



## **Global Canopy Programme Backgrounder**

Established in 2001 and headed by Founder and Director Andrew Mitchell, the Global Canopy Programme (GCP) is an alliance linking studies of forest canopies conducted by 38 leading scientific institutions in 19 countries; it forms a collaborative programme of research, education and conservation addressing biodiversity, climate change and poverty alleviation.

The GCP utilises recent advances in forest canopy access technology to bring the cutting-edge science of canopy ecosystem services to decision makers in Government and financial markets. It maintains a philosophy based upon three interlinking Core Values relating to Ecosystem Services:

### **Science**

- The GCP is a leader in the field of forest ecosystem services and their values to humanity; it capitalises on networks it has developed within the international canopy science community to offer a global perspective on forests.
- It supports scientific research on forest canopy ecosystem services through the international canopy network and the Whole Forest Observatory network proposed to the United Nations Environment Programme; this will prove crucial in determining the full extent of the ecosystem services that forest canopies provide.

### **Policy**

GCP plays an increasingly influential role in shaping national and global policy in relation to forests and climate change. The main thrust of current GCP policy is the VivoCarbon Initiative. This has two primary aims:

- raising awareness of the need to reduce deforestation in order to make the necessary cuts in greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate climate change.
- proposing new market mechanisms to trade in ecosystem services generated by forests.

### **Finance**

The GCP is working with London's finance sector and Governments of forested nations to establish large-scale pilot projects to demonstrate that payments for ecosystem services could become traded in voluntary markets. If successful this could generate significant revenues to countries, on a sufficient scale to compete with current agribusinesses such as soya, palm oil and beef.

GCP policy promotes the use of commerce as an ally of conservation, aiming to create new market mechanisms in ecosystem services; this will not only invigorate forest conservation but also, by reducing deforestation, help mitigate up to 25% of the greenhouse gases that are causing climate change.

GCPs collective achievements have been reported by journals such as *Science* and *Nature*, and have received media coverage in national newspapers including *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian* and *The Daily Express*; the launch of the VivoCarbon Initiative in May 2007 made the front page of *The Independent*.

On 12<sup>th</sup> September 2007 the GCP launches The Forests NOW Declaration. The Declaration will pressure world leaders to take immediate action to tackle deforestation and related carbon emissions; it already boasts over 200 high-level endorsers, including some of the world's most eminent scientists, major conservation and development NGOs, and representatives from across the developing world.

- Ends -

**For more information on the GCP or the Forests NOW Declaration, please do not hesitate to contact Daniel Byrne on 0870 240 5536 or**

**[Daniel@redheadpr.co.uk](mailto:Daniel@redheadpr.co.uk)**

Notes to Editors:

- The Global Canopy Foundation is a charitable company limited by guarantee and was set up on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2001 (Registered UK Charity No. 1089110).
- The GCP is funded by UK Governmental donations from the Darwin Initiative and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, as well as organisations including The John Ellerman Foundation, The Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust, CHK Charities Ltd, The Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation, Cecil Pilkington Trust and Go Ape!
- The 20:20 Vision For Canopy Science is a proposal for a network of Whole Forest Observatories, approved by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Governments of Brazil, Ghana, Madagascar, India and Malaysia in February 2005. In June 2005 the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) of the UN pledged \$6 million towards the final project.
- The Forests First in the Fight Against Climate Change: The VivoCarbon Initiative is authored by Andrew W. Mitchell, Katherine Secoy and Niki Mardas (first published May 2007).