Opening Remarks: REDD+ Implementation and Sustainable Forest Management
Mr. Eduardo Mansur (Director, Forest Assessment, Management and Conservation Division, FAO)

On behalf of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, I would like to extend thanks to Government of Japan and for the institutions that are co-organizing this important seminar. I would like to recognize Dr. Suzuki and his team's personal involvement from the FFPRI, which have been outstanding for us to be here, both on arrangements and on the technical grounds. It is a real pleasure for us to have the opportunities to work with you and your team. I would like to also recognize Dr. Miyahara for the excellent support and the financial support also that we received from the Japan Forest Agency for realizing this event. Of course, JIFPRO[1] and many others have been involved, so let me recognize the presence of Dr. Sasaki, the chairman of the board of directors.

Many colleagues and many friends, it is a great pleasure to see you here and to be here with you. In our jargon, those who work in REDD+ now have started calling it the 'February Tokyo Workshop'. The February Tokyo meeting is becoming a tradition. This is the fourth edition. It started when Dr. Matsumoto and his team took the beautiful initiative to join in Tokyo a group of experts after the COP. The UNFCCC[2] COP's normally happen at the end of November or early December, and then comes Christmas break. In February the dust has settled and it is time for reflection. The Tokyo February Workshops are offering quality time for reflection on how the process of REDD+ is evolving, what is being learned, what can we share, what are the challenges?

This is the fourth edition, and some of us, including me had the pleasure of participating in some of them. It is really a moment where we can leave Tokyo and leave the seminar with the sense that we gain here; we gain knowledge, we gain experiences, we gain contacts. Sometimes we also identify the challenges, and we do not know exactly how to address them, but I think this is the beauty of this event, and the beauty of linking the research group that is here. It is a great pleasure to participate.

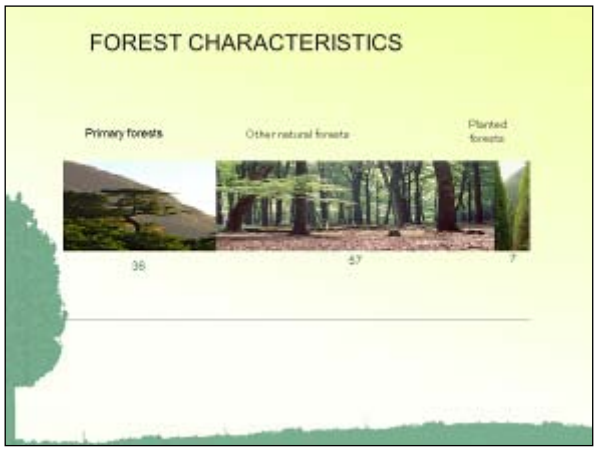
REDD+ is a theme that has been discussed now for about seven years, if we counted the big startup from Bali COP. It is about time for an assessment of what is happening during this lifespan. We have seen many REDD+ projects piloting in countries by many agencies. We see also national REDD+ strategies evolving. It is about time to link them, to associate them, to bring the knowledge of them, and we hope that this event will bring us to this.

Of course, I have support. I am not alone from FAO. Our coordinator of the FAO/UN-REDD program, Dr. Maria Sanz-Sanchez is accompanying me in this mission from FAO, and the Senior Forestry Officer for Asia-Pacific, Dr. Patrick Durst are here. We will be more than happy to

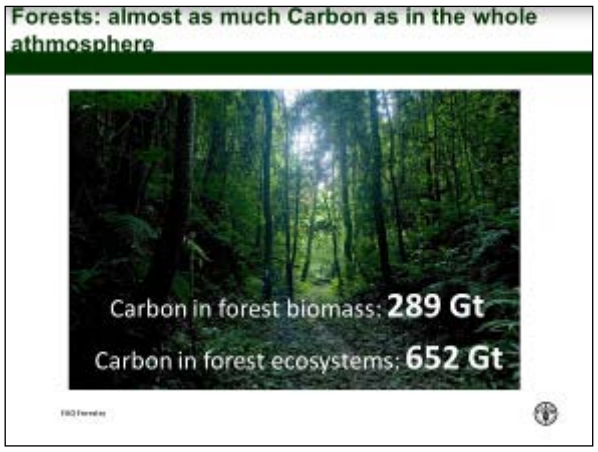
[1] Japan International Forestry Promotion and Cooperation Center: http://www.jifpro.or.jp/Top_E.html
[2] United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: https://unfccc.int/

address any questions you have about FAO involvement on this. Of course, the easy questions are for me, and the difficult questions for Dr. Sanz-Sanchez and Dr. Durst.

Sometimes we have the feeling here when we talk to colleagues that we are preaching to the converted, but we have to see forest from the global perspective if you want to talk about climate change. About four billion hectares of land is covered by forests. This represents bit less than one third of the land on the planet. About 40% are considered tropical forests. 1.6 billion hectares are tropical forests.



