

STATEMENT BY CAROL FLORE-SMERCZNIK, UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE a.i FOR PNG, AT THE INCEPTION WORKSHOP FOR PNG'S NATIONAL UN-REDD PROGRAMMES, CROWN PLAZA HOTEL, PORT MORESBY, PNG – 13TH JULY, 2011

Morning tru olgeta!

Mr. Martin Barl, Acting Director, UN-REDD+ Branch, OCCD

Member of the Diplomatic Corps (British High Commission, AusAID, European Union, JICA)

Distinguished participants from Government departments, civil society and private sector

My colleagues from the UN System

Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be here again today on behalf of the participating United Nations agencies who are supporting the UN-REDD National Programme for Papua New Guinea. As many of us know, the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation in Developing Countries began in 2008 following the 2007 Bali Action Plan generally agreed to by parties at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. This programme benefits from the collaboration between FAO, UNEP and UNDP. Since the government's interest to join the UN-REDD programme in 2008 to participate, PNG and the world have not stopped talking REDD, yet an agreement still seems elusive.

During the internal session yesterday, I highlighted that for UN Agencies and OCCD, the road to reach a final programme document has been fraught with many challenges but it was important to work through the issues so as to achieve this result and ensure guidelines are followed. Whilst faced with many challenges and not being able to meet everyone's expectations, OCCD persevered and managed all these various expectations – and here we are at this inception workshop today.

Ladies and Gentlement:

I am aware of the main objective of the inception workshop which is to assist all stakeholders and involved parties to understand and take ownership of the project's goals and objectives, define roles and responsibilities, clarify technical and managerial aspects in preparation for implementation. However, I get a sense from yesterday's robust discussions that there are some critical issues that have to be resolved to enable a smooth progress of setting up a REDD+ Mechanism in PNG. Some of these issues cannot be resolved overnight, as they are part of a jig-saw puzzle that has to be systematically addressed over time - such as institutional mandates, policy and legal frameworks, mechanisms to capture and integrate lessons learnt, etc. For example, the issue of SABLs which is a direct threat to REDD. But I fear that if PNG waits for this jig-saw puzzle to be solved, we run the danger

of missing the opportunities to be tapped into, should the readiness phase highlight the country's commitment and interest since we first started in Montreal. This does not mean that we rush the process but carefully manage processes and other issues so that the Government of Papua New Guinea and its people's benefit.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The discussions today are very important because there is worldwide attention on the importance of forests, and in particular PNG, who is seen to be a leader on REDD+ dialogue globally. For this reason, we must be conscious of how all the essential aspects of REDD+ are handled in country. In this context, I reiterate that the participating UN Agencies are committed to support and work with government, private sector and civil society organisations to address the issues that are or may seem to stall the processes. And in the spirit of aid effectiveness, I agree with OCCD that the emphasis should be on a Whole-of-Government approach and for this process, the UN will do all it can to see GoPNG in the driver's seat to lead.

At this juncture, I want to stress that the welfare of forest resource owners and the process for Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) are of paramount importance as a prerequisite in REDD+ initiatives in this country. This cannot

be a traditional top down approach but a mix including bottom-up strategies. I therefore urge all of us here - particularly the relevant stakeholders in public, private and civil society - to engage in a focused, open and transparent dialogue because you know the systems and processes and your ideas will help facilitate the design of enabling policy and legal environments for a REDD+ mechanism in PNG.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I know many – if not most of you – have heard all this before and you may be thinking why is this lady lecturing us...can she get out of the way and we discuss the business of this workshop (CFS smiling). I am fascinated by the natural beauty of this country which I am slowly discovering and I strongly believe that through a collaborative approach, we can help the people of PNG improve their livelihoods, thus alleviating certain levels of hardship and ultimately helping the GoPNG make significant progress in achieving the MDGs.

Before I conclude, I would like to thank Dr. Wari Iamo, Martin Barl, Gwen Sissiou and your team for working so hard to organize this workshop and taking us to where we are today. I wish you a very fruitful and robust discussion.

Thank you very much for your attention.