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What is REDD+?

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Forests: why are they important?

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Combating climate change

Forests cover a total of 4 billion hectares worldwide, equivalent to 31% of the total land area (1). Although this figure may seem high, the world's forests are disappearing. Between 1990 and 2000 there was a net loss of 8.3 million hectares per year, and the following decade, up to 2010, there was a net loss of 6.2 million hectares per year. Although the rate of loss has slowed, it remains very high, with the vast majority occurring in tropical regions (1). Aside from the devastating effects tropical forest loss has on biodiversity and forest-dependent communities, a major consequence of deforestation and forest degradation is the release of heat-trapping carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere. Forests provide vast carbon sinks that when destroyed emit CO₂ into the atmosphere, either by burning or degradation of organic matter (2). CO₂ is one of the most potent greenhouse gases and the primary component of anthropogenic emissions (3). The conversion of forests to other land uses is responsible for around 10% of net global carbon emissions (4). Solving the problem of deforestation is a prerequisite for any effective response to climate change.

People and forests

Global estimates of numbers of forest-dwelling and forest-dependent peoples vary widely (5), however the World Bank states that forest resources contribute directly to the livelihoods of 90% of the 1.2 billion people living in abject poverty (6). Of these, there are an estimated 500 million forest dependent people, 200 million of whom are indigenous peoples (5). Forests support the livelihoods of local communities who depend on forests not only for food, but for fuel, fodder for livestock,

medicine and shelter (5). Whether in terms of communities most directly dependent on forest resources or people at the consumer end of international supply chains, forests are vital for the well-being of humanity and play a central role in poverty alleviation initiatives (6).

As it is often the poorest that are most susceptible to the adverse effects of climate change (7), reducing deforestation provides an opportunity to simultaneously tackle the problem at its source whilst helping to promote the resilience of those most vulnerable to climate change.

Ecosystem Services

Forests provide essential ecosystem services beyond carbon storage and emissions offsetting - such as health (through disease regulation), livelihoods (providing jobs and local employment), water (watershed protection, water flow regulation, rainfall generation), food, nutrient cycling and climate security. Protecting tropical forests therefore not only has a double-cooling effect, by reducing carbon emissions and maintaining high levels of evaporation from the canopy (4), but also is vital for the continued provision of essential life-sustaining services.

These services are essential for the well-being of people and the planet, however they remain undervalued and therefore cannot compete with the more immediate gains delivered from converting forests into commodities (8). Ecosystem services operate from local to global scales and are not confined within national borders; all people are therefore reliant on them and it is in our collective interest to ensure their sustained provisioning into the future.

What is REDD/REDD+?

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Watch our REDD+ video, [An Introduction to REDD+](#).

Degradation and deforestation of the world's tropical forests are cumulatively responsible for about 10% of net global carbon emissions. Therefore, tackling the destruction of tropical forests is core to any concerted effort to combat climate change (10). Traditional approaches to halting tropical forest loss have typically been unsuccessful, as can be seen from the fact that deforestation and forest degradation continue unabated.

REDD (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation) incentivises a break from historic trends of increasing deforestation rates and greenhouse gases emissions. It is a framework through which developing countries are rewarded financially for any emissions reductions achieved associated with a decrease in the conversion of forests to alternate land uses (10). Having identified current and/or projected rates of deforestation and forest degradation, a country taking remedial action to effectively reduce those rates will be financially rewarded relative to the extent of their achieved emissions reductions (11).

REDD provides a unique opportunity to achieve large-scale emissions reductions at comparatively low abatement costs (12). By economically valuing the role forest ecosystems play in carbon capture and storage, it allows intact forests to compete with historically more lucrative, alternate land uses resulting in their destruction (10).

In its infancy, REDD was first and foremost focused on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. However, in 2007 the Bali Action Plan, formulated at the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-13) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), stated that a comprehensive approach to mitigating climate change should include “[p]olicy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries” (13). A year later, this was further elaborated on as the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks was upgraded so as to receive the same emphasis as avoided emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (14).

Finally, in 2010, at COP-16 (15) as set out in the the Cancun Agreements, REDD became REDD-plus (REDD+), to reflect the new components. REDD+ now includes:

- (a) Reducing emissions from deforestation;
- (b) Reducing emissions from forest degradation;
- (c) Conservation of forest carbon stocks;
- (d) Sustainable management of forests;
- (e) Enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

Within its remit, REDD+ has the potential to simultaneously contribute to climate change mitigation and poverty alleviation, whilst also conserving biodiversity and sustaining vital ecosystem services (16). This potential for multiple benefits raises the crucial question of to what extent the inclusion of development and conservation objectives may help or hinder the overall success of, and negotiations for, a future REDD+ framework (explicitly for climate change mitigation). Having said this, prospective co-benefits can easily transform into prospective co-detriments, making the earlier question arguably irrelevant. Aside from whether consideration of such factors will promote or hamper the success and negotiations of a REDD+ framework, they are unquestionably important for the creation of a sustainable and equitable REDD+ process.

