

### Tackling Climate Change: Challenges and Opportunities Key Messages and Recommendations

#### Key Messages

- The UNFCCC Paris Agreement places forests high on the climate change adaptation and mitigation agendas
  - Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+)
  - Sustainable Forest Management
  - Joint Mitigation & Adaptation
  - To be integrated with development objectives and non-carbon benefits
- REDD+ is an explicit goal in many Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)
- But how to move forward?
  
- The Paris Agreement was the best deal possible with 196 countries
- Immense work lies ahead
- Funding is an issue but institutional structures are key
- There are complexities in bringing together all the requirements of the agreement
- Indigenous people are still often under-represented but are most affected by land-use decisions
- Negotiated participatory approaches may be key to navigating this complexity and to addressing the needs of different stakeholders
- Countries need to go for synergies to increase efficiency and effectiveness
- There is a need for capacity development

#### Key Recommendation

That member countries, with the support of FAO:

- Enhance funding and coordination among agencies and sectors to strengthen actions on climate change in support of the elaboration and implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions;
- Share the results of their efforts during the 27<sup>th</sup> session of the Asia Pacific Forestry Commission.

*The following sections provide more details on the sessions under the 'Tackling Climate Change' stream.*

#### Opening Plenary

- The Paris Agreement is not a perfect agreement, but it is the best that 196 countries could agree to.

- We can improve but we cannot backslide. The Agreement will be reviewed every five years. This is good so that we can raise the ambitions and actions.
- The money that we need is not there. Even if the money is there, we need to be able to use it properly, and this needs capacity development.

In sum, the session looked at securing rights, developing capacity, increasing and sustaining investments and bringing in the private sector to address broader development goals. The session sought to address the role of multiple actors within this complexity.

### **CIFOR: Fire and Haze: Politics, economics and landscape transformation**

- There is a need to improve regional cooperation to prevent fire. This should not only be limited to technical actions but also address the broader political economy issues of affected countries, including palm oil investments and trade.
- Collaboration between various stakeholders at multiple levels is essential for successful fire prevention.
- Land use management must consider the intensification system as a standard in managing resources for economic development.

Ways forward:

- Raising the accountability of public institutions and government;
- Reforming land use policies and spatial planning;
- Peat collaborative water management – upstream and downstream;
- Public investments (healthcare, job creation, incentives for non-fire agriculture);
- Engaging banks and financial institutions to curb inappropriate investments;
- Supporting an inclusive social movement, involving men and women to fight against actors perpetrating and perpetuating fire and haze.

### **The Pacific Community (SPC) and GIZ: Sharing first experiences on REDD+ Safeguards and related Benefit Sharing Mechanisms from Pacific Island Countries**

The creation and implementation of Safeguards and Benefit Sharing Mechanisms needs to be tailored to each REDD+ country's national circumstances. The sharing of first experiences with other countries will enable countries to reflect on their current ongoing processes and gain new ideas for future development. A multi-sectoral approach will sensitize stakeholders to beneficial effects the REDD+ safeguards and BSM processes will have beyond the forestry sector.

Recommendation: FAO to facilitate capacity building for countries to strengthen safeguards and benefit sharing mechanisms in the Pacific region, and to promote exchanges with Asian countries.

### **CIFOR: REDD+: What do we know and what comes next? Relevant insights from CIFOR Global comparative study (GCS) REDD+ research for the tropical forests of the Asia-Pacific region**

- Opportunity and implementation costs faced by actors in subnational REDD+ initiatives have not been adequately accounted for; understanding these costs is key to designing effective and fair benefit sharing arrangements in order to identify who is most likely to suffer net costs from REDD+ and thus most likely to resist implementation.
- From a policy network perspective based on the Indonesian experience with REDD+, there has been a clear shift in perceived influence from central government to decentralized actors following the dismantling of the REDD+ agency, with the role of knowledge brokers decreasing in significance and the private sector playing an increasingly large role.
- In Fiji, despite achievements made in REDD+ governance, monitoring, and pilot implementation, there remains technical challenges to implementation, including needs for better remote sensing based assessments of forest degradation, capacity gaps and efficiency issues for local implementation, and needs to address competing land use incentives and to secure funding for the long term.
- GCS research on 23 subnational REDD+ initiatives in Cameroon, Tanzania, Vietnam, Indonesia, Brazil and Peru both prior to and following the commencement of activities has found low levels of local knowledge about REDD+, involvement in the decision for its establishment, and involvement in program design. Although engagement has increased over time, meaningful participation remains low and should be further encouraged. Local recommendations also note desires for livelihood improvement, transparent, accountable, and efficient implementation, and better communication and engagement.

REDD+ implementation cannot take a conservative approach. It has to consider changes in a more dynamic manner by taking into account the centrality of other actors.

### **DENR, The World Bank, Program on Forests: Forest development planning for climate resilience and poverty reduction**

Healthy forests help enhance the resilience of the river basin to impacts of climate change, as well as the resilience of the communities within and outside the basin to climate-related hazards. Ecosystem service- based approaches can be used to inform planning and decision-making towards sustainable forest management.

