



Permanent Mission of Costa Rica
Jorge Ballestero, Chargé d'Affairs
United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development -- CSD-14, New York,
High Level Segment: 'The Way Forward'
May 12th, 2006

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the following members of the Coalition for Rainforest Nations: Bolivia, Chile, Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, Gabon, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and my country, Costa Rica.

Mr. Chairman,

As we continue our deliberations today, we must candidly acknowledge 'mixed results' over the past three decades when considering 'sustainable development'.

In 1972 the world held its first global conference on the environment and development in Stockholm. Since then, two other such conferences were held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro and in 2002 in Johannesburg. Over these 34 years many studies have been conducted, global compacts created, and UN conventions enacted.

However, before us today is a world hampered by a steady and significant decline in its natural environments, and the goods and services those environments provide to its inhabitants. The trends in air and water quality, crop production, global fisheries, infectious diseases, local economies, and social stability are all negative.

We can not allow this to continue. When we consider 'the way forward', business as usual, can no longer be an option.

Sustainable Development and Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, when considering 'Sustainable Development', our countries argue that two E's are inextricably missing – ENVIRONMENT and ECONOMICS when it comes to concrete results. Therefore, when considering 'the way forward', we prefer using the terms sustainable development and 'environmentally sustainable economic growth.'

Looking forward, however, we are forced to acknowledge that established development frameworks are inadequate. For example, in the forested rural areas of many developing nations, the only real options for economic growth often require the destruction of natural forests – either when clearing for agricultural commodities or through the sale of hard-wood timbers.



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Simply put, the present system of incentives offered by international markets for agriculture, and forestry often lead directly to deforestation, environmental degradation and further poverty. This dynamic is NOT SUSTAINABLE. But, I ask, how else can our rural people escape poverty?

The Way Forward

Mr. Chairman, our countries are of the view, that when addressing tropical forestry, the world must better align market incentives with sustainable outcomes. We believe that global markets for eco-system services, which include developing nations, are part of the ‘sustainable solution.’

Let me use the ‘Kyoto Protocol’ as an example of how eco-system service markets can be used to support sustainable development and ‘environmentally sustainable economic growth’!

First, we must acknowledge that deforestation is currently the second source of carbon emissions -- up to 30% of global carbon emissions during the 1990’s, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Paradoxically, this significant source of carbon emissions is NOT included within the Kyoto Protocol! Presently, the Protocol only provides incentives for replanting forest that are already destroyed, but does not recognize anything to those who avoid deforestation. Candidly, this defies logic! More importantly, if we are serious about climate change, this framework is not sustainable!

In response, our countries have joined with many likeminded developing countries to call for change. Specifically, this initiative takes the shape of *UNFCCC COP-11 Agenda Item #6: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries*.

According to analysis by the World Bank, this UNFCCC Initiative can potentially provide billions of dollars annually for incentives to developing nations to conserve forests rather than destroy them. Valuing this eco-system service – forest-based carbon sequestration – is good for climate stability, good for biodiversity conservation, and good for poverty reduction!

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, in summary, in the face of 34 years of ‘mixed results, we are challenged to re-think the future. As the magnitude of the climate challenge unfolds within the context of ‘sustainable development’, the issue of deforestation emphasizes that we must set aside the political and economic paradigms of the past.

Developing nations require innovative revenue streams if we are to overcome the perverse and discriminatory market structures currently in place. With regard to climate change, new ‘voluntary’ incentive-based instruments can deliver meaningful emissions reductions while capitalizing sustainable development.



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Our countries thoughtfully suggest that when considering ‘the way forward’ for Sustainable Development, we must incorporate a new philosophy of positive incentives and fair market access – including markets for eco-system services.