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Zerofootprint CDM Initiative  
Bukavu Region of the Democratic Republic of Congo

The Zerofootprint CDM Initiative couples developing a carbon offsetting project with protecting the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) endangered ape population. The project will have wide-reaching effects for the communities in the Bukavu region and for the fight to clean up the atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> and stem the disastrous climate change around the world.

At the heart of the project are the reforestation of the Bukavu Region and the restoration of the ape habitat. It will be based on a sustainable funding model, relying on the revenues from the sale of carbon credits derived from the trees planted, and protected, within the ape's natural habitat after the initial startup donated funding.

Once the Congo initiative is underway, environmentally conscious companies will be able to purchase the carbon value stored in the trees to neutralize their own emissions. Each tree will capture and store tonnes of carbon dioxide over its lifetime.

The project involves the acquisition of CDM certification, which refers to the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism. This is a rigorous and lengthy process that will be shouldered by one of the chief funding organization in the project. Among the CDM's main criteria is demonstrable benefit to the host country and lengthy consultations with the local authorities. Since the project stands to create jobs and a sustainable income for the communities in the Bukavu Region, the benefits are clear.

Another of the CDM's key criteria is the necessity of "additionality," which requires that for a project to be eligible as an offset, it must be able to prove that it is not just "business as usual." In other words, it must be clear that the project would not have happened without the revenue from the sale of the carbon credits. Since the ecosystem protection is dependent on these revenues, the Congo project easily qualifies as additional, and thus matches the Kyoto mandate of fighting climate change through measurable and verifiable efforts that benefit the planet not only environmentally but socially.

"As climate change begins to threaten human civilization with floods, and droughts, and disease, and famine," says Ron Dembo, founder and CEO of Zerofootprint, "it is beginning to make sense to look around the animal kingdom, and say 'we're all endangered species now'."

In concert with the Zerofootprint School Nutrition Project, these initiatives form a virtuous circle, where the initial investment in the project creates jobs, conservation and environmental protection and a sustainable source of income. These funds, in the form of micro-credit create additional jobs and independence for the women of Tshivanga and improved nutrition for the children. Improved social conditions help improve and stabilize the political conditions, which fosters greater investment in the region. Thus is formed a self-sustaining virtuous circle.

The Zerofootprint CDM Initiative is a joint project of the Canadian Ape Alliance and Zerofootprint. For more information about these organizations, please visit [www.great-apes.com](http://www.great-apes.com) and [www.zerofootprint.net](http://www.zerofootprint.net).