(Please check against delivery)

Statement by H.E. Mr. Ali’ioaiga Feturi Elisaia
Permanent Representative of Samoa to the United Nations
and on behalf of the Asian Group Members States on the Occasion of the
adoption of the Non-Legally binding Instrument on All Types of Forests
17 December 2007

Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,

The General Assembly has just successfully adopted the “Non-Legally binding
Instrument on All Types of Forests”, a truly momentous occasion worthy of
commemoration.

The member States of the Asian Group on whose behalf I take the floor are
pleased to be part of this Special Event to mark the formal adoption of this
landmark agreement in the context of international forest policy and
cooperation. The instrument is the culmination of many years of hard and
dedicated work. Appropriately, we would like to acknowledge the
outstanding results achieved at the seventh (7th) session of the UN Forum on
Forests with the adoption of both the non-legally binding Instrument on All
Types of Forests and the Forum’s Multi-Year Programme of Work.

Mr. President,

The Instrument, despite its non-legally binding and voluntary nature, still
provides a comprehensive basis to strengthen political commitments and
action at international, regional and national levels to implement global
sustainable management of all types of forests and to achieve the four shared
Global Objective on Forests, together with the need to enhance the
The contribution of forests to the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, particularly in respect to poverty eradication and environmental sustainability. The Instrument focuses on all types of forests worldwide and calls for a more holistic, instead of sectoral approaches.

The adoption of the Instrument is timely. It provides a platform where none existed before for all stakeholders to come to work together to ensure that our forests are managed sustainably for current and future generations. Moreover, it provides an avenue to address a whole range of issues on forestry and timber in a comprehensive manner. This is particularly urgent considering that forest resources play vital economic, environmental and socio-cultural roles in sustainable development, including an increasingly recognized role in the provision of ecosystem services, including climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Mr. President,

Forests the world over face intensifying threats to their sustainability, productivity and in some cases their very survival. Moreover, forest loss and degradation also threaten livelihood security and well-being of dependent households and communities.

The adoption of this historic agreement moves us closer to the achievement of the UN Forum on Forests principle objectives of enhancing international cooperation as well as policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues and strengthening political commitment to the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

In closing, let me on behalf of the Asian Group Congratulate all those who has a role to play in facilitating the early adoption of the non-binding Instrument on all types of forests.

Thank you.