



PRESS RELEASE

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Rio +20 brings in a new landscape for the protection of global Roadless Areas

A major step towards the protection of the world's roadless areas was one of the fruits of the Rio+20 Summit. **For the first time, roadless areas were mapped globally** and presented to the public. The European Parliament's Rapporteur on Forests, **MEP Kriton Arsenis**, **UNEP**, **IUCN**, **the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB)**, and **the Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education, Tebtebba** **joined forces** to co-organize a side event aimed at putting the protection of roadless areas in the heart of the international environmental debate. **Two interactive maps** of the world's remaining roadless areas **were presented** by **Google** and the **European Environmental Agency**. These maps reveal areas which remain insulated from the uncontrolled human pressure exerted by roads on natural resources and they **pave the way for global action towards the protection of biodiversity** in a **cost efficient and effective** way.

The Google Earth maps of roadless areas can be found at <http://earthengine.google.org/#state=gallery>
EEA's Eye on Earth maps will soon be available publicly

The keynote speakers of the event "No Roads to a Green Economy; Mapping the Earth's Roadless Areas and their Services" included Mrs. Jacqueline McGlade (Executive Director of the European Environment Agency), Mrs. Rebecca Moore (Engineering Manager for Google Earth Outreach and the Google Earth Engine), Mr. Chris Vander Bilcke (Head of UNEP Liaison Office to the EU), Mrs. Cyriaque Sendashonga (Head of IUCN's Global Policy Unit), Mrs. Mariana Vale (President of the Latin American branch of SCB), and Mr. Marcos Mariani (President of the Brazilian NGO Preserve Amazonia).

Following the release of the two interactive global roadless maps **MEP Kriton Arsenis** made the following statement: "Now we all know where the world's remaining roadless areas lie. From today onwards we have no excuse for inaction. These interactive maps are tangible instruments in the hands of international policy makers for cost efficient and effective protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services, for the protection of indigenous people's rights and for paving the way towards a green economy."

Mrs. McGlade on behalf of EEA commenting on the next steps of the roadless areas endeavor said that "we need to do more than showing where the roads are. We have to be able to create an understanding of how roads serve the people but also divide the landscape. In Eye on Earth, improving understanding of such environmental trade-offs is what we do."

Ms. Rebecca Moore on behalf of Google noted that "having now produced this proof-of-concept map (using our Google Earth Engine technology), anyone can easily comprehend how few large roadless areas actually remain on Earth. It is quite striking and conveys the importance of this policy initiative. We look forward to continuing this collaboration and refining the map as science and policy formulations evolve. We hope it can help to turn the concept of "Roadless Areas" into something concrete and useful to policymakers, scientists and communities around the world."

On behalf of IUCN **Mrs. Cyrie Sendashonga** connected roadless areas to the Aichi targets agreed in Nagoya. She stated that "roadless areas are important contribution to reaching the Aichi Target 11 of 17% of terrestrial ecosystems under a system of protected areas. IUCN is promoting all efforts to reach this target and we are developing a number of tools to assist in this endeavor, including the concept of "Key Biodiversity Areas" to allow policy and decision-makers and resource managers to make choices on where to set up such conservation areas to ensure broad coverage of all important components of biodiversity."

Mrs. Mariana Vale from SCB brought interesting examples from Europe on the impacts of roads on the remaining wildlife and stressed out that "with the road network stretching through almost every corner of the planet, habitat fragmentation by transport infrastructures, and consequential secondary development, is one of the most serious global threats to biodiversity. Large patches of roadless areas are rare in the planet. They render vital ecosystem services to society like clean water, clean air, protection against invasive species, pests and diseases, and represent a buffer against climate change. Let's protect these last remaining roadless areas."

Complementing, **Mr. Marcos Mariani** from NGO Preserve Amazonia pointed out "how the possibility and opportunity for the implementation of clean development mechanisms and of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases using REDD+ projects, makes clear how important it is to preserve intact roadless areas, where the unrestricted access to natural resources and biodiversity must be treated very carefully. Avoiding and restricting in these areas the construction of new highways and roads, which represent a huge and dangerous risk to their integrity, especially in the Amazon rainforest, is certainly one of the most important and effective environmental action to be made today on the planet, making less drastic the effects of climate changes and their consequences for humanity and for all other living creatures that inhabit and depend on it"

Mrs. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz from Tebtebba, expressed the view of the indigenous peoples through her statement: We, the indigenous peoples, are also directly affected by road projects, in both negative and positive ways. I would like to reiterate, therefore, that any infrastructure project which is implemented in our territories, need to respect our rights to our lands, territories and resources (Article 26, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) . It should be noted that there are those among us, who would still prefer to be in voluntary isolation and bringing in road projects will violate their right to stay in isolation. In this context, it is important to remind states, private corporations and banks who provide loans for such projects, that they cannot just ram through a road project in indigenous peoples' territories unless their free, prior and informed consent is obtained. Social, environmental and human rights impact studies should be done, jointly with us, before any road project is conceived of and implemented in our territories."

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