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**[Blog for WFC and UN-REDD Programme blog page]**

**Fighting climate change with forests**

As the global community comes together in Durban 7-11 September for the XIV World Forestry Congress, the importance of forests in the fight against climate change is set to take center stage. Deforestation and forest degradation accounts for up to 17 per cent of global carbon emissions – more than the emissions from all the plans, trains, automobiles and ships in the world. It is only by including forests in a climate change strategy that we can hold the increase in global average temperature below two degrees. While forests hold the key to reducing carbon emissions, forests serve an even greater purpose to the more than 1.6 billion people around the world that depend on them. Forests provide food, shelter and financial resources to people, and play a critical role in conserving biodiversity.

The mechanism that brings these two priorities together – reducing carbon emissions from forests *and* increasing the livelihoods of those that depend on them – is REDD+. Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+) has now been recognized as not just having environmental benefits, but also social and economic benefits, making it a key for developing countries to realize sustainable development.

This has been demonstrated through key global actions taken over the last two years, including the development of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ by parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in December 2013, the endorsement of the *New York Declaration on Forests* at the September 2014 Secretary-General’s Climate Summit more than 160 global leaders, and the completion of the UNFCCC’s framework for REDD+ at the 2015 Bonn SBSTA meetings.

The global community has now endorsed REDD+ and is ready for it to be included in a future global climate change agreement. Developing countries have already been preparing for REDD+, with the support of the UN-REDD Programme, our partners at the World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and others. Since the UN-REDD Programme was established in 2008 as a collaborative initiative of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the UN Development Programme and the uN Environment Programme, we have grown from supporting 8 pilot developing countries to 62. More than 50 of these countries have benefitted from direct funding to develop and/or strengthen their national REDD+ programmes or actions.

As REDD+ moves to enter its post-2015 phase, and more developing forest countries prepare to move past REDD+ readiness towards REDD+ implementation, the UN-REDD Programme has responded with action of its own. The collaborating UN agencies of the Programme have recently announced its continuation through 2020, and have developed a new 2016-2020 Strategic Framework designed to meet the evolving needs of REDD+ developing countries.

Simply put, the strengthened post-2015 strategic vision for the Programme is one that aligns with the UNFCCC’s now defined requirements and guidelines for REDD+ and leverages not only the technical expertise of its UN agencies, but also the enhanced knowledge and experiences of partner countries that have participated in the readiness phase of REDD+. This readiness experience provides countries with a strong understanding of what are their national and regional REDD+ needs and what tools and capacities they need to successfully deliver REDD+. With this information, the UN-REDD Programme can now deliver support through a country-driven and country-needs based approach. Countries will also be well positioned, through the alignment with the UNFCCC, to realize results-based payments for their REDD+ results-based actions.

Additionally, the UN-REDD Programme recognizes REDD+ as a sustainable development tool, and will be continuing its work to support partner countries to address other REDD+ crosscutting issues including governance, stakeholder engagement, gender, safeguards and tenure among others. The Programme is also positioning itself to deliver its support in increased synergy with other players including our long-time partner the FCPF, and those new to the arena including the Green Climate Fund.

Through this new strategic framework for the UN-REDD Programme, we will be poised to deliver the highest quality and value of support to developing countries striving to realize the economic, social and environmental benefits of REDD+ and at the same time support the global community to progress in its fight against climate change.

Working together, forest-dependent communities, governments, the private sector and multilaterals including the UN-REDD Programme and others can continue this positive momentum and deliver REDD+ for the benefit of people and the planet.

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For more information, visit [www.un-redd.org](http://www.un-redd.org) and the UN-REDD Programme’s open-platform *REDD+ Online Collaborative Workspace* at [www.unredd.net](http://www.unredd.net).