

HOPE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

a new film by:



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Documentary film offers new approach for Climate Stability, Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Agriculture

Local screenings in 14 countries of global environmental film champions a hopeful way forward

WASHINGTON, DC—As nations prepare for the COP15 climate change summit in December, a new film to air on BBC World reframes the global warming debate, asserting that large-scale ecosystem restoration holds the key not only to stabilizing the earth’s climate, but also to eradicating poverty and making sustainable agriculture a reality.

“Hope in a Changing Climate” is produced with financial support from a diverse set of funders including the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)-The Netherlands, Open University, The Rockefeller Foundation, the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture, and The World Bank. The film airs on BBC World on November 27 and will be screened in Copenhagen by The World Bank and IUCN. “Hope in a Changing Climate” was filmed in China, Rwanda, and Ethiopia and documents remarkably successful efforts of local people to restore denuded, degraded ecosystems – transforming vast areas into verdant, life-sustaining environments, and enabling people to break free from entrenched poverty. The film contains breathtaking before and after footage of large-scale restoration projects.

Presented by John D. Liu, founder of the Environmental Education Media Project (EEMP) and creator of “Lessons of The Loess Plateau,” the new film is directed by Jeremy Bristow from the BBC, producer of the acclaimed “The Truth About Climate Change” series with David Attenborough. Beyond the BBC World broadcast and the COP15 screening, “Hope in a Changing Climate” will be screened by 38 organizations in 14 countries, all of whom will host facilitate discussions around the film and its themes. It will also be distributed globally by TVE, broadcast in China on CCTV, is available on-line in perpetuity for educational purposes on the Open University ‘Creative Climate’ website, and can be seen at www.hopeinachangingclimate.org. Facilitated stakeholder discussions



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hosted by an international network of research centers and nongovernmental organizations have been organized by EEMP in conjunction with the George Mason University Center for Climate & Society in Virginia. A list of host countries and organizations is attached.

According to Jonathan J. Halperin, Executive Director of EEMP, “over the span of geologic time, nature has perfected systems for carbon sequestration that maintain a fundamentally stable climate. Over ten days in December 2009, we are unlikely to conjure a better system. But there is an immense opportunity to define a trajectory in Copenhagen that draws natural systems fully into the mainstream of climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.”

Based on more than ten years of intensive field investigations around the world, John D. Liu commented that, “the nature of the challenge demands a species-level response. It is very clear that integrated poverty eradication from ecosystem restoration holds vast potential to help stabilize the climate. We know what is needed; we know it works; and we know from the history of other civilizations that have collapsed what the consequences are of failing to act – and quickly.”

By way of further elaboration, Liu explained the situation in more detail:

“Human impact on the climate is not simply from the flagrant emission of carbon dioxide and began long before industrial scale emissions. Carbon disequilibrium is a symptom of a larger systemic failure.

We can more comprehensively describe what is taking place by stating that we are reducing biodiversity, which leads to a reduction of biomass, which reduced the accumulation of organic matter in the soils. This has altered three fundamental earth processes that we rely on for life. We have reduced the absorption of carbon dioxide and release of oxygen through photosynthesis, we have reduced fertility and productivity of the soil, and we have disrupted infiltration and retention of rainfall.

Many civilizations have faced this on a local scale and collapsed because they failed to learn this. Now we face this same challenge on a planetary scale. We must now consciously evolve to understand this and act as a species to restore ecosystem function wherever it has been disrupted.

Restoration of degraded lands not only reduces carbon in the atmosphere but also mitigates against extreme events like flooding, mudslides, drought, and famine. It increases agricultural productivity helping ensure food security and it shows us how to make sure that future generations have abundant biodiversity.”

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