

# IN CANCUN, WORLD LEADERS CALL FOR QUICK ACTION ON FORESTS

## *UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon Calls for Action on REDD+ at Cancun; Walmart Chairman Announces Sustainable Palm Oil Initiative for Private Label Products*

CANCUN - Major world leaders gathered today at an event sponsored by non-profit Avoided Deforestation Partners to call on the global community to work towards a speedy end to deforestation, a major source of global CO2 emissions and driver of climate change.

“The time for global action to protect forests is now,” said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. “Developing countries are willing to lead. Let’s hope they receive appropriate financial support.”

Negotiations on forest protection, or Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+), are seen as one of the brightest hopes for a breakthrough at the Cancun negotiations on a global climate agreement.

“An agreement on forests is very much within reach here in Cancún,” said Avoided Deforestation Partners founder Jeffrey Horowitz, the event’s host. “We must not let any one nation be allowed to hold forest protection hostage to other goals.”

“A formal decision on REDD+ in Cancun would help us and developing countries to scale up incentives for forest conservation, including to protect wildlife,” Zoellick added. “Yet we need in any event to proceed with interested parties -- developing and developed countries, indigenous peoples, conservation groups, financiers such as the World Bank -- because REDD+ is a winner: it's key to climate change mitigation and is one of the best chances to save our tropical forests and the people and animals that depend on them.”

In a panel with Conservation International CEO Peter Seligmann and UN Environment Programme Director Achim Steiner, Walmart Chairman Rob Walton said his company would take action to improve the environmental performance of its supply chain.

“Walmart has made a commitment to sustainably source palm oil on private label products in the next three years, and we will only source Brazilian beef from sustainably sourced farms,” Walton said.

“Protecting the world’s forests is absolutely crucial to addressing the issue of climate change,” said Peter Seligmann, CEO, Chairman and Founder of Conservation International. “Fortunately, business leaders like Walmart and Starbucks are not waiting for a global policy agreement and are taking bold actions now for establishing sustainable supply chains that will significantly reduce tropical deforestation.”

The Avoided Deforestation Partners event focused on New Pathways and Partnership to advance REDD+, including innovative government-to-government efforts to protect forests. Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg spoke about his government’s groundbreaking financing of large-scale deforestation reductions in Brazil and Indonesia.

“Significant, lasting, global REDD+ results can best be achieved through the adoption of a UN agreement that puts a value on forest carbon. Considerable progress has been made in the negotiations, and the parties came very close to reaching agreement on a REDD+ mechanism at the climate change summit in Copenhagen in December last year,” Stoltenberg said. “I remain hopeful that Cancún will deliver a decision on REDD+ so we can rapidly scale up our efforts to substantially reduce global deforestation.”

Guyana President Bharratt Jagdeo praised Norway for its major financial commitment to forest protection in Guyana, but called on world leaders to streamline funding for developing countries.

Jagdeo said.

He also called for negotiators in Cancun to send a clear signal to private investors that investment in forest conservation will be credited.

“The only way you have enough money to save forests is by bringing in the private sector,” Jagdeo added.

On the same panel, moderated by United Nations Foundation president Tim Wirth, the director of the Indonesian president’s delivery unit for REDD, Kuntoro Mangkusubroto, said he hoped his country’s forest conservation partnership with Norway could be expanded to other countries.

“This is the way we have to approach the climate change problem,” Dr. Kuntoro said. “This is a transformation process for Indonesia.”

Open Society Foundations founder George Soros said protecting peatlands in Indonesia should be one of the world’s top priorities for conservation.

Joe Aldy, a White House special assistant for energy and environment to U.S. President Barack Obama, said a deal at Cancún is within reach

“We think we see a basis for a successful outcome with a balanced package,” in Cancun, Aldy said. “We’re optimistic that we can get REDD+ as part of a final deal. On REDD+, the international community has worked very well together to come to an agreement that makes sense. It’s a pleasure to be with panelists who share the President’s conviction that we need to reduce deforestation as part of the solution to climate change,” Aldy added.

In a panel moderated by Time Magazine’s Bryan Walsh, leaders discussed progress by states and provinces working across international borders to protect tropical forests.

“I’m thrilled that California will play a leadership role in bringing REDD+ offsets into compliance markets,” said Linda Adams, California Secretary for Environmental Protection. “This is a forward-thinking way to address climate change through a market-based approach and at the same time preserve vital forest resources.”

“If we are successful, this project will open possibilities for other Mexican states,” said Juan Sabines Guerrero, Governor of Chiapas State in Mexico, about their partnership with California’s carbon market.

“The ability to invest in forest protection under California’s climate law would allow us to reduce global emissions while providing affordable power to our customers,” said Steve Kline, Vice President, PG&E Corporation.

“Loss of these forests will mean the loss of the capacity of these forests to regulate climate and rainfall patterns, and this directly affects agriculture and can easily cause food insecurity,” said Wangari Maathai, founder of the Green Belt Movement, Congo Basin Goodwill Ambassador and 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner. “It is very important for us to teach the world the value of forests. I hope all our efforts will be blessed by action taking us much further than we walked in Copenhagen.”

“We need a forest protection approach that combines poverty reduction, sustainable forest management by local communities, and the conservation of species,” said Jane Goodall. “If forest protection programs, with proper regulatory mechanisms, can be developed around the world in biodiversity-rich areas, then indeed we can have hope for the future.”

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