

IUCN Statement on behalf of International Organizations Observers

FCPF PA13, Oct 21st 2020

Thank you Co-Chair, and to all PA participants for allowing us deliver these remarks on behalf of IO observers.

Amid the pandemic, we have seen that global figures continue to show alarming forest loss rates. This urges us to double the efforts in the fight to end forest loss not only for their capacity to generate carbon removals and enhanced carbon stocks but for their critical role in COVID-19 recovery strategies at all levels. REDD+ is known to be a key element of climate finance for the protection of forests, and as such, it needs to be scaled up together with other measures including national budget investment, private investment, public-private finance and development support. We congratulate countries that have signed ERPAs so far and the solid list of additional countries that will soon sign ERPAs. We also congratulate the FCPF's efforts to link REDD+ programmes under the fund with private investment, stressing that carbon credits might be used to offset emissions only after ambitious emission reduction actions are undertaken within companies' operations.

COVID recovery plans need to include climate investments in the forest and land-use sector as the basis of a more sustainable, resilient and equitable growth that transitions to zero carbon at the global level. We encourage FCPF country members to capitalize on the implementation of their REDD+ strategies, connecting them with the economic recovery packages as a source of jobs and climate resilience. In parallel to COVID recovery, this is a critical time to accelerate climate change mitigation and adaptation actions. Countries have the opportunity to raise their NDC's ambition in the 2020 cycle by including, or enhancing, their sectoral quantifiable targets for forest and land use expressed in tons of CO₂ removals. Their REDD+ strategies can support these targets. NDCs can also be enhanced or updated by incorporating information on transparent accounting in the forest and land-use sector where existing REDD+ reference levels and programmes could provide important information, including the express mention of policies and measures to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.

Looking at opportunities to maximize REDD+ implementation there is space to scale up finance for these programmes under various international policy frameworks. REDD+ countries are at a prime stage to improve aspects in their programmes to ensure that additionality, quantification, permanence and leakage are adequately considered. This preparation work will position countries ahead of the time to access additional finance.

On a practical level, it has been seen that REDD+ planning and execution is successful when it is implemented under landscape approaches. Landscape approaches consider ecological, social, political and economic priorities trying to balance interests within natural resource management, keeping in mind environmental and livelihood considerations. Over 60% of FCPF

countries have voluntarily pledged to embrace this approach as they restore their forest landscapes in support of the Bonn Challenge, and we encourage FCPF countries to amplify synergies between their restoration initiatives and their REDD+ programmes. This can be done potentially by expanding REDD+ into areas identified with restoration potential through methodologies, such as ROAM, which has been applied in over 25 countries with the support of IUCN and partners. Through ROAM it has been possible to identify over 160 M hectares that could be restored through activities in agricultural areas, in buffer zones of protected areas and forests. These activities could be accounted for in countries REDD+ GHG estimations. We congratulate FCPF countries that include landscape approaches as part of their REDD+ programmes as well as countries that just presented the R-Package and Mid-term progress reports during PC29.

There has been higher global attention to Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to fight climate change where countries and non-governmental actors are rallying up to materialize the 37% potential of NbS to contribute to the Paris Agreement goal. This can be seen as an enormous opportunity for REDD+ countries to reinforce the attention and support to their REDD+ programmes, connecting them with global priorities such as the ones set by the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and initiatives championed by country leaders, such as the latest Leader's Pledge for Nature, where wildlife and the climate have been put at the centre of post-pandemic economic recovery plans aiming to address the climate crisis, deforestation, ecosystem degradation and pollution.

As countries continue working under the Readiness Fund extended through 2022, we urge countries to double efforts to ensure governance aspects are addressed and incorporated, ensuring that stakeholders are on board with the activities to be implemented which ultimately will allow REDD+ to be successful. We congratulate the FMT for the release of the benefit-sharing platform to support the design of benefit-sharing arrangements which are very important for the potential to generate emission reductions and results-based payments.

Finally, IOs would also like to stress that, as countries develop their emission reductions programme documents, it is necessary to ensure that impact indicators are included for non-carbon benefits and impacts of the implementation of REDD+ programmes, including for communities, indigenous people and biodiversity.

Thank you.

Delivered by Adriana Vidal, Senior Forest Policy Officer, IUCN's Forest Conservation Programme