

3rd World Forest Week and 21st Session of the Committee on Forestry

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“Results of Rio+20 and their impact on forests and development”

Mr. Director General and dear friend José Graziano

Mr. Anders Lonnblad, COFO Chairperson

Dr. Hasan Mahmud, Minister for Environment and Forest, People’s Republic of Bangladesh

Mr Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

Mr. Sven Alkalaj, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Mr Dr Pieter Willem Mulder, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Water of South Africa,

Heads of Delegation,

Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honour for me to address you at this Opening Ceremony of the 3rd World Forest Week and the 21st Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO). This is the first time I am before a large UN gathering since last June, when I had the privilege to speak on behalf of the Brazilian Delegation, at the Rio+20 Conference. It is fitting that the theme of this meeting be the importance of forests for development and that this debate be held under the auspices of the UN Organization dedicated to combat hunger, two issues at the forefront of Brazil's priorities.

I was asked to speak on the implications of the Rio+20 Conference on forests and development.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development which took place in Rio last June following the intense preparatory process in New York at UN Headquarters was the largest meeting ever held in the history of the United Nations. It also triggered many large scale international gatherings across the globe during the last year.

Twenty years ago, we were aware of the requirements to ensure the well being of future generations. Today, while recognizing that such high objectives and their long term perspective must be guaranteed at the heart of the decision making process, a clear sense of urgency is becoming clear to all of the need to address the many interrelated crises in which the world is involved: the economic and financial crisis, the climate crisis, the water crisis, the energy crisis, the food crisis. This is “the urgency of the present”.

During Rio+20, Brazil also organized ten Sustainable Development Dialogues, bringing together experts from the non-governmental sector to discuss the most important and pressing issues on the international sustainable development agenda. As I am sure most of you know, one of these Dialogues was focused on forests, and through a wide public voting process suggested a number of recommendations that were forwarded to the Heads of State and Government present at the Conference.

The official outcome of the Conference, entitled “The Future We Want” provided the international community with a solid platform of consensus and a firm basis for setting in motion a number of international negotiation processes for the promotion of sustainable development.

But, beyond the specific section of the Outcome document that relates to the issue at hand, what are the forest-related outcomes of Rio+20?

First and foremost, Rio+20 puts the eradication of poverty at the center stage of all our efforts towards sustainable development, recognizing it as “the greatest global challenge facing the world today”. At the same time, the Conference renewed at the highest political level, in view of the more than 100 Delegations represented at the level of Heads of State/Government, the global commitment to the Rio Principles, with specific reference to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

The international community agreed that the challenges of development should be addressed through the paradigm of sustainability and through integrated actions in its three pillars: economic, social and environmental.

Furthermore, Rio+20 sent a clear signal that we must move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production. We have therefore adopted the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns and shall give priority to this aspect in developing the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Rio Summit demonstrated that agreements are not only possible, as we saw through the successful negotiations concluded in RioCentro, but that there is an ambitious schedule ahead of us, as we move towards setting in place, within the United Nations, a high-level political forum to follow up on the implementation of sustainable development, a process to define broader measures of progress to complement GDP and intergovernmental negotiations on establishing a set of universally applicable Sustainable Development Goals to help us pursue focused and coherent action.

Forests are at the heart of this fundamental conceptual framework. While we strive to eradicate poverty and hunger, we must give due attention to the close to one billion of the world's poorest people for whom forests and trees on farms are a direct source of food and to the two billion people that rely on biomass fuels for cooking and heating, according to FAO numbers. There has never been a stronger link between forests and the need to provide food for our populations through agrobiodiversity, agroforestry practices, and the myriad services forests provide to enhance the productivity of agricultural landscapes. FAO's recognized expertise to apply science and technology to food production should be duly leveraged. We must discuss, agree upon and implement at the national and international levels a new forest economics that addresses the growing demand for food, fibre and energy; that enables an inclusive green economy through sustainable forest management of both natural and planted forests; that triggers sustainable production and consumption that stimulate significant investment in technology and productivity throughout the forest products chains; that recognizes the value of indigenous and local communities knowledge and customs; that reduces emissions from deforestation and degradation.

To address these various dimensions we must look towards building international consensus and this forum is particularly suited for that. Increasing forest cover and sustainable use of forests worldwide speaks to the objectives of the three so called Rio Conventions dealing with climate change, biodiversity and desertification.

