



Intervention at the Ministerial Meeting on  
Financial Arrangement for REDD-plus

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Ministerial Meeting on Financial Arrangement  
For REDD-plus  
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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address this high level Ministerial meeting on financial arrangements for REDD-plus that are effective, equitable, transparent and responsive to the needs of developing countries. I commend the government of France for hosting this meeting, and the governments of Australia, Japan, Norway, US and UK for joining this effort with concrete commitments. In particular, I would like to recognize the governments of [To be completed – PNG, Brazil, Indonesia, etc...] for leading the way in recognizing their sovereign forest resources as engines for sustainable development

I am not here simply by chance. Forest management and conservation have been central components of the GEF mandate for 19 years. Acting as an operating entity of the financial mechanisms for all three Rio Conventions, the GEF has allocated approximately US\$1.5 billion to forest initiatives, supplemented by more than US\$4.5 billion in cofinancing. Working with our partner agencies, the GEF has continuously increased its financial flows for forest-related activities throughout successive replenishment periods. In this process, the GEF has amassed an impressive body of experience in financing forests globally, in particular reducing deforestation and forest degradation, protecting biodiversity and ensuring that sustainable forest management is part of the development objectives of developing countries everywhere.

Yet even more is needed. We warmly embrace the growing engagement of multilateral and regional development banks, UN agencies, bilateral funding institutions, and national agencies in the REDD-plus agenda. GEF's own efforts need to be increased to tackle rampant deforestation and forest degradation. REDD-plus is perhaps the best opportunity that has ever emerged to support poor and developing countries to cover the costs they bear in maintaining ecosystem services whose benefits are global in nature. This aim is also at the heart of the GEF mission.

As you may know, yesterday we essentially completed the replenishment negotiations for the next phase of the GEF. [Text to be introduced on the outcomes of the Paris meeting, as appropriate]. Within the replenishment package, the GEF donors approved a major program on SFM/REDD-plus, which draws on a successful pilot initiative in GEF-4 that provided financial incentives to countries for transformative action in combating deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries.

Responding to the Copenhagen Accord's call for funding mechanisms to provide positive incentives for REDD-plus, and drawing on guidance from the UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD, the

investment strategy in SFM and REDD-plus for GEF-5 will be expanded into a robust challenge account. This program will provide \$250 million as an incentive mechanism available to countries that wish to promote transformative action on forests by bringing together their GEF focal area allocations in climate change, biodiversity and land degradation, and directing the funds into more efficient, wide-reaching, multi-sectoral projects and programs. We estimate that the incentive mechanism will lead to an investment, over the next four years of \$1 billion in grants by the GEF, and will leverage an additional \$3 billion in co-financing. Therefore, through the GEF, and in partnership with the GEF agencies, countries can take significant steps to fulfill the initial financial commitment by donor countries to the REDD-plus agenda contained in the Copenhagen Accord.

The objective of the meeting today is to “facilitate the establishment of an interim REDD-plus Partnership Arrangement.” I could not agree more that a partnership arrangement is badly needed. The enthusiasm and early commitment by donors and agencies to respond to the REDD opportunity has generated an enormous positive momentum and some early results. But we are also witnessing coordination challenges brought up by an increasingly complex architecture. Let us recognize that creating new funds or mechanisms that demand many years to structure and begin functioning is not the optimal response. For climate change, the potential for interventions in forests is clearly time-bound. If emissions from deforestation and forest degradation are going to be reduced to a level that can significantly affect the global atmospheric carbon equation, action is needed now. Therefore, we must use and improve the existing mechanisms that are at our disposal.

At the GEF, we understand our role well. The GEF is a country-driven funding mechanism, dedicated to the protection of the global commons, responding to the major international environmental agreements in this area. We are a partnership organization that taps into the strengths of agencies, including all those engaged in early REDD-plus action. Unlike other pilot programs on REDD that are directed to a limited number of countries, the GEF is able to support action on forests in all developing countries. This unique structure permits the GEF to act as an independent broker, financially supporting the needs of countries through the agency that is most appropriate for a particular task and geographical context. Moreover, recent GEF reforms will expand the possibilities for access to GEF resources by developing countries. The GEF can also

provide a bird's eye view of forest financing needs and response measures across many sectors and focal areas, thereby revealing the most promising opportunities and the most significant resource gaps.

I stand before you today to contribute to this emerging Partnership Arrangement with the experience and the programs under the GEF mandate, and in particular through the strategies and resources that have just been approved in the GEF-5 replenishment. I look forward to working with all the REDD-plus initiatives and their related agencies, with donors and recipient countries toward a path that can lead to a more harmonized financial architecture that best responds to the urgent needs of our planet and its inhabitants.

Thank you very much.