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**ADDRESS**

**BY**

**MR. OLOCHE A. EDACHE**

**FAO ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL AND  
REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR AFRICA**

**at**

**INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON CLEAN DEVELOPMENT  
MECHANISM (CDM)  
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FOREST INDUSTRY  
SECTOR IN SUB-SAHARAN TROPICAL AFRICA**

**HELD AT**

**THE CRESTA ROYAL HOTEL, ACCRA. GHANA**

**ON**

**2-5 OCTOBER 2006**

Mr. Chairman,  
Hon. Deputy Minister for Lands, Forestry and Mines, Mr. Adjei-Yeboah  
Chief Executive of Forestry Commission Board, Mr. J.E. Otoo  
Representatives of Civil society,  
Colleagues, Development Partners,  
Distinguished Members of the Media,  
Distinguished Invited Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be present at this important meeting, and honored to have the opportunity to present an Address on behalf of the FAO. The subject for this week's workshop, Climate Change, is emerging as possibly the greatest environmental challenge of this century.

Africa, like other continents, is endowed with a wide range of climatic conditions and vegetations zones. But a large portion of its population is living at the margin of fragile agro-ecosystems. This situation is exacerbated by erratic weather conditions and extreme poverty that lead to the unsustainable utilization of forest resources, which in turn lead to land degradation, desertification and loss of biodiversity, famine and misery, with incalculable long term consequences on the environment. In the short run, we are already experiencing some of these effects through rising temperatures, floods, intermittent droughts and crops failures in many parts of Africa. There is no doubt that mitigating the negative effects of climate change will contribute greatly to the improvement in the living conditions of an important part of our population. Moreover, by making full use of the Clean Development Mechanism created under the Kyoto Protocol, African countries should benefit from the emerging market related to carbon sequestration.

That is why FAO is ranking climate change as a high priority in its programme of action throughout the world. It seeks to contribute to mitigate climate change by

advocating and strengthening sustainable forest management. The Forestry Department of FAO is investing more resources to cover this new aspect of forestry.

At present, programme activities cover the following main areas:

Integrating climate change concerns into core forestry activities; advocating forests in the developing climate change mitigation regime in support of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); and assisting member countries in climate change related tasks such as organizing joint workshops with partners like the UNFCCC, ITTO, UNEP, IUCN... to improve the capacity of countries to negotiate agreements made under the Kyoto Protocol and most importantly to reap the benefits stemming from the Clean Development Mechanism.

Mr. Chairman,

If we turn to Africa, the Twenty-Fourth FAO Regional Conference for Africa which was held in Bamako at the beginning of this year, noted that the issue of the impact of fire on carbon emissions and climate change needed to be further studied and documented, and recommended that FAO and relevant partners pursue work on the issue in order to improve understanding and knowledge of both the civil society and political leaders in addressing the question of climate change.

Shortly afterwards, the Fifteenth Session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission held in Maputo in March 2006, drew attention also to the wider dimensions of Climate Change issues, such as poverty alleviation, forest law compliance, good governance, in relation to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Commission recognized planted forests as vital in ecosystems' provision of carbon sinks. It further took note of the potential impacts of climate change on African people and forests and recognized the important roles of Africa's forests in the global carbon cycle. The Commission is cognizant of the potential importance for Africa of the new issue of compensating developing countries for reduced emissions from deforestation.

Mr. Chairman,

We realize that our forests do play an important carbon storage function. The challenge in front of us is to develop further our ability to attract funds in competition with other regions of the World and to address specifically the question of how to get more investments based on coherent forest and tree management policies and sustained long-term actions.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In these 4 days of intense discussions, debates and field activities, you will have the opportunity, not only to take stock of the progress and work done so far in the World in general and in Africa in particular, but also and mainly to review what is good and desirable for Africans and Africa's forests and environment. We expect to get clear indications on what we can do together to be able to face this immense challenge. Given the mandate of FAO on poverty reduction and food security, solutions and initiatives should impact positively on the livelihoods and well being of the millions of small holders who are the most affected by the erratic negative changes of climate.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me finally to mention that FAO will continue to use National Government Development Priorities to mainstream its programmes into the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) of NEPAD, for the betterment of our natural resources and our populations. I wish you fruitful deliberations.

Thank you for your attention.