



Secretariat of the
**Convention on Biological
Diversity**



STATEMENT

BY MR JOCHEN FLASBARTH

**PRESIDENT OF THE COP9 BUREAU OF THE CONVENTION
ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE THIRTEENTH WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS

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United Nations
Environment Programme

413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800
Montreal, QC H2Y 1N9, Canada

Tel : +1 514 288 2220
Fax : +1 514 288 6588

<http://www.cbd.int>
secretariat@cbd.int

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today on behalf of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) here in beautiful Buenos Aires. 2009 is one of the most important years ever for forests, and our challenge in the coming months is nothing less than to lay the groundwork for halting and reversing the trend of deforestation and forest degradation; restoring intact forests world-wide; and maintaining the biodiversity of the world's forests for present and future generations. In this context, I greatly appreciate the **strong focus** of this World Forestry Congress on the links between biodiversity and all aspects of Sustainable Forest Management.

I believe the forest sector could become a 'game changer' for tackling the immense challenges we face as a global community. Please allow me to give you **four examples** of why I see a particularly important role for the forest sector.

The **first example** relates to increased funding for forest biodiversity. As you might recall, German Chancellor Angela Merkel at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, in Bonn in May 2008 pledged **500 Million Euros for the conservation of forests and other important ecosystems** in addition to the existing funds for this purpose. In the years 2009 to 2012 the German government will therewith spent a total of 1,3 Billion Euro in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity with a special focus on forest-based climate change mitigation and adaptation measures. And from 2012 onward, Germany will provide 500 Million Euros every year for biodiversity. While Germany has always been a strong supporter of the forest sector in developing countries, this new commitment can allow structural change, in particular if it is well coordinated with the pledges of other countries in the context of efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD). Numerous projects and partnerships are now underway, and all of them aim in a holistic way at conserving biodiversity, addressing climate change, and improving local livelihoods.

My **second example** refers to the **immense opportunities of forest landscape restoration**. We know that the conservation of forests, in particular primary forests, will make an important contribution to REDD efforts. In addition to addressing the first "D" of REDD, however, we also

need to utilize the significant potential for carbon sequestration and storage through addressing forest degradation, and thus forest restoration. **Indeed, the true ‘plus’ of REDD** is the combined potential to conserve the world’s precious remaining primary forests while at the same time **restoring degraded forestlands or degraded agricultural areas**, combining biodiversity and livelihood benefits with climate change mitigation and adaptation. According to UNFCCC estimates, there are an estimated **850 million hectares of degraded forest lands**, and their restoration could account for reducing CO2 emissions by approximately 117 gigatonnes of CO2 equivalents by 2030 through carbon sequestration – which amounts to almost 5% of the carbon dioxide presently in the atmosphere. We clearly should pursue all opportunities – conservation, sustainable forest management, and enhancement of carbon stocks – in a coordinated way. While the focus of any UNFCCC efforts will be on GHG emissions, the focus of the CBD and of the UNFF is on reducing deforestation and forest degradation, and on creating sustainable livelihoods. The CBD Programmes of Work on Forest Biodiversity and on Protected Areas contain many specific actions to reduce deforestation and forest degradation. The combined experience and expertise of foresters and biodiversity experts will be an essential ingredient to successful forest-based climate change mitigation or adaptation.

The **Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration**, for example, is providing the necessary tools to scale up our forest restoration efforts. In one striking example, a project of the Global Partnership and national authorities are reforesting and restoring the watershed of the Miyun Reservoir in China – which provides most of the drinking water for the 17 million residents of Beijing – with support from local villagers and other stakeholders.

My **third point** highlights that these current opportunities are linked to **further development and evolution of SFM**. While sustainable forest management (SFM) has emerged as a widely recognized, dynamic concept, we know all too well that it suffers severely from implementation on the ground, but also from a lack of clear criteria and indicators. According to the ITTO, **less than 5 percent of tropical forests** were managed sustainably in 2005. The latest findings of FAO’s Global Forest Resources Assessment indicate that this number has increased somewhat, and especially encouraging is the **increase in certified forests world-wide**. But we still have a large gap in the definition and implementation of SFM across the world. The opportunity we

have this year, and throughout the **International Year of Biodiversity in 2010 and the International Year of Forests in 2011**, will be to close these gaps, by supporting a clear and concise global approach, criteria and indicators, and by strengthening implementation across all types of forests, in all countries. The climate debate is calling on us to ‘push the envelope’ on the dynamic and evolving concept of SFM, and we should make use of this opportunity. The CBD stands ready to work with you toward this goal.

Finally, the **fourth reason** concerns recent scientific developments in the valuation of biodiversity and the assessment of ecosystem goods and services. This is apparent in the preliminary results of the global survey entitled “The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity” (TEEB), which is headed by Pavan Sukhdev, of Deutsche Bank India. The TEEB study concludes that we are losing an estimated 2-5 Trillion US Dollars, that is, **2000 – 5000 Billion US Dollars, every year** in economic assets through the destruction and degradation of tropical forests and their biodiversity. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment in 2005 has given us all the arguments we need for investing in sustainable forest management, and the conservation of biodiversity. These investments are becoming more important than ever, as the global economy is headed for a ‘nature crunch’. We clearly must change the way we manage our biological resources, and the forest sector could be leading the way.

We know much more today about the links between ecosystem services, human well-being, and forests than we did even just a few years ago. We understand now, for example, that the **resistance and resilience** of our forests, and thus the ecosystem services they can provide, are directly linked to biodiversity. The CBD Secretariat is launching, here at the WFC on Thursday, a global review on the links between biodiversity and forest resilience. The results of this study have important consequences for the way we plan, design and implement REDD and other forest-based mitigation and adaptation measures, because the permanence of forest carbon stocks and other ecosystem services depend on biodiversity. **Diverse, large and unfragmented forest landscapes have the best long-term climate change mitigation and adaptation potential.** The links between different types of forest management and climate change have been studied by the CBD Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on biodiversity and climate change. Their recent report will be submitted to the UNFCCC in Copenhagen. Amongst other things, the Expert Group

concluded that forest conservation is the most appropriate forest management objective for primary forests, while improvement of SFM, and restoration of forest landscapes, have great potential for modified natural forests, plantations, and degraded forests.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A Greek proverb says that “**A society grows great when old people plant trees, without hoping to ever sit in their shade.**” I hope that this World Forestry Congress will mark the emergence of a proactive forest sector that enables all of our countries to turn into truly great societies who consider the next generations when managing their forests. A world that is increasingly hot, flat and crowded has a great need for intelligent nature-based solutions that truly sustainable forest management can offer. In this spirit, I thank you for your attention and I wish the thirteenth World Forestry Congress every success.
