

Subnational Governments' Billion Trees Endowment

Affirmation of Purpose and Commitment to THE COPENHAGEN STATEMENT

Preamble

At the Climate Leaders Summit held on December 15, 2009 as part of the UNFCCC COP 15 meeting in Copenhagen, more than 60 Leaders, Ministers, State Secretaries and other subnational leaders signed the Copenhagen Statement of Federated States and Regional Governments. Within this Statement the leaders expressed their commitment to “planting at least 1 billion trees worldwide by 2015 and to report on progress towards this goal and calling on national governments, businesses and communities to partner with us and plant one tree for every person on the planet as an endowment from the Copenhagen conference”.

The Copenhagen Statement from the Climate Leaders Summit recalled that 50 to 80 per cent of mitigation and adaptation actions are implemented at the subnational and local levels of government. The planting of trees on locally significant scales by subnational governments demonstrates a strong commitment to climate change action by these governments which also want to emphasize the multiple benefits that such an initiative may provide to their communities.

In committing to the planting of 1 billion trees at Copenhagen in 2009, the assembled subnational government leaders embarked on an ambitious plan of action that has the following high-level objectives.

Subnational Governments' Billion Trees Endowment High-Level Objectives

1. Confirm the leadership role of subnational governments in the reduction of net greenhouse gas emissions and in adapting to the impacts of climate change through the planting of 1 billion trees by 2015.
2. Capture the broader sustainability benefits of tree-planting particularly when done at locally significant scales. As noted in the preamble to United Nations General Assembly resolution 62/98, forests and trees outside forests provide multiple economic, social and environmental benefits, including job creation and sustainable economic development.
3. Forge partnerships with private businesses and non-governmental organisations that may be invited to participate in the initiative, and encourage similar initiatives elsewhere.

The Billion Trees Endowment is a legacy for future generations from the Copenhagen conference on behalf of the participating subnational governments. Signatories to the Billion Trees Endowment agree to adhere to the following set of principles.

Principles of Subnational Governments' Billion Trees Endowment

1. Planting can be done on any scale and on any land, either in the home states, elsewhere in country or overseas, provided such planting will be accurately registered and audited.
2. Emphasis should be on land rehabilitation or restoration, enhancing biodiversity habitat, generating urban open space or promoting sustainable economic development.
3. The regular post-felling replanting of existing production forest land will not qualify for inclusion under the Billion Trees Endowment.
4. The planting of trees is proposed to be permanent, with replanting if the trees are felled. Harvesting of plantings counted towards the Billion Trees Endowment should comply with permanence requirements operating within each jurisdiction.
5. It is recognised that any planting undertaken within the signatory's jurisdictional boundaries, may be taken into account in the national inventories as requested by Article 3.3. of the Kyoto Protocol.
6. It is preferred that plantings are of native and other species that are well suited to the site and are likely to be resilient in a changing climate. It is recognised that each signatory government will plant in accordance with its existing priorities and circumstances and geographic particularities. Where appropriate to the natural environment, signatories may choose to plant trees that do not conform to the strict Kyoto definition of a forest, such as indigenous scrublands. [‘Kyoto Forest’ is a minimum area of land of 0.05-1.0 hectares with tree crown cover of more than 10-30 per cent with trees with the potential to reach a minimum height of 2-5 metres at maturity in situ.]

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7. Trees planted through existing programs (compliant with the other objectives of the Billion Trees Endowment) after December 15, 2009 (the date of the Copenhagen Statement) can count towards Billion Trees Endowment obligations.
8. Reporting of the progress of signatory governments towards the Billion Trees Endowment commitment will be performed annually to 2015 and submitted to The Climate Group for collation, and will include number, type and area of trees planted as well as details of the monitoring and verification methods used.
9. Signatories agree that using the initiative to encourage further plantings would support the global objectives of the Copenhagen statement. Opportunities to partner and collaborate with other international, business and non-government organisations with similar aims and objectives will be actively sought.

I hereby commit my Government to planting _____ million trees according to the Objectives and Principles of the Billion Trees Endowment as expressed above.

On behalf of _____

Signature _____

Name _____

Position _____

Date _____

