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Ministry of Technology, Trade and Economic Development
Ministry of Forests and Range
Natural Resources Canada

CANADA, B.C., CHINA SIGN REBUILDING AGREEMENT

BEIJING – The governments of Canada, British Columbia and China today signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that will support an \$8-million wood-frame rebuilding project to assist China in its reconstruction efforts following last May’s devastating Wenchuan earthquake.

“This project will help rebuild facilities and enable residents to move forward after the devastating Wenchuan earthquake,” said Stockwell Day, Minister of International Trade and the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Regional Minister for British Columbia. “This initiative complements other Canadian humanitarian assistance efforts in the aftermath of the earthquake, including the Sichuan Earthquake Relief Fund.”

“As Canada’s Asia-Pacific Gateway, British Columbia is pleased to be at the forefront of co-operative international assistance to rebuild community infrastructure devastated by the earthquake,” said Ida Chong, B.C.’s minister responsible for the Asia-Pacific Initiative. “This agreement strengthens and highlights the tremendous spirit of co-operation we’ve seen from everyone involved in the reconstruction efforts.”

Participating in the signing event were Pat Bell, B.C.’s Minister of Forests and Range, on behalf of the government of British Columbia, and Robert Wright, Canada’s Ambassador to the People’s Republic of China, on behalf of the Government of Canada.

The Canada-British Columbia Wenchuan Earthquake Reconstruction Project, first announced in mid-June by Premier Gordon Campbell and Canada’s former natural resources minister, Gary Lunn, focuses on the construction of community facilities. The first three projects include a primary school, an elderly care centre, and a rehabilitation centre/school for the disabled, all located in the heart of the quake zone. British Columbia is contributing \$5 million and the Government of Canada, through Natural Resources Canada, is contributing another \$3 million to the project.

“I want to thank the many officials across the levels of Chinese Government who have helped us identify the first three reconstruction projects,” said Bell. “It is important to focus our efforts on where they are needed most, while demonstrating that North American wood-frame construction can meet the unique mix of building styles in China.”

FII Consulting (Shanghai) Co. Ltd. (FII China) is working with Chinese government officials and local experts to design and construct new community facilities and will procure the Canadian wood required for this project. The Canada Wood Group, a consortium of industry associations, will provide technical support and training in wood-frame construction. The organizations will work together to ensure the wood-frame structures meet local needs.

The public facilities built through this project will be constructed from 100 per cent high-quality Canadian wood. Studies have demonstrated that wood-frame buildings are a highly suitable construction choice for earthquake-prone regions because of their adaptability and seismic stability when used in compliance with proven construction techniques. Wood construction products also have a smaller carbon footprint than other materials, such as steel and concrete.

Complementary to this project, long-term research partnerships will be established under the current Canada-China bilateral Science and Technology Agreement. Administered by Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, these partnerships will focus on developing and applying earthquake-resistant construction technology to meet the needs of China's affected areas.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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BACKGROUND

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CANADA-B.C. WENCHUAN EARTHQUAKE RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Through the Wenchuan Earthquake Reconstruction Project, the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia are supporting the construction of community facilities to replace structures damaged or destroyed by the earthquake in Wenchuan County in May.

The \$8-million project was first announced in June 2008 and is supported by \$5 million in funding from British Columbia and \$3 million from the Government of Canada.

These buildings will be constructed from 100 per cent high-quality Canadian wood. Research has shown that wood-frame buildings are an especially well-suited construction design for earthquake-prone regions because of their adaptability and seismic stability when used in compliance with proven construction techniques.

The delivery of the project will be undertaken by FII Consulting (Shanghai) Co. Ltd. (FII China), in partnership with the Canada Wood Group (CWG), a consortium of industry associations. FII China will work with Chinese government officials and local design and construction experts to implement the project and ensure that the wood-frame structures meet local needs. In addition, FII China will procure Canadian wood required for this project. CWG will support the initiative by providing technical support and construction training in wood-frame construction.

Three projects have been approved to date:

Xiang'E Primary School in Dujiangyan

The Xiang'E Primary School in Dujiangyan in China's Sichuan Province was destroyed by the May 12 earthquake, which took the lives of many students and their rescuers. It has since captured the attention of the entire country and was personally selected by Mayor Han of Shanghai to be one of the first schools that Shanghai, as the appointed reconstruction partner province for Dujiangyan, will rebuild.

On July 1, 2008, the Shanghai government granted Tongji University, a leader in structural engineering, design and urban planning, approval to oversee the facility's reconstruction, with assistance from Canada and British Columbia.

The wood-frame Dujiangyan school complex will include a mixture of classrooms, dormitories and administrative/common area facilities. It will make use of green design concepts and have many energy-efficient features.

Construction is expected to be completed by the spring of 2009.

Care Centre for the Elderly in Beichuan

China's rural elderly rely heavily on their children for support when they can no longer care for themselves. The Ministry of Civil Affairs provides basic social assistance (food, clothing, housing, medical care) for those without children or other financial means.

The Leigu Town Elderly Care Centre in Beichuan County, which previously housed 75 people, was destroyed in the May 12 earthquake. The new facility will provide care for more than 200 people.

Design for the project is underway, with construction to be completed in 2009.

Rehabilitation Centre in Mianyang

The Wenchuan earthquake had a dire impact on Mianyang Municipality (which includes Beichuan County), claiming the lives of more than 20,000 and injuring almost 180,000. More than 13,000 children and adults have been left disabled by the quake. To help these victims the Mianyang Government is planning the construction of a comprehensive facility that will include a recovery and rehabilitation centre for children and adults, a special needs school for disabled students and a vocational training centre for disabled adults. Canada will be involved in the construction of some of these facilities.

Design of this project will begin in 2008 with construction to be completed in 2009.

FII China

FII Consulting (Shanghai) Co. Ltd. (FII China) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Forestry Innovation Investment Ltd. (FII), a company established by the government of British Columbia to promote the province's forest products, raise awareness of its environmentally sound forest practices and develop new products and market them internationally. FII, along with Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), is a major funding agency for the Canada Wood Group. Headquartered in the Dream Home Canada Demonstration Centre in Shanghai and with a shared office in Beijing, FII China and CWG work jointly in China, delivering a comprehensive program focused on creating opportunities for Canadian forest products in wood-frame construction, landscaping, remanufacturing and value-added product sectors.

Canada Wood Group

In China, the CWG has offices in Shanghai and Beijing and supports the Canada Wood College, which delivers vocational training on wood-frame construction techniques adapted to China's building codes and construction practices. The Canada Wood College will play an important role in providing on-site training and technology transfer as part of the project. The Canada Wood Group is supported by Natural Resources Canada and FII.

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