

**OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF NRI PUBLICATION**

***'REDUCING EMISSIONS FROM DEFORESTATION AND DEGRADATION OF FORESTS  
IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA: ISSUES AND OPTIONS'***

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FOREST AUTHORITY**

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

CLIMATE CHANGE IS NO LONGER A MYTH – IT IS REAL. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO GO FAR TO FIND OUT IF CLIMATE CHANGE IS REAL.

IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA, COASTLINES ARE ERODING AND ISLANDS AND ATOLLS ARE SINKING AS A RESULT OF SEA LEVELS RISING. THE CARTERET ISLANDS IN THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF BOUGAINVILLE IS PREDICTED TO BE TOTALLY SUBMERGED BY 2015. MANDOK AND TAMI ISLANDS IN THE MOROBE PROVINCE ARE ALSO SINKING, AS WELL AS OTHER ISLANDS AND ATOLLS THROUGHOUT PNG. OUR CLOSEST SOUTH PACIFIC NEIGHBOR, TUVALU IS ALSO AT RISK OF BEING UNDERWATER, AND ITS' PEOPLE ARE FEARFUL THAT ONE DAY THEY WILL BE A PEOPLE WITHOUT A COUNTRY.

THE ISSUE OF CLIMATE CHANGE HAS COME ABOUT AS A RESULT OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FROM HUMAN ACTIVITIES. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS CALLED ON BOTH DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO TAKE DRASTIC MEASURES TO ADDRESS THE IMMEDIATE THREATS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA AS A SIGNATORY TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL, IS REQUIRED TO REDUCE ITS GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IN ORDER TO FULFILL ITS' OBLIGATORY COMMITMENTS IN ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE FROM A NATIONAL FRONT.

AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL, IT HAS BEEN ESTIMATED THAT THE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FROM FORESTS ACCOUNTS FOR BETWEEN 18-20% OF TOTAL GHG EMISSIONS. THE CURRENT ESTIMATE FOR PNG IS THAT GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FROM FOREST IS BETWEEN 55-69%. ACCORDING TO SHEARMAN AND OTHERS (2008), THIS WOULD BE ABOUT 2000 METRIC TONNES OF CARBON DIOXIDE EQUIVALENT. [ROUGHLY ABOUT 1 MILLION CUBIC METRES OF CARBON DIOXIDE]

WHILE IT MAY BE ARGUED THAT PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IS LOW, IT IS PART OF THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY AND MUST PLAY ITS ROLE TO LOWER/MINIMIZE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FROM ITS' FORESTRY AND LAND USE ACTIVITIES. BECAUSE PAPUA NEW GUINEA HAS A LARGE TRACK OF FOREST COVER, IT IS PUSHING FOR THE CONCEPT OF REDUCING EMISSIONS FROM DEFORESTATION AND DEGRADATION OF FORESTS, KNOWN SIMPLY AS

'REDD' AS ONE OF THE MECHANISMS TO COMBAT ISSUES RELATING TO CLIMATE CHANGE. IT IS NOW REFERRED TO AS 'REDD+'.

'REDD+' HAS BEEN AROUND SINCE 2005, BUT IT IS YET TO FIND ITS PLACE WITHIN THE PNG ECONOMY AND SOCIETY. THERE ARE MANY REASONS AS TO WHY THE ISSUE OF 'REDD+' HAS NOT GAINED THE PROMINENCE IT DESERVES. THE MAIN ONE IS RELATED TO THE DIFFICULTY IN EXPLAINING 'REDD' GENERALLY TO ORDINARY CITIZENS DUE TO ITS' COMPLEXITY. A SECOND REASON IS THAT THE ISSUES AND OPTIONS PERTAINING TO REDD+ HAVE NOT BEEN IDENTIFIED AND DOCUMENTED IN A COHESIVE MANNER SO CAN BE UNDERSTOOD AND IMPLEMENTED.

IT IS TIMELY THAT THE NATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE HAS PRODUCED SUCH A PUBLICATION. AS WE HAVE HEARD FROM THE AUTHOR, THE PUBLICATION IS INTENDED TO RAISE FURTHER DIALOGUE FROM AMONGST THE INTERESTED STAKEHOLDERS SO TO STEER PAPUA NEW GUINEA TO A PATH WHERE IT CAN BENEFIT (ECONOMICALLY, ENVIROMENTALLY AND SOCIALLY) FROM IMPLEMENTING THE 'REED+' CONCEPT.

I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE PERSPECTIVES HIGHLIGHTED IN THIS PUBLICATION WILL BE USEFUL POLICY DISCUSSIONS FOR PAPUA NEW GUINEA TO CONSIDER AS IT PARTICIPATES IN DIALOGUES LEADING UP TO THE NEGOTIATION OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT TO REPLACE THE KYOTO PROTOCOL IN 2012.

FINALLY, I WISH TO COMMEND THE NATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE IN PRODUCING THIS PUBLICATION **"REDUCING EMISSIONS FROM DEFORESTATION AND DEGRADATION OF FORESTS: ISSUES AND OPTIONS'** AND I CHALLENGE THOSE HERE TODAY TO TAKE STOCK OF WHAT PAPUA NEW GUINEA HAS AND

CAN OFFER FOR THE COLLECTIVE BENEFIT OF THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF SUCH CONCEPTS AS THE 'REDD+'.

THANK YOU LADIES AND GENTLEMEN