The details of a REDD+ mechanism continue to be debated under the UNFCCC (17), and the considerable financial needs for full-scale implementation have not yet been met. A final mechanism is therefore not yet in place and operating at scale. Despite this, in recognition of the need for urgent action if reducing deforestation is going to have a meaningful effect in terms of reducing emissions and mitigating climate change, [REDD+ initiatives](#) have already been instigated outside the auspices of the UNFCCC, both independently and in anticipation of a formal REDD+ mechanism (9).

REDD+ Negotiations under the UNFCCC: From Marrakesh to Lima

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The details of a REDD+ mechanism continue to be debated under the UNFCCC (17), and the considerable financial needs for full-scale implementation have not yet been met. A final mechanism is therefore not yet in place and operating at scale. The following section provides a chronological summary of what has happened so far within the UNFCCC REDD+ negotiations.

The Kyoto Protocol

Although REDD was formalised as an idea at the thirteenth Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-13) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Bali, 2007, and in its current form, is considered a success of COP-16 in Cancun (2010), its roots extend back to the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. Within the context of emissions limitation and reduction commitments in Article 2, the Kyoto Protocol refers to the protection and enhancement of sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases, sustainable forest management practices and afforestation and reforestation activities (18). The inclusion of the above practices was restricted, as it was only afforestation and reforestation activities that were considered eligible for generating credits under the Clean Development Mechanism.

Despite the inclusion of deforestation as an important land use issue, confusion existed over the role of Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) activities in countries' commitments under Kyoto and there was a significant lack of information and technology to guide the measurement, reporting and verification of such activities (18).

COP-7, Marrakesh, 2001

At COP-7 in 2001 it was decided, as part of the Marrakesh Accords, that only afforestation and reforestation qualified as LULUCF activities capable of generating carbon credits under the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol (Decision 17/CP.17) (19). Reducing deforestation or forest degradation was excluded from the decision due to concerns of leakage (18). The concern was that reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation was unlikely to achieve a net reduction in emissions due to the fact that whilst reduced in one area, the same pressures may present themselves elsewhere, as the emissions producing activity is merely relocated (18). Other concerns originally raised over REDD included issues to do with: permanence, the idea that carbon is only ever temporarily stored and at some point is always re-released into the atmosphere; additionality, the notion that identifying any improvements in emissions reductions is complicated by complexities of predicting what eventualities would have occurred in the absence of the REDD project; and measurement, difficulties in accurately ascertaining the levels of carbon stored in soils and trees (11).

Read Decision 17/CP.7 from the Marrakesh Accords [here](#)

COP-11, Montreal, 2005

The notion of avoided deforestation as an important climate change mitigation mechanism then did not re-enter the negotiations until COP-11 in Montreal, 2005.

Throughout 2005, there had been increasing attention paid to the individual roles of countries at different developmental stages in efforts to combat climate change. The European Commission laid the foundations for a climate change strategy with measures targeting both industrialised and developing countries. Given the respective contributions of countries to global greenhouse gas emissions, the decreasing share attributable to developed countries within the EU along with the growing role of developing countries in emissions generation, in February 2005, the European Commission adopted a communication entitled "Winning the battle against global climate change" (SEC(2005)180) (COM/2005/0035) recognising the need to broaden country participation in order to achieve the global action required. Despite their growing share of emissions, developing countries expressed concerns that imposing reduction targets could hamper their economic development. Meanwhile, some developed countries, such as the U.S., argued that exclusion of developing countries from commitments not only undermined the environmental effectiveness of an agreement

but also jeopardised their own industry's competitiveness. From either viewpoint, the benefits of positive incentives that would permit developing countries to participate in emissions reduction efforts whilst maintaining progress towards their wider development goals were clear. As well as appreciating the varying capacities of countries on the basis of 'common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities', the communication also highlighted the importance of including more policy areas, in particular emphasising the need for a fresh approach to halting deforestation (20).

