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CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS FAILING FOREST PROTECTION No remedy to this glaring omission as Bonn session concludes

BONN: Protecting intact natural forests is acknowledged to be a key component of a global climate change solution, but the public rhetoric of governments has not fed through to the latest negotiating text at the UN climate meeting in Bonn, said campaigners from the Ecosystems Climate Alliance (ECA) today.

After a week of international negotiations aimed at reaching a final agreement in Copenhagen at the end of the year, the text coming out of Bonn gives no assurance that the tropical forests of the world will be saved, despite a strong push from campaigners for explicit language on protecting forests.

“We all know that forests are the lungs of the earth and that protecting remaining intact forests from logging and clearing is vital to tackling climate change, but the claims that governments are serious about this are not borne out by the latest negotiating text for a Copenhagen agreement,” said ECA spokesperson Peg Putt of The Wilderness Society.

“There has been a lot of fanfare about a new mechanism called REDD to get money into developing countries to halt the threat of deforestation and forest degradation.”

“It is alarming that instead of delivering protection as expected, this money could pay for the introduction of logging to untouched primary and peat swamp forests under a peculiar notion that slightly nicer logging will do the job.”

“Peat swamp forests that have been drained or cleared cause huge ongoing emissions and this must be tackled urgently. There are no guarantees of halting the clearing of tropical forests for oil palm plantations either.”

“A strong lobby was mounted in Bonn to get the forests aspects of these international negotiations back on track, but the revised text released in the closing stages failed to put in the vital provisions.”

“We are blowing the whistle on the lack of political will to tackle the 25-30% of annual global carbon dioxide emissions and the loss of diverse forest species and homes of indigenous peoples that will continue if the governments of the world don’t do a lot better,” Ms Putt concluded.

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- Global Witness, The Wilderness Society, Humane Society International and Wetlands International are each members of the Ecosystems Climate Alliance.
 - The Ecosystems Climate Alliance (ECA) is an alliance of environment and social NGOs committed to keeping natural terrestrial ecosystems intact and their carbon out of the atmosphere, in an equitable and transparent way that respects the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. ECA recognises that avoiding emissions of terrestrial carbon stored in the soils and biomass of forests, peatlands and wetlands represents the largest potential single opportunity for cost-effective greenhouse gas mitigation. ECA advocates climate, forest and land use policies to give strong, equitable, transparent and positive incentives free of perversities for avoiding the degradation of terrestrial carbon stores and for rehabilitating degraded land, supported by effective forest governance, robust monitoring and demand-side policies to ensure meaningful outcomes.