

Joint [Statement]/[Communiqué]/[Declaration] of the Summit of Heads of State and Government [from the Tropical Forest Ecosystems of Africa, Asia and South America] on Tropical Forests Ecosystems

Brazzaville, Congo, 3 June 2011

Preamble:

Aware that forests cover 31% of the world's land area, contain more than half of all terrestrial biodiversity and provide vital global and local services and goods that underpin human wellbeing.

Recognizing that forests contribute to the livelihoods of more than one and a half billion people and that forests function as a cross-sectoral service utility through carbon sequestration and storage, water and pollination services for food production and provision of sustainable construction material and renewable energy, amongst others.

Cognizant of the crucial importance of the world's largest tropical forests: the Amazon and the Congo basin, together with the tropical forests of Southeast Asia, which together harbor the bulk of remaining forest biodiversity and carbon stocks thus being key in combating climate change and conserving global biodiversity.

Noting that forests hold an enormous socio-economic potential if managed sustainably and are instrumental in attaining national economic growth and development goals and acknowledging that forests are the ancestral home of over 300 million forest people, including indigenous peoples, and are at the centre of conserving cultural heritage, maintaining a way of life and knowledge that has been built up over millennia.

Further recalling the UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/62/98 which states "Sustainable forest management as a dynamic and evolving concept aims to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental value of all types of forests, for the benefit of present and future generations."

Building on the spirit of the Earth Summit (1992) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002), the International Year of Forests (2011) and the growing global momentum around forests, notably generated respectively from the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change:

Countries attending this Summit seek to cooperate with each other and the rest of the world in finding solutions and resources to improve management of these globally vital forest resources.

1. The Heads of State and Government from the countries of the tropical forests of the Amazon, Congo basin and Southeast Asia: [H.E. President xxxxxxxxxxxx, H.E. President xxxxxxxx, Prime Minister xxxxxxxx, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs/Forests] from xxxxxxxx, held a Summit in Brazzaville on 3 June, 2011 to discuss major issues affecting forests.
2. The Summit was also attended by the following special observers: xxxxxxxxxxxx
3. The Heads of State and Government discussed and exchanged views on the current situation and future prospects for cooperation on tropical forests as well as concrete steps for strengthening cooperation amongst their countries in the spirit of mutual interest.
4. The Heads of State and Government acknowledged the multiple opportunities presented by forests to contribute to the achievement of national development objectives as well as the objectives of international and regional agreements including the Millennium Development Goals.
5. The Heads of States and Government agreed to maintain close consultations and promote common interest at various international and regional fora related to forests, biological diversity, climate change, and other international arrangements including the forthcoming Seventeenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change Convention.
6. The Heads of State and Government recognized the positive momentum being built around the world's forests and underlined the importance of forests being included as a key focus area at the Rio +20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in June 2012 in Brazil based on a continued global partnership amongst nations, multilateral-organizations and civil society actors.
7. The Heads of State and Government underlined the complexities and linkages between deforestation and forest degradation and socio-economic challenges such as livelihoods and poverty reduction and in this regard recommended tackling underlying drivers of deforestation and removing perverse incentives that encourage destructive patterns of forest misuse and exploitation.
8. The Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their commitment to put in place enabling conditions for the transformation of the forest sector including the development of forest investment plans to realise the opportunities that forests can provide towards the achievement of the green economy in their countries.
9. The Heads of State and Governments emphasized the need for adequate and reliable financing to support developing countries' forest-related commitments and obligations and further called for new public-private-civil society and multilateral partnerships to facilitate investments in an equitable and development-oriented manner for the strengthening of the forest related sectors in their countries.
10. The Head of State and Government recognized the catalytic role REDD+ (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries) and related finance can play in transitioning towards a green economy and welcomed development partners and private sector investments in REDD+.
11. The Heads of State and Governments share a vision of a cooperation that holistically incorporates economic, environment, and socio-cultural aspects, with a view to promoting harmonious and sustainable development of their respective forests.
12. The Heads of States and Government agreed to take concrete steps to promote dialogue and cooperation among their countries. In this regard, Heads of States and Government agreed that

their relevant Ministers should meet and prepare an action plan on sustainable management of forests and related resource use. The Heads of State and Government further agreed that the action plan will place special emphasis, among others, on the following:

- a) advocating for conservation, sustainable management and rehabilitation and restoration of tropical forests ecosystems and their biodiversity,
- b) promoting sustainable trade in forest [services and] products, including forest genetic resources,
- c) strengthening of forest governance including access and benefit sharing; forest law, environmental governance and trade,
- d) improving the management of forest ecosystems and protected areas and related conservation measures,
- e) promoting and supporting global, regional, sub-regional, national and sub-national programmes on sustainable management of tropical forest and placing people at the centre and recognize the important and differentiated role that women play in conserving and managing forest resources,
- f) putting in place measures to promote forest-based investment throughout the tropics, by governments, development partners and the private sector,
- g) generating knowledge (e.g., valuation of ecosystem services) and sharing of environmentally-sound technologies and approaches (e.g., adaptation, forest assessments, reduced impact logging, bioenergy and participatory development approaches),
- h) promoting efficient and sustainable use of forest-related products and energy resources, and
- i) developing cross-sectoral forest actions for poverty reduction, increased food security and biodiversity conservation.

13. The Heads of States and Government, in this regard, reiterated the important role of the three regional organizations: the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC), in supporting governments to achieve national sustainable development objectives, and international and regional forest-related commitments. Furthermore, the Heads of States and Government [recommended]/[agreed] that a cooperation agreement between the three regional organizations should be developed, for signature [at the Rio+20 meeting in 2012], with the aim to facilitate South-South and North-South-Cooperation in support of the action plan.

14. The Heads of State and Government decided to hold their next Summit in conjunction with [the Rio+20 meeting in 2012] and to review progress in cooperation. The Heads of State and Government expressed their warm thanks for the hospitality of the people and Head of State of the Republic of Congo, His Excellency Denis Sassou Nguesso for hosting this Brazzaville Forest Summit.

Brazzaville, Congo 3 June 2011