That year also saw the formation of the Coalition for Rainforest Nations. Led by Papua New Guinea, the Coalition came together as a collaboration aiming to reconcile forest stewardship with economic development (18) and highlight and remedy the exclusion of reducing emissions from deforestation from carbon markets under the Kyoto Protocol. COP-11 saw the Coalition act through the governments of Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica in requesting that "Reducing emissions from deforestation [RED] in developing countries and approaches to stimulate action" be included in the agenda. It was proposed that, in generating credits from RED activities, developing countries could gain access to carbon markets that would incentivise the protection of forests by making their worth greater in their carbon value than from industries requiring their destruction (21). The issue received extensive support and Parties generally agreed on the issue's importance in the context of climate change mitigation (22). Governments subsequently agreed to a two-year work programme (23) and agreed to initiate consideration of the issue at the twenty-fourth SBSTA (Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice) session in Bonn, May 2006. This would involve both consideration of the Parties' views and recommendations on RED-related issues with a specific focus on scientific, technical and methodological issues (24).

COP-13, Bali, 2007

In 2007, given that forest degradation plays a more threatening role than deforestation in central Africa, a group of countries within the Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale (COMIFAC) proposed that emissions reductions from forest degradation be included also (25). Previously, RED had omitted inclusion of degradation due to a number of technological challenges associated with the accurate measuring and reporting of emissions reductions from reduced degradation (15).

A key milestone was subsequently achieved at COP-13. The two previous years, following COP-11 in Montreal, had seen extensive discussion and deliberation by the SBSTA on policy, scientific, technical and methodological issues, culminating in a decision at COP-13 in Bali, 2007. The Bali Action Plan, under Decision 1/CP.13, outlined a commitment of the Parties to address enhanced action on climate change mitigation, including the consideration of "Policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and forest carbon stocks in developing countries" (13). The Bali Action Plan also established a subsidiary body to conduct the process, the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA). The AWG-LCA was to conduct a comprehensive process to enable full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action (26), with the aim of completing its work in 2009 and presenting its outcomes at COP-15 (13).

A further decision (Decision 2/CP.13): 'Reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries: approaches to stimulate action' was adopted (13). Whilst the Decision itself in referring explicitly to deforestation maintains the limited scope of RED, it also importantly acknowledges that "forest degradation also leads to emissions, and needs to be addressed when reducing emissions from deforestation" and affirms "the urgent need to take meaningful action to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries" (REDD) (13).

This decision provided a mandate for several elements and actions by Parties relating to RED, including: i) strengthening and support of current efforts; ii) capacity-building, technical assistance and technological transfer to support methodological and technical needs of developing countries; iii) identifying and undertaking activities to address the drivers of deforestation, enhance forest carbon stocks via the sustainable management of forests, and; iv) mobilise resources to support the above (16).

Read the Bali Action Plan/Decision 1/CP.13 and Decision 2/CP.13 in full [here](#)

COP-14, Poznań, 2008

At COP-14 in Poznań, the SBSTA reported on the outcomes of its programme of work on methodological issues associated with REDD policy approaches and incentives (16). In its report, in response to pressure from some developing countries, the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks countries was upgraded so as to receive equal emphasis as deforestation and forest degradation (16). This saw the early progression of REDD to REDD+ (18) and recognised that conservation, the sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks play as equally an important role in emissions reductions through protecting carbon stocks, as preventing deforestation and forest degradation.

The aim of expanding the scope of REDD to REDD+ was to prevent the development of a mechanism that would reward only historically high emitters in favour of one that could incentivise regions with low deforestation rates to keep them as such. The “+” improved the potential of REDD to achieve co-benefits such as poverty alleviation, improved governance, biodiversity conservation and protection of ecosystem services (27).

COP-15, Copenhagen, 2009

The Copenhagen Accord (Decision 2/CP.15) explicitly recognised the crucial role of both REDD and the emissions removals provided by forests and agreed on the need to incentivise related activities through the establishment of a REDD+ mechanism that would aid in mobilizing financial resources from developed countries. It was stated that “scaled up, new and additional, predictable and adequate funding as well as improved access” would be provided to developing countries for improved mitigation including for REDD+. To this end, developed countries committed to providing resources approaching USD 30 billion for adaptation and mitigation for 2010-2012 (of ‘fast-start finance’) and jointly mobilising USD 100 billion by 2020 for transparent, meaningful mitigation actions in developing countries. This funding was expected to come from public and private and bilateral and multilateral sources (28).

