

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A new global social and environmental standard for REDD+ programs

First initiative to develop REDD standards through global public consultation process

Copenhagen, Denmark (December 9, 2009) - Failing to put the interests and rights of people first will undermine efforts to reduce carbon emissions from deforestation and squander the real opportunity that exists for these efforts to also contribute to poverty reduction and forest conservation goals. A new set of global standards released at the Copenhagen climate change conference today directly tackles this concern.

Framed around eight fundamental principles, these standards provide countries with a way of demonstrating the social and environmental benefits of their REDD programs to both their own citizens and the wider international community. At the same time they provide safeguards against the potential negative social and environmental impacts of REDD that are of such great concern to Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent peoples.

This REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards Initiative is unique in the way that it is developing global standards that can be applied across all countries implementing REDD, in using a global public consultation process, and in the way that the governments and civil societies of REDD countries are at the forefront of the initiative.

In the case of Ecuador, after over a year of implementing a domestic policy oriented to provide an incentive to land owners who voluntarily decide to protect their forest, ensuring social benefits is of paramount importance for the Ministry of Environment. One of the main aims of this policy, called Socio Bosque, is to deliver direct economic benefits to Indigenous Peoples and other local communities who participate in Socio Bosque.

“In addition to providing the economic incentive, it is important for the Ministry of Environment to ensure that other social benefits are met, says Marco Chiu Advisor to the Undersecretary of Natural Patrimony in the Ministry of Environment - Ecuador. “Therefore, the REDD+ Social & Environmental Standards represent probably the best opportunity at the moment not only to influence future policies on REDD but also to check the actual delivery of other social benefits through the implementation of Socio Bosque.”

The REDD+ Social and Environmental Standards can be used by a wide range of agencies involved in implementation of national REDD programs including government agencies, NGOs, grass roots organisations of Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent peoples and financing agencies.

Mr. Bhola Bhattarai, General Secretary of Federation Of Community Forestry Users, Nepal (FECOFUN) said that “REDD should focus on social and environmental issues so the initiative on standards is at the heart of sustainable and equitable community forestry. It is important to strengthen governance, environmental justice and payment for environmental services in REDD and forestry. It is also critical to support safeguarding the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in REDD implementation process at national to local level.”

This global initiative is facilitated by CARE International and the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA).

Joanna Durbin of CCBA said: “Protecting forests to prevent climate change needs the support of the delegates here in Copenhagen, but it also needs to have the support of the people who depend on these forests to survive. These standards have been created through a very inclusive process listening to the concerns of the people at the front-line of REDD in developing countries.”

Phil Franks of CARE said: “many forest peoples have high expectations for REDD – that their crucial role as stewards of much of the world’s natural forest will at last be fully recognised. But there is also real concern that REDD will finance ill-conceived protection measures that will seriously undermine the livelihoods and rights of forest peoples. These risks are particularly significant for Indigenous Peoples, women and other marginalised groups. These standards are a key element of a global effort to minimise these risks and make their hopes a reality”.

Based on input from the first round of public consultation, this newly released version of the standards has been prepared by representatives of diverse stakeholder groups including Indigenous Peoples, community associations, social and environmental NGOs, the private sector and governments from countries where REDD will be implemented. It will go into a second public comment round in January. After this, the standards will be tested in pilot countries, such as Nepal, Ecuador, Tanzania, Brazil and Indonesia starting in 2010.

The standards can be reviewed at www.climate-standards/REDD+

###

For more information or interviews, contact:

Sandra Bulling, bulling@care.de , Mobile#: +45 5311 2644

Katrin Olson, kolson@conservation.org , Mobile#: +1 202 549 3953

Rob McNeil, rmcneil@conservation.org , Mobile#: +1 571 232 0455

Or visit our websites:

CARE:

www.careclimatechange.org

CCBA:

www.climate-standards.org

Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal (FECOFUN)

www.fecofun.org/

Ministry of Environment – Ecuador:

www.ambiente.gov.ec