



NEWS FLASH

FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE – TO COPENHAGEN AND BEYOND

**Buenos Aires, 21 October 2009
14h00 – 19h00**

BACKGROUND

Forests are linked with climate change in various ways - they are affected by climate change, when degraded or removed, they contribute to climate change through greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and they contribute to climate change mitigation by sequestering carbon dioxide from the atmosphere during afforestation and reforestation. Furthermore, the use of wood for products and fuel reduces GHG emissions from competing, more carbon-intensive products.

At the 13th Conference of Parties in Bali in December 2007, Parties to the UNFCCC included in their Bali Action Plan the reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, conservation, sustainable forest management and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries. A decision for both Annex I and Annex II countries on whether and how forests will be dealt with in the post 2012 climate arrangement is expected to be taken at the UNFCCC COP 15 scheduled for early December 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The WFC represents an excellent opportunity for the global forest community to discuss advances on technical aspects related to questions such as: how forests can contribute to mitigating climate change and how the impacts of climate change on forests and people can be addressed. The Forum on Forests and Climate Change also aims to develop some technical recommendations on how to include forests in the 2012 regime in an effective way. The recommendation will be presented to the world forestry community at COP 15.

OBJECTIVES

- Views on the challenges and opportunities for forests in the context of climate change are shared;
- The knowledge of WFC participants on issues related to forests and climate change is strengthened;
- Interchange of different views on the role of forests and climate change in post-2012 regime to be negotiated in COP 15.

OUTCOMES

- A shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities for the forest sector in the climate negotiations;
- Recommendations on technical issues of the global forest sector to UNFCCC COP 15 at Copenhagen.

TENTATIVE AGENDA

14h00 – 14h10 Opening of Forum
Republic of Argentina

14h10 -14h30 Keynote address

Forests in Post 2012 climate negotiations- where do we stand?

14h30 – 15h00 Session 1: Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF)

The development of policy on “sinks” has evolved to cover emissions and removals of greenhouse gases resulting from direct human-induced land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) activities.

The role of LULUCF activities in the mitigation of climate change has long been recognized. Mitigation achieved through activities in the LULUCF sector, either by increasing the removals of GHGs from the atmosphere or by reducing emissions by sources, can be relatively cost-effective.

This session will address LULUCF activities under the Convention and under the Kyoto Protocol:

15h00 -16h00 Session 2: Climate change impacts on forests and people: challenges and action required

PANEL DISCUSSION

With the IPCC’s Fourth Assessment Report has come more certainty that climate change is an inevitable consequence of past and present human activities. Observations of current impacts of climate-mediated events on forests include diebacks and mass mortality and changes in tree physiology, forest biodiversity, forest growth and productivity. Forests interact intimately with climate and are also an essential part of many societies, especially in the developing world. Climate change is already affecting people and livelihoods and in despite of incomplete knowledge and uncertainties, forest adaptation is possible, but it is necessary to have a plan and act rapidly. Forest science must to advice policy decisions and management actions.

This session will address how different ecosystems and stakeholders will be affected, and what actions could be undertaken to deal with this problem. Speakers are requested to in five minutes answer the following questions:

1. How will your constituency be affected by climate change and forest measures?
2. How can we adapt forest management? What actions do you propose?
3. How can we capture opportunities and synergies?

16h00-16h30 Coffee Break

16h30 – 18h00 Session 3: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD)

16:30 – 16:45 Introduction into REDD

According to the FAO (2005), deforestation, mainly conversion of forests to agricultural land, continues at an alarming rate (approximately 13 million hectares per year for the period 1990–2005). Deforestation and forest degradation result in immediate release of the carbon originally stored in the trees as CO₂ emissions, particularly if the trees are burned, and the biomass decays. The IPCC WG III (2007) estimated emissions from deforestation in the 1990s to be at 5.8 GtCO₂/yr, accounting for roughly 17% of global greenhouse gas emissions. The IPCC also notes that reducing and/or preventing deforestation and forest degradation are the mitigation option with the largest and most immediate global carbon stock impact in the short term, per hectare and per year, as the release of carbon as emissions into the atmosphere is prevented.

This session will present information and the most recent developments on REDD.

16h45-17h45 REDD Financial and methodological challenges and opportunities for countries

PANEL DISCUSSION

Countries have different national circumstances and face different challenges and opportunities for considering the potential of their forest to contribute to mitigating climate change. Each country is requested to summarize in five minutes their views on this, followed by a discussion. The session has the intention of giving a contribution to the negotiations to take place in the UNFCCC process, but also aims at informing the forest community about the complex issues at stake and to discuss implications and opportunities.

The speakers are suggested to answer the following questions:

- What is the major challenge for forestry in your country resulting from a potential REDD approach?
- Which methodological and financial issues do you think need to be addressed in discussions on including forestry in a post 2012 climate change agreement?
- How should countries address readiness capacities to implement REDD?

17h45 – 18h30 REDD initiatives for early action

PANEL DISCUSSION

Demonstration activities are essential in order to establish a basic stock of practical experiences related to REDD. This session will inform about ongoing and planned demonstration initiatives by Parties, relevant organisations as well as joint initiatives. The speakers are requested to in seven minutes share the essence of their initiative, to present lessons learnt based on its experience and the main challenges for REDD being a practical option. Speakers are requested to stress how they intend to coordinate their actions and make use of synergies with other initiatives.

18h30 - 19h00 Session 4: Discussion of forestry recommendation for COP 15 and wrap-up

A number of stakeholders in the forestry sector have already prepared statements on the forests and climate change linkages. The *Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)*, consisting of 14 different international bodies, presented at COP 13 its *Strategic Framework for Coordinated Response of the Forest Sector to the Climate Change Agenda*.

The Forest Dialogue (TFD) also presented at COP 13 its statement on forests and climate change. Further, the *Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI)* presented at the European Paper Week in November 2008 a one page position on forests and climate change. And finally, the issue of forests and climate change and ongoing negotiations in the UNFCCC was also discussed at UNFF 8.

As discussed, climate change is affecting the entire forest sector with all its stakeholders and is perceived as a common problem. Therefore, it merits a joint response. It is therefore suggested to analyze and consider the very comprehensive CPF framework as well as the positions of UNFF, TFD and CEPI and produce a one page recommendation from the WFC to the UNFCCC COP 15.