



WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT OF MADAGASCAR AGREE TO SAVE PRISTINE FOREST THROUGH MASSIVE CARBON SALE

More than nine million tons to be sold to protect forest and combat climate change

The Wildlife Conservation Society and the Government of Madagascar announced a landmark agreement, where the government will offer for sale more than nine million tons of carbon offsets to help safeguard this African nation's most pristine forest. Proceeds from sales will protect the wildlife-rich Makira Forest, contribute to the economic well-being of people living around the forest, and help fight global climate change.

Representatives of the Madagascar Government and the Makira Carbon Company (or MCC), a separate company established by WCS, signed the agreement at a ceremony in Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar. The carbon offsets will be marketed and sold by the government in private transactions with the aid of MCC. MCC will work in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Water, Forests, and Tourism of Madagascar. The Madagascar government, with MCC as its agent, will seek carbon offset transactions with principals, brokers, dealers, and other intermediaries in the United States and abroad who wish to purchase high-quality emissions reductions delivering multiple benefits – climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable economic development.

The Makira Forest spans 400,000 hectares (more than 1,500 square miles), making it one of the largest remaining intact blocks of rainforest in Madagascar. It contains 22 species of lemurs, hundreds of bird species, and thousands of plant varieties, many of which are found nowhere else on earth. About 50 percent of Madagascar's unique biodiversity, and one percent of the world's biodiversity, exists within the greater Makira landscape. The landscape provides a critical forest corridor, which allows wildlife to travel between adjoining protected areas and outlying blocks of forest. The Makira Forest provides vital ecosystem services, such as clean water to the approximately 300,000 people who live around it.

"WCS is honored to be working with the government of Madagascar in creating this new model for conserving its greatest forest," said Dr. Steven E. Sanderson, President and CEO of the Wildlife Conservation Society. "The government continues to show global leadership in conservation, climate change and concern for its people."

Harrison Randriarimanana, Madagascar Minister of Environment, Water, Forests, and Tourism, said: "The signing of this accord on the sale of carbon credits constitutes a tremendous first and shows the commitment of the Government of Madagascar to lead conservation of

biodiversity in Madagascar, and at the same time, ensure the long term financing for the sustainable development and sustainable management of protected areas. With the assistance of Makira Carbon Company, the Government of Madagascar will sell the carbon credits and use the funds for supporting biodiversity conservation and the economic development of Madagascar.”

Also present at the signing event were high level representatives of the Government of Madagascar, Madagascar’s Ambassador to the United Nations, and the U.S. Ambassador to Madagascar.

In Madagascar, 100,000 hectares (386 square miles) of forest are lost each year due to burning for agricultural land.

The announcement of the sale of Makira carbon is particularly timely in the wake of the recently unsuccessful efforts to pass cap-and-trade carbon legislation in Congress. The Wildlife Conservation Society is calling on Congress to make sure that avoided deforestation is a central component of any future legislation to limit carbon emissions.

Dr. Sanderson said: “The agreement between WCS and the Government of Madagascar has a ‘triple bottom line’: it ensures forests and wildlife are protected, local people benefit and climate change is mitigated.”

The Wildlife Conservation Society has been carrying out conservation activities in Madagascar since the early 1990s and in Makira since 2003 when it was appointed manager of the Makira Forest project. WCS continues to work closely with the Ministry of Environment, Water, Forests and Tourism, local organizations and community groups towards establishing a new permanent protected area that encompasses the Makira Forest. Sale of Makira carbon offsets by the government will provide an important source of sustainable financing towards achieving that goal.

The Wildlife Conservation Society, which operates field projects throughout the island nation, opened *Madagascar!* on June 19th – a new exhibit at its Bronx Zoo headquarters that showcases the country’s amazing biodiversity, including ring-tailed lemurs, spider tortoises, and tomato frogs.

The Wildlife Conservation Society saves wildlife and wild places worldwide. We do so through science, global conservation, education and the management of the world's largest system of urban wildlife parks, led by the flagship Bronx Zoo. Together these activities change attitudes towards nature and help people imagine wildlife and humans living in harmony. WCS is committed to this mission because it is essential to the integrity of life on Earth. www.wcs.org