



MEDIA RELEASE

Senator Penny Wong
Minister for Climate Change and Water

The Hon Stephen Smith MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs

PW 71/08

26 May 2008

\$4.5 MILLION TO ASSIST GLOBAL EFFORTS ON DEFORESTATION

The Australian Government will invest \$4.5 million in helping developing countries reduce deforestation as part of international efforts to tackle climate change.

Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Stephen Smith, said the funds come from the Rudd Government's International Forest Carbon Initiative.

Senator Wong said up to \$3 million will go to the Indonesia-based Centre for International Forestry Research.

"Globally, there is a shortage of research on how to reduce deforestation and Australia's support for the centre will help bridge this gap and support international efforts to take action," Senator Wong said.

Mr Smith said a further \$1.5 million will help relevant non-government organisations (NGOs) work with developing countries on large-scale pilot projects designed to reduce deforestation.

"The allocation of this funding recognises that, while NGOs often have lots of practical experience, they often lack the resources to fully develop and implement on-the-ground solutions," Mr Smith said.

"Helping them set up these pilot projects will boost efforts to include action on deforestation in a future global response to climate change."

The International Forest Carbon Initiative builds on Australia's existing commitments to reducing deforestation and has a particular focus on countries in the region including Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

"In Bali, the international community agreed that demonstration activities were needed to show that activities to reduce deforestation could be effective, long-lasting, support local economies, and reduce greenhouse emissions," Senator Wong said.

"Australia is helping get these activities up and running."

Mr Smith said deforestation is responsible for about 20 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

"Any comprehensive response to global climate change must take action in this area."

The \$4.5 million investment is part of the Rudd Government delivering on one of its main climate change priorities: helping shape a global solution.

