

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY DR. M. NURUDEEN IDDRISU,
DIRECTOR - TRADE AND INDUSTRY, ITTO. "TRADE AND
MARKET DAY / PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT,
RADISSON HOTEL, SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA, APRIL 4,
2025".**

The Honorable Vice-Minister of Environment and Energy, **Sr.
Mario Rodriguez Zuñiga,**

Distinguished Head of Government Institutions and private sector operators.

CITES Management Authorities, Scientific Authorities, and our esteemed invited speakers.

Distinguished participants from across our member countries and other invites,

All protocols observed.

On behalf of the ITTO Executive Director, **Ms Sheam Satkuru,** I welcome you all to San Jose, Costa Rica to our **trade and market day / private sector engagement** for Latin America where we have ten (10) ITTO member countries participating. Your presence here is a strong demonstration to your shared commitment to ensuring sustainable trade, which is legal and traceable for our timber species.

We wish to express our thanks to the **Unites States** government for their generous support which has made it possible for us to hold this conference bringing together the private sector operators, governments officials, researchers and scientists alike into this beautiful city of San Jose and truly speaking the **Switzerland of Latin America**. During this conference we will have the opportunity to discuss markets trends, global policies and regulations such as CITES and EUDR that disrupt trade and markets in the tropics. We will also have

the opportunity to discuss policies and interventions that can help boost compliance with these regulatory policies.

As you all know, illegal logging and its associated trade pose economic, environmental, societal, and national security threats to our nations and this is an opportunity for us to discuss these threats and find common grounds towards facilitating legal and sustainable trades alongside managing the fragile forests sustainably.

Supporting the legal and sustainable timber trade continues to be a strategic focus for ITTO and this event at the regional level is a testament of ITTO commitments towards bringing services to the doorstep of our members.

Honorable Vice-Minister, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen, as you may be aware, a well-structured, regulated market of all timber species can be a catalyst for growth and development in the timber industry in ITTO member countries and beyond. This will require collaboration among all stakeholders and actors along the timber supply chain so we can continue to trade sustainably and legally and leave our forests sustainably managed for the next generation.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Camara Nacional Forestal, Madera e Industria (CFMI) for their hard work and collaborative efforts towards this event, without them this gathering would not be possible.

Last but not the least we would like to thank the city of San Jose and all the **Ticos** for being such a great host and the Ministry of

Environment and Energy (MINAE) for accepting our request to host this event.

As I look at the agenda, the one can attest to the assemblage of seasoned professionals who cover diverse topics of great interest to the tropical timber fraternity. I wish us all a productive meeting and enriching day ahead.

Thank you. **Saludos Cordiales**