

**Statement of IUCN – The World Conservation Union**  
**Second Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests**  
**High-Level Ministerial Segment**  
**13 March 2002**

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

IUCN welcomes the opportunity to participate in this ministerial dialogue session with members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. IUCN also welcomes the invitation to become a member of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

IUCN would like to take this opportunity to address some challenges and opportunities with respect to forest conservation and use in the context of repositioning forests on the international agenda.

There has been increasing discussion in recent years about the link between conservation and sustainable livelihoods. Despite the long period of dialogue and the perceived high level of dependence of many people and communities on forests, the linkages between forest conservation and livelihoods remain controversial. Some conservationists have concluded that when one attempts to integrate conservation and development, biodiversity tends to lose out. At the same time, some development thinkers see such integration as an unnecessary distraction from the real challenge at hand – to lift poor people out of poverty – and they argue that the best conservationists have to offer is the option of sustainable poverty.

Balancing conservation and development objectives is a necessary part of repositioning forests in the broader international political agenda. Doing so will address key pillars of the World Summit on

Sustainable Development - combating poverty and maintaining ecosystem integrity.

A degree of honesty and conceptual clarity will be required given the mixed track record in reconciling development and conservation objectives. To start with, those who want to see a workable marriage

between development and conservation must better articulate what a livelihood emphasis means within environmental policy, and vice versa. This will also imply a shift of attention from the myth of win-win – supposing that all parties can get everything they want – to a practical understanding of how land-use trade-offs can be equitably balanced.

The recent progress in promoting forest restoration within an ecosystem context is one example of how land-use trade-offs can be dealt with. IUCN is collaborating with WWF and other partners from inside and outside government to develop and implement an approach that shifts the emphasis from purely re-establishing tree cover on a particular site to ensuring that forests landscapes have the necessary mix of forest goods and services to fulfil both conservation and development objectives. This approach, Forest Landscape Restoration, aims to strike a balance between the ecological, social, and economic requirements for sustainable and equitable resource use, based on the outcomes of an inclusive, land-use negotiation. It operates at a scale where the consequences of trade-offs between land uses can be negotiated, understood and agreed upon by the people most directly affected. The recent International Experts Meeting on Forest Landscape Restoration confirmed that are already promising steps being taken on the ground involving a wide range of stakeholders in such countries as Uganda, Tanzania, Nepal, Vietnam, Costa Rica, Bolivia, Ecuador, Bulgaria and the United Kingdom.

We are also working with a number of experts to further develop this approach, including experts from Argentina, Brazil, Malaysia, Thailand, Canada and the USA, as well as the ITTO, CIFOR and UNEP.

Mr. Chairman, we can go to Johannesburg reiterating what was agreed at Rio or we can go with a positive and concrete agenda that can reposition forests on the international agenda in a way that reconciles conservation and development needs and aspirations.

The partnerships to do this are being formed and will be profiled at Johannesburg. While all of this is encouraging, there is still a need for political leadership on this issue at the international level. IUCN believes those leaders are with us here in the room today and looks forward to hearing from them here and in the WSSD process.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.