



Näringsdepartementet

**Anförande vid Seminarium Promotion of Sustainable
Forest Management to Achieve SDGs and other Global
Commitments**

I would like to thank Mr. Satoshi Imai, Director General of the Japanese Forestry Agency, for inviting me to this Seminar.

The year 2015 marked a milestone for global commitments towards sustainable development, financing for development and climate change.

Sustainable forest management is integral to all these global commitments, which was reconfirmed by forest leaders at the 11th session of the UN Forum on Forests, in May last year.

Thank you Dr. Manoel Sobral Filho for presenting the

outcomes of this historic session of the UN Forum on Forests.

Forest friends,

With the new global development agenda and SDGs, natural resources, such as forests, play a much greater role than with the previous agenda and the Millennium Development Goals.

Forests are now recognized with specific targets, but also seen as important in achieving many other global goals and targets.

I'm especially happy to see that the SDGs make an explicit reference to sustainable forest management in goal 15. In target 15.2, we are even more ambitious than many other targets, since we already call for the promotion and implementation of sustainable forest management of all types of forests by 2020. We want to halt deforestation and we want to restore degraded lands.

However, the greatest potential for forests with the SDGs are the linkages to other goals and targets. We, in the international forest community, now have a common platform and a unique opportunity to influence other sectors. Let me give you a few examples of targets that allow us to reach further, beyond the “normal” sphere of influence of the forest sector.

For example, by 2030, we want to ensure that all men and women have equal rights to economic resources. This includes ownership and control over land and natural resources, including forests. To be competitive, the forest sector needs to use the skills of both women and men. Ensuring long term tenure rights to land, and access to markets, are key actions in this regard.

If you, by 2030, want to achieve sustainable consumption and production patterns, then you need to sustainably manage, and efficiently use, natural resources, including forests. This will only happen if we increase the use of bio-based materials and make the transition to a bio-economy. We see great opportunities in the forest sector, in particular

in the increased use of wood in the construction and building sector and through new innovations.

In Paris, we all agreed to raise the ambition to tackle climate change. We agreed to holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C and aiming to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C.

In the Swedish context, forests make most climate sense as a substitution of fossil fuel, or fossil materials, that require high energy input.

Sustainable forest management can also contribute to maintaining a net forest sink as well as other ecosystem services, including biodiversity and clean water. In Sweden, we plant at least two new trees for every tree we cut down.

The Swedish government has made a commitment to become one of the world's first fossil-free welfare states. And we are well on our way. Today, bioenergy, at 32 percent, is the biggest source of energy in Sweden. Bigger than nuclear power. And, yes, bigger than oil.

Forest friends,

In order to bring structure to all these global goals and targets related to forests, we need a comprehensive, yet concise, strategic plan. I'm aware that, here in Tokyo, discussion on this has just begun this week. Later today, you will hear some views on the Strategic Plan for the International Arrangement on Forests.

However, allow me to share some of my views on this.

Both the process of developing the SDGs and reaching the climate deal in Paris has taught us some important lessons to build upon as we develop the Strategic Plan.

These lessons are: 1) the importance of bottom up commitments and 2) stakeholder involvement. However, for both the SDGs and climate agreement to be effective, an accountability framework is needed. Here the forest sector can lead the way and share experiences and lessons learned.

The Strategic Plan for the International Arrangement on Forests needs to build upon what countries, international organisations, private sector and other stakeholders are willing to bring to the table.

In the new climate agreement, the foundations are the nationally decided contributions. Part of the success in Paris was that almost all countries shared their intended nationally contributions before COP21. This was a major accomplishment and sends a strong signal that all countries are willing to do something about climate change.

Moreover, countries agreed in Paris to raise ambition from year to year.

Sweden would like to see a Strategic Plan, in which countries present their nationally decided contributions to sustainable forest management. We believe that national forest programmes are useful to help define national priorities for how forests can contribute to reaching many global goals and targets. I'm pleased to inform you that we in Sweden are well on our way to develop our first national

forest programme. We have one working group now focusing specifically on the international dimension, and how we can contribute to the SDGs and other global commitments.

One important lesson learned from the SDG-process is the involvement of stakeholder participation. The UN showed in that process that it is possible to engage with stakeholders in a meaningful way. I hope that, in the year to come, the UN Forum on Forest, Collaborative Partnership on Forests and all other critical components of the International Arrangement on Forests can work to ensure that the million voices of forest dwellers, including indigenous peoples, women and youth, forest farmers, private sector, academia and NGOs are not only being listened to, but are truly being heard and engaged in the process of developing the Strategic Plan.

Finally, accountability. We have a long history in the forest sector of monitoring our forest resources at many different levels. This will enable us to lead the way in terms of monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress.

For almost 100 years, we in Sweden have systematically collected forest information and monitored developments in the Swedish forest sector. Knowledge and information about our forests is a foundation for strategic decision making and for optimizing the use of forest resources to benefit all.

Globally, FAO, in collaboration with others, is doing a tremendous job with monitoring forest resource development in the Global Forest Resources Assessment.

At the regional level, we have several criteria and indicator processes, which all have extensive knowledge and experiences of monitoring and assessing progress in the forest sector.

All these processes and levels need to be included in the Strategic Plan, in order to form a strong accountability framework.

I have understood that reporting has been weak in the UN Forum on Forest so far, but monitoring and assessment has been next to nothing. However, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. We simply need to make better use of the existing work on monitoring and assessment. A clear division of labour between the many different organisations involved in monitoring, assessment and reporting are, in my

opinion, a good starting point towards fostering accountability towards global goals and commitments.

Forest friends,

We live in a turbulent world. In 2015, many global processes relevant to forests came to a crossroads. The international community was able to show leadership and chose a path forward towards sustainability.

2016 marks new beginnings. In 2016, we begin the journey of implementation. This will not be an easy one and we are sure to encounter challenges.

However, I'm convinced that solutions for the road ahead may be found in many places: within the United Nations, other international organizations, regional platforms, our countries, and through research and private sector initiatives, but also in our everyday life in forested landscapes across the world.

Together, these different levels interconnect and bring about transformative change and enable us to deliver on the global commitments.

Thank you for your attention.