



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

The Hon. John Howard MP, Prime Minister of Australia
The Hon. Alexander Downer MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs
The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP, Minister for the Environment and
Water Resources

AUSTRALIA TO LEAD THE WORLD: GLOBAL INITIATIVE ON FORESTS AND CLIMATE

Today the Australian Government launched a *Global Initiative on Forests and Climate*. This represents a material advance in the global effort to tackle climate change and protect the world's forests.

The Australian Government has committed \$200 million to kickstart this world leading initiative that will reduce significantly global greenhouse gas emissions.

Almost 20 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions come from clearing the world's forests – second only to emissions from burning fossil fuels to produce electricity, and more than all of the world's emissions from transport.

Globally, more than 4.4 million trees are removed every day or 1.6 billion trees each year – almost 1 billion of which are not replaced. An area twice the size of Tasmania is currently cleared each year – this is the equivalent of removing around 71,000 football fields of trees every day.

If the world could halve the rate of global deforestation we could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by three billion tonnes a year – more than five times Australia's total annual emissions and about ten times the emissions reductions that will be achieved during the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

Reducing deforestation, planting new forests, and investing in sustainable forest management practice are among the best ways to reduce global emissions now.

Working with both developed and developing countries the Australian Government's \$200 million investment will:

- support new forest planting;
- limit destruction of the world's remaining forests;
- promote sustainable forest management; and

- encourage contributions from other countries.

Specific activities include:

- building developing countries' technical capacity to assess their forest resources;
- putting in place effective regulatory and law enforcement arrangements to protect forests, including through preventing illegal logging; and
- promoting the sustainable use of forest resources and diversifying the economic base of forest-dependent communities.

Since Kyoto negotiations began more than a decade ago, Australia has consistently and strongly argued for effective international action on deforestation as an essential part of the global response to climate change.

Through this initiative we will work with like-minded countries and will be inviting nations such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, Brazil, New Zealand, Japan and Indonesia to join the Initiative. We will also work with international organisations including the World Bank, and businesses, to reduce emissions from deforestation and to sustainably manage the world's forests.

Harnessing our combined resources will make a difference for world forests and the climate.

This Initiative also builds on the almost \$20 billion invested by the Australian Government for the environment over the past 11 years.

The *Global Initiative on Forests and Climate* delivers practical action that will substantially reduce global greenhouse gas emissions.

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(Fact sheet with further information on the initiative is attached).

GLOBAL INITIATIVE ON FORESTS AND CLIMATE: HOW WILL IT WORK

The Australian Government is providing \$200 million for 'Global Initiative on Forests and Climate'. This funding will be used to support projects in selected developing countries (particularly, but not exclusively, in the South-East Asia and Pacific regions) to:

- build technical capacity to assess and monitor forest resources, and to develop national forest management plans;
- put in place effective regulatory and law enforcement arrangements to protect forests, including through preventing illegal logging;
- promote the sustainable use of forest resources and diversify the economic base of forest-dependent communities;
- support practical research into the drivers of deforestation;
- encourage reforestation of degraded forest areas;
- develop and deploy the technology and systems needed to help developing countries monitor and produce robust assessments of their forest resources;
- pilot approaches to providing real financial incentives to countries and communities to encourage sustainable use of forests and reduce destruction of forests.

These projects will be developed in cooperation with regional countries and relevant international organisations including the World Bank. They will reflect the priorities of the countries concerned, while seeking to achieve the maximum possible benefit for forest management and the global climate.

In relation to the provision of incentives to developing countries for sustainable forestry practices and reducing net forest loss, we expect to explore a range of approaches that reflect the differing needs and circumstances of different countries. However, a common element of any incentives is that they will be provided only on the achievement of pre-agreed forest sustainability milestones (e.g. agreed reductions in national deforestation rates). Measurement of achievement of these milestones will be underpinned by the investment in the technology and systems to robustly monitor forest resources.

Effectively tackling the issue of global deforestation will require a huge investment from governments and businesses around the world. The Australian Government will therefore be working closely with governments and businesses from other developed countries to build support for and help in the delivery of this global initiative, so that we can harness the collective effort required.

The contributions that other countries may make will obviously be a matter for them, but we will be talking to key countries about the initiative over the next few weeks. Those discussions will also address the most effective means for countries to mutually identify areas and projects for joint activity, and how best to form clusters of partners to undertake those activities.

As a soon as we have a good initial picture of the views of key countries and others, we will decide how best to proceed with this initiative, including through engaging key Ministers from these countries.

Planning and delivery of the Initiative in Australia will involve a whole of government effort, including through the Environment, Foreign Affairs (including AusAID) and Forestry Departments.