

**STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF LANDS  
AND NATURAL RESOURCES HON. HENRY FORD  
KAKMEL AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE MAJOR  
GROUPS INITIATIVE IN SUPPORT OF THE UNITED  
NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS**

**HELD AT ALISA HOTEL, ACCRA, GHANA,**

**26-30 JULY, 2010.**

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The Chairman,

Representative of the Government of Canada,

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants,

Members of the Press,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here this afternoon to close this important workshop of the Major Groups on the theme: "Applying sustainable forest management to poverty reduction: strengthening the multi-stakeholder approach within UNFF".

First of all, I want to commend all participants for their wonderful contributions throughout the five days of deliberations.

It is unfortunate that I could not participate in the discussions due to other official engagements outside of Accra. I am however glad that Ghana was well represented at the workshop.

Mr. Chairman,

I have been reliably informed that the discussions during the period have been very participatory, informative, lively and fair. Personally, I think that such workshops are very important platforms for people with diverse backgrounds to share their rich professional experiences from their countries with others.

I am also told that there was a field trip on Wednesday to the country side and I believe you did enjoy the trips.

Mr. Chairman,

With regards to the group discussions during the period, I understand a number of cross-cutting issues have emerged which are very relevant to us as policy makers and resource managers.

These include:

- Meaningful participation of various stakeholders at all levels in order to strengthen policy framework;
- The need for strong national Forest Policies that address issues on equity in terms of access rights to resources, land and resource tenure and benefits generated from the forest;
- Capacity building at all levels to ensure effective implementation of national policies related to sustainable forest management (livelihoods, poverty reduction, etc)

- Promotion of research and knowledge generation to support forest –dependent communities

I think one of the critical emerging issues which also has to be mentioned is the need to mainstream Climate Change issues (mitigation & Adaptation strategies) in our development agenda.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to inform you that Ghana has already undertaken a number of initiatives to address some of these cross –cutting issues.

Currently, the Forest and Wildlife Policy and the Forestry Development Master Plan of Ghana are under critical review and these issues such as collaborative resources management, land and tree tenure, equitable benefit sharing and other issues mentioned above are been given prominence in these policy documents.

Apart from this, the Government of Ghana through the support of a number of Development Partners is implementing a Natural Resource and Environmental Governance Programme (NREG) that is looking in detail some of these concerns.

I believe that all participants would also examine the cross-cutting issues vis-avis their national programmes to ensure that we are all moving towards a sustainable resource management regime.

Mr. Chairman,

What is critical at this point is how to package these issues that have emerged at this workshop to be presented at the Ninth Session of the Forum which would be held from 24<sup>th</sup> January to 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2011 so as to make an impact on the global economy.

I can assure you that the Government of Ghana is ready to champion this agenda when the necessary arrangements and negotiations are made.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me at this stage again acknowledge the significant contributions of the Governments of Austria, Canada, Finland, United Kingdom and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the Natural Resources of Canada towards this event. We also appreciate the guidance and support received from the United Nations Forum on Forests in the Organisation of this conference.

I also want to thank the Steering Committee and the Local Planning Committee who put in their efforts to make this event a success.

Finally, on behalf of the people and government of Ghana I wish to once again express our appreciation to you for choosing Ghana as the venue for this event. We wish you a safe journey back to your various countries and hope to see you again in Ghana in the future.

On that note I wish to declare the meeting on "Applying sustainable forest management to poverty reduction: strengthening the multi-stakeholder approach within UNFF" formally closed.

Thank you.