



Convention on
Biological Diversity



2010 International Year of Biodiversity

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PRESS RELEASE

Biodiversity central for REDD-plus success and for climate solutions: Experts at Forest Day 4 meeting in Mexico link biodiversity and climate change agendas

Montreal, 6 December 2010 – Biodiversity underpins the resilience, health and productivity of forests and is therefore essential for the success of REDD-plus¹ and other efforts for climate change mitigation and adaptation. As part of the fourth Forest Day, organised by the International Center for Forestry Research (CIFOR), a panel including scientific and policy experts underlined the need to better link the biodiversity and climate change agendas.

“The amazing biodiversity of our planet has the power to reverse the human induced imbalances in the climate system,” said Thomas Lovejoy, Chair of the Science Panel of the Global Environment Facility. “Biodiversity is our most powerful and immediate ally for removing CO₂ from the atmosphere and for storing it safely.”

Panellists, including Dr. Lovejoy and Maria Fernanda Espinosa, the Minister of Natural Heritage and Culture of Ecuador; Jose Sarukhan, President of CONABIO Mexico; Jos Delbeke, the Director General of the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Climate Action; and Vicky Tauli-Corpuz of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), addressed the theme of synergies between the biodiversity and climate change agendas. The discussion formed part of the programme of activities for the Rio Conventions’ Ecosystems Pavilion.

The panellists reminded the audience that biodiversity is vulnerable to climate change. A world that is 2 degrees Celsius warmer could be one without tropical coral reefs, and with much reduced and degraded rainforests and other large forest areas. REDD-plus can be part of the solution to the climate crisis, but only if ambitious overall mitigation targets avoid serious ecosystem tipping points such as Amazon dieback.

¹ REDD-plus refer to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries. As negotiations on this issue are ongoing under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), this term is used here without any intention of pre-empting negotiations under the UNFCCC.



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Biodiversity information is an important part of any policy design. “There is no way to manage the forests if you don’t know the biodiversity of these ecosystems,” said Jose Sarukhan. Accessible, spatially meaningful information on biodiversity, organised to be most useful to decision makers at all levels – national, sub-national and local – is key to sustainable forest management and thus to the success of REDD-plus.

Many developing countries are linking biodiversity, climate change and development objectives at the national level. “The Socio Bosques programme in Ecuador promotes forest conservation and sustainable management and is built around strong social and biodiversity safeguards,” said Minister Espinosa. The Minister also told the audience that Ecuador has committed to leave 20% of its oil reserves underground in the Yasuni National Park, thus protecting indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation, protecting one of the world’s most biodiverse ecosystems, and avoiding 470 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions.

The international community needs to support developing countries in these efforts. Director General Delbeke reminded participants that the European Union has included in their 2010 fast start financing package for climate change USD500 million for REDD-plus.

Vicky Tauli-Corpuz stressed that indigenous peoples play a key role in effective ecosystem management and conservation, since they are 'ecosystems people' with a holistic view of nature, and any negative impact on the ecosystem means an adverse impact on their lives. She said that the Convention on Biological Diversity’s modes of full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities and their representatives could act as a model for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This would help ensure the broad and long-term support to climate change mitigation and adaptation measures by these communities.

All panellists agreed that biodiversity and social safeguards, and the monitoring of co-benefits, are essential for the success of REDD-plus.

The International Year of Forests 2011 will provide key opportunities to further enhance the important policy and implementation linkages between forest biodiversity and climate change.

Notes for Editors:

The Rio Conventions Ecosystems Pavilion

The Rio Conventions' Ecosystems and Climate Change Pavilion is a collaborative outreach activity involving the Rio Convention secretariats, with the Global Environment Facility and other important partners. The CBD’s Lifeweb is also playing a key role. Launched during the International Year of Biodiversity, the Ecosystems Pavilion is a platform for raising awareness and sharing information about the latest practices and scientific findings on the co-benefits that can be realized through implementation of the three Rio Conventions. Through highlighting a number of specific themes and cross-cutting issues relevant to the three Rio Conventions and their common objective to support sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Pavilion demonstrates the challenges and opportunities for biodiversity and land managers due to the unavoidable and projected adverse impacts of climate change.

For more information go to www.ecosystemspavilion.org

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 193 Parties, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, a supplementary treaty to the Convention, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 159 countries and the European Union have ratified the Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal.

For more information visit www.cbd.int

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