



Embargoed until 09:30 CEST, 8 October, 2008

International consensus on forests' vital role in fighting climate change

Barcelona, Spain, 8 October, 2008 (IUCN) – The world's forests have immense potential to lessen the impacts of climate change, but if this opportunity is going to be realized, unified global action is now required, according to a remarkable alliance of international forest leaders.

The Forests Dialogue's Initiative on Forests and Climate Change brought together more than 250 representatives of governments, forestry companies, trade unions, environmental and social groups, international organizations, forest owners, indigenous peoples and forest-community groups in a series of meetings over 10 months. For the first time, the group has agreed on five guiding principles for climate change negotiators. (see attached one page summary.)

In a landmark statement entitled *Beyond REDD: The Role of Forests in Climate Change*, the Initiative also agreed on exactly what role forests can play in the battle to halt damaging climate change. The group specifies that sustainable forest management that reduces deforestation and degradation and that actively supports the livelihoods of millions of forest-dependent communities must now be one of the world's highest priorities. This is because forests and forest products have the unique ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, capture carbon, and lessen peoples' vulnerability to climate change.

"For the first time on this unprecedented scale, forest leaders, business representatives, donors, and community groups not only agreed on the pivotal role that forests can play in mitigating climate change but also mapped out a consensus action plan on concrete next steps. We now ask the world to work with us in putting these guiding principles into action," says **Stewart Maginnis, Head of the Forest Conservation Programme at IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature.**

"All of us have a shared responsibility to insist on sustainable forest management that produces fiber for wood and paper products, bioenergy and that also provides critical ecosystems services such as carbon sequestration and water quality," says James Griffiths, Managing Director of the **Sustainable Forest Products Industry project at the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.**

The Initiative also emphasizes that forest governance and local rights to forests and their resources, especially those of forest-dependent communities, must be clarified, strengthened and made more transparent if sustainable forest management is to succeed.

"We live in a defining moment of time, when the very well-being of our earth is at stake, our economy is in turmoil and the lives of billions of people threatened. This is the climate change moment," says **Mr Abdon Nababan, Secretary General of Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of the Archipelago), Indonesia.** *"Listen to the indigenous people around the world. Our knowledge will harness the climate change mitigation potential of our forests and in turn will promote economic development and conservation."*

"Despite the many varied perspectives and interests that make up the broad forest community, The Forests Dialogue process produced strong agreement on these key sustainable forest management principles for addressing climate change," said **Gerhard Dieterle, World Bank Forestry Advisor.**

The Forests Dialogue urges the world's governments to mobilize the resources necessary to develop and implement climate change mitigation and adaptation policies that make the vital role of forests clear. The Forests Dialogue is committed to working with the public and private sector in the formulation of these policies so that their guiding principles are adopted, the expertise of forest dependent communities is incorporated, the foundations of sustainable development included and the underlying causes of deforestation tackled.

Notes to Editors:

There will be a press briefing in the press conference room at the World Conservation Congress

- **Wednesday, 8 October, from 09:00-09:30** – Beyond REDD: The Role of Forests in Climate Change – IUCN/WBCSD

For more information, please contact:

- **Moira O'Brien-Malone**, Media Relations WBCSD, +41 79 377 7958, obm@wbcsd.org
- **Liz Schmid**, Communications Officer, IUCN, +41 79 519 1988, Liz.schmid@iucn.org
- **Anne Davis Gillet**, Communications Officer, World Bank, +1-703-537 9546, adavis@worldbank.org

About The Forests Dialogue

The statement, "Beyond REDD: The Role of Forests in Climate Change," is the product of a multi-stakeholder dialogue process developed and convened by The Forests Dialogue (TFD). It expresses the consensus view of more than 250 people from diverse backgrounds, who came together to debate, over a ten-month period, the role of forests in climate change and the policies being developed to foster that role. TFD is an international collaborative platform and process driven by environmental and social groups, businesses, Indigenous Peoples' and forest community groups, trade unions, forest owners, and international organizations. Its mission is to promote sustainable forest management through a constructive dialogue among all key stakeholders (www.theforestsdialogue.org). TFD's approach is based on establishing mutual trust, improving understanding on issues, and a commitment to change. This dialogue on forests and climate change is the seventh and largest initiative convened by TFD since its inception in 1999. All materials related to the Forests and Climate dialogue can be found at www.theforestsdialogue.org/climate.html

About IUCN

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges by supporting scientific research; managing field projects all over the world; and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN, international conventions and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice.

The world's oldest and largest global environmental network, IUCN is a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists and experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 professional staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. IUCN's headquarters are located in Gland, near Geneva, in Switzerland.

www.iucn.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