

Press Release

CARE International Urges Stronger Safeguards for the Poor

Climate Negotiations Must Advance Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Funding for Adaptation

CARE Experts Available for Interviews

Bali, Indonesia (December 11, 2007) Ten years after the Kyoto Protocol was signed, negotiators at the U.N. Climate Change Summit are finally addressing two crucial issues that have been neglected until now: how to move forward on financial support for adaptation to climate change, and how to reduce the carbon emitted from deforestation. Both have critical implications for the livelihoods and well-being of poor communities.

The Adaptation Fund, which is close to final agreement, could be a critical mechanism for providing support to the people who are most vulnerable to climate change. However, even when it's operational, the level of resources is not sufficient to meet the scale of need, estimated by the UN Development Program's Human Development Report at \$86 billion per year by 2015. This figure is equivalent to 0.2 percent of developed country GDP or about one tenth of what these countries allocate annually to military budgets. Even so we are concerned that the funds that are available will not reach the neediest.

More than a billion of the world's poorest people depend heavily on tropical forests for their livelihoods. In Africa, 90 percent of poor people use firewood to cook. In many countries across the developing world, forests are often the poor's only source of income, fuel, and fodder for their animals. Yet their interests may be overlooked in global efforts to slow and eventually reverse forest degradation and destruction, by giving forests a carbon value. For example, carbon in a standing forest in Indonesia is already valued at up to \$10,000 per hectare so the financial stakes are high.

"Our concern is that carbon markets could provide governments with the incentives and the means to keep poor people from benefiting from forests, yet communities surrounding forests are not to blame for large scale deforestation" says Phil Franks, Poverty Environmental Network Coordinator for CARE. "It is far more powerful interests who are responsible."

In the long run, people living closest to these forests have an overwhelming stake in conserving them. If negotiators take the approach of making forests into untouchable fortresses, they will disenfranchise the poorest people.

"These are life and death issues in the communities we work with," said Dr. Charles Ehrhart, Climate Change Coordinator for CARE. "It's essential to increase the resources that poor people have at their disposal, both through conserving their forests and allowing them more access to funding for their adaptation to a changing climate."

About CARE: In keeping with our core poverty fighting mission, CARE's focus is on helping the most vulnerable communities adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. For example, CARE is working in Kalimantan, one of the poorest provinces in Indonesia, where community fire brigades were able to extinguish fires across more than 240,000 hectares over a three month period in 2006.