeking to transform the international trade in tropical timber and timber products into a force for forest conservation. TFT provides comprehensive information about the origin of all tropical wood in member wood products. TFT's Wood Control Systems track wood from the felling operation from the forest, to the factory and through every key stage of manufacture. Technologies like TracElite assure real-time monitoring and trace-back of the full supply chain of wood from the stump to the showroom. TFT also helps the forests improve their management and achieve FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification.

TFT members are based in Europe, North America, South East Asia, and New Zealand. They include more than 40 multi-national retail giants and small 'high street' retailers committed to purchasing only legally harvested timber. TFT is supported by membership fees and grants from foundations and individual donations. It has forged partnerships with governments, timber companies, and international organizations to expand the world's holdings of FSC-certified forests. For further information, visit: <http://www.tropicalforesttrust.com>

About the Timber Trade Action Plan (TTAP)

The Timber Trade Action Plan (TTAP) is a 7 year project that began in March 2005 and is co-funded by the European Commission, participating timber trade federations and their members. It was developed by the European timber trade federations (TTFs) to assist their suppliers to deliver verified legal timber to the EU. TTAP is managed by the Tropical Forest Trust (TFT) who provide technical expertise to timber suppliers in Africa, Asia, China and South America to help them supply verified legal timber to the importer. For further information, visit: <http://www.timbertradeactionplan.info>