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**Editor's Note:**

The statement and press release are available here: <https://www.burness.com/pressrooms/clua-foundation-presidents-event-gcf-task-force-annual-meeting-2018/>; Password: GCAS. It is possible that additional foundations will sign on to the statement. Please check the pressroom for the most recent version.

## **Global Climate Action Summit: 9 Foundations Pledge \$459M to Forests, Indigenous Rights, and Lands to Combat Climate Change**

### ***16 Foundations Issue Statement Championing Forests, Indigenous Peoples' Rights, and Sustainable Land Use as Underappreciated Climate Solutions***

SAN FRANCISCO (Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018)—Nine of the world's leading philanthropic foundations announced their intent to commit at least \$459 million through 2022 to the protection, restoration and expansion of forests and lands worldwide and the recognition of indigenous peoples' and traditional communities' collective land rights and resource management. These are powerful and under-appreciated climate solutions and must be urgent global priorities to help avert the worst threats from a warmer world.

Land-based climate actions have the potential to deliver up to one-third of the carbon emissions reductions needed by 2030 to limit global warming to 1.5°C. Forests, food, and farming are major focuses of the Global Climate Action Summit, a three-day event convened in San Francisco to galvanize efforts to tackle climate change and 'take ambition to the next level'.

The nine foundations-- ClimateWorks Foundation, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, Mulago Foundation, and The Rockefeller Foundation-- joined together in making land-related climate pledges.

"Today marks a major step forward for the philanthropy sector as we step up our collaborative efforts to address the crisis of climate change. Climate solutions rooted in forests and land use are critical to meeting today's global climate goals—to protect and expand forests, promote sustainable land use, and secure the rights and livelihoods of indigenous and forest communities," said Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation. "We're calling on other donors to join us in the urgent effort to protect forests, rights, lands, and the climate."

The Climate Action Summit takes place mid-way between the signing of the Paris Agreement in 2015 and 2020 when progress in meeting climate targets will be reviewed. The Global Climate

Action Summit aims to give governments confidence to ‘step up’ their national climate action plans. In support of accelerating climate ambition, sixteen foundation presidents signed a joint statement affirming their commitment to supporting the critical role forests and sustainable land use play in the fight against climate change. The statement emphasizes the need to secure indigenous guardianship of the forests they inhabit, which robust evidence shows is among the most powerful and durable solutions to keep forests standing.

"Worldwide, lands belonging to indigenous and local communities hold nearly 300 billion metric tons of carbon—equivalent to over 30 times global energy emissions in 2017," said Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. "If our rights as Indigenous Peoples are recognized, we can continue to protect these lands for generations to come."

Recent research finds that, along with rapidly ending our use of fossil fuels, changing the ways we use land is "mission-critical" to the fight against climate change. Currently, land use is responsible for about 24%—or approximately 12 billion tons—of the globe's total annual greenhouse gas emissions, making it the second-largest source of climate pollution after energy.

At the same time, forests and lands soak up approximately 30% of the carbon emissions we add to the atmosphere each year, and by 2030, could provide 30% of the carbon emissions reductions we need to keep dangerous global warming at bay.

"Forests, fields and soils play an essential role in solving climate change. Research shows that we cannot achieve our climate goals without them," said Ed Henry, president of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. "These natural climate solutions are the only deployable technologies that can both prevent carbon emissions and remove carbon from the atmosphere, but we have to invest in them now for them to deliver their greatest climate benefit. Forests and land also provide other equally important benefits for humans and wildlife—producing clean air and water, protecting habitats, and sustaining both crops and people's livelihoods."

Despite this, forests receive only three percent of all public funding for climate action, making this a seriously underfunded solution. The statement calls on other foundations, governments, and businesses to increase financing for these critical priorities.

"From reducing the frequency and impact of forest fires to channeling new resources for the preservation of the world's rainforests, we are committed to using our catalytic capital to support new and creative ways of attracting capital at scale toward sustainable land use and forest management practices," said Dr. Rajiv J. Shah, president of The Rockefeller Foundation. "Through The Rockefeller Foundation's innovative finance portfolio, we are supporting new financing solutions with the potential to mobilize large scale private investment for the protection and restoration of forests and rights-based land use."

Research points to a range of culprits undercutting the capacity of land to store carbon and keep the Earth's systems functioning. Rampant clear-cutting of tropical forests, often coupled with forest fires, is the most urgent crisis facing the land sector. Driven by growing global demand for commodities--specifically animal protein, palm oil, soy and wood products--forest loss continues unabated. [Recent data shows that 2017](#) was the second-worst on record for tropical tree cover loss. Inefficient farming, excessive food waste, and unsustainable diets also cause significant climate impacts.

"If we continue to treat forests and lands as infinite and expendable resources, science shows that people and the planet will suffer -- and we won't achieve our climate goals," said Harvey V. Fineberg, M.D., Ph.D., president, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. "Science and philanthropy play critical roles in advancing efforts to preserve and protect forests and land."

In addition to releasing carbon and throwing weather patterns off kilter, deforestation can ignite conflict between companies and indigenous communities who rely on these forests for food and incomes. A recent study showed that [197 people were killed in 2017](#) for standing up to the governments and companies to protect their forests.

In the statement, the foundations call for "a shift ... away from short-term resource depletion that leaves communities, economies, and the planet impoverished."

"Evidence is mounting that despite the global squeeze for land, it is possible to protect forests, wetlands and other precious natural resources--and indigenous communities--while growing food," said Charlotte Pera, president and CEO of the ClimateWorks Foundation. "We see countries reviving degraded lands, corporations pledging to stop deforestation, and indigenous communities with strong land rights leading the way on sustainable enterprises that support their livelihoods while keeping forests standing. Our goal is for the philanthropic sector to raise its ambitions so that these successes can be elevated and replicated."

"There isn't a single solution to the climate problem--but protecting forests, land, and the people who defend them is an important part of the constellation," said Carol Larson, President and CEO of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. "Philanthropy is in a unique position to act on climate because we have the flexibility to tolerate risk, think big, and invest for the long haul. Foundations must play their part, so we make progress with greater urgency and ambition."

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