



## **The Forests NOW Declaration Backgrounder**

The Forests NOW Declaration is a unique document sponsored by international research network the Global Canopy Programme (GCP); it calls on world governments to take immediate action to tackle deforestation, which causes 18-25% of global carbon emissions. The Declaration is being signed by leading scientists and representatives from across the developing world on its journey over three continents before being presented to world leaders at the December 2007 Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Bali.

The UNFCCC Conference marks the beginning of a pivotal round of renegotiations of the Kyoto protocol that will determine the course of international climate change mitigation for years to come. The launch of the Forests Now Declaration is timed to pressure governments to move forests up the climate change agenda. Deforestation is second only to energy as a cause of global carbon emissions, at the centre of the agenda.

Whilst recognising that it is essential for mitigation to continue across all sectors, the Declaration points out that efforts to meet vital reduction targets by 2030 will be negated unless immediate action is taken to tackle emissions from deforestation.

The Forests Now Declaration has two central aims:

- To raise awareness of the scale of the problems presented by deforestation, and the urgent need to mitigate the carbon emissions it produces
- To call on governments to introduce six key measures, in order to create an international market in carbon and ecosystem services which will incentivise conservation, and safeguard forests' survival.

As well as emphasising the magnitude of the contribution of deforestation to global carbon emissions, the Declaration highlights the wealth of essential ecosystem services provided by forests - among them carbon sequestration, climate regulation and rainfall generation - which benefit mankind globally, and to which no monetary value is currently attached. The Declaration calls on world governments to introduce an incentive framework which encourages investment in these vital ecosystem services, therefore commercially safeguarding forests' survival.

The Declaration calls for governments to act to put tropical forests higher on the international climate change agenda, reform of existing economic arrangements such as the Clean Development Mechanism and the European Union Trading Scheme. Through this framework, conservation, afforestation and sustainable development can be provided with the extensive funding which philanthropy and donor appetite alone are insufficient to provide.

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For more information on The Forests Now Declaration or the Global Canopy Programme, please do not hesitate to contact Daniel Byrne on 0870 240 5536 / 07882 033 166 or [Daniel@redheadpr.co.uk](mailto:Daniel@redheadpr.co.uk)

### **Notes to Editors**

- Established in 2001, the Global Canopy Programme is an international alliance linking 38 leading institutions in 19 countries engaged in research, education and conservation efforts investigating the impact of climate change on biodiversity and ecosystem services maintained by forest canopies.
- The first signing took place at 6am on 10<sup>th</sup> September near Manaus in Amazonas State, Brazil.

- The Declaration already has 200 high-level endorsers, including:
  - scientific luminaries such as Harvard botanist E. O. Wilson, former Director of Kew Gardens Sir Ghillean Prance, and Chair of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, Dr. Carlos Nobre;
  - NGOs such as Care International, Conservation International, Fauna and Flora International, Friends of the Earth Brazil, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and the Wildlife Conservation Society;
  - leaders of the faith community such as the Bishop of Liverpool, and the leader of the Orthodox Church His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who led 200 religious leaders, politicians and environmentalists to the Amazon last summer to explore these issues.