

PRESS RELEASE



United Nations Development Programme

Climate change deal could have big impact on PNG says UN Port Moresby, December 17, 2008

The head of the UN in Papua New Guinea has praised the outcome of the recent Poznań Climate Change Conference, saying it could significantly help to stem deforestation in the country.

"This could have an enormous impact on countries like PNG with large tracts of rainforest, where deforestation, often caused by illegal logging, is responsible for much of the carbon dioxide emissions that cause global warming," said UN Resident Coordinator Dr. Jacqueline Badcock,

According to Dr. Badcock, the agreement takes the form of a statement of intent by countries with large amounts of rainforest, such as PNG, Brazil, and Indonesia and concerned developed nations, mainly in Europe, for a joint approach to halting forest destruction.

"The statement of intent, which was signed in Poznań, Poland last week, is a clear commitment from governments to begin negotiations next year in order to shape a bold and effective international response to climate change, to be agreed in Copenhagen at the end of 2009," she said.

As well as halting the unsustainable harvesting of timber, the deal may also bring in large amounts of development assistance to PNG, with several governments in developed countries committing money to combating deforestation on a global scale. The government of the UK alone has committed over £100 million to schemes worldwide and some of that money could make its way to PNG in the form of grants to increase the private investment that developing countries require both for mitigation and adaptation technologies. The money comes from a two percent levy on offset investments that industrial nations make on green projects in the developing world.

The agreement comes hard on the heels of the recently launched UN Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) Initiative, which has seen PNG receive a share of US\$35 million to target and fight deforestation.

Dr. Badcock praised PNG's commitment in the area in recent years. "I congratulate the government for demonstrating clear commitment to mitigating the impact of climate change and its strong international leadership on the issue of reducing emissions from deforestation," she said.

In 2007, PNG made key interventions at the Bali Conference on Climate Change and contributed to the Bali roadmap.

The removal of tropical forests is responsible for about 18 per cent of all the carbon dioxide emissions causing global warming – more than all the emissions from the world's transport sector. Huge amounts of carbon stored in trees are released when forests are cleared, especially if the clearance involves burning.

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