



## WORKSHOP

# CONVERSION OF FORESTLANDS TO RUBBER PLANTATIONS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

*September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013*

*Meeting Hall No. 7, La Thành Hotel, 218 Đội Cấn, Ba Đình, Hà Nội*

### Background

Vietnam is currently among the top five countries in the world for rubber production. By 2012 the total area of rubber plantations reached 915,000 ha, a figure that will continue increasing in the future. Eighty percent of the country's rubber latex is now exported. In 2012, 1.02 million tons of latex was exported, earning 2.85 billion USD. This was an increase of 25% in amount and 11.7% in value compared to the previous year.

The national strategy of rubber plantation development up to 2015 and vision up to 2020 approved by the Prime Minister in 2009 indicated that by 2020 the total area of rubber plantations would reach 800,000 ha and turnover of latex export value would reach 2 billion USD.<sup>1</sup> Along with this strategy, several policies were launched by the government to promote rubber plantation development, including allowing conversion of 150,000 ha of natural poor forest to rubber plantation. This rapidly increased the total area of rubber plantations in recent years. To date (Sep. 2013) all objectives/indicators of total rubber plantation area, total export volume and annual turnover of rubber latex export indicated in the 2009 national strategy are lower than the real statistical figures.

Vietnam is actively involved in international initiatives such as FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade) and REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation). The major objectives of these initiatives are to support Vietnam to improve its forest governance, especially in dealing with deforestation and forest degradation. However, the government of Vietnam indicated that conversion of forestlands to rubber plantations is one of five prime underlying causes of deforestation in the country. In order to implement FLEGT and REDD+ effectively there must be sound coordination among state agencies regarding forestry and land management – this must also include other stakeholders in the rubber sector and local communities. The workshop, "Conversion of forestlands to rubber plantations: Opportunities and challenges," will be a platform for participants to discuss this issue.

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<sup>1</sup> National strategy of rubber plantation development to 2015 and vision to 2020, approved by the Prime Minister under Decision 750/QĐ-TTg, dated June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009.

## Objectives

The workshop will discuss mechanisms and solutions that harmonize the benefits of rubber plantations and forest/environmental protection in Vietnam. The objectives are as follows:

- Share information on the status of rubber plantation development in Vietnam in past years.
- Identify the impacts of rubber expansion on forest resources, the environment, local livelihoods and local culture.
- Derive policy recommendations to harmonize rubber plantation benefits and forest protection in Vietnam.

## Tentative agenda

08:00 – 08:20: Registration

08:20 – 08:30: Opening speech (VAFS)

08:30 – 08:50: Status of rubber development in Vietnam from the market perspective: Current situation and future trends (Dr. *Trần Thị Thúy Hoa*, Head of the Administration Department, Viet Nam Rubber Association)

08:50 – 09:10: Conversion of forestlands to rubber plantations in Vietnam (Prof. Dr. *Nguyễn Ngọc Lung*, Institute of Sustainable Forest Management and Forest Certificate)

09:10 – 09:30: Impacts of rubber plantations on the environment (Dr. *Vũ Tấn Phương*, Vietnam Academy of Forest Sciences)

09:30 – 09:50: Rubber plantation development in the Central Highlands and Northwest: Implications for FLEGT and REDD+ (TS. *Tô Xuân Phúc/Trần Hữu Nghị*)

09:50 – 10:05: Tea break

10:05 – 10:25: Perspective of local authorities (*Dak Lak, and Sơn La provinces*)

10:25 – 11:45: Panel discussion: Rubber development and its impacts on:

- Forest resources and biodiversity
- Household/community economics
- Social and cultural aspects of communities

### **Panelists:**

*Assoc. Prof. Dr. Triệu Văn Hùng, Director General of Viet Nam Academy of Forest Sciences*

*Prof. Dr. Nguyễn Ngọc Lung, Institute of Sustainable Forest Management and Forest Certificate*

*Dr. Trần Thị Thúy Hoa, Viet Nam Rubber Association*

*Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vương Văn Quỳnh, Vietnam Forestry University*

**Moderator:** *Dr. Tô Xuân Phúc, Forest Trends*

11:45 – 12:00: Conclusion

12:00: Lunch