

## **COP28 Side Event on Primary Forests**

### **“Climate & Canopy:**

### **Amplifying Action for SDG 13 & 15 through Primary Forest Conservation”**

**8 December 2023, 11:45am-12:45pm**

**COP28 SDG Pavilion, Dubai, United Arab Emirates**

*Concept Note*

#### **Background and introduction**

Primary forests, including intact forest landscapes, include several forest types and exist throughout the world. While primary forests are primarily found in the Amazon, the boreal area of the northern latitudes, the Congo Basin and in Indonesia, they also exist as fragments in many other areas/biomes. These forests are the guardians of our planet's health, playing a crucial role in mitigating climate change, supporting biodiversity, the hydrological cycle and providing a myriad of benefits to local communities.

Given the irreplaceable roles of primary and intact forests in carbon storage and sequestration, biodiversity, hydrological and other ecosystem services and livelihoods support, the protection and conservation of these forests are fundamental for achieving the Global Forest Goals and enhancing the contribution of forests to the achievement of the SDGs while also advancing the goals of the Paris Agreement.

In this context, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), Global Environment Facility (GEF), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the UN Forum on Forests – members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests – are joining forces and collaborating to foster enhanced conservation of primary forests. Key partners are Wild Heritage and Griffiths University who have long been active on this topic.

Currently, there is insufficient recognition, understanding and conservation of primary forests globally. This oversight poses a significant threat to our climate, biodiversity, and sustainable development goals. In addition, this lack of understanding and integration of the values and benefits of primary forests in forest financing strategies, national budgets and global policy agendas has led to their inadequate prioritization, contributing to ongoing deforestation and loss of these vital ecosystems. The lack of coordination and information-sharing mechanisms has also hindered donor engagement and mobilization of financial resources for primary forests conservation, resulting in a funding gap that hampers effective conservation efforts.

This collaboration will support the UNFF in elevating the importance of primary forests in global discourse and helping its member countries to provide conditions for strategically channeling investments to good projects and monitoring progress. The collaboration also aims to facilitate and stimulate financing for primary forest conservation by establishing robust donor-recipient dialogue and coordination mechanisms and providing information on financing opportunities. Through capacity development and information sharing, the collaboration will raise the visibility of primary forests among stakeholders,

policymakers, and the public, transforming their perception and ensuring their inclusion in forest financing strategies, conservation initiatives, and the global policy agenda.

### **Main Objective of the event**

The event will foster better understanding and awareness of the importance of enhancing the conservation of primary forests, and explore concrete next steps to be taken to champion primary forest conservation, seamlessly intertwining the objectives of SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 15 (Life on Land). Spotlighting collective endeavors from diverse stakeholders, it emphasizes the pivotal role primary forests play in both climate mitigation and preserving terrestrial ecosystems.

### **Modalities of the event**

Through a series of engaging mini-panels interspersed with audience engagement activities, attendees will explore real-world challenges, innovative solutions, and the immense opportunities that lie at the intersection of these two critical SDGs – while also advancing the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF).

### **Programme of the event**

- Welcome and Introduction by moderator – Ms. Anita Tzec, Senior Program Manager, Indigenous People and Conservation, International Union for the Conservation of Nature
- Opening keynote address - Ms. Juliette Biao, Director of the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat
- *Mentimeter: When you think of primary forests today, what 3 words most describe the continuing challenges?*
- Keynote address - H.E. Maria Osmarina Marina da Silva Vaz de Lima, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change of Brazil
- Panel Discussions: Strategies and Collaborations for Primary Forest Conservation  
Panelists:
  - Mr. Pascal Martinez, Senior Climate Change Specialist, Global Environment Facility
  - Dr. Amy Duchelle, Senior Forestry Officer and Team Leader, Forests & Climate, Forestry Division, FAO
  - Prof. Brendan Mackey, Director, Griffith Climate Action Beacon, Griffith University
- Audience engagement; Q&A Session
- Closing Remarks

### **Target audience**

Delegates and other accredited participants at the UN Climate Conference COP28

### **Contact**

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