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PRESS RELEASE

THE EUROPEAN UNION ANNOUNCES €3.1 MILLION TO SECURE LIVELIHOODS IN THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON THROUGH FOREST CONSERVATION

Bogotá, Colombia, 30 March 2011

The long-term sustainability of nature's bounty in the Colombian Amazon has received a significant boost thanks to 3.1 million euros in new funding from the European Union. The new project will improve livelihoods in the Colombian Amazon through the prevention of deforestation, forest conservation and sustainable use activities in protected areas, indigenous reserves and their buffer zones.

This support for important on-ground action in protected areas in Colombia will strengthen collaborative environmental governance among the Colombian Government, traditional indigenous authorities, grassroots organizations and civil society dedicated to the conservation and sustainable development of the Colombian Amazon.

Over the course of the project, a number of achievements will be made, including the conservation of important areas of natural forest, the strengthening of indigenous governance among communities in the region, and an increase in the ecological and human well-being of this culturally and ecologically rich region of Colombia and the continental Amazon.

Sandra Bessudo, High Presidential Advisor for Environmental Management, Biodiversity, Water and Climate Change stated that: "This thematic cooperation with the European Union is a key contribution to Colombia's Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainability of the Colombian Amazon. Specifically, it will help ensure the conservation of the Amazon and the well-being of its peoples, through strengthening indigenous authorities' role in the creation and governance of adequate mechanisms to ensure a fair system of payments for their contribution to the maintenance of key ecosystem services for the country and the world."

Julia Miranda Londono, Director of Colombian Parks, stated the following: "This support will strengthen the National Parks Agency's ongoing partnership with indigenous peoples and local communities, to enhance conservation and sustainable development in the Colombian Amazon, which represents 44% of the Colombian national territory. It will also contribute to the sustainable financing of protected areas, and the benefits they provide to people, through payments for ecosystem services. This cooperation addresses an important component of our priorities conveyed in the Expression of Interest submitted to CBD LifeWeb in 2010 and it is being coordinated within the context of the ongoing Financing Roundtable for Colombia's Protected Areas."

The European Union in partnership with Colombian institutions is investing €3.1 million, through its Environment and Natural Resources programme, including the Energy thematic programme, over 24 months. This funding will bolster the subsistence of local communities by strengthening the provision of key ecosystem services, including food and freshwater security, income generation, and cultural and



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spiritual access especially for indigenous peoples of the Amazon. At a global scale it will contribute to climate change mitigation as a result of greater forest protection.

“This project is an example of the firm commitment of the European Union to contributing to the environmental governance of the Colombian Amazon, and is a contribution to a process that began with the traditional indigenous communities of the region more than 15 years ago. This project seeks to ensure that indigenous communities actively participate in the creation and implementation of the State’s social and environmental regulations as they relate to their own priorities and culture, among which are included the conservation of their ecosystems and natural resources, on which they depend for their social, cultural and economic survival.”, said Fernando Cardesa, Ambassador of the European Union’s Delegation in Colombia.

The European Union is supporting *Environmental Governance to Prevent Deforestation and Promote Forest Conservation of the Colombian Amazon*. This project is consistent with an Expression of Interest submitted by the Government of Colombia to the CBD LifeWeb Initiative entitled *Strengthening Colombia’s National Protected Areas*. The CBD LifeWeb Initiative is a partnership platform to strengthen financing for protected areas to conserve biodiversity, secure livelihoods and address climate change, through implementation of the Programme of Work on protected Areas under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

While this funding addresses some of the most critical actions, the total financial need to strengthen Colombia’s National Protected Areas remains substantial. As conveyed in the submission to the CBD LifeWeb clearing-house (see here: <http://www.cbd.int/lifeweb/?eoi=4683>), the involvement of more funding partners is essential to sustain the biological diversity and life-sustaining ecosystem services that Colombia’s protected areas provides to its citizens and others around the world, through carbon sequestration and local livelihood security.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, congratulated the European Commission for its significant investments in global conservation efforts and stressed that: “Protected areas are cornerstones for biodiversity conservation and powerful tools for achieving multiple benefits by addressing climate change and promoting sustainable economic development. Financing protected areas, including through the CBD LifeWeb Initiative, is one of the brightest hopes we have for the future of our planet and humankind. This cooperation between the Government of Colombia and the European Commission, is a further example of leadership in action by investing in a sustainable future for people in this region and globally.”

Notes to Editors

About Colombia’s National Parks Authority

Within Colombia’s newly created Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the Colombian National Parks Authority is Colombia’s lead technical agency responsible for the administration of Colombia’s National protected areas, as well as the country’s National Protected Areas System. For more information, please visit www.parquesnacionales.gov.co

About the Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation

This Presidential Agency is the Government of Colombia’s lead technical agency on the coordination of international cooperation in Colombia, with a diversity of bilateral and multilateral partners. It is responsible for the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in Colombia and South-South Cooperation. For more information, please visit www.accionsocial.gov.co

About the thematic programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy (ENRTP)

The thematic programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy (ENRTP) helps developing countries and partner organizations to address environmental and natural resource management issues. Moreover, it helps to meet their obligations under multilateral environmental agreements and to take international policy leadership in such areas as fighting climate change, tackling land degradation and desertification, biodiversity protection and proper management of chemicals and wastes. Its legal base is Article 13 of the EU Regulation establishing the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI). For further information, please visit http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/environment/index_en.htm

About the CBD LifeWeb Initiative

The CBD LifeWeb Initiative adds value to recipients and donors by providing a user-friendly clearing house website for countries to profile their protected area financial priorities and invite international support; facilitates funding matches; helps coordinate counterpart financing among donors; and recognises donor support and innovation for natural solutions. For further information, please visit www.cbd.int/lifeweb/ or contact Jason Spensley on +1 514 287 8704 or at jason.spensley@cbd.int.

About the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. For more information visit www.cbd.int or contact David Ainsworth on +1 514 287 7025 or at david.ainsworth@cbd.int.
