



Presented by CIFOR in collaboration with other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

Summary of Forest Day 3

Produced by a drafting committee representing members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

Presented to the UNFCCC Secretariat

Closing Plenary Forest Day 3, December 13, 2009

Introduction

In the hours devoted to Forest Day 3 deliberations, the world will have lost an area of tropical forests roughly the size of the city of Copenhagen. By many estimates, deforestation and forest degradation account for up to one-fifth of the current global total of all greenhouse gases emitted as a result of human activity, not to mention an untold loss of biodiversity. It doesn't have to be this way. It is now widely accepted that forests must play an early and central role in the emerging global and national climate mitigation and adaptation strategies. As go the forests, so goes the fate of the hundreds of millions of people, including some 60 million Indigenous Peoples who depend on forests for their livelihoods.

However, the road ahead is not clear. How should forests be included in the climate agreement currently being negotiated? What is the greatest obstacle to the successful implementation of REDD+? For example, should some kinds of logging activities be eligible for REDD+ payments?

What are the main barriers to mobilising forests for climate adaptation? Today close to 1500 of the world's forestry experts, climate change negotiators, representatives of environmental and social non-governmental organizations and indigenous leaders, policy makers, and corporate representatives gathered at the third Forest Day conference, the most important to date, to inform the

debate and seek consensus on these and other pressing questions. The results of these deliberations follow.

Highlights from plenary speeches

Keynote speakers Bill Clinton (by video) Elinor Ostrom, Rajendra Pachauri, and Gro Harlem Bruntland stressed the following points:

- If deforestation continues at the current level, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to reach the target of containing the increase in global mean temperature within two degrees Celsius.
- Forests can make a very significant contribution to a global mitigation portfolio. Even if forests contribute less than 20 percent of global emissions, they have potential to contribute much more than 20 percent of the solution. Forest loss can lead to profoundly negative costs in terms of foregone goods and services. Reducing or reversing deforestation provides synergies with adaptation and sustainable development.
- The establishment of a REDD+ mechanism forges a link between the UN Year of Climate Change (2009), the International Year of Biodiversity (2010) and the International Year of Forests (2011).
- Two overarching commitments are needed to get REDD+ off the ground:
 - a. Developed nations must commit to compensate the developing nations economically for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and for

enhancing the storage of carbon in their forests, their conservation and sustainable management;

b. Developing nations must commit to produce these reductions in environmentally, socially and economically sustainable ways. This must be done in a transparent and verifiable manner and the rights of the people living off the forests must be respected.

- There is a need for social and environmental safeguards. Forests play an important role in the fight against poverty, and provide a safety net for poor people. Sustainable development means we are not focusing only on climate change actions for the future generations. Life and opportunity for present generations are also of the essence.
- Local communities are important forest stewards. REDD+ must help strengthen and build on local institutions for forest management. REDD+ provides opportunities for the involvement of local communities in measuring and monitoring forest carbon and channelling REDD+ finance.
- The success of REDD+ depends on learning quickly as we move forward. Research institutions and civil society organizations will have an essential role to play in documenting and disseminating the lessons learned.
- Frameworks for addressing climate change need to allow for adaptive policy processes that link local to national levels and engender the trust necessary to enable meaningful actions on the ground.

Jan Heino, chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests closed the opening plenary with this remark:

- The forest sector has moved beyond a limited focus on timber production. However, it has been handicapped by inadequate funding and weak political support to address drivers of deforestation that originate outside the sector. REDD+ can help reverse these trends. As we move forward, however, we should not again fall into the trap of looking at forests through only one lens: carbon.

In his keynote address at the Global Views session, Lord Nicholas Stern stressed the following points:

- The economics of forest-based mitigation strategies are highly favourable.
- While governments of countries rich in forests must be responsible for designing and implementing appropriate strategies, the global community must share responsibility for financing.
- It makes sense to invest in forest mitigation strategies now, as future generations would no doubt prefer to inherit debt than to be faced with irreversible degradation of the global ecosystem.

The Danish Minister of Environment, Troels Lund Poulsen, stressed the following points:

- Good governance, law enforcement and trade in the forest sector are an important precondition for progress towards sustainable forest management and the fight against illegal logging. Illegal logging contributes to deforestation.

- It is of utmost importance that the EU demonstrates strong leadership in tackling the problems associated with the trade in illegal timber. A new EU due diligence regulation must include an additional provision to make it an offence to put illegal timber on the market. It is important to promote and implement public procurement policies to create a demand for legal and sustainable timber.

