

The Ecosystems Climate Alliance

Mr Yvo de Boer
Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC
UNFCCC Secretariat
Haus Carstanjen
Martin-Luther-King-Strasse 8
53175 Bonn
Germany

1 December 2009

cc. Megumi Endo, UNFCCC Secretariat

Dear Mr de Boer,

We are writing on behalf of the member organizations of the Ecosystems Climate Alliance (ECA),¹ which work together within the UNFCCC process to keep natural ecosystems intact and their carbon out of the atmosphere.

As you may recall, the ECA has written to you on a number of occasions throughout 2009 concerning the need for greater openness and transparency within the climate change negotiations and the importance of improving participation and access for observer organisations at the meetings.

For this reason, we were deeply disappointed to find that the vast majority of meetings remained closed to observer organisations during the Barcelona climate change talks. This roll-back in transparency risks leading to distrust and does not necessarily assist the progress of the negotiations. Many observer organizations, including ECA members, bring substantial and valuable expertise in the areas of negotiations they follow, often accompanied by long experience in the negotiations themselves. This expertise allows observers to provide invaluable assistance to Parties, including particularly those Parties with smaller and less specialized delegations. In addition to these direct contributions to the negotiation process, observer organizations play an important role in raising public awareness of the process within their home countries, with less direct but no less important impacts on process outcomes. For these reasons, we believe the negotiations – and ultimate agreement – will benefit substantially from increased openness and interaction between parties and observers.

We are therefore writing to respectfully request that during the up-coming meetings at COP15, including those of each of the AWG-KP, AWG-LCA, SBSTA and SBI, the reliance on closed sessions is strictly limited, and that any informal groups and sub-groups are kept open to observers. In the event that closed meetings do become necessary, we would appreciate periodic open briefing sessions by each of the Chairs, including the Chairs and Facilitators of the informal groups and sub-groups.

¹ ECA is an alliance of registered observer organisations currently comprising the Australian Orangutan Project, Environmental Investigation Agency, Global Witness, Humane Society International, Nepenthes, Rainforest Action Network, Rainforest Foundation Norway, The Rainforest Foundation U.K., Wetlands International and The Wilderness Society.

Since ECA is focusing on the REDD and LULUCF negotiations, open briefings from the Chairs of the contact groups, informal groups and sub-groups relevant to these issues would be most helpful to us. However, we recognise that other observers would benefit from open briefings by the Chairs of other groups and therefore request that time could be found to fit these into the agenda. Given the already substantial demands on the time of the Chairs and Facilitators, simply keeping meetings open to observers in the first place would be a more efficient and effective approach.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Yours sincerely,

Ecosystems Climate Alliance

About the Ecosystems Climate Alliance

The Ecosystems Climate Alliance (ECA) is an alliance of environmental and social NGOs committed to keeping natural terrestrial ecosystems intact and their carbon out of the atmosphere, in an equitable and transparent way that respects the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. ECA recognises that avoiding emissions of terrestrial carbon stored in the soils and biomass of forests, peatlands and wetlands represents the largest potential single opportunity for cost-effective greenhouse gas mitigation. ECA advocates climate, forest and land use policies to give strong, equitable, transparent and positive incentives free of perversities for avoiding the degradation of terrestrial carbon stores and for rehabilitating degraded land, supported by effective forest governance, robust monitoring and demand-side policies to ensure meaningful outcomes.

Contact details for each organisation are listed below.

Environmental Investigation Agency

Andrea Johnson
Forest Campaigns Director, EIA U.S.
andreajohnson@eia-international.org
Tel: +1 202 483 6621

Rainforest Foundation Norway

Nils Hermann Ranum
Head of policy and campaign division
nils.hermann@rainforest.no
Tel: +47 23 10 95 04

The Wilderness Society

Peg Putt
International Green Carbon Consultant
peg.putt@wilderness.org.au
Tel: +61 418 127 580

Wetlands International

Susanna Tol
Communications Officer
susanna.tol@wetlands.org
Tel: +31 (0) 318-660910

Nepenthes

Rebecca Bolt Ettliger
rbe@nepenthes.dk
Tel: +45 28 33 54 61

Global Witness

Dr. Rosalind Reeve
Forest Campaign Manager
reeve@globalwitness.org
Tel: +254 726 993377

Humane Society International

Nicola Beynon
Senior Program Manager - Wildlife and Habitats
nicola@hsi.org.au
Tel +61 2 9973 1728

The Rainforest Foundation, U.K.

Simon Counsell
Executive Director
simonc@rainforestuk.com
Tel: +44 207 485 0193

Rainforest Action Network

Bill Barclay
Global Finance Campaigner
bbarclay@ran.org
Tel: +1 415 398 4404

Australian Orangutan Project

Stephen Leonard
Legal Consultant
stephen.leonard@three.blackberry.com
Tel: +61414 284 178