Furthermore, discussions included a decision (Decision 4/CP.15) requesting Parties to identify the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation resulting in emissions along with means to address them, activities that reduce emissions, increase removals and stabilise carbon stocks, and to use the most recent IPCC (International Panel on Climate Change) guidelines to estimate and monitor forest-related greenhouse gas emissions and removals and changes in forest cover (28). Prior to the development of the Copenhagen Accord, negotiators, within the AWG-LCA, worked on a more detailed REDD+ agenda in the hope it would guide Parties undertaking REDD+ discussions (29). This decision text identified a number of safeguards as a means of preventing negative social or environmental outcomes of REDD+ activities and also highlighted the need for robust measurement, reporting and verification of changes in emissions resulting from REDD+ activities (30). Despite considerable progress and consensus on these issues, no formal agreement on REDD+ was reached.

Read the full Copenhagen accord (Decision 2/CP.15) [here](#)

Read Decision 4/CP.15 in full [here](#)

COP-16, Cancun, 2010

Following the formulation of a decision on REDD+ in Copenhagen, COP-16 in Cancun saw its adoption with only minor modification. The Cancun Agreements (Decision 1/CP.16) affirmed that “in the context of the provision of adequate and predictable support to developing country Parties, Parties should collectively aim to slow, halt and reverse forest cover and carbon loss” (14). Parties established a technology mechanism to facilitate in the advancement and transfer of technology to support adaptation and mitigation actions, including the full range of REDD+ activities, in developing countries.

The Cancun Agreements (Paragraph 73 of Decision 1/CP.16) also decided on a phased approach to REDD+ implementation adopting with the following steps: i) the development of national strategies or action plans, policies and measures, and capacity building; ii) the implementation of national policies, measures, strategies or action plans for further capacity building, technology development and transfer, and results-based demonstration activities, evolving into; iii) results-based actions to be fully measured, reported and verified.

The same Decision identified the systems and information needed to partake in REDD+ activities by requesting that developing country Parties support REDD+ activities, according to their respective capabilities, through developing: i) a national strategy or action plan; ii) a national forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level; iii) a robust and transparent national forest monitoring system for REDD+ activities, and; iv) a system for providing information on how REDD+ safeguards (to avoid negative social and environmental outcomes) are being addressed and adhered to (14).

Finally the Agreements (Paragraph 72 of Decision 1/CP.16) highlighted the need to address related issues by requesting that Parties, when developing their national action plans or strategies for REDD+, address “the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, land tenure issues, forest governance issues, gender considerations and the safeguards” whilst ensuring effective and full participation of the relevant stakeholders including indigenous peoples and local communities (14).

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) was established in Cancun and it was decided that it would be designated as ‘an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention’ (Paragraph 102 of Decision 1/CP.16). Despite significant ground gained, a major gap remained in that there was no progress relating to what mechanisms would provide the funding for REDD+ and decisions on market-based funding mechanisms were left to be decided at COP-17 in Durban, 2011 (31).

Read the full Cancun Agreements/Decision 1/CP.16 [here](#)

COP-17, Durban, 2011

Outcomes for REDD+ from COP-17 at Durban related to financing options, safeguards and reference levels (32).

With regards to financing, in Decision 2/CP.17, it was agreed that results-based financing for developing country Parties may come from a variety of sources, including public, private, bilateral and multilateral. Notably, within this decision it was considered that market-based approaches could be developed as a means to support results-based actions (33). The decision, however, failed to clarify a number of issues. It neglected to identify the specific meaning of market-based approaches, whether sub-national activities could be supported by markets, or whether bilateral or non-convention developed mechanisms would be recognised by the UNFCCC. It also failed to specify

whether any market-based mechanism would relate to those under the UNFCCC and future commitments under a second commitment phase of the Kyoto Protocol or a new legally binding agreement post-Kyoto (32). The Decision invited Parties to submit their views on ways to finance results-based activities in order for the AWG-LCA to consider these at the next SBSTA meeting (33).

Relating to safeguards, discussions focused on the reporting of how they are being respected and addressed - that is, the kind of information to be submitted, when and to whom (34). Specifically, Decision 12/CP.17 provided guidance on systems for providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected. The decision agreed that systems providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected should, respective of national circumstances, capabilities, sovereignty and legislation, provide transparent and consistent information, be implemented at the national level and build upon existing systems (33). It was also agreed that developing country Parties should periodically report on how social and environmental safeguards are being addressed and respected within their National Communications (33). Despite some progress in this area, there was little guidance on the level of detail required within reporting and discussions concluded with the understanding they would be further elaborated upon at COP-18.

