



PRESS RELEASE

The Forests Now Declaration: Leading Scientists join with Forested Nations to Launch Global Call for Action on Deforestation

September 12, 2007
LONDON

September 12th marks the launch of the landmark Forests NOW Declaration in London already endorsed by over 200 forest leaders, scientists, conservationists, NGOs and business leaders, this Declaration calls on world governments to take urgent action on deforestation in the tropics and sub-tropics, which causes 18-25⁰% of global carbon emissions, more than the world's entire transport sector.

The Declaration calls for a series of carbon policies and market reforms to incentivise the protection of tropical forests and safeguard the vital services they provide including capture and storage of carbon dioxide.

Forests have been absorbing and storing carbon for millennia and contain 60% of the carbon stored on Earth. Deforestation releases this carbon into the atmosphere contributing significantly to global warming. Action to stop deforestation and to provide sustainable sources of forest products and stimulate forest restoration and the planting of new forests will help substantially in the fight against climate change.

Deforestation, driven by economic forces, also threatens critical natural habitats across the world particularly in tropical and sub-tropical regions. Tropical forests cover less than 7 percent of the Earth's total surface area but are home to 50 percent of the world's species and are critical to the survival of over a billion of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people. New market-driven incentives are required now if we are to avoid irrevocable damage to our environment and to ourselves.

Today, the Forests NOW Declaration arrives in Europe from the heart of the Amazon forest in Brazil. In a stunning ceremony high above the forest canopy, pioneering State Secretary for Environment Virgílio Viana signed the document alongside leaders from the indigenous, NGO and scientific communities. From Brazil, the Declaration has embarked on a journey through the world's carbon capitals and great remaining rainforests and is set to arrive at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in December, where world leaders are to begin pivotal renegotiations of the Kyoto Protocol and will decide on the

role that forestry will be able to play in future efforts to limit emissions and support developing countries.

The Declaration's remarkable journey is being coordinated by the Global Canopy Programme, an international research network linking 38 institutions in 19 countries. Underpinned by the recognition that "conservation alone has proven no match for commerce", it calls for a new series of economic reforms to incentivise the protection of tropical forests and safeguard the vital services they provide. Currently, deforestation is responsible for greater carbon emissions than the entire global transport network.

Professor Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Founder of the Green Belt Movement, said "We need a mechanism that will assist people in developing countries, certainly in Africa, to protect their standing forests and plant trees, to protect their soil, protect biodiversity and protect livelihoods while reducing carbon emissions for everyone."

Kevin Conrad, Ambassador of Environment and Climate Change for Papua New Guinea and Executive Director of the 30-strong Coalition for Rainforest Nations, said: "Global markets for products like beef and coffee have been driving deforestation. The measures called for in this Declaration offer an opportunity to compete head to head with the money a country can make elsewhere - while protecting forests. We absolutely must do this if we are serious about climate stability."

"This is a declaration of hope" said Andrew Mitchell, Director of the Global Canopy Programme. "Halting deforestation is an opportunity to score a big win against climate change - These forests support the livelihoods of 1.4 billion of the world's poorest people, and offer services critical to humanity's survival, such as rainfall generation and maintaining half of all life on Earth - benefits we all need but do not yet pay for."

- Ends -

To read the Declaration in full, and to follow its progress from Brazil to Bali, or to lend your support to this initiative please visit www.ForestsNow.org

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

Notes to Editors:

Other endorsers to date include:

- political representatives from the great forested regions, including Amazonas State Secretary for Environment Professor Virgílio Viana, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Roving Ambassador to the Congo Basin Professor Wangari

Maathai, and Executive Director of the 30-country Coalition for Rainforest Nations Kevin Conrad;

- scientific luminaries such as Harvard botanist E. O. Wilson, former Director of Kew Garden 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 - Brazilian Amazonia, 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.
- Businesses including Sustainable Forestry Management, Aveda, Chicago Climate Exchange and Habitat.

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