

## STORES AND SINKS

- Peatlands are wetlands that store carbon from dead plants to form organic soil or peat
- Peatlands are one of the world's largest carbon stores (more than 550 billion tonnes), equivalent to 100 years emissions from fossil fuels or 75% of atmospheric carbon
- One hectare of tropical peatswamp forest stores up to 5,000 tonnes of carbon or 15 times more than any other forest type
- Peatlands cover 400 million ha or 3% of the land and freshwater surface of the earth and occur in 150 countries from tropical to polar zones

## or source



## ACT NOW

Action is needed to maintain peatland carbon stores by:

- Protecting pristine peatlands
- Restoring natural water levels and controlling drainage
- Preventing fires
- Restoring peatland ecosystems
- Reducing global climate change

## SOURCES

- Degradation of peatlands worldwide through drainage, mining, land clearing and fire is turning peatlands from carbon stores to emission sources
- Drained peatlands release between 15 and 50 tonnes of carbon/ha/year as well as being more vulnerable to fires
- Peatland fires release 100-600 tonnes of carbon/ha Fires in Indonesia released an estimated 1-2 billion tonnes of carbon in 1997-98
- Climate change is predicted to induce drying and fires in many peatlands eg, 60 million ha (with 75 billion tonnes of stored carbon) in Canada is likely to be seriously affected.

WEBSITE: www.peat-portal.net FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Global Environment Centre, 2nd Floor Wisma Hing, 78, Jalan SS2/72, 47300 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia Tel: +60 3 7957 7003 Email: fparish@genet.po.my OR Wetlands International, P.O. Box 471, 6700 Wageningen, The Netherlands Tel: +31 317 478861 Fax: +31 317 478850 Email: marcel.silvius@wetlands.org Produced by GEC and Wetlands International as part of the project on Integrated Management of Peatlands for Biodiversity and Climate Change, with funding from UNEP-GEF.