The same decision included guidance on reference levels and/or reference emission levels. These form the benchmarks against which to measure forest-related emissions per year and are thus essential to environmental integrity when assessing future performance (36, 38). This provided a strong basis for a robust measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) scheme, essential for the development of REDD+ (35). It was decided that reference levels should be consistent with each country's greenhouse gas inventories, referring to anthropogenic forest-related greenhouse gas emissions by sources and removals by sinks (33). The decision provides guidance on a transparent, flexible approach, in which reference levels are periodically reviewed in conjunction with any advances in methodologies and in which sub-national reference levels can be elaborated as an interim measure whilst transitioning to a national level (33).

Read the full decision on the outcome of the work of the AWG-LCA/Decision 2/CP.17 [here](#)

Read Decision 12/CP.17 on safeguards and reference levels [here](#)

COP-18, Doha, 2012

The main areas of debate on REDD+ at COP-18 were measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) and REDD+ financing (36).

Technical issues regarding MRV were addressed under the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA). These included: (i) how to design national forest monitoring systems; (ii) how to create an appropriate MRV framework for result-based payments; (iii) how to link this in with reference levels; (iv) the need for additional guidance on designing REDD+ safeguards and (v) the drivers of deforestation. The SBSTA did not complete its work on these matters but aimed to finish by its 39th session at the 19th COP in December 2013.

The main stumbling block of the session turned out to be the issue of verification (37). Some Parties pushed for verification based on the process of international consultation and analysis (ICA) used for nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs), while others backed independent third-party verification by experts from both developed and developing countries. With no compromise reached, the issue was suspended and discussions set to resume at the next SBSTA meeting in June 2013 (38).

The second major issue concerning REDD+ discussed at the conference was how to raise finance for

REDD+ activities. This was discussed under the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA), with debate raised over (i) the creation of a new REDD+ institution; (ii) incentives for non-carbon benefits; (iii) the creation of a fund for joint adaptation/mitigation actions; and (iv) the issue of sub-national approaches for result-based payments. However, the failure to reach consensus on the issue of verification had knock-on effects for decisions on results-based finance (38). As a result the COP decided to develop a work programme on results-based finance in 2013, co-chaired by representatives each from one developed and one developing country Party (Decision 1/CP.18, paragraph 25-26). It was further agreed that draft decisions on improving the effectiveness of REDD+ finance would be developed through a series of workshops on the four topics mentioned above, for adoption at COP 19 (Decision 1/CP.18, paragraph 28-29).

Read the full text of the decisions adopted by the COP, including Decision 1/CP.18 [here](#).

Bonn Climate Change Conference, June 2013

A number of important steps were taken for REDD+ at the inter-sessional meetings of the UNFCCC in Bonn. The conference included the 38th sessions of both subsidiary bodies: the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA).

Negotiations under the SBI were stalled when objections over procedural issues were raised by a number of Parties. This lack of progress however allowed for an unexpected amount of time to be afforded to negotiations under SBSTA, resulting in three draft decisions for REDD+ to be proposed for adoption at COP19 in Warsaw. These decisions relate to addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation; modalities for national forest monitoring systems; and the timing and frequency of presentations of summary information on how safeguards are being addressed and respected (39).

The draft decision on drivers represented an important step forward after COP18 in Doha failed to produce any meaningful outcomes on this. However, although the draft decision encourages the private sector to take action to reduce drivers, overall the text remains weak in that it does not incorporate any suggestion of concrete actions, nor reference the importance of tackling the root causes of forest loss for the success of REDD+ (40). The draft decision on safeguards states that Parties should provide a periodical summary of information on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected in the implementation of REDD+ activities. This summary is, on a voluntary basis, to be uploaded to the REDD+ Web Platform, which was created at COP18 in Doha, 2012 (41).

The third draft decision on national forest monitoring systems (NFMS) establishes that the development of Parties' NFMS for the monitoring and reporting of REDD+ should be guided by the most recent guidelines of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as well as that they should provide transparent and consistent data and information that are suitable for the measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) of REDD+ activities. The decision also supports subnational monitoring and reporting as an interim measure, stating that NFMS should build on existing systems and be flexible enough to incorporate any improvements over time (42).

Progress was made in other areas, including through the agreement of elements for possible draft decisions on modalities for MRV and procedures for the technical assessment of proposed forest reference emission levels/reference levels (RELS/RLs). Regarding REDD+ financing, the issue of market-based versus non-market-based sources of finance were discussed without any concrete outcomes. However, should the above draft decisions be adopted at Warsaw alongside a decision on verification, some of the major obstacles to verification and therefore results-based payments and REDD+ implementation could be solved (37).

