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| **Media Release** | For release post announcement 5 February 2013  |

**WWF Welcomes APP Announcement to Halt Clearing,**

**Urges Paper Buyers to Wait for Proof**

**JAKARTA** – WWF welcomed the announcement by the Sinar Mas Group’s Asia Pulp & Paper (APP) stopped clearing Indonesia’s tropical forests and peatlands to allow an assessment of their conservation and carbon values. But the conservation organization urged paper buyers to wait for confirmation of the claims through independent monitoring by civil society before doing business with APP.

 “APP today committed to most of WWF’s calls. If the company follows through on this, it could be great news for Indonesia’s forests, biodiversity and citizens,” said Nazir Foead, Conservation Director of WWF-Indonesia. “Unfortunately, APP has a long history of making commitments to WWF, customers and other stakeholders that it has failed to live up to. We hope this time the company does what it promised. WWF plans to independently monitor APP’s wood sourcing and forestry activities for compliance with its commitments and regularly update stakeholders on the findings.”

APP runs two of the world’s largest pulp mills on Sumatra, where it produces the pulp for the toilet paper, tissue, copy paper and packaging that it sells worldwide. The company and its wood suppliers are responsible for clearing more than 2 million hectares of rain forest on the island since beginning operations in 1984, an analysis by the NGO coalition Eyes on the Forest found.

“WWF hopes that APP’s new commitments will do more than just stop its own bulldozers, including protecting the natural forests in its concessions from all illegal activities and mitigating the long-term negative impacts its practices have had on all the peat lands, forests, biodiversity and local people in Sumatra and Borneo for which these commitments have come too late,” Foead added.

“WWF has long called on responsible businesses to avoid sourcing from APP and until there is truly independent confirmation that APP has stopped draining peat soils and pulping tropical forests with high conservation value, we continue to urge paper buyers to adopt a wait for proof stance,” said Aditya Bayunanda, GFTN and pulp & paper manager of WWF Indonesia.

Mr Teguh Widjaya, the patriarch of the family’s pulp and paper business, oversaw the announcement today that no member of his APP group operating in Indonesia or China will accept any tropical timber felled in Indonesia after 31 January 2013 until company consultants have completed a full “high conservation value” and a “high carbon stock” assessment of their forest concessions. However, the company inserted a loophole in the commitment saying that for an indefinite period of time APP mills would accept trees felled before 31 January.

As a sign of good faith and the first demonstrable milestone, WWF calls on APP to have moved the supply of already-cut tropical timber its suppliers cleared before the self-imposed 31 January 2013 moratorium by 5 May 2013, the due date of its next quarterly forest policy report.

A fully implemented moratorium on pulping forests with high conservation and high carbon value would have a profound impact on Indonesia’s biodiversity, as well as on Indonesia’s carbon emissions. WWF urges all of the country’s pulp producers to stop using tropical forests.

**For more information**:

Eyes on the Forest, a coalition of NGOs in Riau Province has documented APP’s destruction of more than two million hectares of Sumatra forests since 1984 when the company started to operate on the island. APP’s activities have made a major contribution to pushing the island’s tigers, elephants and orang-utans into critically endangered states. [www.eyesontheforest.or.id](http://www.eyesontheforest.or.id)

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**About WWF**

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with over 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the Earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. [panda.org/news](http://www.panda.org/news) **for latest news and media resources.**