A well-developed forest-based economy must be part of the country's development strategy, and be recognized as a priority in the national agenda. Conservation and the economic use of forests are indissociably linked in that agenda. Forests are such an important issue, with such great potential for sustainable development, that require perfecting management tools and interministerial coordination mechanisms, along the lines of what the Brazilian Government has promoted with the Plan to Prevent and Control Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon and savannah ("Cerrado") areas (PPCDAM) and the implementation of a climate-change-related agenda.

In Brazil, the task involves identifying policies and management procedures to make the interaction between the Ministry of the Environment and its governmental partners more agile, with a view to promote incentives for the development of robust forest-based economies and the attraction of industries; rural development based on planted forests (also avoiding concentration of land property); job creation; promotion of sustainable tourism; the strengthening of state and local environmental bodies; the Rural Environmental Registry, the Low-Carbon Agriculture Program, the National Policy of Planted Forests, Brazil's Public Forest Management Law, among other actions.

For improving forest management, we are committed to create and improve economic instruments (credit, fiscal policy, funding, and collateral); to reduce transaction costs and end unfair competition between the legal production of timber products and illegal exploitation: the struggle against illegal logging cannot be conducted only through command and control activities. On the other hand, it is timely to promote synergies and interaction between the forest and agriculture policies: those two agendas must walk hand-in-hand and not drift apart. We have to look for an integrated perspective to deal with planted and native forests, with basic principles and clear rules, economic instruments, R&D and the struggle against illegal operations.

In the context of the ongoing Forest Code deliberations, President Dilma Rousseff's Government is fully committed to the conservation and sustainable use of our forests as well as to ensuring the productivity of our agriculture. Maintaining our forests and planting trees, while making good economic sense in itself, is, in fact, essential for sustainable rural development. President Rousseff's decision to establish criteria based on social and environmental aspects recognizes that: small farmers and rural families (that represent 90% of rural properties and 24% of farm land are required to restore less while the medium and large landowners which represent 10% of the number of properties but 76% of farm land shall restore proportionately more degraded areas, based on technical criteria.

We are facing the challenge of restoring the extensive degraded areas in the country as an opportunity to broaden forest coverage, in a productive and entrepreneurial perspective. The new forest legislation can offer a series of income generation alternatives from maintenance and revegetation of the so-called Permanent Preservation Areas and Legal Reserve. Along these lines, we are defining, together with the business sector, academy and society as a whole, the strategy that will make this challenge attainable.

I have the pleasure to announce today the official launching of a Brazilian directive creating the National Programme to Conserve Brazil Wood - Pau Brasil (*Caesalpinia echinata*), which aims to promote concrete actions towards the conservation and sustainable use of this species and its natural habitat. This species as you may know has special significance for all Brazilians as it originated the name of our country.

I also highlight the implementation of initiatives strictly focused on conservation, such as those related to protected areas and botanical gardens, aimed at promoting the sustainable use and commercial plantations of species in public and private enterprises and undertakings.

In this regard I would like to mention the Amazon Region Protected Areas Program – ARPA – the world's largest program for conservation of tropical forests. Its actions cover 43% of the Amazon biome and have a decisive role in protecting forest areas, thus contributing for biodiversity preservation, reduction of deforestation, and consequently, have a positive impact on climate change. Sixty-four Federal and State Protected Areas (PAs) have been created so far (32 million hectares of protected land). Now we are launching a new financial strategy to support ARPA in a long-term perspective

The different forest functions (environmental, economic or social) or the different forest types (natural or semi-natural forests and plantations) should not be seen in contradiction or competition but rather as supportive and complementary landscape, for a weak economic performance of forests is in no ones' interest. We need to stop deforestation and preserve biodiversity and carbon stocks, as well as guarantee sustainable wood supply and livelihood for local people. Natural forests are to be preserved, and semi-natural forests restored and better used thus establishing suitable land

plantations in order to cover the growing fiber and fuel demand.

There are more than 5 thousand products and bio-products originating from forests and wood used on a daily basis, in pulp and paper, food, energy, medicines, electronics, packaging, shoes, personal hygiene, automobiles, cosmetics, toys, and others, and this potential needs to be exploited. Many more is to be developed through research and technology, for instance, forests are home to the potential development of biomimicry, industrial applications, which, especially when allied to nanotechnology, represent one of the most promising areas for innovation in industrial design.