Two emerging topics and their relation to climate change were also discussed at Bonn: agricultural activities and high-carbon ecosystems. As a main driver of deforestation internationally, the inclusion of agricultural activities on the UNFCCC conference agenda is of interest for future progress on REDD+. The Parties agreed to define the scope and role of agriculture in mitigating and adapting to climate change. A technical workshop on the issue is being prepared and will be held at COP19 with the aim of producing a draft text for future negotiations.

COP-19, Warsaw, 2013

The 19th Conference of the Parties (COP-19) held in Warsaw in November 2013 saw a number of decisions adopted. This produced the 'Warsaw Framework for REDD+'; a package of decisions, which along with those adopted at previous COPs completes the 'REDD+ Rulebook' and gives guidance for the full implementation of REDD+ (43).

Discussions on REDD+ took place under several different negotiating bodies. Methodological issues were debated under the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA); institutional arrangements within a joint work programme of SBSTA and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI); and results-based finance under the Conference of the Parties (COP) (44).

SBSTA concluded five decisions, which provide technical guidance for the implementation of REDD+ activities. These decisions were on modalities for national forest monitoring systems (Decision 11/CP.19); modalities for measuring, reporting and verifying (MRV) (Decision 14/CP.19); the technical assessment of proposed forest reference emission levels/forest reference levels (RELS/RLs) (Decision 13/CP.19); safeguards information systems (Decision 12/CP.19); and addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation (Decision 15/CP.19). These issues, in particular MRV and RELs, have been the subject of extensive debate and have taken up much negotiating time since first proposed at COP-16 in Cancun (44).

National Forest Monitoring Systems (NFMS)

Decision 11/CP.19 adopted at COP-19 completed the UNFCCC's guidance for modalities for NFMS for REDD+. The decision reaffirms those from previous COPs and gives further guidance, deciding that NFMS should build upon existing systems (paragraph 4(a)); enable the assessment of different types of forest, including natural forest (paragraph 4(b)); be flexible and allow for improvement (paragraph 4(c)); and, reflect the phased approach to REDD+ (paragraph 4(d)).

Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV)

Decision 14/CP.19 details modalities for measuring, reporting and verifying 'anthropogenic forest-related emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks, and forest carbon stock and forest-area changes' resulting from the implementation of REDD+ activities. The main outcomes of COP-19 regarding MRV are as follows: the MRV for REDD+ should be consistent with any guidance for the MRV of nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs) and with any future relevant decisions of the COP (paragraph 1); and that Parties should use data that is transparent and consistent over time and with the established REL/RL (paragraph 3). Furthermore, the decision establishes the process for verification; that is the process of technical analysis that needs to be undertaken in order to receive payments for results-based actions. The team of experts performing the analysis (i.e. verifying data that is submitted by each country Party in its biennial update reports) will include two experts on land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF), one from each a developed and developing country Party (paragraph 10). The decision also details what the technical analysis will entail (paragraph 11). It is also agreed that the two LULUCF experts will produce a report on the technical analysis that will be made available on the UNFCCC website

(paragraph 14).

Forest Reference Emission Levels/Forest Reference Levels (RELS/RLs)

The Warsaw REDD+ Framework gives guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of proposed RELs/RLs (Decision 13/CP.19). It is decided that forest RELs/RLs submitted by developing country Parties on a voluntary basis will be subject to a technical assessment (paragraph 1), with details of the technical assessment given in the Annex of Decision 13/CP.19 (paragraph 3).

Safeguards Information Systems

In Decision 12/CP.19, the Warsaw REDD+ Framework establishes guidelines for the timing and frequency of presentations of summary information on how safeguards are being addressed and respected. It is agreed that this information could be provided, voluntarily, via the UNFCCC website (paragraph 3). It is further decided that this information should be provided in national communications after the start of the implementation of REDD+ activities (paragraph 5).

Addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation

Decision 15/CP.19 on addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation contains no explicit requirements for Parties implementing REDD+ activities. Although the importance of addressing drivers in the context of REDD+ implementation is reaffirmed (paragraph 1) and it is recognised that drivers are context specific (paragraph 2), the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ produced no concrete decisions on requirements to address drivers. The decision encourages Parties, organisations and the private sector to take action and continue their work to reduce drivers and to share the results of this work, including via the UNFCCC web platform (<http://unfccc.int/redd>) (paragraphs 3 & 4).

