



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

Back to Office Report

Submitted by Celina Yong, UN-REDD

Title Regional Stakeholder Engagement Specialist

Date submitted 25 June 2014

1. Practice area: BDP/EEG

2. Mission period (incl. of travel days)

From: 14 to: 21 June

3. Type of mission: Technical backstopping

4. Clients

UNDP CO – Alamgir Hossain, Biplab Chakma

5. Purpose of mission

To provide technical oversight and input to the National Preparatory Meeting of Indigenous Peoples (IP) from 16 to 18 June, and the National IP Dialogue on 19 June 2014 in Dhaka

6. Documents, materials, resources

7. Mission member

Celina Yong

8. Costs

UNDP/UN-REDD global budget

9. Brief summary of the mission

9.a Background

As part of on-going efforts to strengthen the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples (IP) or Ethnic Minorities (EM) in national REDD+ processes in Asia-Pacific, the UN-REDD Programme based in the Asia-Pacific Regional Center in Bangkok, Thailand, is collaborating with a regional IP group – Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) to conduct a series of dialogues in three countries: Bangladesh (16 to 19 June 2014), Myanmar (29 April to 2 May 2014) and Viet Nam (7 to 9 May 2014). These dialogues consist of a national preparatory meeting among the EM, followed by a one-day dialogue between the IP with the relevant government agency leading REDD+, and the Programme.

Bangladesh's R-PP was approved during the 11th Policy Board Meeting in Geneva, December 2013. It has been revised and subsequently, the National Programme Document has been formulated.

9.b Main Findings

• National Preparatory Meeting, 16 – 18 June

- *When should engagement with IP commence, how much awareness raising should be done beforehand, with whom and at which level?* While some of the participants had been involved in earlier consultations during the development of the roadmap, a majority had neither been exposed to REDD+ nor understood how REDD+ is relevant to them. This affected the overall quality and specificity of discussions. Compounding this challenge was also the lack of a platform to unify IPs from Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) with those from the plains. As a result, it was a challenge to shift discussions arising from grievances based on historical exclusion and marginalization to positive engagement.
- *Internationally accepted terminology of "IP" vis a vis national terminology of "EM".* Because the former is perceived to accord greater recognition for their rights, participants were keen to ascertain that the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) endorsed this terminology so as to strengthen their future negotiation base. GoB, however, has stated that they neither deny nor endorse the term "IP".
- *Development of an IP statement.* Facilitated by Raja Devasish Roy, a member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) and the National Coordination Committee (NCC), the paper consists of 4 key sections: motivation for their engagement with REDD+; suggestions regarding IP membership in the National Steering Committee (NSC), REDD+ Stakeholder Forum (RSF) and the Technical Working Groups (TWG); enhance future participation through awareness raising and capacity building; and recommendations to address issues beyond REDD+ such as full implementation of the CHT Accord, broader reformation of laws and policies. While contents of the statement were not as specific and detailed as they could have been, the process of articulating the statement helped to clarify and manage expectations among different groups of EM.
- *Legitimate organisation and representation.* Participants understood that engagement during the readiness phase will predominantly take place at the national level. As such, different EM groups from CHT and the plains need to reach a consensus as to (i) if and how they will organise themselves under an umbrella network; (ii) who and how many will represent the EM from CHT and plains; and (iii) how the umbrella network will develop feedback channels that ensure representatives are able to share and obtain feedback from communities on the ground.

- *Implications for UN-REDD.* (i) Integrate efforts of NCC to establish an umbrella network with similar initiatives, while extending more technical and financial support to EM in the plains. (ii) Ensure NCC and its membership are involved in upcoming awareness raising and capacity building activities under the Programme. (iii) Continue discussion with CHTDF to synergize awareness raising and capacity building efforts such as those conducted for the Village Common Forests.

- **National Dialogue, 19 June**

- *Response by Haradhan Banik, Deputy Director General of Forest Department.* Participants selected 4 representatives to elaborate on different sections of the statement during the dialogue. Inevitably, this was interspersed with bitterness from on-going exclusion in national development that included challenges faced beyond the ambit of REDD+. Mr Banik, to his credit, responded positively. Where it was within his authority, he was open to recommendations proposed, e.g., referred participants to an existing Forum on Social Forestry, following participants' suggestion to establish a Forum on Forestry to address disputes, policy reform.
- *Next steps.* Agreement that the current NCC will continue to facilitate the formation of an umbrella network for the EM in Bangladesh; develop the terms of reference; and revise the selection criteria for representatives. NCC members will also work with 4 facilitators, 2 each from CHT and plains, to organise and coordinate discussions and participation in upcoming REDD+ activities.

9.c *Bilateral Discussions*

- Henrik Fredborg Larsen, CHTDF Director, UNDP
 - In a post-UNPFII briefing, Raja Devasish Roy has requested that CO consider providing development opportunities for EM in the plains who make up 70% of the EM population. This will be taken up by a joint ILO, UNESCO and UNDP Bangladesh high-level rights based programme for EM in the plains, focusing on advocacy and capacity building. The Programme may wish to consider if and how it can leverage on this initiative, especially in the establishing RSF.
 - Consider providing an in-house forestry expert that should also be familiar with REDD+ for the Bangladesh Adivasi Forum (BAF). While Binota Moy Dhamai is performing well in his role in BAF, he faces limitation in dealing with forestry issues.
 - In the CHT, there has been further division in the governance structure: the establishment of a Headmen's Association that is seeking to claim a spot in the administrative system which consists of the Regional and District Councils, the 3 Circles (customary); and a provincial government. It is yet unclear how roles and responsibilities will be divided and/or clarified.
- Nick Beresford, Deputy Country Director, UNDP
 - While noting the need to balance creating space for dialogue between the EM and the GoB, and managing overall expectations from REDD+, the role of UN should focus on setting and maintaining a conducive atmosphere.
- Alamgir Hossain
 - Welcomed the opportunity provided by targeted support (TS) to complement the work on revising stakeholder mapping and analysis, and support initial efforts to organise different stakeholder groups for the RSF. Once a draft of the TS request is ready, he will discuss further with the focal points in Forest Department.
 - Plans to list and track REDD+ components where funding gap remains in order to identify where future TS funds can provide support.

9.d *Expected outputs, outcomes and impact*

- An IP position paper that will guide future engagement in the REDD+ process.
- More effective participation of IP in the Programme, and the national REDD+ process, with lessons learnt to be shared nationally, regionally and globally.

10. Key counterparts

- UNDP CO – Alamgir Hossain, Biplap Chakma
- AIPP – Lakpa Nuri Sherpa
- National Coordination Committee – Raja Devasish Roy, Gones Shoren, Binota Moy Dhamai, Pallap Chakma, Sudatta Tanchangya, Uchacha-A Chak, Pragati Chakma

11. Follow up action matrix

Action to be taken	By whom	Expected completion date
Review revised IP statement and press note (summary of statement)	Celina, Alamgir	Upon availability from NCC.
Prepare and finalise TS request	Celina, Alamgir, Aki, Gaya	4 July

12. Distribution list

UNDP UN-REDD