36% are primary forests with no visible indication of human activities, and where ecological processes are not significantly disturbed. Planted forests represent only 7%, predominantly composed of trees established through planting or deliberate seeding. The remaining 57% of forests are composed of naturally regenerating forests, with some degree of human intervention. This gives us more or less the current distribution of the forest characteristics in the world.



We know that forest biomass stocks almost 290 gigatons of carbon, but if you consider all the carbon stored in soil in the forest land and the forest ecosystems, this figure grows to almost more than 650 gigatons of carbon. My colleagues and experts on this topic tell me that this is more or less the same amount of carbon that is currently in the atmosphere of the planet. If we want to address climate change, that is about it. We can only increase the forest coverage globally, or to at least maintain the current forest cover. That does not mean that deforestation will not occur in certain parts of the world or certain countries, but globally speaking, I think that is about it. We have changed the characteristics of the planet enough, and forests have to be maintained at least in the current proportion. They are widely recognized as the most efficient and effective way to address climate change, because it is one of the cheapest ways to guarantee carbon storage.

However, forests can also be a menace for climate change when they are destroyed or degraded. We know from the last estimation from FAO Global Forest Resource Assessment[3] that the world loses about 13 million hectares of forest per year. That represents about 17.4% of carbon emissions. This figure has data from IPCC[4] from 2007[5] and shows more or less the contribution of each sector in terms of carbon emission. You can see that forest contribution is larger than agriculture emissions, or the transport emissions; much larger than the residential and commercial buildings. It is very significant.

The challenges are how we maintain these forests as forests. People think of protected areas as a solution. We know that the world nowadays has about 13% of the land covered by protected areas. This means that more than 80% of world's forests are outside protected areas. It is not feasible to

[3] http://www.fao.org/forestry/fra/en/
[4] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: http://www.ipcc.ch/
[5] Fourth Assessment Report: http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/publications_ipcc_fourth_assessment_report_synthesis_report.htm

think that this figure will increase to more than 20 or 25% in the next few decades, because establishing protected areas require an investment in management to maintain protected areas as protected, and feasible for human development. It is very likely that the largest proportion of forest will remain for long term as forests either naturally protected in locations that are difficult to access, or under human influence. The challenge is to improve the quality of the existing and upcoming protected areas and to maintain this area of 70 to 80% of the world's forests that are not under protected areas under some degree of control, under sound management, and under conservation.

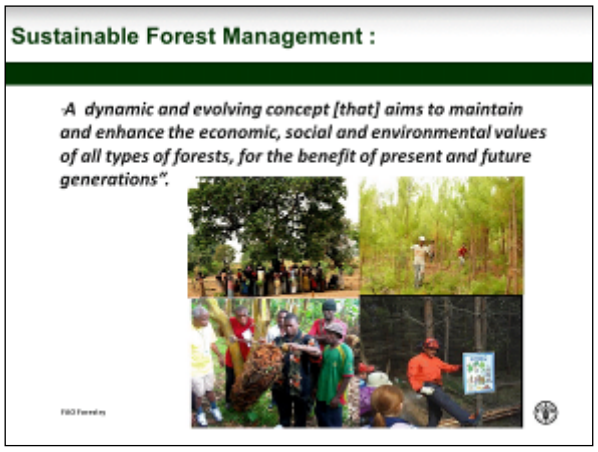
There are different types of uses of forest. Forest is used for production, for protection of soil, for conservation of biodiversity, for recreation, or for multiple-use. The proportions here shown are obtained also from the Forest Resource Assessment, from FRA 2010[6].

The question is what are the threats to forests? Land conversion to agriculture and to other uses continues to be the major threat to forest followed closely by unsustainable and illegal forest practices. Other causes include natural causes like fires and natural disasters. It is up to foresters, to

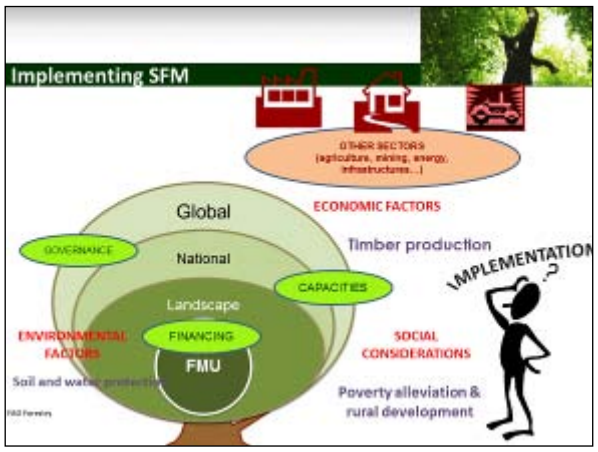
[6] http://www.fao.org/forestry/fra/fra2010/en/

scientists, and to practitioners to demonstrate and disseminate sustainable practices that will maintain and hopefully expand current forests covering the planet. This will guarantee the carbon stock we need to help address climate change. At the same time, forests must generate socioeconomic benefits in a long-term basis to guarantee that they will not be replaced to other land uses. They must also protect biodiversity, landscapes, and ecosystems to guarantee long-term life in our planet.