Coordination of support and institutional arrangements

A joint work programme between SBSTA and SBI established at COP-18 for the coordination of support, including institutional arrangements, concluded in Warsaw. Throughout the negotiations there were disagreements over the need for new institutions, with Papua New Guinea strongly pushing for a new body to be established under the COP (44). Decision 10/CP.19 encourages Parties to establish a national REDD+ entity or focal point to liaise with the UNFCCC regarding REDD+ (paragraph 1). These entities are also encouraged to meet regularly to share experiences and identify possible gaps in the coordination of support (paragraphs 2 & 3). There was no decision on international institutional arrangements, such as the establishment of a new “body, board or committee” as had been proposed at COP-18, and it was merely decided that SBI will review the outcomes of the meetings of the national entities with a view of proposing a decision at COP-23 in 2017 (paragraph 9) (43).

Results-based finance

The work programme on results-based finance, held under the COP, also reached completion in Warsaw with Decision 9/CP.19. There had been disagreement over the balance between market and non-market based mechanisms as sources of finance for results-based payments, with some Parties disagreeing with the potential use of market based mechanisms for REDD+ to offset mitigation commitments by Annex 1 countries (45).

Although the decision clarifies potential sources of REDD+ finance, reaffirming that REDD+ finance can come from public and private, bilateral and multilateral, and alternative sources (paragraph 1); recognises the key role of the Green Climate Fund (preamble); and recognises the importance of

adequate and predictable financial support, as well as the need to scale up and improve the effectiveness of this support (preamble), few concrete outcomes on these matters are achieved. The only decisions offered are on the establishment of an information hub on the UNFCCC website, which will contain information on results and payments (paragraph 12).

COP-20, Lima, 2014

Lima hosted the 20th Conference of the Parties (COP-20) where a number of issues in relation to REDD+ were to be clarified, such as further guidance on safeguards, and decisions on non-carbon benefits and non-market mechanisms.

COP-20 failed to address these remaining issues in Lima. The main outcome of COP-20 is a document referred to as the Lima Call for Climate Action which:

- Reiterates the goal of limiting global warming to less than 2°
- Contains reference to ensuring the world has net-zero emissions by 2050
- Provides the procedure for countries to submit information on the measures they will take to combat climate change under a new climate change agreement to be adopted at COP-21 in Paris in December 2015
- Contains the outlines of a future agreement in its annex. The annex is broken down into different sections including mitigation, adaptation, finance (which mentions REDD+), capacity building, technology development and transfer, and transparency of action and support.

Importantly however, during COP-20, the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) created a contact-group to discuss methodological guidance on REDD+ at its 42nd meeting in June 2015, in Bonn (FCCC/SBSTA/2014/5, paragraph 23).

Substantively, a number of key issues remain unresolved, especially the need for more guidance on safeguards, and decisions on non-carbon benefits and non-market mechanisms.

A number of stakeholders called for the development of further guidance on the reporting mechanisms for Safeguard Information Systems (SIS) at COP-20. In total, 21 submissions were made to the SBSTA. One of these submissions was by the REDD+ Safeguards Working Group in September 2014 which emphasised the importance of common reporting elements to be used by all parties, including interpretation of safeguards and systems in place, as well as implementation status of further safeguards. Others have pointed out that country-driven processes that allow for flexibility should not be compromised. No decisions were made on this yet.

Non-carbon benefits refer to the social, environmental and governance benefits that result from REDD+ readiness and implementation. The topic was further discussed at COP-20 where 18 submissions were made by stakeholders (a compilation can be found under FCCC/SBSTA/2014/MISC.4). According to general consensus, these non-carbon benefits should be determined at the country level taking into account the relationship between local communities, indigenous peoples and their forests. Nevertheless, two submissions contended that non-carbon benefits are better determined and valued at an international level by the UNFCCC. It remains to be seen which approach will be taken, however, there seems to be strong support for nationally determined benefits. Moreover, some states called for monetarily quantifying non-carbon benefits whereas others contended that there is no need for this as, strictly speaking, they do not reflect climate interventions. Many submissions also consider the relationship between non-carbon benefits

and other international agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (46). A few submissions introduced ideas to emphasise the importance of ecosystem services as non-carbon benefits, however, necessary dialogue did not ensue.

Additionally, a number of submissions raised the importance of non-market approaches (a compilation can be found under FCCC/SBSTA/2014/MISC.3). The government of Bolivia, for instance, tabled a proposal on Joint Mitigation and Adaptation (JMA) as a non-market based mechanism based on alternative policy approaches as proposed at COP-19. This proposal asked for further guidance on non-market approaches. Bolivia suggests that JMA activities should take an integral approach taking into considering holistic world views of indigenous peoples and local communities, identify finance requirements and explore the need to assess results qualitatively as well as quantitatively. Negotiators had diverging opinions on JMA ranging from differences with REDD, finance, the small number of states supporting it, to ideological frustration.

