



Forest Day 3

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Radisson Blu Falconer Hotel and Conference Center

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The speech given by Mr Pham Khoi Nguyen, Minister for Natural Resources and Environment, Vietnam

Thank you very much Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. First of all I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Minister for the Environment of Denmark, for allowing me to participate and make my speech on Forestry Day during the COP 15 held in Copenhagen.

Ladies and gentlemen, forests have for a long time played an important role in protecting the living environments of people, and making a contribution to the sustainable social and economic development of countries. In the context of climate change taking place in a fierce manner with immeasurable consequences, forests are a vital resource for people to maintain their livelihood and their ability to cope with natural changes and disasters, and to mitigate climate change and its adverse impacts. However forests have been lost and degraded seriously in the world, especially in developing countries. Therefore to mitigate climate change by mitigating greenhouse gases, we have to act now to stop the current alarming forest loss and degradation. Concretely, we must promote global cooperation with new mechanisms, financial resources and technologies to help countries boost their management and protection of forests.

Ladies and gentlemen, Vietnam is a rich and highly diverse country in terms of forest resources, accounting for about 10% of mammals and birds in the world. Many species of plants and animals are unique to Vietnam. According to statistics, around 3% of endangered wildlife in the world are in Vietnam. As a country with a high value of biodiversity, ranking 16th in the world, with many various ecosystems, Vietnam has been recognised as a high priority for global conservation.

Climate change, one of the biggest challenges for mankind in the 21st century, has impacted most of the key economic sectors of Vietnam, including forestry. Droughts and hot spells have caused fierce fires, destroying many forests in Vietnam. At present Vietnam has about five million hectares of forests which are inflammable at any time of the year. 56% of these are particularly inflammable during the dry season. Furthermore, climate change is unique to the change in the crop and plant structure, producing negative impacts on the development of forests, as well as increasing the risk of forest loss and forest land use change that's threatening forest biodiversity.

Ladies and gentlemen, according to the scenarios of climate change and sea level rise for Vietnam, if the sea level rises by one metre, about 250,000 hectares of mangrove forest will be lost, and 46 important biosphere reserves and nice forests of specific purposes which have a high biodiversity value will be seriously affected. The number of tropical species and coastal ecosystems will decline and then migrate to higher latitude areas, and the number of temperate species will also reduce. If the global climatic system changes in a massive manner, three kinds of forests will decline in terms of area and change in distribution.

Ladies and gentlemen, having been aware of the important role of environmental protection and climate change mitigation, Vietnam has achieved implementation of a national targets program on forestry. Including the program on re-greening bare hills, and projects for reforestation of five million hectares and other major programs and projects such as a national targets program in response to climate change.

Indeed, the focus has been given to the restoration and sustainable development of natural forests systems, promoted the development and management of dense forests, including mangrove forest, piloted clean development mechanism project in forestry, implemented an initiative on forest land management and poverty reduction, and integrated the implementation of international conventions, including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biodiversity, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. As a result, Vietnam's forest coverage increased from 27% in 1990, to 39% in 2008, making a significant contribution to the increased income of four million households. However the quality of forests has declined and many natural forests are becoming poor.

Ladies and gentlemen, the fight against climate change will be very tough, requiring full responsibility for quick action in terms of having global policies from all of us. Concretely, the international community should promote united cooperation and policy dialogue on resources and national action. We cannot be successful by only having long devolution without action at all levels. It's a real measure of the efforts.

I would like to call for joint action to protect forests and fight climate change. Thank you very much for your attention.

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