Address delivered to the 2nd GLOBE International Forest Forum by Mr Ian Gray, GEF

It is a great pleasure to able to represent the Global Environment Facility at today's event.

First, however I must pass on the apologies of my CEO Dr Ishii who had already been committed to another event. She therefore asked me to offer some reflections on the importance and timeliness of the work we consider today.

The GEF has been fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with GLOBE over a number of years on a range of topics. Working alongside UNEP and with the support of Norway, the GLOBE Legislator Forest Initiative is a good example of how a relatively modest project can develop far reaching outputs that not only support local and national efforts but also gives a knowledge base that can be helpful for many of us around the world.

The strong international profile of REDD+ has seen the momentum maintained despite sometimes challenging discussions in the wider climate arena. The turnout at the weekend’s Global Landscape Forum is a clear indication of this.

I think it is true to say that the once simple vision of REDD+, with experience, is now seen as a bit more complex in reality.

It is also becoming apparent that to have real progress in international processes addressing climate and deforestation we have to have local and national processes that provide the momentum and mandate to actually move.

This highlights one of the key reasons for the GLOBE work.

Parliamentarians have a decision-making and leadership role in each level in REDD+ - whether this is among their constituents or their peers, in national parliaments or at international fora such as here at CoP.

Supporting Parliamentarians build capacity and bring forward legislation to address climate change and avoid deforestation that is realistic, timely and fits the situation locally is an important but often forgotten step of developing working global processes.

Many of the challenges for REDD+ arise from underlying weaknesses in the way forest resources are governed.
Efforts to strengthen and increase levels of transparency, accountability, and participation in decision-making and capacity and coordination in forest management and administration are therefore a necessary part of this process. However at times it seems like the REDD+ process bears upon its shoulders the burden of decades of limited capacity, low political will and faint societal interest in the forest sector. It is clear we cannot afford to wait for perfect forest governance before addressing climate change and deforestation. We have to look for basic legislative reforms and sound legislative platforms for national REDD+ efforts to be able to start making real progress now as the GLOBE report shows.

Supporting this progress is important for the GEF. Without good forest governance it is difficult to see how pilots can ever expand into mainstream or how the long-anticipated private sector investment will finally arrive.

One element that is interesting for the GEF – is the connection between REDD-related legislative reform and the wider management and stewardship of natural resources.

The Forest Legislation Study highlights that reforms within the context of REDD+ actually have close links with wider forest governance, biodiversity, conservation, ecosystem services and sustainable rural development.

We think this cross-sectoral and multi focal approach is essential to avoid a repeat of the “silo” solutions that have so far had mixed results, and begin to develop approaches that make sense in a much wider landscape context that link local, national and international aspirations.

Also when looking at REDD+ around the world we can see that REDD+ comes in many varieties. Each approach is – and must be – unique to the location, circumstances and situation. However we already have a number of countries that are well advanced in developing their national strategies and have been moving through this “legislative” phase of REDD+. This is a resource and body of knowledge that we should not miss and one we should utilize in providing support for the next wave of countries looking at new legislation for REDD+.

The GEF appreciates the very much this work from GLOBE, helping policy-makers to share experience in this important process. We would like to congratulate all those involved in this piece of work.

Ian Gray

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