

## **JOINT STATEMENT ON COLLABORATION TO PROMOTE FOREST CONSERVATION, CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

*(Ministry of Climate and Environment, Norway and Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Colombia – 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2015.)*

This year, world leaders address three issues of profound importance to our common future. In Addis Abeba in July, we shall contemplate how Finance for Development can most effectively be secured and deployed. In New York City in September, we will agree on the new Sustainable Development Goals. Finally, in Paris in December, we shall decide upon a new global, legally binding agreement to deal with climate change.

Colombia and Norway are committed - to achieve ambitious outcomes in all three of these processes. Moreover, we intend to work closely going forward to contribute to such outcomes – together and in the broader global context.

At the heart of our work will be an effort to drastically reduce tropical deforestation. The world's tropical forests are essential to the well-being of our planet. They are the home of as much as 80% of the world's terrestrial biodiversity, and provide environmental services for billions of people around the world by regulating weather and water, providing food, fuel and sustenance. In addition to these essential benefits, tropical forests have enormous carbon stocks that have to be protected to avoid dangerous climate change. Reducing forest emissions in the tropics has been identified as a win-win climate change mitigation option, whereby reducing emissions many other environmental, economic and social benefits are achieved.

In Colombia, true treasures of biodiversity are still intact, and forests are the home of indigenous peoples and afro-colombian communities with invaluable cultural heritage.

However, a growing and increasingly affluent global population is demanding ever greater amounts of food, feed, fuel and goods that put pressure on tropical forests. Even so, it is our conviction that the world's remaining tropical forests can be saved, if the right choices are made. Recognizing current challenges, sustainable practices of agriculture and cattle ranching need to be adopted, best practices for sustainable infrastructure development and for industrial and mining production need to be implemented, spatial planning practices improved, land tenure clarified, and agricultural productivity increased – not least to the benefit of local communities, all while respecting human rights. This will allow for the production of the goods that the world will need and the improvement of living standards of forest countries through a low carbon development model.

In the New York Declaration on Forests coming out of the UN Climate Summit in September last year, countries, subnational governments, civil society organizations, indigenous peoples organizations and numerous private sector companies committed to ambitious goals to reduce and eventually halt natural forest loss globally, and to scale up land restoration worldwide

These commitments are important, indeed essential, to progress. However, we will only achieve our goals, at the desired speed and scale, if national and international partnerships are created to support transformational change at the country level. A number of developing forest countries are already heading in this direction, including on the basis of the Lima Challenge, of which Colombia was a leader. We applaud tropical forest countries that take on ambitious unilateral actions to combat deforestation, while signaling the willingness and desire to do more if support is available from developed countries.

Tropical forest countries must lead – their vision of their own deforestation free development must always be at the core. However, they must be supported in this choice by partner countries, while seeking the active involvement of the private sector and ensuring effective participation by civil society, indigenous peoples and local communities. We commit to ensuring that the rights and proposals of indigenous, forest dependent and local communities are respected in accordance with Colombian legislation and international law, noting that Colombia has ratified ILO Convention 169 on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by Law 21/1991.

Colombia and Norway are moving forward, jointly with Germany and the United Kingdom, to complete development of a partnership based on Colombia's "Amazon Vision Programme", which is an important part of Colombia's National Development Plan (2014-18). The Amazon Vision Programme will be one of the first low carbon and low deforestation development models for the Amazon Region, and will be based on strong cross-sectoral ownership, broad consultations and the full and effective participation of all relevant stakeholders in the region.

Today Norway and Colombia announce their intention to work towards an even higher level of ambition for their partnership, advancing climate change mitigation, adaptation and support for sustainable development. Based on Colombia's commitment to low carbon development and green growth as stated in its National Development Plan (2014-18), its national goal of reducing deforestation to 90,000 ha/year by 2018, and relevant UNFCCC agreements, we will significantly increase our joint ambitions and commitments. The partnership will mainly be pay-for-performance, emphasizing payments based on verified emission reductions. It will also, during the first few years, include investment financing to reduce deforestation, taking into account the challenges posed by national circumstances.

As part of this collaboration, Norway will provide significant support for Colombia's ambitious goal of zero net deforestation in the Amazon by 2020, in close partnership with Germany, contributing funds additional to pledges Norway has already made, with the aim to contribute to further reductions in deforestation while fostering sustainable development.

We will make it a priority to encourage and facilitate the implementation of voluntary commitments by the private sector, indigenous peoples groups, and local communities on reducing deforestation, increasing restoration, promoting sustainable agriculture for deforestation-free production as well as preserving and enhancing livelihoods.

Looking beyond to the period after 2020, when the new climate regime takes hold, it is the desire of Colombia and Norway to pursue even more ambitious global action on tropical forest mitigation, and work to strengthen their partnership on this basis.

Norway submitted its INDC in March this year, committing to a 40% reduction target below 1990 levels by 2030, with an intention to deliver the commitment collectively with the EU. In addition, if it can contribute to a global, ambitious climate agreement in Paris, Norway would be willing to take on additional commitments in excess of 40 per cent through possible flexible mechanisms under the UNFCCC. Norway provides five hundred million dollars annually to efforts to protect rainforests. It will maintain those contributions at least at this level through 2020, and will consider scaling up those contributions if others do the same. We intend to continue our contributions to rainforest protection also after 2020. It is also the declared policy of Norway to aspire to carbon neutrality by 2050.

Colombia will submit its INDC by August this year, showing considerable unilateral efforts to reduce its projected greenhouse gas emissions at the national level. Colombia's INDC will also indicate the

additional emissions reductions that could be reached in the spirit of the Lima Challenge, if support is declared from partner countries. Agricultural and land use related emissions, including deforestation, constitute more than 50% of Colombia's emissions, so any efforts made in this sector make a great impact.

Colombia and Norway aim to launch this partnership no later than at COP 21, abiding by the provisions, methodologies and safeguards of the UNFCCC including the Warsaw Framework for REDD+.

Both of our countries call for a climate deal in Paris, to recognize REDD+ as a cooperative arrangement that can increase the ambition of the treaty. We encourage developing countries to launch their commitments in spirit of Lima Challenge and quantify not only how much they can do on their own, but also how much more they can do with international financial support to achieve the goals under the New York Declaration. We encourage developed countries to respond to these countries' ambitions, through significantly increased, sustainable, and predictable financial incentives, in line with relevant decisions under the UNFCCC and the New York Declaration on Forests and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

Colombia and Norway look forward to working together to achieve our goals. We are confident the outcomes of our partnership will both promote sustainable development and be an essential contribution to the global response to climate change.