

Prime Minister Erna Solberg
The Office of the Prime Minister of Norway
P.O. Box 8001 dep.
(NO-)0030 Oslo
Norway

Wednesday, 21st June 2017

Dear Prime Minister Solberg,

POTENTIALLY DISASTROUS NORWEGIAN SUPPORT FOR EXPANSION OF LARGE SCALE LOGGING IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

We are writing to bring to your attention, and to ask for your immediate intervention, to prevent what we believe would be a gravely misguided initiative which is being considered for support by your government through its Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI).

Attached is a briefing explaining the issues. However, to summarise, your government is considering providing financial support for a project that will serve to greatly expand large-scale logging in the rainforests of the Democratic Republic of Congo. This will, we believe, place at risk not only globally important ecosystems and the people that live there, but also vast amounts of carbon stored in the soils below the forest. We have estimated the possible carbon stores at risk as being roughly equivalent to 200 years' worth of Norway's own annual carbon emissions. Twenty million hectares of rainforest could be affected, damaged and eventually destroyed as a result of the proposed project.

We are asking you personally to intervene as, regrettably, your Minister for Climate and Environment, Vidar Helgesen, has already made it clear that he is in favour of providing Norwegian support to the logging of Congo's rainforests.

We ask you to state clearly that the government of Norway will not support any project which serves to increase logging in the Congo, and specifically will not fund the abovementioned project in any way, shape or form. We ask that you instruct the minister and his officials to instead develop programmes to support the Congolese government to dismantle the five million hectares of large-scale logging concessions which are currently operating illegally and causing serious damage to the forest.

We thank you for giving your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Simon Counsell, Executive Director