



With breaking stories and
newswire products from

UN NEWS CENTRE



Upcoming UN-backed summit to focus on sustainable management of rainforests



Jan McAlpine, Director of the UN Forum on Forests

13 April 2011 – Top officials from more than 35 nations covering the world’s three major rainforest regions will gather at a United Nations-backed conference next month to discuss the common challenges faced by these vital ecosystems that support more than a billion people.

The aim of the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Amazon, Congo, and Borneo-Mekong Forest Basins is to achieve a plan for the sustainable management of forest ecosystems in the three basins.

The four-day meeting, which will be held in Brazzaville, the capital of the Republic of Congo, beginning on 31 May, is also part of celebrations of the [International Year of Forests \(2011\)](#).

The Amazon Basin of South America, the Congo Basin in Central Africa, and the Borneo-Mekong Basin in South-East Asia make up 80 per cent of the world’s rainforests and contain two thirds of its biodiversity.

“Every one of us, all 7 billion people on Earth, has our physical, economic and spiritual health tied to the health of our forest ecosystems,” said Jan McAlpine, Director of the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat. “Throughout Forests 2011, we will celebrate this intricate, interdependent relationship between forests and people.”

Forest loss is accelerating at a rapid pace across much of the three basins, and forest degradation and destruction now account for 20 per cent of the greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere.

Ms. McAlpine noted at a news conference in New York that the discussions and outcomes of the summit will also feed into the preparations for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012.

Also addressing the briefing, Henri Djombo, Minister of Sustainable Development, Forestry and Environment of the Republic of the Congo, said it was hoped that the summit will achieve “a treaty or an agreement” for the sustainable management of the ecosystems of the three regions.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[UN launches year-long celebration of vital role of world's forests](#)