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**Asia-Europe Environment Forum (ENVforum) Side Event:
REDD for Climate Change Mitigation and Biodiversity Conservation
13:00 – 14:30, 22 October 2009**

**at the ASEAN Conference on Biodiversity 2009
Singapore | 21- 23 October 2009**

Background

Climate change and biodiversity are interlinked. Biodiversity is threatened by irresponsible human activities and will be increasingly affected negatively by the impact of climate change as some ecosystems and species are not able to adapt to the rising temperature and changing climatic pattern across the globe. At the same time, the continuing degradation of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity also contribute to the intensification of climate change. One of the most prominent examples is deforestation, in which species are lost and stored carbon are released to the atmosphere.

Biodiversity degradation and climate change are a two-way process; they reinforce each other. It is therefore important to have an integrated approach to tackle the challenges posed by the two.

One example is the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) mechanism. REDD is beneficial for climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts, as well as biodiversity conservation. REDD is highly potential to stabilise the atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations. At the same time, biodiversity conservation efforts – consequently sound ecosystems which could adapt better to climate change – will also benefit positively from REDD. Therefore it is important that REDD mechanisms takes into account biodiversity concerns.

The importance of REDD to reduce greenhouse gases and to preserve biological diversity is reiterated by the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) leaders at ASEM 7 through the Beijing Declaration on Sustainable Development in October 2008. However, with plenty of issues surrounding REDD to be agreed upon, the road to REDD implementation is still a long one.

Objective

Realising synergies between UNFCCC and CBD is important to achieve the objectives of both conventions. This side event at the ASEAN Conference on Biodiversity will look at the design of REDD mechanisms to achieve co-benefits for climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation, so as to provide useful inputs to relevant policy processes, especially the UNCBD COP 10.

Output

The output of the side event would be a formulation of recommendations in the form of Policy Brief which will be published online and disseminated to relevant contacts.

As the only open discussion between Asia and Europe on the link between REDD, biodiversity conservation and climate change, this side event aims to improve understanding and knowledge on these issues in the lead up to UNFCCC COP 15 and UNCBD COP 10.

Structure

The side event will be composed of a series of presentations that will discuss the following:

- Current UNFCCC negotiation with respect to REDD
- Pitfalls and opportunities for mutually addressing climate change and biodiversity conservation
- Case studies of ecosystem management for carbon and biodiversity benefits.

Following the presentations is a panel discussion. The panellists from Asia and Europe are invited to give a brief commentary on the topic and to answer some of the questions prepared. The panellists will also take questions from the audience.

Some questions that the panellists from both Asia and Europe could address during the panel discussion:

- What are currently lacking in the currently discussed REDD mechanism with respect to biodiversity conservation? How REDD should be designed to better promote co-benefits for biodiversity conservation/ecosystem restoration?
- What are the challenges in incorporating biodiversity consideration into REDD mechanisms? How to address the challenges?
- What are the impacts of REDD implementation on biodiversity that could arise, and how to encourage good practices in REDD implementation so biodiversity and ecosystem integrity could be maintained and improved?
- What are the implications and reliability of REDD on areas of low carbon stocks (low forest cover and non-forest areas) in harnessing carbon stocks and biodiversity?

For more information about the Asia-Europe Environment Forum, please write to env@asef.org or visit our website at www.env.asef.org.