The report of the Standing Committee on Finance (6/CP.20) which was created in 2010 at COP-16 to assist with coordination in delivering climate finance lays down some general modalities regarding forest activities. The report highlights the appreciation of the work on financing for forests taking into account different policy approaches (paragraph 15). The report, furthermore, encourages the Standing Committee to engage a wide variety of stakeholders on its third forum in 2015 in order to ensure broad participation (paragraph 17). For this third forum, the Standing Committee shall take into account, inter alia, decisions related to mitigation actions (1/CP.16, paragraph 70), forest reference emission levels and forest reference levels (12/CP.17) and addressing drivers of deforestation (15/CP.19).

In summary, decisions related to finance, reporting and modalities of REDD+ and LULUCF have been postponed as no agreement could be reached. However, it was agreed that each Party has to promulgate domestic policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and has to communicate its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) to the UNFCCC Secretariat prior to the commencement of COP-21. Under these INDCs, each country can decide what commitments to make to mitigate or in reaction to climate change based on what it considers appropriate. This process was agreed with the hope of broadening participation to all countries and to move away from the division between Annex I and non-Annex I countries in order to have a more collaborative agreement which engages all parties. Nevertheless, there is no guidance as to what INDCs should cover and the extent to which efforts will focus on water, energy, agriculture and forests will be determined by each country. Some countries however are likely to include REDD+ as a strong component of their INDC given the importance of forests as both a source and a sink of greenhouse gas emissions.

ADP meeting, Geneva, 2015

The ADP has taken up the submission of the Bolivian government on JMA and integrated it into several paragraphs of its negotiating text (paragraph 21.5(c) and 212 (viii)) as an alternative to market-based approaches. Such measures are to be taken into account by all parties to the Convention (paragraph 23). It is further stated that forest activities shall be carried out under the Warsaw framework for REDD+ including Kyoto projects (paragraph 37). The ADP also stresses that finance related aspects of forest projects must be in line with the Warsaw framework (paragraphs 79, 118 and 122). However, it is not clear whether any submissions integrated into the text will be kept there as they are still subject to debate in Paris.

Bonn Climate Change Conference, 2015

UNFCCC SBSTA, SBI and ADP (the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action) meetings in Bonn took place in early June 2015 in order to prepare for the COP-21 meeting

at the end of the year in Paris. The ADP faced a heavy agenda of preparing the 90-page Geneva Negotiating Text into a more concise and coherent form ready for COP-21. Despite concerted efforts to streamline the Geneva text, it was only reduced by five pages. The ADP also aimed to address its second work stream which aims to close the gap between Parties' emission reduction pledges for 2020 and current efforts to reduce GHG emissions. Aside from INDC submissions from Ethiopia and Morocco, few advances were made here. Despite some progress, the majority of the issues were left to be resolved at future ADP, SBSTA and SBI sessions, namely the condensing of the Geneva text, which will be addressed by the co-chairs for late July 2015, before the ADP's session in August/September.

The SBSTA addressed the remaining open agenda items concerning REDD+, and forwarded respective draft decisions for consideration and adoption at COP-21. These three items were related to; methodological guidance for REDD+ on safeguards, non-carbon benefits, and alternative policy approaches (FCCC/SBSTA/2015/L.5)- the latter referring to what was previously called non-market based approaches. The Parties agreed to more specific guidelines on the content required of Parties when submitting information on safeguards to the UNFCCC (FCCC/SBSTA/2015/L.5/Add.1). It was decided that non-carbon benefits (NCBs) are not required for receipt of support or result-based finance for REDD+ activities. However, those developing countries choosing to promote the "long-term sustainability" of REDD+ projects through NCBs are encouraged to share information on the NCBs with the UNFCCC, "interested parties" and "relevant financing entities" (FCCC/SBSTA/2015/L.5/Add.3). The SBSTA agreed that alternative policy approaches (i.e. joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests) are an alternative to results-based payments for REDD+ activities, and gave guidance to developing nations on how to proceed designing and implementing alternative policy approaches. Financial entities previously supporting REDD+ activities (referred to in the COP decision 9/CP.19) are also encouraged to financially assist alternative policy approaches (FCCC/SBSTA/2015/L.5/Add.2).

Read the full text of the draft decisions forwarded by the SBSTA [here](#), including the individual items of guidance on safeguards [here](#), alternative policy approaches [here](#), and non-carbon benefits [here](#).

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