

## **Forest Day keynote debate: REDD+ and Rio +20**

*(Remarks of Ambassador Hans Brattskar, the Government of Norway's Special Envoy for Climate Change – Check Against Delivery)*

- Since the first Rio conference, and in particular over the last decade, our planet has experienced the embryo of a natural resource disaster. The environmental crisis, of course, is at the heart of this. Since Rio we have lost 300 million hectares of forest area. We've seen a 36 % increase in CO2 emissions. We've seen population growth of 26%. We've lost 12 % of global biodiversity. All this according to UNEP's excellent recent report on global trends over the last 20 years.
- But this crisis goes beyond purely environmental concerns. According to McKinsey & Company's recent report "The Resource Revolution", we have seen a 147 per cent increase in real commodity prices since the turn of the century. This increase has in ten years wiped out the effects of a halving of these prices in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The food price increases in the second half of 2010 alone drove 44 million people globally into poverty, according to the World Bank. Meanwhile, the cost of bringing a new oil well into production has doubled since the year 2000.
- And these may just be the inklings of things to come. With current trends, the world will add three billion more middle class consumers by 2030. The rising prosperity this implies is a good thing, and should be welcomed. However, we also need to understand the environmental, economic and social implications of this.
- The numbers are deeply worrying. This format doesn't provide time to examine the numbers, but this much is clear: Without urgent and forceful action to expand supply, boost resource productivity and make sure the true costs of greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental externalities for society are included in all public and private decision-making, we will enter an era of high and volatile resource prices, growing concerns about food security, increased risk of resource-related economic shocks, and increasing and unpredictable costs of adapting to severe climate change.
- And please note this: The medium term economic risks of non-action on unsustainable and ineffective resource use more than match the environmental ones.
- Why this introduction, when I'm supposed to talk about REDD+ and Rio +20?
- Because Rio +20 is about sustainability, and – next to climate change and biodiversity loss – there is no more critical threat to sustainability than the natural resource revolution that is now under way. And what is more, REDD+ has the potential to constitute an essential part of the solution, not only because of its direct effects, but also because it could provide a model of collaboration with broader applications..
- REDD+ as a model of performance based north south partnerships is well developed. Other challenges of the resource revolution, energy access and energy efficiency comes to mind, exhibits several similarities with REDD+. Therefore, our efforts on REDD+ could have value beyond saving the forests. The ramifications of REDD+ go beyond the forest sector, into the heart of the broader question of sustainability.

- We all know the issues: Even given this impressive array of benefits REDD+ has to offer, the short term benefits of deforestation and forest degradation – without decisive market intervention – as a rule outweighs the benefits of letting the forests stand.
- And this trend looks set to continue. The pressure on tropical forests is rising. Growing populations and increased consumption patterns worldwide are triggering an increased demand for food, fiber, fuel wood and other commodities provide by tropical forests.
- However, and this is the essential point from a resource productivity standpoint, deforestation is not necessary to meet that demand. We can and must stem these pressures on forests by adopting measures to intensify agricultural productivity in non-forested areas, invest in renewable and sustainable energy sources and reduce the global demand for commodities that drive deforestation, while providing market incentives for green supply chains. In short, we must become more resource productive.
- One important point in this context: REDD+ was never meant to be an alternative to development. It was always an alternative development choice. A wiser, more sustainable development choice.
- Given the continued and increasing need for resources, it becomes even more essential to emphasize that REDD+ by no means implies that forest related resources, such as timber, fiber, fuel wood and food – nor other natural resources located in the forests, like essential minerals – should not be exploited if the societal benefits of doing so outweighs the costs. If that was the choice, REDD+ would loose.
- Rather, REDD+ is about correcting the market failure of not recognizing the ecosystem values of forests in the calculus of land use and spatial planning. Properly designed and implemented, national REDD+ strategies – supported by international payments for reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation – will provide strong incentives for the sustainable management of forests while still exploiting other natural resources in a sustainable way.
- The treasures that are the world's remaining tropical forests can be saved, at a very reasonable cost.
- The time is ripe for large scale, collective action.
- It is for the tropical forest countries to take the lead in this effort.
- However, the threat of catastrophic climate change and biodiversity loss mean that all countries have a stake in this, and all countries should contribute, and developed countries must contribute the most. In particular, they must generate adequate,

predictable and sustainable financial flows to support the efforts of tropical forest countries.

- In other words:
  - If REDD+ can be achieved, we will have established a genuine, global partnership to save the treasures of the world's remaining tropical forests for posterity, and thereby established one of the key pillars of sustainable development.
  - Equally important in the Rio + 20 context, however, is that we would also have created a model for global collaboration that can be deployed – with the necessary modifications – to other resource productivity and innovation challenges.
- The essential takeaway of the resource revolution is that using dire financial times as an excuse for lack of action on resource productivity, which is at the core of REDD+ as well, is not only environmentally but also economically and socially counterproductive, indeed indefensible and irresponsible. On a purely rational basis, indeed, the current financial crisis serves to strengthen, rather than weaken, urgent action in this respect.
- Climate change is already happening.
- It is not a crisis for future generations to deal with, it is affecting peoples' lives in a bad way as we speak.
- The scramble for resources, too, is happening. And it adds further urgency and gravity to our situation. In essence, if we – humanity seen as one – are unable to generate a step change in resource productivity over the next decades, the consequences – in pure economic terms – will be severe, and the most vulnerable among us will suffer first and most.
- REDD+ is, as of yet, mostly an ideal. It is, however, a well developed and workable ideal, which is being put into practice – with varying effort, and at varying depth, but with measurable results – across the developing world as we speak, in partnership with committed developed countries.
- So here's my thesis. REDD+ provides the ultimate challenge to Rio +20
- It does so not only in its agreed and incredibly audacious aim to 'slow, halt and reverse forest cover and carbon loss', and thereby establishing one of the core pillars of global sustainability.

- Equally important, REDD+ is in the process of establishing an example of the kind of global partnerships that will be of paramount importance as we strive to meet all of our most fundamental sustainability challenges.
- Thank you for your attention.