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Center for International Forestry Research  
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## Cancún climate agreement is a win for the climate and world's forests

**BOGOR, Indonesia (14 December 2010)** \_ An agreement at the U.N. climate talks in Mexico to move ahead with REDD+ is a boon for efforts to cut carbon emissions, slow the rate of deforestation, promote biodiversity and combat poverty.

REDD+ (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation) aims to reward developing nations for protecting, restoring and sustainably managing forests. It offers one of the cheapest options for cutting global greenhouse gases.

"This is a positive outcome from the talks and sends an important signal to REDD+ proponents to move forward," said Frances Seymour, Director General of the [Center for International Forestry Research \(CIFOR\)](#). "The agreement will likely lead to scaling up REDD+ as an officially recognized and politically accepted method of curbing carbon emissions, and brings with it many opportunities for co-benefits."

The agreement on REDD+ was part of a package of decisions reached at the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC COP16) in Cancún, Mexico to move forward on addressing climate change. It came just days after more than 1,500 people gathered on the sidelines of the conference for [Forest Day 4](#) to discuss how to accelerate the integration of forests into climate mitigation and adaptation strategies.

In his opening speech at Forest Day, Mexican President Felipe Calderon Hinojosa stated that "...it's time for all of us to push, and push hard for the full incorporation of REDD+ into a long-term international climate change agreement." Other speakers at Forest Day, which is organized by CIFOR and co-hosted by members of the [Collaborative Partnership on Forests](#), identified a lack of a global agreement as a major barrier to further progress on REDD+ and said that it was time to act.

About US\$4.5 billion has been promised so far, much of it by Norway in bilateral agreements, to get REDD+ off the ground. Governments of a number of forest-rich countries, including CIFOR's host country, Indonesia, have made bold commitments to reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation.

Participants at Forest Day recognized that there is broad consensus that well-designed REDD+ initiatives can conserve biodiversity and ecosystem services, improve local livelihoods, promote adaptation, and provide incentives to reform forest governance. CIFOR is coordinating a global comparative study on the first

generation of REDD+ initiatives at local and national levels to determine the conditions under which such initiatives can be effective, efficient, and equitable.

The conference's host country, Mexico, and co-host of Forest Day 4, offers a wealth of examples demonstrating how community management of forests can simultaneously serve rights, livelihoods, and sustainability objectives.

A well-implemented REDD+ agreement with adequate financing and capacity-building can help capture such opportunities. Still, there are legitimate concerns about possible risks to vulnerable human and ecological communities. A REDD+ agreement with robust safeguards is increasingly considered the best way to manage those risks.

The Cancun agreement on REDD+ is expected to increase funding to support REDD+ readiness and invigorate donor pledges for REDD+, but negotiators held off on the controversial introduction of a role for carbon markets.

Dr. Louis Verchot, CIFOR's principal climate change scientist, welcomed the COP16 agreement on REDD+, but cautioned that the world does not now have the luxury of waiting several more years for the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) to agree on the details of so-called reference emissions levels and carbon accounting rules. Reference emission levels refer to the benchmarks against which progress in emissions reductions will be measured in a participating country. SBSTA's task is to provide the COP with advice on scientific, technological and methodological matters, and works to improve the guidelines for preparing national emission inventories.

"If SBSTA were to set standards of performance rather than prescribe specific methods, we would be able to proceed quickly through existing operational processes to promote innovation and learning," Dr. Verchot said. "The risk of no action is surely greater than the risks of moving ahead."

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The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) advances human wellbeing, environmental conservation and equity by conducting research to inform policies and practices that affect forests in developing countries. CIFOR helps ensure that decision-making that affects forests is based on solid science and principles of good governance, and reflects the perspectives of developing countries and forest-dependent people. CIFOR is one of 15 centres within the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research.

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