



Press Release

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NGOs call for strong safeguards in efforts to halt deforestation to help address climate change

Gland, Switzerland – Leading environmental and humanitarian organizations are calling for efforts to combat climate change through halting deforestation to take full account of impacts on forest peoples and species.

CARE and WWF made the call as country delegates head to Oslo for Thursday's Climate and Forest Conference to ensure that any efforts to combat climate change by reducing forest loss take into account impacts on people and the environment.

CARE and WWF are asking governments to ensure that benefits to the climate, biodiversity and people's wellbeing are fundamental to efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+). To this end, the organizations are proposing a set of principles for governments to adopt in REDD+ activities and plans. CARE and WWF welcome the inclusion of principles in the partnership agreement and reaffirm the importance that countries not only promote and support but make a commitment to the principles and application of safeguards.

More than 30 governments will discuss forming a first-time Partnership at the Oslo meeting to advance REDD+ activities this year and beyond which is essential to maintain the momentum ahead of the climate talks in December in Cancun, and advance interim activities in a more coordinated and transparent manner.

REDD+ offers a unique opportunity to address both the dire consequences of climate change and the underlying causes of ongoing forest loss and forest degradation around the world and in doing so, contributes to efforts to avoid dangerous levels of warming.

However, it could be ineffective and may potentially do more harm than good unless countries adopt principles that set a global benchmark for success. Tackling the problem of deforestation and forest degradation at the scale and pace needed to prevent catastrophic climate change must go hand in hand with protecting the planet's climate and biodiversity, and benefiting local communities and indigenous peoples, the organizations said.

In addition, any coordinated approach must be transparent and accountable to show how any money to implement REDD+ activities is spent and to learn lessons for future activities.

"The world's governments are about to lay billions of dollars on the table to help protect our climate by fighting deforestation. We need to agree on strong rules to guide how this money is used so it benefits the people and wildlife living in forests," said Paul Chatterton, of WWF's Forest Carbon Initiative. "These principles ensure that any efforts to address climate change by stopping forest loss result in real benefits for people and the environment."

"Experience from all over the world shows that local communities are the best custodians of forests and what lives in them" says Raja Jarrah, CARE's expert on REDD. "They will feel the impacts first if the forests disappear. The principles we are introducing today re-state what we know already: that REDD+ programmes will only succeed if they benefit local people, and if their rights are safeguarded during the process."

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR REDD+

REDD+ offers a unique opportunity to address both the dire consequences of climate change and the underlying causes of ongoing forest loss and forest degradation while benefitting the climate's planet, biodiversity, and people. As countries come together to establish this global partnership on REDD+, they must adopt guiding principles that set a global benchmark for success in tackling the problem of deforestation and forest degradation at the scale and pace needed to prevent catastrophic climate change, to avoid further decline in biodiversity, to promote human wellbeing and to support low carbon development.

Principle 1:

CLIMATE

REDD+ demonstrably contributes to greenhouse gas emission reductions with national goals working toward a global objective

Principle 2:

BIODIVERSITY

REDD+ maintains and/or enhances forest biodiversity and ecosystem services

Principle 3:

LIVELIHOODS

REDD+ contributes to sustainable and equitable development by strengthening the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities

Principle 4:

RIGHTS

REDD+ recognizes and respects the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities

Principle 5:

FAIR & EFFECTIVE FUNDING

REDD+ mobilizes immediate, adequate and predictable resources for action in priority forest areas in an equitable, transparent, participatory and coordinated manner

NOTE: The REDD+ Principles above are supported by CARE, WWF, and Greenpeace. For more information, please visit www.panda.org/forestcarbon

For further information and to set up interviews, please contact:

- Sandra Bulling, CARE, mobile : +49 151 126 27 123, email : bulling@care.de
- Melissa Tupper, WWF, mobile: +1 202 569 0842, email: Melissa.Tupper@wwfus.org

About CARE

CARE is a leading aid organisation with more than 60 years' experience fighting global poverty and delivering emergency assistance. In 72 countries, CARE works with the poorest communities to improve basic health and education, enhance rural livelihoods and food security, increase access to clean water and sanitation, and expand economic opportunity. In response to the growing crisis, CARE is helping the most world's most vulnerable communities adapt to the impacts of climate change.

About WWF

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with almost 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.