

## Can the CBD save the forests?

The Hague, April 15, 2002

A new report released today by the Global Forest Coalition details the impact of ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on forests in 21 countries, North and South. The project co-ordinated by Fern<sup>1</sup> reveals that although there is potentially a large role to play for the CBD in the protection and sustainable use of the world's forests, in most countries the implementation of the CBD has only just started. More strategic guidance, a better understanding of all aspects of the CBD –including forest peoples' rights- and more financial resources are needed, to ensure the CBD can play an effective role in sustaining the world's forests.

Berenice Muraille, the project's co-ordinator, states: "*The main problem is that the required Biodiversity Strategies have in most cases not been integrated in the National Forest Programmes or vice versa. The latter often put a strong emphasis on the economic value of the forests to the detriment of biodiversity conservation*"

The 64 page synthesis report presents the first ever overview on the implementation of CBD requirements in relation to forests. It is based on 21 country case studies<sup>2</sup>, all available at [www.fern.org](http://www.fern.org) and [www.wrm.org](http://www.wrm.org). The conclusions centre on a lack of implementation of CBD requirements –including reporting-, a lack of strategic guidance by the CBD to the Parties, a lack of sectoral and cross-sectoral integration, and the often adversarial relations between civil society and governments, and a lack of awareness of the full spectrum of the CBD requirements.

*"There is an amazing lack of awareness of what the CBD requires. To many the CBD's implications for forests relate only to forest conservation, while in fact sustainable use and equitable benefit sharing are the 2 other objectives of the CBD states Miguel Lovera, co-ordinator of the GFC."*

This week Ministers will meet in The Hague to adopt a new work programme on forests, developed by the CBD's technical Committee. The report of the Global Forest Coalition contains clear recommendations for this work programme.

The Global Forest Coalition recommends that Ministers adopt a work programme on forests and a strategic plan that focuses on the integration of biodiversity into other sectors, including the forestry sector. It also calls for better guidance and support to Parties on the development, implementation, and review of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans by:

- Creating a forest biodiversity focal point/helpdesk within the CBD Secretariat to guide and support national implementation of forest-related commitments;
- Creating national-level forest biodiversity working groups to follow-up and monitor the implementation of forest-related commitments at that level;
- Separating national reporting on forests from reporting on large-scale industrial tree plantations. The latter report should include both positive and negative impacts on biological diversity;
- Ensuring effective participation and capacity building of civil society including local environmental NGOs, indigenous peoples and local communities.

The report and 21 country reports will be presented today at the VIth Conference of the Parties of the CBD in The Hague, and will include presentations by a number of the country report authors.

For more details, contact:

\*Berenice Muraille, project co-ordinator, Fern, GSM: +32 497 432503

\* Miguel Lovera, co-ordinator GFC, tel: +31 206140264

\* Saskia Ozinga, Director Fern, tel: + 44-1608-652895/811398

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<sup>1</sup> [www.fern.org](http://www.fern.org)

<sup>2</sup> Countries include: Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia, Brazil; Canada, Cameroon; Chile, Colombia, Czech Republic, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Papua New Guinea,