

Joint statement of Colombia, Germany, Norway and the United Kingdom on reducing emissions from deforestation in the Colombian Amazon

As the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report indicates, warming of the climate system is unequivocal and the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has increased to unprecedented levels. This makes the urgency of mitigation action worldwide inescapable.

Finding solutions to climate change will benefit everyone across the planet. We, the governments of Colombia, Germany, Norway and the United Kingdom, recognize that many developing countries are successfully developing low carbon development strategies, as called for in the Cancun Agreements. The maintenance of the world's tropical forests through REDD+ and other strategies should be a key component of these new development models. In this context, we expect important progress in Warsaw to advance REDD+ in the UNFCCC by moving forward with methodological guidance and ways and means for results-based finance.

Germany, Norway and the United Kingdom intend to support the government of Colombia's ambitious goal to reach zero net deforestation in the Amazon by 2020. This ambition was first stated by Colombia at the UNFCCC COP15 in Copenhagen, and reaffirmed at COP16 in Cancun through the projected expansion of protected areas. Since these commitments, Colombia is currently developing a multi-sectoral Low Carbon Development Strategy, a National REDD+ strategy, and a National Plan for Climate Change Adaptation. Colombia's commitment to low carbon development and protected areas expansion as a key strategy, was made clear through the expansion of Serranía de Chiribiquete National Natural Park in August 2013. This protected area in the most biodiverse region within the Amazon rainforest increased from 1.3 million hectares to almost 2.8 million hectares, an area as large as Belgium. Furthermore, Colombia recently registered a decline in national-level deforestation during 2011 and 2012 as compared to 2005 - 2010.

Nonetheless, the Amazon is 40% of Colombia's territory and the country and the people of the Amazon have poverty alleviation and development needs, which must be met. To address these challenges, the Colombian Government, under the leadership of the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, is shaping an ambitious low deforestation vision for the sustainable development of the Colombian Amazon that:

- Promotes land use planning, improved governance and sectoral agreements addressing the drivers of deforestation
- Supports low carbon development alternatives, through public-private partnerships, innovation and sustainable value chains.
- Supports the livelihoods, territories and rights of indigenous peoples in the Amazon, noting that Colombia has ratified ILO Convention 169 on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by Law 21/1991.

Germany, Norway and the United Kingdom see these on-going policy developments as a promising contribution to support global mitigation and sustainable development, one that reflects Colombia's progressive vision to advance international climate policy under the UNFCCC.

Indeed, all four countries have been working closely in 2013 to develop a strong programme to support the goal of zero net deforestation in the Colombian Amazon by 2020. Norway and Germany intend to provide support to Colombia through a results-based payment scheme for emission reductions resulting from reduced gross deforestation in the Amazon. The United Kingdom has funded research into drivers of deforestation in Colombia and intends to support high quality, value for money activities

that generate the greatest benefit by addressing these drivers. Additional partners will be sought over time to complement these initiatives.

The programme will be based on the following elements:

- Design and implementation of a mechanism for a results-based payment scheme, based on robust carbon accounting, reference levels and an MRV framework, aims to be agreed upon during 2014.
- The programme will operate in alignment with the National REDD+ Strategy and its implementation, in the context of a nationally nested approach.
- Colombia will establish a robust reference level in 2014 for the Amazon subnational region and, following UNFCCC provisions, intends for a technical assessment as soon as feasible.
- Colombia will apply safeguards and provide information on how safeguards are addressed and respected in accordance with UNFCCC guidance for REDD+.
- Collaboration across sectors will be promoted to ensure policy coherence, best practices and multisectoral commitment to reducing deforestation.
- A robust financial mechanism will be established taking into account international fiduciary best practices, to ensure transparent tracking and reporting of financial contributions and expenditures.
- Investments on the ground will focus initially on selected Amazon jurisdictions representing the highest levels of deforestation, and would gradually be scaled up to the entire region.
- Investments and benefit sharing targeting local communities and indigenous peoples will take place in the context of inclusive, multi-stakeholder processes, incorporating gender considerations.

The programme will have strong Colombian leadership and national contribution and will be open to other international and national partners.

Ministers of the four countries have emphasized that the aim is to operationalize this programme in 2014, bringing value to Colombia, the entire Amazon and the wider world. Our countries will also continue to work energetically with all other Parties towards an ambitious, global climate change agreement to be signed in Paris 2015 under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, with REDD+ a key element for mitigation ambition.