REDD+ came as an opportunity. It is an opportunity to further demonstrate and disseminate how to maintain and manage forests for carbon stocking and for much more. Outside that, REDD+ has a large benefit for us working in forests for so many years. It put forests back into the stage, into the political dialogue, and into cooperation and development. It is a huge opportunity for us, who work in forestry to make the case for forest management. REDD+ efforts to date have concentrated mostly in the monitoring and assessment of forests for generation of data and for informed decision making. This is very important. Also, national policies and strategies have initiated and some piloting on REDD+ implementation on the ground. They are important, but they are not sufficient for achieving what we expect in terms of forest conservation and sustainable use. A next step is urgently needed to demonstrate how forests should be managed, taking into account the requirement of the society and the conditions to achieve REDD+ results.



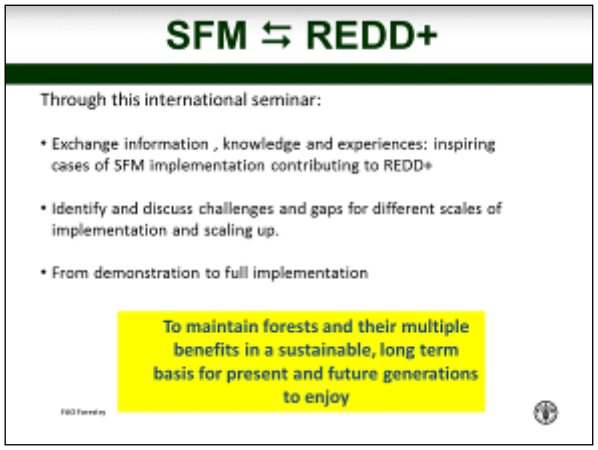
Sustainable forest management is a concept that has been around for a long time. Some of you have seen, and I have a few copies with me and it can be still downloaded, the last issue of our publication, the Unasylva[7] which is about the 300 years of sustainable forest management. In 2013 we celebrated the 300 years that the term 'sustainable forest' was first published in a publication in Germany. Hence, we say that this concept is at least 300 years old. At that time, it was for mining when German foresters were saying, "If we do not manage the forests sustainably, there will be no timber for mining structures." The concept is 300 years old. There is this definition adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, defining, "Sustainable forest management as a dynamic and evolving concept aims to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental value of all types of forests, for the benefit of present and future generations." This concept is part of the non-legally binding agreement that has been adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.



SFM is a concept that can be understood in different levels, at the forest management unit level, at the landscape/territorial level, at the national level, and at the global level. It is a complex, evolving concept like the definition expressed. There are economic, social, and environmental factors

[7] http://www.fao.org/forestry/unasylva/en/

liaising with the implementation of SFM, like timber production, like poverty alleviation, rural development, soil protection, and water protection. Also, we know the issues that make difficult implementing sustainable forest management: lack of financing support, lack of funding for sustainable forest management; lack of capacities on the ground or capacities at the decision making level to understand and apply sustainable forest management; and governance issues. We also have competition from other sectors for the land and natural resource use: from agriculture, mining, energy, infrastructure; this whole set is a challenge for implementing SFM. REDD+ puts this debate into another stage and we have to look at it as an opportunity.



This international seminar has three very clear objectives. Facilitating the exchange of experience, those inspiring cases of sustainable forest management implementation that can contribute to the five REDD+ activities: reducing deforestation, reducing forest degradation, sustainable management of forest, conservation, and enhancement of carbon stocks. This seminar should help us discuss challenges for addressing the different scales of implementation and exploring challenge caused by scaling up from projects into national scales. This is still open and we should look at it. We also have facilitating reflections on the role of sustainable forest management in the context of REDD+

demonstration. Then we have full implementation: moving towards a full implementation of REDD+.

The objective is common to all of us: to maintain forests and their multiple benefits in a sustainable, long-term basis for present and future generations to enjoy. We have an excellent program ahead of us; carefully selected presentations, good scientists, practitioners that have been studying, discussing, and debating this issue from different perspectives. We expect that these two days will generate a set of information that can serve as a legacy for us to carry forward. In FAO, we are committed to bringing the conclusions and recommendations of this seminar to be presented at the Committee on Forestry[8] that FAO organized for the last week of June in Rome. There will be other events this year that are very relevant for what we are discussing, including the next COP in Lima, Peru, including the IUFRO[9] World Congress in Salt Lake City[10], including the CBD[11] COP in Korea[12].

Many things are happening in 2015, including the new climate agreement, so we are moving towards there. I would like once again to thank FFPRI team on REDD+ for the February workshop in Tokyo. We hope that this becomes a tradition and I cannot express sufficiently the pleasure on my name and on behalf of my colleagues from FAO to be here with you and work on these two days towards these objectives.

[8] http://www.fao.org/forestry/57758/en/
[9] International Union of Forest Research Organizations: http://www.iufro.org/
[10] http://www.iufro.org/events/congresses/2014/
[11] Convention on Biological Diversity
[12] http://biodiversity-l.iisd.org/events/cbd-cop-12/