

IFFS/AFS 2006 achieves record deals, exhibitor and visitor count

The International Furniture Fair Singapore 2006/223rd ASEAN Furniture Show (IFFS/AFS 2006) has again proven to be an excellent business conduit for the international furniture trade fraternity in Asia. The fair generated a record yield of estimated USD 240 million of spot orders over the five day event from March 1 to 5, at the Singapore Expo. The event is also expected to garner an additional USD 2.1 billion of follow-on sales for the year ahead.

Registering the highest exhibitor and visitor count in its 23 year history, with 505 exhibitors from 29 countries and 17,838 trade participants from 112 countries, IFFS/AFS 2006 has also, in turn, garnered an estimated USD 32 million in revenue and economic spin-offs for Singapore's MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions) and tourism industries.

The IFFS/AFS 2006 occupied six halls of the Singapore Expo and boasted an increase of eight per cent in size from 2005 to an astounding nett exhibition space of 35,500 m². The number of new exhibitors also grew by more than 100 per cent, from 85 companies in 2005 to 176 this year to provide potential new business ventures.

The ASEAN countries, like Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam, saw significantly stronger participation at the IFFS/AFS 2006, displayed an impressive 20 per cent increase in nett exhibition space compared to last year's show.

With more than 32,000 pieces of furniture and furnishing products featured at IFFS/AFS 2006, Singapore boasts the largest collection of quality products in the ASEAN region and remains the preferred sourcing destination for prominent buyers. The IFFS/AFS 2006 attracted close to 40 per cent more foreign buying delegations than IFFS/AFS 2005, from 48 buying groups to 77, boasting prominent players from the neighbouring regions as well as Europe, America, the Middle East and Africa.

Mr Steven Chew, Chief Operating Officer of Sitra Holdings (International) Pte Ltd, Singapore said: "This year's show has been the best we had since we started exhibiting at the fair five years ago. We saw more quality buyers this year compared to the previous ones. Besides continuing to use the IFFS/AFS as a key platform to reach out to our customers, we will definitely increase our exhibition space at next year's fair."

"The huge array of products on display, coupled with distinctive designs, was truly exceptional! We are convinced that three days is not sufficient and we intend to return next year and will stay for the entire show period of five days. We are certain that our business orders springboard from IFFS/AFS," commented VIP Buyer, Mr Peter Walkom,

Managing Director of Casual Living from Australia.

On what to expect at next year's show, Mr James Koh, President of the Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC) and Chairman of IFFS Pte Ltd, said: "Moving forward, the SFIC and IFFS Pte Ltd will be rolling out new initiatives geared towards improving the size, scope, and quality of the show. IFFS/AFS 2007 will see the implementation of 'PLATFORM', a Design Entrepreneur Development Programme and the launch of the inaugural World of Woodworking Machinery 2007, or WOWMAC 2007. We are looking forward to staging an even bigger, better and more comprehensive show for our international audience next year!"

IFFS/AFS 2007, together with WOWMAC 2007, will become the largest annual trade show in Singapore, boasting a nett space of 42,000 m² spread over seven halls of the Singapore Expo. The estimated annual economic spin-offs for Singapore's MICE and tourism sectors will increase to about USD 40 million. IFFS Pte Ltd reported that at the closing of IFFS/AFS 2006, more than 60 per cent of exhibition space for the 2007 fair had already been booked, with exhibitors hailing from China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Singapore, Taiwan, USA and Vietnam.

Chinese lumber companies to face punishments

China says it will punish those Chinese lumber companies who illegally arrange lumbering operations in Myanmar, as reported in a local daily. China's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Qin Gang says some Chinese companies have lumber operations in Myanmar, and most of their business is operated correctly with the contracts or agreements between the companies of the two countries and in accordance with local Myanmar laws and regulations.

China's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Qin Gang said in a press conference: "It is undeniable that a handful of companies and individuals engaged in illegal logging under the incentive of interest. The Chinese Government attaches great importance to this problem. We require all Chinese companies and individuals to abide by the laws and regulations of Myanmar and not to disturb the normal order for trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. We will punish the offenses according to law." Qin did not say what type of punishments these companies will face.