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MEDIA RELEASE

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International plantation summit looks at forestry for the future

Cape Town is playing host to an international forestry meeting, the New Generation Plantations (NGP) annual summit that will look at challenges facing the forestry industry today. The summit, that takes place at the Vineyard Hotel in Cape Town on 18 and 19 June, will look at two of the most important and challenging forestry frontiers today, namely social forestry and land-use.

Also participants from agriculture sectors, such as the sugar industry, will be attending the summit, as the NGP aims to broaden and share its experiences and learning with agricultural sectors in a resilient landscape approach. Set up by WWF in 2007, NGP brings together companies, government forest agencies and conservationists from around the world to explore, share and promote better ways of planning and managing plantations. NGP seeks to engage with stakeholders, learn from them and to share these lessons. It is underpinned by the philosophy that well-managed plantations in the right places can take pressure off natural forests and eco-systems and improve the welfare of local communities. [Read more about NGP experiences and achievements here.](#)

A world with seven billion people requires forestry and farming practices that produce more with less land and water, while empowering communities to achieve their aspirations. In many rural areas, forestry companies, with their access to resources, are best placed to act as agents for development, but struggle to integrate social policies into their business.

Luis Neves Silva, the NGP manager from WWF International, explains: "NGP is a space of trust, bridging different worlds. It creates a zone for open discussions and exchange where we can learn from each other by seeing what others are doing faced with similar issues, and to better understand the concerns of other stakeholders. Instead of coming with the answers, NGP helps to frame the right questions."

Over the two-day meeting, over a hundred conferees from 20 nationalities will put their heads together to come up with ideas about how to enable skilled, motivated local people to run successful forestry businesses and manage productive plantations on their land to secure supply, reduce risks, and benefit communities and investors.

According to Morné du Plessis, Chief Executive of WWF South Africa, "Forestry and agriculture are important elements of productive landscapes, but we need to plan plantations as living landscapes that provide broad benefits to local and downstream communities. It is no longer good enough to see agricultural and forestry land simply as only providing food and timber. We need to recognise that these landscapes also generate water, absorb carbon and harbour critical biodiversity, and they may help to control pests and pollinate crops."

A joint learning journey will continue in the field at the next NGP study tour in South Africa in November ["The resilient landscape approach to freshwater ecosystem stewardship"](#)

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**Editor's Notes:****About New Generations Plantation**

The NGP platform is a place for sharing knowledge about good plantation practices and learning from experience, through events such as study tours, workshops and conferences.

Over the coming decades, plantations are set to expand at a rapid rate to meet growing demand for paper, timber and energy. While plantations can be controversial, the NGP concept suggests that well-managed plantations in the right places can take pressure off natural forests, work in harmony with natural ecosystems, and improve the welfare of local communities. Find out more at www.newgenerationplantations.org

About WWF

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organisations, with almost six million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

Ultimately our aim is to inspire all South Africans to live in harmony with nature for the well-being of our country and its people.

See www.wwf.org.za for more information on the organisation's activities in South Africa.

WWF stands for the World Wide Fund for Nature. The organization prefers to be referred to just by the acronym.

You can follow WWF on twitter <http://twitter.com/WWFSouthAfrica>

For more information, images and interviews:

Andrea Weiss

media@wwf.org.za

+27 (0)82 920 5933