

***The High Conservation Value (HCV) Resource Network launches Network Charter and welcomes participants. 16<sup>th</sup> October 2006***

In an important step forward for international collaboration on the sustainable management of the world's natural resources, the *High Conservation Value Resource Network* today launched its Network Charter and extended an invitation to individuals and organizations around the world to participate in the Network.

The Charter was launched by the Network's Steering Group, which includes representatives from organizations including forest and land managers, forest products companies, environmental and social NGOs, and intergovernmental organisations. The HCV Resource Network aims to enhance understanding of the concept of High Conservation Values in forest and land management across the globe and to promote the consistent application of the concept and the tools associated with it. The Network supports processes of national interpretation, assessment and management of high conservation value areas by bringing practitioners together to share their experiences and by providing a resource centre for documents and reports on the topic.

*"The HCV Resource Network is designed to promote and enhance sustainable resource and land management and secure local communities' and indigenous peoples' use of natural resources, as well as biodiversity values."* noted Marcus Colchester, Director of the Forest Peoples Programme and member of the Network's Steering Group.

*"Our aim is to ensure a consistent and widely accepted application of the concept of High Conservation Values so that companies and other land users can be confident that their use of natural resources is responsible and seen to be so"* added Mario Abreu of Tetra Pak, another member of the Network's Steering Group.

*It began with forests.* The concept of High Conservation Values developed out of the Forest Stewardship Council's principles and criteria for forest management certification, and has proven such a powerful concept in forest management that there is now interest in applying it to the management of other landscape components including grasslands, wetlands and areas subject to agricultural expansion projects. The organizations taking part in the Network are committed to build on this by sharing lessons learned, enhancing the consistency of the application of the High Conservation Value approach, and promoting cooperation with other conservation processes, in whichever landscape they are applied.

*The Charter:* The Charter sets out the mission, structure and guiding principles of the Network and was developed by the current Steering Group in consultation with potential users. It is available on the HCV resource network website.

*Participants welcome:* The information and resources on the Network's website at [www.hcvnetwork.org](http://www.hcvnetwork.org) are available to any organization or individual. Those who support the Network Charter may register as *Participants*, giving them the opportunity to play a more active role, such as leading discussion groups and working groups. A simple on-line registration form is available on the website.

*Becoming a Regional Partner:* The Network is also inviting organizations and individuals to join them as *Regional Partners*, to help with local networking, adaptation, and the provision of information in local languages. They are particularly seeking partnerships with indigenous peoples, and private and public sector resource owners.

A key element of the next phase of the Network's development project is the formation of Discussion Groups, to facilitate the discussion of priority issues among members and interested parties. Topics prioritized for initial discussions include:

- **Information Sources and Links:** identifying and implementing best mechanisms to make information accessible.
- **Methodologies for HCV in practice:** looking at both national interpretations and assessments on the ground, exchanging lessons learned, and identifying how to provide support at the national and field level.
- **Extension from forests to other ecosystems:** practical issues around broadening the scope of the use of HCV concept.

The next meeting of the HCV Resource Network's Steering Group is expected to be held in Parana, Brazil 24 –25 January 2007.

Organizations and individuals interested in collaborating with the HCV Resource Network as Participants, Regional Partners or as part of the Steering Group are invited to contact the Network secretariat or to register directly on-line.

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#### **More information on the HCV Resource Network:**

The HCV Resource Network was launched in December 2005, with initial core funding provided by Ikea, Tetra Pak and the WWF/World Bank Alliance.

The Network Steering Group is currently formed by representatives of the following organizations: ForestEthics; Forest Peoples Programme; Forest Stewardship Council (FSC); Greenpeace International; Mondi; International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO); Tetra Pak; Universidad Nacional Experimental de Guayana; World Bank; World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), and The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

The Secretariat function is currently fulfilled by ProForest, a UK-based independent company working with natural resource management and specialising in practical approaches to sustainability ([www.proforest.net](http://www.proforest.net)).

**Contact details:**

The High Conservation Value Resource Network: [www.hcvnetwork.org](http://www.hcvnetwork.org)

**Secretariat:**

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**Co-Chairs of the Steering Group:**

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Marcus Colchester (Dr), Forest Peoples Programme; [marcus@forestpeoples.org](mailto:marcus@forestpeoples.org)

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***The Mission of the HCV Resource Network:***

The Network Mission is to maintain and enhance critical social and environmental values of forests and other ecosystems as part of responsible land management, and to advance locally adaptable management strategies through the development and use of the HCV approach.

***What are High Conservation Values?***

The key to the concept of HCV Areas is the identification and maintenance of High Conservation Values (HCVs). The Network focuses on the following six main types of High Conservation Values:

HCV1. Areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g. endemism, endangered species, refugia).

HCV2. Globally, regionally or nationally significant large landscape-level areas where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.

HCV3. Areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems.

HCV4. Areas that provide basic ecosystem services in critical situations (e.g. watershed protection, erosion control).

HCV5. Areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g. subsistence, health).

HCV6. Areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities)

*Source: HCV Resource Network Charter, Version 1 September 2006*