SOLOMON ISLANDS

COUNTRY PRESENTATION ON

Challenges and Opportunities related to Forest Biodiversity and Climate Change (including biodiversity-related aspects of pilot and demonstration activities on REDD+)

HORTPARK

15 – 18 MARCH 2011

SINGAPORE
i. Overview of Forest Cover of Solomon Islands

ii. Challenges to Forest Biodiversity

iii. Opportunities for Forest Biodiversity Conservation

iv. Status of & Implications for REDD+ and Climate Change
i. Overview of forest biodiversity

- Vegetation cover for Solomon Islands stands at 2 million hectares

- The assessment includes non-commercial forest and cleared areas, unlogged commercial natural forest, logged over commercial natural forests and plantations

- Solomon Islands rainforest ecoregion is included in the Global 200 list and ranked in the highest category of Globally Outstanding.

- Solomon Islands forests vegetation is recognized as one of the world’s great Centres of Plant Diversity

- This is a reflection of the significance of the biodiversity of the country

- Major vegetation types identified in Solomon Islands are coastal strand vegetation, riverine
forests, lowland forest, montane forest and non-forest communities

ii. **Challenges to forest biodiversity**

- Major threats to biodiversity are:
  - Logging
    - 288, 200 hectares have already been logged
    - Total commercial forest is expected to be exhausted by 2015 due to increased log production
  - Inappropriate land use practices (commercial plantations, etc)
    - Plantation cash cropping for coconut, cocoa, oil palm
    - Plantation forestry
- Over exploitation of natural resources
  o Forest degradation

• Loss of forest biodiversity is compounded by natural disasters, population increase, invasive species and climate change

• Major constraints to addressing the threats are lack of financial support, insufficient capacity, conflicts generated by land tenure system, insufficient and weak legislation and political instability
iii. **Opportunities for Forest Biodiversity Conservation**

- Mainstreaming of policies and legislation,
- Ecosystem based approach to natural resource management,
- Species conservation,
- Protected areas system,
- Human resources and capacity building,
- Financial resources
iv. **Status of and Implications for REDD+ and climate change**

- Solomon Islands is among UNFCCC Parties being selected for REDD+ readiness program

- Presently the program is coordinated by the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology

- Institutional arrangements or supportive institutions for REDD+ implementation yet to be finalized

- REDD+ could benefit from the Ecological Gap Analyses conducted for Solomon Islands as part of CBD’s Program of Work on Protected Areas in developing environmental safeguards
- REDD+ could benefit from newly enacted Protected Areas Act 2010 in terms of biodiversity conservation

- REDD+ requires mainstreaming of policies across relevant sectors for it to be successful