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Suriname Launches a Bold Plan for a Green Future

Suriname works to build a vision for the future based on the role that its vast and pristine forests can play in tackling the world's climate change crisis.

The nation with more forest per person than any other has today announced an ambitious plan – with the support of Conservation International – to protect that forest in perpetuity, and in doing so improve the lives of its people while contributing to global efforts to combat climate change.

Under Suriname's "Green Vision" the country will pursue environmentally sustainable economic development using anticipated revenue from payments for the carbon stored in its vast forest estate. The plan was unveiled by Suriname today at a side session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting in Barcelona, in collaboration with the French Development Agency (AFD) – a key supporter of the strategy.

The payments – which would help keep Suriname's forest intact while fueling green development and ensuring the well-being of the country's 500,000 people – would come from sources including REDD (Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation), the framework proposed for inclusion in any new global agreement that emerges from the Copenhagen climate meeting in December.

Russ Mittermeier, President of Conservation International said: "Suriname's Green strategy means that the country has recognized the great potential that its forest holds for its own future and for the world. It also means that the country that has the highest percent rain forest cover on Earth should finally be compensated at a significant level for conserving its forests. But this will only be realized if the world's nations agree to moving REDD forward at the UNFCCC meeting in Copenhagen – otherwise Suriname will face continued economic pressure to cut its forests."

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Notes to editors:

Conservation International (CI): Building upon a strong foundation of science, partnership and field demonstration, CI empowers societies to responsibly and sustainably care for nature for the well-being of humanity. With headquarters in Washington, D.C., CI works in more than 40 countries on four continents. For more information about CI, visit www.conservation.org