

**For immediate release: 7 October, 2008**

## **Poverty in the midst of plenty – Congo Basin**

### **Background:**

The Congo Basin is the most intact of the remaining large rainforest areas on earth. Its biodiversity is relatively well conserved. But its people live in poverty, insecurity and misery. Now massive investments are planned in roads, railways, dams, mineral exploitation and agro-industries. How should conservation organizations deal with this imminent transformation of one of the world's richest ecosystems? What sort of scenarios might allow nature to be conserved whilst peoples' lives are improved?

### **Key Issues:**

- *"We cannot oppose development in the Congo Basin – the people have suffered extraordinary hardship in recent decades and now we must help them to enjoy the fruits of the riches that their region contains,"* says **Jeff Sayer, Senior Scientific Advisor for IUCN's Forest Conservation Programme.**

### **Where:**

- Tuesday, October 7, from 16:30-18:00 – Alliance Workshop.

### **Spokespersons:**

- Laurent Somé – WWF Director for Africa and Madagascar
- Alain billand, Researcher CIRAD, France
- Hans-Pieter Schipulle – Chairman of the Congo Basin forest Partnership
- André Kamden – Director of the WWF "Green Heart of Africa" Initiative
- Su Ming – Chinese State Forest Administration
- Jeff Sayer – IUCN, Forest Programme

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### **About IUCN**

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges by supporting scientific research; managing field projects all over the world; and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN, international conventions and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice.

The world's oldest and largest global environmental network, IUCN is a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists and experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 professional staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. IUCN's headquarters are located in Gland, near Geneva, in Switzerland.

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