

Speech of Jose Carlos Fernandez, Head of International Affairs of the Mexican National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR)

Mrs Jan McAlpine, Director of United Nations Forum on Forests

Mrs Maya Graf, member of the Swiss Parliament

Jose Edmundo Bononge, Minister of the environment, nature and tourism of the DRC

Emmanuel Ze Meka, Exec Dir, International Tropical Timber Organization

Hans Peter Egler, Head of Trade Promotion, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs

SECO Friends and forest conservation colleagues,

Good morning to you all,

It is for me an honour to be here and on behalf of our Minister of the Environment of Mexico and I would like to express our gratitude to the ITTO and the Swiss Government for providing us with the opportunity to join you all in celebrating the launch of the Status of Tropical Forest Management 2011. We would like to congratulate ITTO for the report and to thank the Swiss government for taking such a leadership role supporting this enterprise. In particular, acknowledge the work of Jurgen Blasser, Alastair Sarre, Ducan Poore, Steve Johnson and all the contributors to the volume which resulted in a strong, sound and accessible report. Like never before, there are two gaps that must be closed simultaneously, the poverty gap and the environmental degradation one. In Mexico, many of the poorest Mexicans live in forested areas that provide a wealth of environmental goods and services but that are also being lost and degraded. To the extent that forests provide benefits to their inhabitants in ways that maintain them we will be closing those gaps simultaneously. This is why advancing

in the conservation and sustainable management of tropical forests is so important locally, nationally and globally. From addressing local subsistence, protecting biodiversity and both assisting in adapting to and mitigating climate change, tropical forests remain key natural assets in need of adequate stewardship. For México, the report unveiled today represents a significant contribution to our understanding of the status and challenges around the management of tropical forests. You may wonder what is the value of this report to Mexico, and there are a number of reasons we consider it extremely valuable: First, accountability of our progress on SFM: Mexico believes that national progress must be sound, demonstrable and comparable to ensure all of us do our share in global environmental stewardship. This report represents progress towards this end for the more than 30 countries included in it. Second need to stimulate collaboration Collaboration: While the challenges for SFM presented in the report are many and some of them quite old, it also portrays some of the lessons learned and innovative approaches being used. In this way, the report helps trigger cooperation and stimulates policy innovation. México, for instance, has a strong tradition in community forestry and the evolution of our program of payment for environmental services could and is being shared with other countries. An effort that can and must be expanded globally. A related aspect is the promotion of common approaches: for example, We are excited that CoP 16 of the climate convention in Cancún managed to set the basis for a REDD+ mechanism that will provide incentives to reduce deforestation, forest degradation and promote the enhancement of carbon stocks, including the sustainable management of forest. But for this to work, we will need to develop common approaches on Monitoring and the reporting of safeguards are obvious, but even common activity types to halt and revert forest loss and degradation. This report can help in the design of such actions and systems. Finally, incentives for improvement: We are happy to see the report reflect many improvements in Mexico's forest such as reduced deforestation but we are equally motivated to address

some of the remaining challenges, such as consolidating The areas under SFM and The expansion of competitive supply chains for certified forest. Just like Mexico has seen a significant strengthening of forest policies particularly in the last 10 years, we believe that climate change may become the most significant trigger for the expansion of global efforts in favor of forests and it's peoples. We must take this advantage fully and quickly. In our vision, REDD+ is about promoting sustainable rural development, aligning policies across sectors and across multiple levels of government, in a way that can effectively get us closer to low carbon development strategies... This are truly exciting times for forests. I will simply close saying that, as proud members of ITTO, we congratulate the organization for its 25th anniversary and for this report, both of which make worthy milestones for this, international year of the forests. To our Swiss colleagues I would also like to express our gratitude for their vision in supporting this work and the global forest agenda. We have been and will continue to be close allies in forest issues and look forward to future joint initiatives. Thank you.