

## PNG forest management below levels

AN International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) diagnostic mission to PNG, concluded that PNG forest management practices fall below ITTO criteria and indicators.

The mission, a technical team, made up of three international and two national consultants, who met and interviewed non-government organisations, landowners, forest industry representatives, and PNG Government agencies between February 17 and March 7 this year.

"The general conclusion of this 'diagnostic mission' is that PNG has many solid acts, laws and legislation in place. But implementation is problematic due primarily to administrative and governance constraints and intervention. The Government and industry have not been able to demonstrate integrated, economically viable, ecologically compatible and socially acceptable forest management practices in line with the ITTO criteria and indicators," the diagnostic mission concluded in its report.

"The environmental impacts of timber harvesting decisions and operations are poorly addressed and the regulatory framework is not being enforced due to inefficient collaborative efforts of PNG Forest Authority and DEC (Department of Environment and Conservation) in field monitoring and control. The landowners constantly complain about lack of involvement in all government decision making processes related to forestry."

ITTO executive director Dr Manoel Sobrul Filho yesterday told reporters in Port Moresby that PNG had problems but was not different from other tropical timber nations who faced similar challenges.

"I would not say that PNG is much different from the other tropical countries, PNG faces problems, yes," Dr Filho said.

Emphasising that the decision to allow the diagnostic mission confirmed its openness and transparency, Dr Filho said the mission's findings was the first step towards addressing the problems.