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Conservation of world's forests key to planet's survival

Bangkok, Thailand, 1 October, 2009 (IUCN/TFD) – With only two months to go before a new climate deal is negotiated in Copenhagen, The Forests Dialogue calls on industrialized nations to ensure robust financial commitments for conservation and sustainable management of forests and on tropical countries to ensure that these new financial streams are fairly shared with forest dependant communities.

This is one of the main recommendations published by The Forests Dialogue (TFD) in “Investing in REDD-plus” which is launched today and which reflects unique consensus amongst forest stakeholders across business, environmental and scientific sectors and from indigenous peoples and forest-based communities, who met in a stream of intensive dialogues this year.

*“Consensus amongst disparate stakeholders in the forest sector is rare,” says **Stewart Maginnis, Head of the Forest Programme of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**. “Today’s recommendations provide a timely roadmap for the financing of forest-related CO₂ emission strategies and show that REDD-plus can combat climate change in a cost-effective way while generating crucial, additional benefits for indigenous peoples, local communities and biodiversity.”*

REDD-plus should be designed as a performance-based mechanism that achieves real CO₂ emission reductions by reducing deforestation and degradation, and through conservation, sustainable forest management and the enhancement of carbon stocks. A phased approach will enable REDD-plus to address the drivers of deforestation according to country-specific circumstances.

*“REDD-plus activities in different phases should not only be assessed on changes in carbon stocks but also against social, environmental and financial indicators,” says **Roberto Smeraldi, Director of Amigos da Terra – Amazonia Brasileira**.*

Each phase of REDD-plus should be funded through a portfolio of financial resources that make optimal and coordinated use of both markets and funds, as well as other sources of finance.

*“Given the scale of the challenges involved and in order to come to reliable REDD-plus financing, we need to move beyond the markets versus funds discussion,” says **James Griffiths, Managing Director at the World Business Council for Sustainable Development**. “A flexible portfolio approach with different funding sources and reliable donor coordination is imperative.”*

*“The leaders that participate in our dialogues are concerned that many in the forest sector are pinning their hopes on REDD while the real issue is a REDD-plus design that will be able to deliver when the pressure is on and to which we hope our recommendations will contribute,” says **Gary Dunning, Executive Director of The Forests Dialogue**. “Transparent, inclusive and accountable forest management, based on local processes, should underpin REDD-plus.”*

Safeguards must guarantee equitable participation and distribution mechanisms for indigenous peoples and local communities as well as biodiversity conservation.

*“Forest governance reform requires strong partnerships founded on respect for the rights and active participation of indigenous peoples and local communities,” says **Carlos Chex, from the Guatemalan Indigenous Peoples organization Sotz’il**. “Key areas of concern are the clarification and strengthening of tenure, property and carbon rights.”*

The TFD report “Investing in REDD-plus” stresses the urgency to establish clear financial accounting standards and regulations. TFD also suggests that a global oversight body is set up to mainstream activities

with respect to carbon accounting and verification of performance against social, environmental and financial safeguards.

“We do not need to reinvent the wheel to develop robust international controls and monitoring frameworks for REDD-plus activities. Experience managing and disbursing development funds in challenging countries, years of work on carbon monitoring, reporting frameworks and forest certification systems provides a solid learning platform,” says **Chris Knight, Assistant Director, Sustainability and Climate Change, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP.** *“Ongoing discussions need to learn from existing systems and engage the finance sector in order to develop a financial mechanism and future market which is investible and attractive to the mainstream capital markets.”*

More than 100 stakeholders have been involved in this collaborative initiative facilitated by TFD to build an effective international mechanism for tackling the climate, community and biodiversity issues associated with deforestation.

Full set of recommendations:

http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/investing_in_redd_plus_en_tfd_recommendations.pdf

Executive summary:

http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/investing_in_redd_plus_en_executive_summary.pdf.

Spanish and French translations are also available.

TFD Dialogue on REDD Finance Background Materials:

<http://www.theforestdialogue.org> and <http://www.theforestdialogue.org/climate.html>

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Notes to editors

REDD-plus includes reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, conservation, sustainable management of forests and carbon stock enhancements, and envisages to offers multiple environmental and social benefits, including biodiversity conservation, adaptation advantages in the form of restored ecosystem services such as watershed protection and the equitable benefit-sharing for Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

The TFD dialogues that developed these recommendations were made possible with the support of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), Intercooperation, the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO), the World Bank and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

About IUCN

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges.

IUCN works on biodiversity, climate change, energy, human livelihoods and greening the world economy by supporting scientific research, managing field projects all over the world, and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice.

IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental organization, with more than 1,000 government and NGO members and almost 11,000 volunteer experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world.

www.iucn.org

About The Forests Dialogue (TFD)

The Forests Dialogue (TFD) is a group of individuals from diverse interests and regions that are committed to the conservation and sustainable forest management. Through a shared understanding of forest issues from their own

dialogues, participants in The Forests Dialogue work together in a spirit of teamwork, trust, and commitment. They believe that their actions and relationships can help catalyze a broader consensus on forest issues and encourage constructive, collaborative action by individual leaders that will improve the condition and value of forests.

Over the past two years, TFD has held seven international dialogues engaging over 375 leaders. These stakeholders include indigenous peoples, family forest owners, investors, academics, IGOs, ENGOs, trade unions, social NGOs, forest industry, forest and carbon investors, retailers, and government representatives. In October 2008 this collaboration produced the [Beyond REDD consensus statement](#) and since then, TFD has focused its dialogue process on the elements of a framework for REDD financing and implementation. The consensus reached during that initiative has led to the recommendations put forward in the *Investing in REDD-plus* recommendations document.

www.theforestdialogue.org

About WBCSD

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development is a unique, CEO-led, global association of some 200 companies dealing exclusively with business and sustainable development. The Council provides a platform for companies to explore sustainable development, share knowledge, experiences and best practices, and to advocate business positions on these issues in a variety of forums, working with governments and non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations.

www.wbcsd.org