



Joint Declaration of the Heads of State and Government at the Occasion of the First Summit on Tropical Forest Ecosystems of Amazonia and Congo Basins and South East Asia

Brazzaville, 3 June 2011



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Preamble:

The Heads of State and Government and the representatives from the countriesⁱ of the tropical forests of the Amazon basin, Congo basin and Southeast Asia, as well as representatives of the United Nations system held a Summit in Brazzaville on 3 June, 2011 to discuss major issues affecting forests.

The Heads of State and Government:

- i. 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,
- ii. 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,
- iii. Acknowledging the sovereign rights of the countries of origin over their natural resources,
- iv. Further acknowledging that fair and equitable sharing of the economic value of ecosystems and biodiversity with countries of origin is a key incentive for the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components,
- v. Cognizant of the crucial importance of the world's largest tropical forests: the Amazon and the Congo basin, together with those of the tropical forests of Southeast Asia, which together harbor the bulk of remaining forest biodiversity, carbon stocks and potential for carbon sequestration thus being key in combating climate change, conserving global biodiversity and combating desertification,
- vi. Cognizant of the importance of women in the management and conservation of tropical forests as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of any Form of Discrimination Against Women which recommended that women should benefit from the products linked to the use of natural resources,

- vii. Considering the threats on the ecosystems of the three basins due to anthropogenic pressure,
- viii. Noting that forests hold an enormous environment and 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 local communities, and are at the centre of conserving cultural heritage, maintaining a way of life and knowledge that has been built up over millennia,
- ix. 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,
- x. Building on the spirit of the Earth Summit (1992), World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002), the International Year of Forests (2011), The Organisation of the Amazon Treaty (1998), the Yaoundé Summit and Declaration (1999), the Joint Statement of the Tropical Rainforest Countries’ Leaders New York (2007), and the growing global momentum around forests, notably generated respectively from the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992___), the Framework Convention on Climate Change (199...), the United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification (2004), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (2007), and the new International Tropical Timber Agreement,
- xi. Having discussed and exchanged views on the current situation and future prospects for cooperation on tropical forests as well as concrete steps for strengthening cooperation at global level and amongst their countries in the spirit of mutual interest,
- xii. Acknowledging the multiple opportunities presented by forests to contribute to the achievement of national sustainable development objectives as well as the objectives of international and regional agreements,
- xiii. Seeking 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,

Declare that they:

1. Maintain close consultations and promote common interest at various multilateral and regional fora related to forests, biological diversity and climate change.
2. Welcome the growing sensitization around the world's forests and underline the need for 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, civil society, private sector actors and any other partnerships.
3. Recognise the linkages between deforestation and forest degradation and socio-economic challenges such as livelihoods and poverty reduction and in this regard recommend tackling underlying drivers of deforestation and removing perverse incentives that encourage destructive patterns of forest misuse and exploitation.
4. Affirm their commitment to put in place enabling mechanisms that would encourage development 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 and low carbon economic development in the context of sustainable development and poverty reduction in their countries.
5. Recognise the need for adequate, reliable and sustainable financing to allow their countries to meet the challenges of sustainable forest management and forest-related commitments and further recommend 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.
6. Call for support from the international community in their countries' efforts to combat desertification.
7. Recognize the need to further promote the catalytic role of REDD+¹ and related finance can play in achieving sustainable development and welcome development partners and private sector investments in the implementation of the REDD+ mechanism.
8. Agree to adopt concrete steps to promote dialogue and cooperation among their countries. They mandate their relevant Ministers to meet and prepare an action plan on cooperation on sustainable management of forests and related resource use.

¹ 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

9. Recognise the need for developing a platform to promote the cooperation between the countries of the three tropical forest basins. In this regard, they mandate the President of the Republic of Congo to facilitate and coordinate the development of the cooperation agreement in consultation with the countries of the three tropical forest basins and relevant regional organizations (ACTO, ASEAN and COMIFAC).
10. Agree that the Bureau of the Brazzaville Summit work together with South Africa (host of UNFCCC COP 17) and Brazil (host of Rio+20 Summit) and in the spirit of inclusiveness and re-enforced cooperation to finalise the draft cooperation agreement, with the aim of its adoption at the Rio+20 Summit at the latest. In this regard, consultations will be held, inter alia, at the 66th session of the United Nations General Assembly and the seventeenth conference of the Parties of UNFCCC.
11. Decide to hold a Summit in conjunction with the Rio+20 Summit in 2012 in order to review progress made since the Brazzaville Summit.
12. Decide to nominate the President of Guyana, H.E. Mr Bharrat Jagdeo as Goodwill Ambassador for the forests of the Amazon Basin, the Congo Basin and Southeast Asia.
13. Express their warm thanks to the people of Congo and to the President of the Republic of Congo, His Excellency Denis Sassou-Nguesso, for the hospitality and warm welcome extended to them.

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ⁱ List of countries in annex