

**12TH SESSION OF THE UN FORUM ON FORESTS
4TH MAY 2017, UN**

**INTERVENTION BY KARMA CHOEDA, COUNSELLOR, BHUTAN MISSION UNDER
AGENDA ITEM 5: MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION**

Thank you Mr. Moderator.

Let me first, thank the Secretariat, for introducing the Note, and for the panellists for their useful and diverse presentations, on this important subject covering means of implementation – from the philanthropic world, from the perspective of a multilateral dev bank and from the private sector.

I have two or three questions, but first allow to make some quick comments on the subject by way of contributing to the discussions from our national perspective.

Means of implementation, in our view, is key to the realisation, of the forestry goals within the SDGs, as well as the UN Strategic Plan for Forests for 2017-2030.

For my country, Forestry and its conservation and management, is a subject that is close to our heart, especially given the fact, that the lives of our people are deeply intertwined with that of forests.

Sustainable utilization and conservation of forest resources form a critical component in our overall quest for sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Given its importance, preservation of forests in Bhutan is not only a goal, but a constitutional requirement, which requires Bhutan, to maintain 60 percent forest coverage at all times. Today, as per the National Forest Inventory completed in 2016, our forest coverage stands at 71 percent, exceeding the constitutional mandate.

We have also set aside 51.44 percent of the Country's land as protected areas, which includes ten protected areas and biological corridors – placing Bhutan amongst Countries, with one of the highest percentage of protected areas in the world.

In terms of international obligations, Bhutan has successfully fulfilled its obligation, under the Montreal Protocol, and has pledged to remain carbon neutral.

So, both at the global and national level, we feel that the vision, ambition and parameters on where we need to go on forestry have been well set with the SDGs and the UN Strategic Plan. It is in the implementation, that we need to really focus going forward.

And in doing so, we would emphasize that in the spirit of leaving no one behind, countries that are challenged with resources, such as the least developed countries and countries with structural constraints, such as the landlocked developing countries needs to be given support and attention.

From our experience, we find, that if we have the will and the right policy framework in place, and if this is backed up with adequate resources, going to where it is required the most, much can be achieved.

In this regard, the Global Forest Financing Network, has a critically important role to play in exploring, mobilizing and facilitating the wide range of financial resources out there, connecting countries to these resources, facilitating sharing of best practices and supporting capacity building in countries.

On our part, we are also looking at innovative ways on long term sustainable financing. We have embarked, under the leadership of His Majesty the King, a programme called "***Bhutan for Life***", in partnership with WWF. It's an innovative funding initiative that aims to provide sustained flow of finance to maintain our protected areas and biological corridors, for perpetuity. It is a multiparty, single closing deal – where essentially, a group of donors, contribute towards the fund, which are held and not distributed until the total fund has been reached. Then, when all of the conditions are met, these donated funds will be placed in a transition fund that will make annual payments over a period of 14 years. At the same time, Bhutan will increase its funding by approximately 5 to 7 percent annually over this 14 year term. Thereafter, Bhutan will be responsible for fully funding all the protected areas on its own.

I share this info to stress on the need for national actions and initiatives, and in doing so to also look at innovative ways of financing from a long-term perspective and the need for donor support as we discuss means of implementation.

Now coming to my questions.

My first question is for Penny from Ford Foundation. You mentioned in your presentation that you had difficulty making investments and I am wondering why this is the case. The follow up question then is to ask whether you work through governments or you prefer to work directly with local communities. My other question is your disbursement of funds – where are your grants distributed general in terms of region.

My next question is for the Secretariat. In your presentation, you had mentioned of your activities in different regions. I did not see South Asia. I am wondering if you have any activities and programmes planned for countries in the South Asian region.

Finally, a general question to all panellists on the issue of private sector financing. Ivan covered this in great detail in his presentation, but the private sector is by default

designed for profit. As we look at the financing landscape, is there an appetite from the private sector world to really come in a big way to complement the financing requirement to contribute to global commons, such as the forests.

Thank you!
