

Communiqué

## **UNEP High Level International Forum on Ecosystem Management and Green Economy**

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18 November 2011, Beijing, People's Republic of China

The UN General Assembly has made "...a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication..." one of the two main themes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012 (Rio+20).

Ecosystems are the basis of human civilization and natural capital for Green Economy development. Ecosystem management, "an integrated process to conserve and improve ecosystem health that sustains ecosystem services for human well-being" is a critical approach to realize a Green Economy.

In order to promote the central role of ecosystem management in the development of a Green Economy, UNEP has co-organized this *High Level International Forum on Ecosystem Management and Green Economy* along with the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), in Beijing on 18 November 2011.

This forum has a **goal to contribute to the success of Rio+20 by promoting the central role of ecosystem management in the development of a Green Economy in China and other developing countries**, through demonstrating the value of ecosystem services and thereby promoting investment in natural capital.

Participants to the forum included ministers, parliamentarians, principals of UN and international organizations, science and business leaders, and representatives of the civil society from around the world. The list of participants is attached as Annex 1. This communiqué conveys the key messages on which the participants reached a consensus and conveys these to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) also known as Rio+20:

## **1. Role of ecosystem management in a Green Economy**

- Ecosystems are the natural foundation for economic activity and human well-being. A robust, healthy and sustainable ecosystem is a prerequisite for the development of a Green Economy.
- Ecosystems have been profoundly degraded over the last 50 years and pressure on them continues unabated. This is unsustainable and threatens livelihoods and economic development.
- Ecosystem management plays a critical role in halting and reversing this ongoing degradation. It can also provide economic and job opportunities, particularly for developing countries.

## **2. Need for restoring degraded ecosystems**

- Degraded ecosystems poses threats to human life, livelihoods and economic development and demands urgent action.
- Policy instruments have been demonstrated to be effective in countering ecosystem degradation in countries including China.
- Market based mechanisms such as Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) exists to support ecosystem restoration efforts.

## **3. Capacity building for the management of ecosystems in developing countries**

- Developing countries face capacity constraints for implementing ecosystem management.
- However, there are also numerous ecological research networks, mechanisms, good practices, methods and tools in place to promote the role of ecosystem management for Green Economic development. These have to be spread across developing countries.

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- Political commitment is needed to expedite the capacity-building process and enable co-operation among countries.

#### **4. Research and actions to be pursued to improve the current economic model.**

- The current economic model does not fully reflect the value of natural resources.
- Developing effective methods to value ecosystem services and reflecting this value in policy decisions is necessary.

#### **5. Key Messages for Rio+20**

- Political commitment at the highest level is needed to ensure ecosystem management is adequately reflected in the Rio+20 discussions.
- Clear linkages are established between ecosystem management and the Green Economy in developing Rio+20 policy frameworks.
- Adequate financial, technological and information resources are allocated to support ecosystem management, including in national policy-setting and awareness-raising, capacity-building, planning and practices, particularly in developing countries.
- Capacity building and ecological infrastructure in developing countries, particularly in Africa, for enhancing ecosystem management and promoting the greening of economies.

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Annex 1 Participants list