

[Cross River signs REDD+ declaration as stakeholders endorse scheme](#)

Monday, 28 February 2011 00:00 By Chinedum Uwaegbulam, Assistant Housing & Environment Editor Property - Property

A FRESH deal has been sealed between the Federal Government and United Nations to protect Africa's largest rainforest region from deforestation and degradation, which accounts for nearly 20 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, more than the entire global transportation sector.

The deal on United Nations Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD) Declaration was signed between the Minister of Environment, Mr. John Odey, Cross River Governor, Liyel Imoke and United Nations Resident Coordinator, Daouda Toure in Mabushi, Abuja.

Under the scheme, the government is using Cross River to test-run the scheme and constrain the impacts of climate change. REDD is an effort to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests, offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development. "REDD+" goes beyond deforestation and forest degradation, and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

Governor Imoke said: "The use of forest resources is the mainstay of the economy of about 70 per cent of the population of forest communities. So managing it sustainably will help to alleviate poverty while ensuring that future generations have forest

"This forest also serves as a carbon sink thus helping to stabilise change crisis. The choice to conserve our forest entailed the withdrawal of revenue targets from timber exploitation. Besides the denial of this revenue, the State has committed enormous financial resources and man hours in the enforcement of the anti-deforestation ban."

Toure commended the constructive partnership between the Federal Government and the Cross Rivers State government on the issue of REDD, an approach likely to become one of the emerging best practices.

Meanwhile, stakeholders that met at National Validation Workshop on the draft Nigeria REDD+ Readiness Programmes in Abuja have approved the document, a two-track approach that consists of a combination of federal and state actions, with a focus on activities at community level. They agreed to form a National Stakeholders Forum on REDD+ with particular representation from civil society and non-governmental organisations.

Earlier, participants at Cross River Stakeholders' forum said that there was need for REDD+ to have a broad approach that went beyond forest conservation to address questions of land management, afforestation and reforestation, ecosystem restoration, sustainable agriculture and community-based livelihoods, and the programme should include provisions to assess issues of land tenure, carbon rights, fair benefit-sharing mechanisms, and community conflict, providing guidance on how to address them in the context of REDD+.