



# THE FORESTS DIALOGUE

## BROAD-BASED CONSENSUS OF LEADERS PUTS FORESTS AT THE CENTRE OF CLIMATE CHANGE DEBATE

Consensus on forests is rare. When it is achieved, the world should listen. When it offers a solution to climate change, the world *must* listen.

Over a 10-month period in 2007 and 2008, The Forests Dialogue's Initiative on Forests and Climate Change brought together over 250 leaders of environmental and social groups, businesses, Indigenous Peoples' and forest-community groups, trade unions, forest owners, governments, and international organizations.

In its consensus statement *Beyond REDD: The Role of Forests in Climate Change*, this diverse group agreed that:

- Forests have a unique ability to simultaneously reduce greenhouse gas emissions, capture carbon, and lessen the vulnerability of people and ecosystems to climate change.
- Forests store a vast amount of carbon. Conserving this store by reducing deforestation and forest degradation and promoting sustainable forest management must be one the world's highest priorities.
- Restoring forests and planting new forests greatly increases the forest-based carbon store.
- Sustainably managed forests not only retain their carbon, they also support the livelihoods of millions of rural people and deliver many products and ecosystem services such as the clean water and wildlife habitat that societies need.
- Sustainably harvested forest products and wood-based bioenergy can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by substituting high emission materials such as petrol, steel or concrete for neutral or low emission, renewable ones.
- For forests to fully achieve their potential to address climate change their governance must be improved and processes established to empower disenfranchised people, including Indigenous Peoples.

To make the best use of forest's climate change mitigation opportunities, the Initiative established five principles that should guide climate change negotiators:

1. Ensure that forest-related climate change options **support sustainable development** in both forest-rich and forest-poor countries.
2. **Tackle the drivers of deforestation** that lie outside the forests sector.
3. Support transparent, inclusive, and **accountable forest governance**.
4. **Encourage local processes** to clarify and strengthen tenure, property, and carbon rights.
5. **Provide substantial additional funding** to build the capacity to put the above principles into practice.

The Forests Dialogue's statement, *Beyond REDD: The Role of Forests in Climate Change* and related materials, can be found at: [www.theforestsdialogue.org/climate.html](http://www.theforestsdialogue.org/climate.html)