



For Immediate Release

MACARTHUR FOUNDATION TO ASSESS CLIMATE CHANGE THREATS AND FUND RESPONSES

New York, NY (February 13, 2007) – Recognizing that global warming is occurring and threatens biodiversity conservation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation will invest \$5 million over three years to identify and mitigate the threat from global climate change on species in the most diverse ecosystems of the planet. MacArthur President Jonathan Fanton today announced support for eight initial projects that respond to the pressures placed on species and their habitats as a result of climate change.

“Climate change is a real threat to our shared vision of a sustainable world,” said Fanton in remarks at the 25th anniversary dinner for the World Resources Institute, an environmental think tank that MacArthur helped to build in 1982. “The biologically richest environments in the world are in the tropics, which are especially vulnerable to climate change; yet little is being done to examine this issue, much less respond to it. These new grants will help identify the level of threat and support steps needed to adapt to the impact of climate change in each region where we fund conservation work. Otherwise, all our investments in conservation could be at great risk.”

MacArthur has invested more than \$350 million in support of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. MacArthur’s conservation grantmaking focuses on conserving the biodiversity of living organisms and maintaining tropical ecosystems, home to some of the world’s most diverse natural communities and critically endangered species. Grants are made to help create and manage parks, increase the skills of local governmental and non-governmental institutions and individuals, strengthen environmental law and policy, and advance the state of knowledge about conservation. This includes efforts to better understand how climate change will impact biodiversity under different management regimes and support for new technologies, tools, and interventions to conserve biodiversity in the face of predicted climate change and variability.

The Foundation’s conservation work is focused on eight regions around the world: Madagascar and the Albertine Rift in Africa; Melanesia, Eastern Himalaya, and Lower Mekong in Asia and the Pacific; and the Insular Caribbean, Southern Andes, and Northern Andes in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The eight new grants, totaling nearly \$2.3 million, for climate change planning and mitigation are as follows:

The University of California, Berkeley will receive \$390,000 over two years to develop innovative tools and techniques to improve planning for biodiversity conservation in Madagascar, particularly to anticipate climate change scenarios. The University will create a

web-based biodiversity repository to help ensure the most recent data is available and accessible for planning conservation responses to climate change. The new technologies created for the repository are expected to provide a model system that can be used as a blueprint for other conservation priority regions around the world.

A grant of \$350,000 over two years will be awarded to the **World Conservation Union (IUCN)** to support an assessment of species' vulnerability to climate change. The IUCN Species Survival Commission holds the world's largest and most authoritative database on the conservation status of species, the threats these species face, and the actions needed to reduce these threats. This grant will allow IUCN to make significant additions to the database in order to more accurately and comprehensively measure and track the impact of climate change.

The International START Secretariat of the American Geophysical Union will receive a grant of \$300,000 over two years to assess research and training needs, develop a curriculum for masters-level courses, and conduct intensive training courses in climate change and biodiversity conservation for those working in Africa's Albertine Rift region. The project will help address the need for indigenous climate and biodiversity expertise to deal with the pressures of climate change in the region. This work will be carried out in close collaboration with the University of Dar es Salaam.

A grant of \$290,000 over 18 months to **The Bernice P. Bishop Museum** funds an assessment report on the vulnerability of biodiversity and island ecosystems in Melanesia to climate change. All data gathered during the survey will be organized in an environmental information system for climate change in Melanesia and made available via the Internet for access by conservation groups. This work will be carried out in coordination with the Pacific Science Association and the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme.

Additional grants will fund an assessment of the impact of climate change on biodiversity in the Caribbean (**Caribbean Natural Resource Institute**, \$250,000); development of an adaptive framework for conservation in the face of climate change in the Albertine Rift (**BirdLife International**, \$250,000); a climate change vulnerability assessment for coastal and marine conservation in Madagascar (**World Wildlife Fund**, \$250,000); and recommendations for creating a network of protected areas that is resilient to potential future effects of climate change in Madagascar (**Conservation International**, \$200,000).

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation is a private, independent grant making institution dedicated to helping groups and individuals foster lasting improvement in the human condition. With assets of more than \$6 billion, the Foundation makes approximately \$225 million in grants annually. For more information about the Foundation, please visit www.macfound.org.

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