



## Press Release

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Cooperation for responsible forest management and timber industry practices

### **SIG Combibloc now a member of the WWF's Global Forest and Trade Network (GFTN)**

**November 2009.** Carton packs from SIG Combibloc are made of around 75 per cent pulp fibre, obtained from the renewable raw material wood. Ensuring that the main raw material originates from forests that are managed responsibly and to the highest standards is a firm component of the company's corporate strategy. Now, SIG Combibloc has joined the GFTN (Global Forest and Trade Network) network operated by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), in order to actively promote forest management that encompasses social, economic and environmental aspects in equal measure, working at inter-company level and on a global scale.

The WWF is one of the world's biggest and most widely known environmental protection organisations and is active in more than 100 countries, with around 5,000 employees working on projects aimed at preserving the biodiversity of our planet. The organisation's paramount objective is to create a future in which humans live in harmony with nature. Forests play a key role in this future. Johannes Zahnen, in charge of forestry policy and business partnering at WWF Germany: "Forests have an immense impact on world climate and the protection of species. They counteract global warming, since among other things they store up carbon and produce oxygen. As well as establishing reserves and protected areas, one of the WWF's chief concerns is to identify strategies for responsible forest management that, in terms of concepts of sustainability, bring social, environmental and economic aspects into alignment. Working with numerous international partners, the WWF campaigns in a wide range of projects for forests to be managed in such a way that they can continue to perform their myriad, varied functions on a sustained basis and so also for the benefit of future generations".

The WWF founded the Global Forest and Trade Network (GFTN) as a trading association that works to improve forest management practices all over the world and helps to strengthen the partnership between companies and non-governmental organisations. The GFTN is active in more than 20 countries and now represents more than 300 partner companies that are pursuing a common goal of increasing the proportion of wood products certified in accordance with the standards of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). As an international, independent and non-profit organisation that promotes responsible forest management, the FSC applies exacting standards to ensure the exemplary use of forest resources, and for this reason it has the support of the WWF and other major environmental organisations.

### **Broad communication impact**

Johannes Zahnen sees the inter-sectoral cooperation within the GFTN above all as being of great importance: “Trade is a key interface between industry and consumers, making it the most significant driver in establishing voluntary and independent proof of origin. With the offer of credibly certified goods and packaging, trade practices now give customers the opportunity to choose such products out of preference. At the WWF, we believe the broad communication impact of consumer goods packaging is enormous. We believe that having the FSC label on food packaging will give a considerable boost to consumer awareness of responsible forestry”.

In October, SIG Combibloc launched the first FSC-certified beverage cartons for fruit juice drinks and ice teas in Europe. The FSC logo on the beverage cartons shows consumers that all the wood fibres used to manufacture the packaging are traceable along the entire value-added chain – from labelled carton pack right back to forest of origin – in accordance with the FSC standards, and only wood sourced from well-managed, FSC-certified forests and other controlled sources was used to manufacture the carton. Johannes Zahnen: “The launch of beverage cartons with the FSC label at a German retail chain will raise awareness among consumers and among other companies and industries. FSC-labelled beverage cartons will make the importance of responsible forest management and the wide applicability of the topic within society more ‘graspable’ in everyday life – quite literally. By becoming a member of the GFTN, SIG Combibloc is making a clear statement of its intention to continually increase the proportion of FSC-certified carton packs it offers. So we see SIG Combibloc as a key strategic partner in

making the end consumer, together with food and drink filling companies and the retail trade, more aware of the FSC label”.

Rolf Stangl, CEO of SIG Combibloc: “We see continually improving our carton packs and our production processes as an important business principle. This is how we ensure that our product will continue to be one of the most environmentally friendly types of packaging. Membership of the GFTN offers us an additional platform for cooperation with international companies and organisations involved in forestry, manufacture and trade that place the highest value on responsible forest management – in terms of social, environmental and economic issues and in relation to compliance with all the laws governing logging and the timber trade. We see membership of the GFTN as the perfect opportunity to exchange experiences and to benefit from these synergies to generate the momentum that will further advance our environmental objectives”.

For SIG Combibloc, responsible, environmentally aware action and the systematic management of all environmental aspects are central components of the company’s corporate strategy. This is why, for instance, the company has this year had all its European production sites certified in accordance with the criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) for a complete chain of custody (CoC) verification. The aim is to have the other packaging plants worldwide certified by the end of 2009.

**Caption:**

Johannes Zahnen (left), in charge of forestry policy and business partnering at WWF Germany, was given an insight into the manufacture of FSC-labelled carton sleeves at SIG Combibloc production plant in Linnich by Michael Hecker, Head of Group Environment, Health & Safety at SIG Combibloc.

**Photo: SIG Combibloc**

*SIG Combibloc is one of the world’s leading system suppliers of carton packaging and filling machines for beverages and food. In 2008 the company achieved a turnover of 1,249 million Euro with around 4,100 employees in 40 countries. SIG Combibloc is part of the New Zealand based Rank Group.*

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