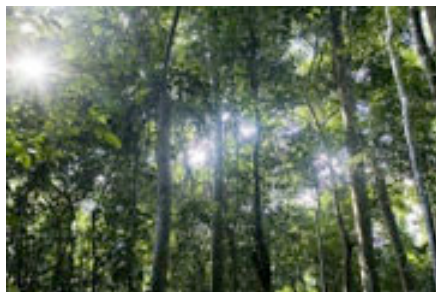


UN Member States reach agreement on financing of sustainable forests



30 October 2009 – United Nations Member States today reached an agreement that sets out the path to financing sustainable forest management, ending nearly two decades of debate on an issue that is becoming more and more critical because of the impact of climate change.

The **UN Forum on Forests**, representing the world's countries, agreed at a meeting at UN Headquarters in New York to establish two initiatives that it says will particularly help poor countries in need of assistance.

An intergovernmental process is being set up to conduct in-depth analysis of all forms of forest financing over the next four years and a separate process will help countries mobilize funding so they can protect their forests.

More than 1.6 billion people across the globe are estimated to be dependent on forests for subsistence living or employment, according to the World Bank, and trade in forest products is thought to represent almost 4 per cent of global trade in all commodities.

But as many as 13 million hectares are lost each year because of deforestation, threatening biodiversity and reducing the protection offered by forests against the ravages of greenhouse gas emissions.

Jan McAlpine, Director of the Secretariat of the UN Forum on Forests, said the new initiatives – the result of negotiations that date back to the landmark Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 – will lead to innovative solutions because they will bring together the broadest possible cross-section, including governments, donors and the private sector.

"We must learn together, so that we may work together," Ms. McAlpine said.

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