

i. Title/Heading.

A Global Initiative for the protection of forest carbon sinks and reservoirs

ii. Context and rationale.

Maintaining the integrity of intact, primary forests is essential to achieving global climate and sustainable development goals, since these forests: 1) hold immense carbon stocks, totaling nine times annual anthropogenic emissions, 2) absorb over a quarter of global anthropogenic emissions annually; 3) are biodiversity strongholds, vital for adaptation and resilience; and 4) are home to many Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC).

Long-term protection of intact, natural forest carbon sinks and reservoirs should be key in countries' climate NDCs. However, most climate action focuses only on near-term emission reductions. This contribution aims to promote a prominent role for intact, natural forest sinks in enhanced commitments (e.g. 2020 NDCs) by tropical and boreal governments, in collaboration with IPLC, and supported by innovative, enhanced finance.

iii. An overview of the contribution.

The Initiative will promote global recognition of the critical role of intact forests through (1) commitments from stewards to monitor, manage, and protect them, (2) support from other stakeholders in the form of capacity, technology, and resources.

The outcome will be implementation of commitments by High Forest Low Deforestation (HFLD) and other intact forest countries, standing together with IPLC, private sector, and civil society organizations. To enable these commitments, the Initiative will facilitate dialogues, technical support, and cooperation, building on the political will demonstrated by 27 countries through two major recent declarations (Section ix).

iv. How the contribution leverages living natural systems as a solution to avert climate change?

This contribution would avert threats and secure major forest carbon reservoirs and sinks, a proven natural climate solution that is currently underfunded and insufficiently protected.

v. How might the contribution support both climate mitigation and adaptation as well as other important co-benefits and social, economic and environmental outcomes in coming years including:

- Preserve the vast carbon stocks and ongoing sequestration capacity of the most intact forests, including peatlands (a quarter of global forests; 11 GtCO₂e/year). IPLCs manage at least 17% of the carbon stored in forestlands across 64 assessed countries (SDG 13 & 15).
- Enhance resilience, by sustaining regional rainfall, reducing ecological vulnerability to fire, droughts, floods etc.

- Help secure the livelihoods and cultures of Indigenous Peoples and tribal peoples, while delivering cost-effective social benefits from secure, clean watersheds, including reduced disease transmission (SDG 1 & 6).
- Improve the sustainability of supply chains and prioritize just transition strategies for forest stakeholders -- including IPLC (SDG 12 & 16).
- Preserve the vital ecological services that support water and food security of forest-dependent communities (SDG 2), including through conserving the biological diversity essential to ecological functions (SDG 14 & 15).
- Draw greater international awareness to the value of HFLD and other intact forests to climate adaptation and mitigation efforts (SDG 17).

vi. Which countries and organisations are involved in the contribution?

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN), with contributions from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), will collaborate with the 27 countries implementing two Declarations (see below), donor countries, and selected IPLC organizations.

vii. How have stakeholders (for example indigenous peoples, local communities, and youth) been consulted in developing the contribution?

Local stakeholders have been consulted through ongoing field activities and the Initiative will consult a wide cross-section, utilizing partners' existing networks and platforms.

viii. Where the contribution can be put into action?

Action in the 30 developing and developed nations that hold >97% of the most intact forests should be supported by donor countries and countries where forest-related investments and commodity markets originate.

ix. How the contribution will be delivered? How will different stakeholders be engaged in its implementation? What are the potential transformational impacts?

Transformational impacts:

- A paradigm-shift in climate finance, embracing support for HFLD and intact areas alongside clearance frontiers;
- Halt degradation of some of the world's most important forest carbon stores;
- Securing long-term biocultural benefits of IPLC management.

Delivery:

1. Piloting innovative finance mechanisms to enable enhanced climate commitments and implementation;
2. Sustainable finance for protected areas and IPLC management;
3. New, expanded or improved modalities of protection (legal designations, spatial planning, jurisdictional approaches, boreal fire management etc.)
4. A UNFCCC policy agenda providing tools and incentives to account for, value, and protect forest carbon sinks in NDCs.

5. Policy targets and monitoring systems for intactness (see section xiii)

Stakeholder groups:

1. Supporters of the [*Krutu of Paramaribo Joint Declaration on HFLD Climate Finance Mobilization*](#) will mobilize finance and conserve intact natural tropical forest sinks and reservoirs through their NDCs and green development plans.
2. Implementing the [*Haparanda Ministerial Declaration on Circumboreal Cooperation on Forests*](#), countries will commit to individual and collective action to protect boreal forests.
3. IPLCs will strengthen ownership and management of their traditional lands through access to legal assistance, technical support and financing.
4. Non-state actors including civil society, private sector and investors
Sustainable finance will require cross-sector collaboration to identify innovative mechanisms to catalyze national transitions to sustainable development.

x. Is this initiative contributing to other Climate Action Summit workstream (industry transition; energy transition; climate finance and carbon pricing; infrastructure, cities and local action; resilience and adaptation; youth and citizen mobilization; social and political drivers; mitigation strategy)?

There are clear synergies with other workstreams (eg transition of industry from ecologically damaging activities; resilience benefits of ecological integrity etc).

xi. Examples of experiences to date: how does this contribution build upon this experience? How does the contribution link with different ongoing initiatives?

Well managed and resourced protected areas successfully conserve intact forests, biodiversity and watershed values. Government spatial planning avoids fragmentation of intact areas. Formalizing IPLC tenure slows deforestation. This contribution boosts such efforts by emphasizing the climate benefits, catalyzing additional ambition and support. There are linkages to many other initiatives, including implementation of the abovementioned Declarations.

xii. Mechanisms for funding (with specific emphasis on potential for partnerships).

Developing countries' domestic finance can be complemented by bilateral or multilateral funding that is scaled up, simplified and better aligned to generate incentives for protecting intact forests in NDCs (e.g. GCF, GEF, Adaptation Fund, REDD+ finance for the "+" activities), and new or enhanced funding mechanisms (e.g. green bonds).

Domestic financing is the main opportunity for boreal forest countries.

Management by IPLC requires expanded direct domestic and international finance.

xiii. Means of stewardship, metrics for monitoring.

Measurable targets will be incorporated into NDCs and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans, supported by global targets or guidance around the Paris Agreement and Convention on Biological Diversity. Scientific tools and methods based on Indigenous knowledge exist for monitoring, including 'Intact Forest Landscapes' maps and new high-resolution integrity metrics.

xiv. Communication strategy.

Our communications strategy will increase public awareness about the importance of intact forests in the context of broader climate action on forests. We will engage the public, decision makers and influencers in key countries through in-depth content and compelling storytelling in traditional and social media.

xv. Contact details of proponents (indicating the degree of commitment among the countries and organizations that are named). [this will be finalized later]

Proponents:

WCS: Cristian Samper, CEO, csamper@wcs.org

RFN: Øyvind Eggen, Executive Director, oyvind@rainforest.no.

Contributor:

UNDP: Tim Clairs, tim.clairs@undp.org.

Outreach is underway to secure country commitments, including at UNFF14 and UNFCCC intersessional. Commitments from IPLC organizations will be solicited from existing field partners and others.