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North Australia's Indigenous Fire Management Methods to Cut Carbon Pollution Go Global at Doha

Mark Dreyfus, Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, Australia, today hosted a special briefing at the UN Climate Change Conference in Doha on Australia's new Savanna Fire Management Initiative.

The initiative builds on the pioneering savanna fire management methodology recently approved under Australia's Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI).

The Australian Government is now working with the United Nations University (UNU) and the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd. (NAILSMA) to share Australia's experience of savanna fire management mitigation projects with developing countries.

"Countries in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and South America share similar savanna environments and traditional knowledge with regard to their management", said Mr. Dreyfus.

"As in Australia, traditional fire management practices elsewhere have been interrupted, resulting in uncontrolled and destructive wild fires which emit large amounts of greenhouse gases."

Also on hand to present on the initiative were NAILSMA Chairman, Peter Yu, and Senior Research Fellow of UNU's Traditional Knowledge Initiative, Sam Johnston.

"Indigenous land managers have been leading the development of the Carbon Farming Initiative methodology for savanna fire management in Australia", said Mr. Yu.

He explained there are two savanna fire management projects underway in north Australia: the award-winning West Arnhem Land Fire Management (WALFA) Project and the Fish River Fire Project, which has recently been approved as a carbon emission offset project under the CFI. This means the project can generate carbon credits that can be sold into the Australian carbon market.

"These projects have the potential to generate sustainable livelihoods in remote communities, where few other opportunities for earning an income exist", said Mr. Yu.

"But more importantly, they strengthen ties to culture and country and provide an opportunity for Indigenous people to stay on their ancestral lands."

Adding to the international dimension is the United Nations University's Traditional Knowledge Initiative, which has worked with Indigenous people on climate change issues around the globe.

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"Australia's approach to savanna fire management might be applicable in a number of developing countries. That is what the new Savanna Fire Management Initiative aims to explore", said Mr. Johnston.

Using the knowledge and experience of Australia's Indigenous land managers, the initiative will develop resources to document and communicate results and lessons learned and provide practical guidance on project design and implementation.

"This is an exciting initiative. It will allow interested groups around the world to benefit from the work done by Indigenous land managers in north Australia, assisting them to reduce emissions from savanna fires and generate sustainable income through participation in the global carbon market". said Mr. Dreyfus.

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A joint Media Release by:

United Nations University

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North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd.