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## UN environment chief calls on G20 to build on previous pledges of green growth



UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner

9 November 2010 – As world leaders gather in the Republic of Korea for the latest meeting of the Group of 20 (G20) major economies, the head of the United Nations environmental agency is calling on them to build on their previous pledge to move towards a green and more sustainable recovery from the financial crisis with more concrete action.

“A year ago in London, G20 leaders articulated this vision as building an ‘inclusive, sustainable and green recovery,’” wrote the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)), [Achim Steiner](#), in an [opinion piece](#) published today in the Korean JoongAng Daily newspaper.

“In Seoul, this vision needs to be evolved toward not only a green recovery, but to inclusive, sustainable green growth underpinned by clean technologies and the economic importance of maintaining nature's multi-trillion dollar services.”

Mr. Steiner noted the G20's actions to stabilize banks and counter the financial and economic global crisis, but stressed that financial sustainability, more sustainable employment prospects and wider challenges such as addressing poverty in the 21st century will not happen just by fixing the contradictions inherent in existing economic models.

“It will only happen if public policy and private sector investments are aligned in ways that meet the short-term recovery challenges with a longer-term vision of opportunity for the many and not

just the few,” he wrote, adding that by acting in concert and cooperation, the G20 has the potential to become a key and pivotal enabler for countries transitioning their economies towards green growth.

There are encouraging signs, not least from the G20's Korean hosts, whose own economic stimulus package had earmarked close to 90 per cent of its funds to a short- and long-term vision of green growth, stated Mr. Steiner. He added that the country's leaders have also made the indivisible link between the leadership role of public policy-making in terms of unleashing private sector investment into clean technology and other green sectors.

The UNEP head pointed out that business, in the broadest sense, is looking long and hard to governments for more forward-looking and imaginative responses, an approach which emerged last month in Nagoya, Japan, at the meeting on the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#), at which an historic new protocol was agreed on, setting ground rules for improving access to, and the equitable sharing of, the world's genetic resources.

“An increasing number of banks and pension funds see rising risks to their investments from the loss of ecosystems, such as forests and wetlands, and the multi-trillion dollar services they produce,” Mr. Steiner wrote. “And a rising number now see the disruption to food supplies, supply chains and other challenges linked with natural resource losses as a bigger threat than that from international terrorism.”

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