### **SNV, World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF): Climate smart landscapes – addressing trade offs and delivering multiple benefits at scale**

In order to balance the benefits and trade-offs of climate smart landscapes, it is essential to first have an understanding of all the preferences and priorities involved. This information can be used to inform policy such as land use plans, as well as private sector stakeholders and development projects. However, how to best reconcile and negotiate the gains and losses, particularly at scale, remains a challenge. Harmonizing administrative and natural borders remains a challenge.

Recommendation: Environmental and social considerations must be integrated into sub- and national planning, while engaging all pertinent stakeholders. In particular, this should involve inclusive participation of smallholders, all businesses active in the area, as well as government and administration representatives.

### **The Asia Foundation: Overcoming deforestation and forest fires in Indonesia**

- Deforestation and forest fires in Indonesia is driven more by weak governance than technical aspects and the natural occurrence of fires. The Asia Foundation's LFGI study found that sub national governments score poorly on the governance index in the forest and land sectors. CIFOR and The Asia Foundation also found that political economy interests drive deforestation and forest fires in Indonesia.
- There has been a greater demand for social accountability and the application of the rule of law on forest violations and fires resulting in deforestation and land degradation.
- The budget allocation of the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry is relatively small compared to other Ministries. Although this is not a main issue in efforts to tackle deforestation and forest fires, there is a need to expand resource mobilization from other countries and institutions.

The following actions should be undertaken by the Indonesian government to prevent deforestation and forest fires:

- Strengthen law enforcement, in particular the enforcement of law reform agendas and the following up of prosecution cases related to forest fires;
- Promote better governance, enhance transparency of forest fire investigations to increase public participation and improve social accountability;
- Encourage other countries to support the mobilization of resources to tackle deforestation and forest fires.

### **Papua New Guinea Forest Authority: Promoting transparency on national forest monitoring for REDD+ in Papua New Guinea**

#### Appropriate GIS/RS Technologies for REDD+ NFMS

- To maintain a sustainable transparent national forest monitoring system (operational).
- Capacity building has been built within national experts; this is crucial for sustainability of technology transfer from international experts to local people.
- To use existing, freely available software and application programs online, such as Landsat mosaic images and Collect Earth (tools developed by FAO under the Open Foris initiative).
- The use of different data sets or information has to be dynamic and comparable (after 5 or 10 years later, similar assessments can be done) to maintain consistency.

#### The issue of transparency

- Information on the web portal should be made freely available for everyone to access and should be understood by all (regardless of their technical capacities); local people should be able to get information about their forest resources.
- It is important that the information provided on the web portal is accurate and verified. This depends on quality control processes and will serve to strengthen the system to ensure REDD+ Safeguards information is effectively addressed.

To summarize, with the established web portal, the sustainability of this system is important for effective forest monitoring. The data or information has to be accurate and verified through appropriate quality control processes to ensure REDD+ Safeguards information is effectively addressed.

### **CIFOR: Enhancing the resilience of coastal wetlands to promote sustainable livelihoods in a changing climate**

- There is significant unrecognized potential of mangroves related to climate adaptation and mitigation, which governments should recognize in terms of provision of funding for projects and research.
- There is a need for enhanced capacity in terms of understanding the role of mangroves in relation to ecosystems goods and services and its potential to enhance resilience.
- There is a need for research related to the important role that mangroves can provide in meeting the long-term adaptation and mitigation goals that were agreed to, in the Paris Agreement.
- Private sector engagement in relation to mangrove forestry should place more emphasis on sustainable benefits for local communities.



### UN-REDD: REDD+, is it really difficult?

This session included a mock debate where contrasting views were expressed about whether REDD+ was really so difficult. The presenters explained that REDD+ is not as difficult as many people think and in fact all the expected technical guidance from the UNFCCC for REDD+ implementation is in place in only a few pages of UNFCCC decisions. Collectively known as “The Warsaw Framework for REDD+”, the seven decisions build on earlier decisions, especially the Cancun Agreements from COP16, which defined the five REDD+ activities, the safeguards, and the phased approach.

In short, there are only four key elements required for developing countries to participate in REDD+, to be eligible for results based payments: (1) National Strategy / Action Plan, (2) National Monitoring System, (3) Safeguards Information System, and (4) Forest Reference Level. The fact that 14 countries have now submitted reference levels to the UNFCCC shows that REDD+ is clearly technically achievable by countries.

The session included a panel of four national representatives from different countries and thematic experts who shared their lessons learned and their perceptions, based on experiences in developing and implementing REDD+ readiness initiatives across the Asia-Pacific region. Participants then posed questions and made comments in an open plenary. From the discussion and the panelists’ contributions, **it was concluded that REDD+ is not difficult to achieve if there are also:**

- **Full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders:** engagement among all key REDD+ stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and civil society groups is one of the keys to REDD+ success;
- **An effective communication strategy about REDD+ should be in place** and to build capacity and understanding and avoid confusion among relevant stakeholder groups;
- **Strong political will, adequate resources and commitment from decision-makers** and implementing agencies is needed;
- **Continuing efforts to increase capacity and technical expertise.**

### University of British Columbia: Innovative tools for sustainable forest management under climate change

The UBC team presented the results of their work on climate change modelling and the development of tools to help countries and stakeholders plan and make informed decisions on forest management. The session highlighted that:

Specific, localized climate and ecological modeling tools can help the Asia-Pacific region to address uncertainty related to forest management under a changing climate.