The valuation of environmental services is a crucial aspect of our policies as we aim to address and solve the inter-related crises involving climate change, food, water and energy access as well as population increase . The demand for food, fuel, fiber and forests, the so called 4Fs, increases together with population increase and the welcome shift away from poverty. New, more efficient technologies and management practices must lead us to more sustainable levels of production and consumption.

I take this opportunity to highlight the importance of the agreement reached two years ago during the Convention on Biological Diversity's COP-10 in Nagoya that led to the signing of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to genetic resources and the sharing of benefits derived from the use of those resources. As we move towards ratification of that very important instrument, the international ABS Regime, also integrated by FAO's International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA/TIRFAA), is poised to provide a powerful tool for the conservation and sustainable use of forest resources, the development of science, and the well being of forest dwellers, in particular indigenous populations.

Dear Director-General,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Brazilian experience in fighting deforestation goes beyond the environmental perspective; it also incorporates the social and economic dimensions of the problem. It is basically a sustainable development experience, with all the challenges, obstacles and opportunities that the concept encompasses.

Though the implementation of this strategy, in 2011, we had the lowest deforestation rate in the Legally-Defined Brazilian Amazon in the past 20 years (6,418 km² from 27.772km² in 2004). In the period from 2004 to 2011, activities on the ground have helped reduce by 76, 9% deforestation in the Legally-Defined Brazilian Amazon.

“Bolsa Verde” or the Green Grant is yet another critical initiative that is being implemented under President Dilma Rousseff’s Administration with the joint objectives of eradicating poverty and the preservation of our forests. It is a program of income transfer focused on the population group that lives within protected areas and whose livelihood comes from the forest. In one year it reached some 20 thousand families, and we have the goal to achieve 50 thousand families by 2014.

In the past few years, new cooperation modalities are gaining ground, such as the **Brazilian Climate Fund** and the **Amazon Fund** which proposes a different and innovative logic for international and national cooperation and is based on incentives for results: the largest the reduction in deforestation, the more funds can be earmarked and destined for projects associated to deforestation reduction, biodiversity conservation and promotion of sustainable development. It should be stressed that the Amazon Fund provides for 20% of its resources to be used in tropical forest biomes other than the Amazon, as well as in other tropical countries. The Amazon Fund is thus also a powerful tool to promote South-South cooperation, of which the ongoing cooperation with OTCA is an example that we are hoping to emulate.

Dear Director-General,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to report that one of the most significant results of the Rio+20 conference for the forests and development areas is a greater determination and engagement of the private sector in implementing the necessary commitments in order to make the transition for a more sustainable model.

We are currently observing a growing commitment on this sector in the creation of action programs focused on the better use of water resources and energy, waste recycling and smart constructions, as well as a commitment to adopt practices that allow for the good use of natural resources.

Public-private partnerships are in the core of a new policy for management of Brazilian public forests that represents more than 300 million hectares. Granting rights for private companies to sustainably manage public forests, through reduced impact techniques, after transparent bidding processes have been a very successfully experience in forest concessions in Brazil. More recently, a cooperation between the Brazilian Forest Service and the International Finance Corporation – IFC has been established in order to boost concessions in the Amazon rainforest.

Dear Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I conclude, I would like to express my gratitude to FAO Director-General, Mr José Graziano Silva, for inviting me to be here today, but, above all, for his commitment and partnership, towards the struggle against hunger and for sustainable development in Brazil and worldwide.

It is important to highlight FAO's role in facilitating process and the systematisation of studies that foster the valuation of forests and signal the potential of forest resources to face global challenges such as the eradication of poverty and hunger and the mitigation and adaptation to climate change. In this regard, I would also like to point out FAO's important collaboration for the preparation of the Brazilian National Forest Inventory, a fundamental instrument for the monitoring and creation of public policies and decision-making by the public and private sectors and civil society in my country.

I would also like to welcome FAOs decision to host an International Conference on Forests for Food Security to take place in Rome in May 2013.

I once more express Brazil's commitment to spare no effort in turning the Rio+20 conference results into actions and practices that strengthen the forest sector, as well as foster a greater participation of all sectors towards a socially-fair, economically-sound and environmentally-balanced development.

Thank you very much.