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### **Forest Management Threatens to Undermine Climate Agreement**

*Last Chance on REDD; LULUCF Loophole Hiding Up to Two Percent of Annex One Emissions Targets*

**Copenhagen** – Rather than being one of the solutions, negotiations at the Copenhagen climate talks on forest management, called REDD and LULUCF, are threatening to create loopholes that will destroy the integrity of any overall agreement. LULUCF, which sets the rules for land use, land-use change and forestry in the Kyoto Protocol, has become a means for developed countries to hide greenhouse gas emissions from forest management and undermine the accuracy of their emissions reduction targets. In fact, under the currently proposed LULUCF rules, around two percent of all developed country emissions could go unaccounted.

If the current LULUCF approach is adopted then very large real increases in emissions occurring from forest management will simply disappear from the accounts. The effect of this on overall Annex 1 (developed countries who are parties to the Kyoto Protocol) emissions compared to 1990 is that approximately two percent of total emissions disappear. If a reference level proposed by Switzerland based on reported emissions occurring in the period 2001 - 2005 were used, however, the percentage of unaccounted for emissions almost doubles to around four percent.

“Developed countries are trying every trick in the book to preserve business as usual greenhouse gas emissions,” said Sean Cadman of the Wilderness Society. “How can we expect developing countries to accurately account for emissions from land use change and deforestation if developed countries continue to shamelessly game the system?”

Meanwhile, negotiations starting today on SBSTA (Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice) text prepared in June threatens to roll back elements of the subsequent six months of negotiation work on REDD, the part of the proposed new climate treaty intended to reduce the 20 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and degradation of tropical forests. SBSTA provides technical guidance to the climate change talks, but its references to REDD, last discussed in June at the Bonn talks, in some respects have been surpassed by the REDD text. In effect, the negotiations concerning REDD are occurring on two different tracks. Merging the two risks losing important environmental, social and cultural safeguards that are necessary to make REDD work on the ground.

Particularly concerning is a lack of language in the SBSTA text concerning indigenous peoples’ rights, an area where REDD has made significant progress since June. Additionally, the SBSTA text lacks adequate forest definitions and fails to differentiate plantations from natural forests, which is problematic as SBSTA is the only body capable of developing such definitional language. On the other hand, SBSTA does contain some text that is better than the current REDD text. A mandate for independent review of monitoring systems also needs to be retained.

“If a country is supposed to protect indigenous peoples’ rights and other important safeguards, how can we be sure that it actually does?” said Davyth Stewart of Global Witness. “SBSTA’s entire purpose is to provide technical advice on how best to ensure that REDD will work on the ground. The goalposts for REDD have moved since June, and SBSTA needs to catch up if it’s going to be able to do it’s job.”

Even if SBSTA text and current REDD text are successfully merged, additional work will need to be done to achieve a workable REDD treaty. Important concerns, including measures addressing the underlying drivers of deforestation and explicit text demanding the protection of forests appear nowhere in any version of the text.

On Wednesday the REDD contact group is intending to settle the Scope, Safeguards and Phases sections of the text and to resolve the rest of the text on Thursday, with full decision on REDD due Friday. This means very limited time to settle unresolved issues, incorporate missing text, and correct loopholes and perversities that could yield a disastrous REDD agreement.

“This is our last chance on REDD,” said Andrea Johnson of Environmental Investigation Agency. “If we don’t get adequate safeguards in now, including explicit language on forest protection, obligations for all parties to address the causes of deforestation and forest degradation, and the inclusion of comprehensive and independent monitoring, REDD will be a failure on the ground.”

Forest management is a popular but controversial part of the climate change treaty. Worldwide, the destruction of forests and forest soils accounts for 20 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Conversely, standing forests absorb almost 15 percent of atmospheric carbon, creating a double whammy for the climate when forests are destroyed. Accounting for emissions or absorptions from living ecosystems is inherently difficult, making the rules and baselines particularly important. REDD and LULUCF could be important solutions for forest protection and for the climate, but strong safeguards must be in place.

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The Ecosystems Climate Alliance (ECA) ([www.ecosystemsclimate.org](http://www.ecosystemsclimate.org)) 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 comprises Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), Global Witness, Humane Society International, Rainforest Action Network, Rainforest Foundation Norway, The Rainforest Foundation U.K., Wetlands International and The Wilderness Society, Nepenthes, and the Australian Orangutan Project.