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***Kenya***

**Press release**

**Launch of the National Task Force on**

**Anti-Corruption for REDD+**

***Nairobi - 27 November 2014 - For immediate release***

**The Government of Kenya led by Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (MEWNR), Transparency International Kenya, the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission and the United Nations Development Programme have jointly launched today the National Task Force on Anti-Corruption for REDD+.**

REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks) is a climate change mitigation initiative which seeks to provide financial incentives to enhance the role of forests in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The MEWNR, in collaboration with other stakeholders in the forest sector, is currently implementing activities that collectively will enable the country access international carbon finance to support REDD+ implementation.

The credibility and functioning of a REDD+ system relies on a robust implementation framework, where governance measures, including transparency and accountability, are indispensable and key social safeguard measures that were set out in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change’s 2010 Cancun Agreements.

 **“The establishment of the Task Force is a clear example of how several institutions, each with their mandate, capacity and vision, can unite their efforts to enhance transparency, accountability and integrity in REDD+”, stated Principal Secretary Dr Lesyampe.**

The Task Force membership includes the MEWNR, the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC), Transparency International (TI) Kenya, the Land Commission, the Kenya Forest Service, the National REDD+ Office, the National Treasury, Indigenous Livelihoods Enhancement Partners (ILEPA) and the National Alliance for Community Forest Associations (NACOFA). Its mandate, with a budget of 4.5 million KES for the first year, is to advance a multi-stakeholder dialogue on the interface between REDD+ and anti-corruption efforts.

**“Deforestation, like corruption, affects us all but remedies to its effects are best utilized when they are locally relevant, rather than one-size-fits-all”, highlighted EACC Chairman Mr. Mumo Matemu.**

The Task Force will alsoprovide guidance to Government and stakeholders, including on a national stakeholder engagement plan for REDD+, REDD+ finance and national guidelines on free, prior and informed consent. It will implement joint “quick win” priority actions: providing inputs into the draft benefit sharing Bill, conducting capacity development for governmental, private and non-governmental stakeholders, strengthening and/or developing codes of conduct for REDD+ actors, and a critical review of the existing feedback and grievance mechanism.

**“Many mechanisms for delivering climate finance are new and untested. However, decades of experience with development have taught us that anti-corruption safeguards must not be an afterthought. Now is the time to ensure that national, multilateral and bilateral climate funds operate with and are governed by full transparency, accountability and integrity”, declared TI Kenya Executive Director, Mr. Samuel Kimeu.**

The Task Force is supported technically and financially by the UN-REDD Programme, a collaborative partnership of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

**Mr. Fernando Abaga Edjang, UNDP Country Office Deputy Director noted that “UNDP and UN-REDD’s support to the Task Force enhances and complements the support we provide to the Government of Kenya on issues of both governance and of REDD+. The diverse composition of this Task Force -- with representatives from government and civil society -- reflects not only the commitment of these institutions, but also the various perspectives needed to address complex and sensitive governance matters related to forests and REDD+.”**

REDD+ implementation will involve the design and application of appropriate land and forest management practices, including enhanced forest sector governance, to reduce deforestation and forest degradation and to support conservation and sustainable management of available forest resources. The UN-REDD Programme and other bilateral supported programmes have been instrumental in providing technical and financial support for these efforts. A number of activities are currently going on in the country to support efforts to design, develop and apply strategies and programs to reduce emissions and enhance carbon sink capacities of forest ecosystems. This builds on analytical work, completed last year, on governance issues such as a REDD+ corruption risk assessment, scoping of carbon rights and benefit-sharing dimensions, assessment of legal preparedness for REDD+, as well as an assessment of the forest sector and its contribution to the green economy.

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