

**Ministerial Dialogue with the Heads of the member organizations of
the Collaborative Partnership on Forests
UN Forum on Forests**

**Remarks by Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator
New York, 3 February 3-5pm**

I thank the UN Forum on Forests for hosting this high level dialogue at the outset of the International Year of Forests.

Sustaining the world's forests, whose integrity is so vital for those who dwell in them and for our planet's ecosystems, goes hand in hand with UNDP's mission of advancing sustainable human development.

The threats facing our forests are extensive. UNDP works with programme countries on many fronts to tackle them.

For example:

- through the UN-REDD Programme to combat deforestation with FAO and UNEP, we help developing countries strengthen their capacity to prepare national REDD+ strategies;**
- through our partnership with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), we support more than 35 countries to implement projects ranging from sustainable forest management to establishing protected areas; and**
- through the GEF Small Grants Programme, we are supporting indigenous community-conserved areas in 123 countries.**

We are also firmly committed to supporting countries to implement the UN Forest Instrument and the Global Objectives on Forests.

The importance of protecting our forests has gained international momentum in recent months with the outcomes of the MDG Summit, the Nagoya Biodiversity Conference, and the Cancun Climate Change Conference.

The Cancun Agreements are pioneering in enshrining the need to stem the loss of tropical forests in order to mitigate climate change in the context of provision of adequate and predictable support to developing countries.

Climate finance will be a major source of funding for developing countries in the future.

REDD+ could be an example of how, through such finance, a range of development objectives can be met simultaneously. In addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, well structured REDD+ initiatives, could bring about better forest governance and protection of biodiversity; generate social benefits and poverty reduction; and be positive for human rights, including the rights of indigenous people.

A breakthrough achieved at Cancun in December was the recognition given to the need for strong safeguards to achieve the goals of REDD+¹.

UNDP, through the UN-REDD Programme, is committed to:

- **having its work on environmental and social safeguards for REDD+ initiatives meet the expectations set out in the Cancun Agreements;**
- **developing a recourse mechanism for forest stakeholders involved in REDD+, to ensure accountability and provide a system for addressing complaints from affected parties; and**
- **ensuring that human rights and the UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the right to free, prior, and informed consent, underpin the safeguards framework.**

UNDP is adapting its systems to meet the needs of the new climate finance architecture. We are now working with the World Bank to develop safeguards.

Achieving sustainable development, addressing climate change, and maintaining the world's precious biodiversity require an end to the ravaging deforestation rates of today.

UNDP looks forward to working with all its partners in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to help make that possible.

¹ Safeguards ensure that environmental and social issues are evaluated in decision making, help assess and reduce the risks, and provide a mechanism for consultation and disclosure of information.