

## **Global rubber demand growth to be slower than expected in 2013 -IRSG**

SINGAPORE, May 21 (Reuters) – The growth in global demand for natural and synthetic rubber will be slower than previously expected in 2013 amid concerns about the health of the world economy, the secretary-general of the International Rubber Study Group (IRSG) said on Tuesday. “The issue is there is plenty of inventory around as everybody reports, which more than covers an increase in growth. But at the moment, if anything, we expect our annual projection of growth to be marked down slightly in response to the lower IMF GDP forecast,” Stephen Evans told Reuters ahead of a rubber summit organised by the group. IRSG, which compiles data and issues global demand and supply forecasts, will provide a new 2013 demand growth forecast in June. In August last year, IRSG said global demand was likely to rise 4 percent year-on-year to 27.7 million tonnes in 2013 as consumers start rebuilding inventories. The group, which has 35 member countries, including producers and consumers, bases its estimates on the International Monetary Fund’s economic growth forecast. It does not forecast price. The IMF has trimmed projections for global economic growth for this year and next to take into account sharp government spending cuts in the United States and the latest struggles of recession-stricken Europe. The IMF cut its 2013 forecast for global growth to 3.3 percent, down from its January projection of 3.5 percent. It also trimmed its 2014 forecast to 4.0 percent from 4.1 percent. (Reporting by Lewa Pardomuan; Editing by Himani Sarkar) Reuters