

The World Bank

INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

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Mr. Stewart Maginnis
Chair
WB Forest External Advisory Group
Route de Fouchy 7
CH- 1146 Mollens
SWITZERLAND

Dear Mr. Maginnis,

I would like to thank you very much for your letter of September 10, 2007 in which you summarize the outcome of the 5th Meeting of the External Advisory Group of June 18-19, 2007.

As always, the EAG's recommendations to strengthen the Bank's performance in implementing its Strategy on Forests are highly appreciated. The Forests Team as well as other Bank forest professionals will strive to incorporate your recommendations in their respective work programs. I note that the EAG's main findings concur with and complement those of the 2007 Forest Strategy mid-term review which, have been presented to the World Bank's Board of Directors. Please find attached for your reference the Bank's response to this report.

The ongoing global debate on climate change with its potentially negative social, environmental and economic consequences have highlighted the important role that forests will play in mitigating the effects of climate change, in providing vital global public goods and delivering essential economic benefits especially for poor rural populations.

The position by the Bank is therefore clear: we will continue to strengthen our engagement in the forests sector. Concretely, we have already undertaken first bold steps towards this end by launching the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) at the Bali COP 13 meeting. As you are aware, the Bank has also commissioned a global multi-stakeholder consultation process to frame the scope and structure of a Global Forest Partnership (GFP) that was proposed earlier this year.

We believe that both partnership instruments bear witness to our institution's commitment to address deforestation and climate change. Yet, by framing our work in the form of partnerships, we are signaling our recognition that the Bank alone will not be able to address these challenges – there is a need to collaborate and to work through partnerships with all stakeholders from government, private sector, civil society, NGOs and research organizations.

We believe that, in due time, this new orientation will also address some of the issues of a Bank systemic nature mentioned in your letter. The increased emphasis we intend to give to improved analytical work, to in-country forest sector dialogue and the possibilities we are exploring for creating stronger partnerships, should help to ensure that forest concerns are more adequately reflected in PRSPs, and in Bank Country Assistance and Development Lending Strategies.

My colleagues and I look forward to further discuss these issues at the upcoming January EAG meeting. I specifically encourage you to continue the constructive dialogue and guidance on the emerging Global Forest Partnership. We believe that this partnership will help to address concerns expressed in recent international fora that greater emphasis needs to be given to the potential of SFM to contribute to conservation and wise use of global forest resources. In short the onus is on all of us to “Get this Partnership Right”

You will receive a formal invitation letter for the next EAG meeting, together with a proposed agenda shortly.

Let me take this opportunity to thank you and all EAG members again for your support and wish you a very happy Holiday season and all the best for the New Year.

Yours sincerely



Mark Cackler
Acting Vice President
Sustainable Development Network

Attachment: Bank Response to Mid-term Review Report on the Forest Strategy