Hilary Benn, the UK Minister for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, made these remarks:

- REDD+ is a simple idea but many questions remain: how it will be financed, what accounting systems are required and how it will be included in emissions trading. These questions are important but not as important as our responsibility to find the right answers. We must agree on REDD+ this week.
- The UK and France have said that 20% of EU fast start financing on climate change should go to reducing deforestation. The UK further believes that that a 6 year financing deal should be agreed to reduce deforestation by 25% from current levels by 2015

Yvo De Boer, executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, made the following points in his closing remarks:

- The current moment is a critical one in which the need to address the climate change challenge has a strong scientific base, broad public understanding, and significant political will. The moment is unlikely to come again.
- The response to climate change must be linked to other global objectives, including biodiversity conservation,

protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and sustainable development.

- As negotiations proceed toward their conclusion, press and public attention will focus on the magnitude of commitments to emissions reductions and financial support. However, the success of forest-based adaptation and mitigation strategies will depend on the details of the architecture created for the various mechanisms necessary for success on the ground.

Main messages from sub-plenary sessions

Mitigation

- REDD+ will require a transformational change in the way forests are governed to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, including those outside the forest sector.
- A large majority of participants polled felt that REDD+ implementation should start at both national and local levels. While a majority polled believed that a combination of approaches will continue for the foreseeable future, many believed that they should converge as soon as possible.
- A majority of participants polled saw lack of equity (such as failure to recognize rights or inadequate benefit-sharing) or lack of efficiency (such as high transaction costs or corruption) as the principal risks to the success of REDD+ implementation. Risks can be reduced significantly through

sufficient participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and equitable benefit–sharing arrangements.

- Renewed efforts to reduce and reverse deforestation and degradation might work this time if:
 - a. The mechanism provides sufficient financial incentives to maintain and restore forests;
 - b. It is performance-based;
 - c. It is subject to independent verification and public scrutiny; and
 - d. There is greater inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the process of developing the implementation rules at the national level.

Adaptation

- As climate risks continue to escalate, participants expressed the view that adaptation should immediately receive significantly increased attention from policy makers. Participants proposed a ‘Marshall Plan’ for adaptation.
- Billions of people depend on the services provided by forests for their livelihoods, and therefore adaptation should be centred on the needs of these people.
- Ninety-four percent of participants polled felt that ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation, including forests, have “some” or “lots” of potential to be more cost-effective than engineering approaches.
- A large majority of participants polled identified lack of appreciation of the importance of forest adaptation, lack of funding, and inadequate coordination across sectors and

institutions as major barriers to adapting forests and people to climate change, rather than a lack of proven approaches.

Degradation

- Improved forest governance is a prerequisite to reversing degradation. This includes ensuring that the exploitation of forests is legal and sustainable (through mechanisms such as certification); recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples; tenure reform; more democratic processes and participation of stakeholders; mechanisms to achieve intersectoral coordination and address drivers; and monitoring to achieve transparency and improve response measures.
- 90 percent of participants polled supported the potential eligibility of sustainably managed forests (including those used for timber production) for REDD+ funding, although a minority believed that such eligibility should be limited to community-based and smallholder production systems.
- Forest restoration provides an immense opportunity to address the widespread degradation of forest lands and significantly enhance carbon stocks. It also provides important opportunities for adaptation. Political and financial commitments are needed to seize these opportunities.

Cross-cutting

- Participants highlighted a wide range of forest-based options for delivering biodiversity and livelihood benefits. REDD+ and adaptation actions need to be tailor-made to each country's circumstances.

- 94 percent of participants polled felt that there is potential for synergies between adaptation and mitigation in forests in terms of improving ecosystem resilience, local livelihoods and governance. More than two-thirds saw “lots” of potential. The time has come to identify concrete ways of capturing these synergies.

Main messages from learning events

1. National consensus on a single national REDD+ strategy, reached through a broad and transparent consultation process, and integrated into the national development plan, is emerging as the principal method for organising REDD+ activities at the national scale. Early lessons from REDD experience in Amazonia and elsewhere indicate that:
 - a) Payment delivery approaches at the village scale seem feasible and successful (e.g. the *Bolsa Floresta* project);
 - b) The proliferation of sub-national projects offers rich experience, but they need to be accounted for consistently in a single national accounting system; and
 - c) An area that needs to be rapidly explored is the potential for addressing the safeguard and governance issues. These are being widely discussed, but, as yet, little implemented.
2. The livelihood effects of REDD must be carefully taken into account in REDD projects. Early experience in implementing REDD is providing preliminary insights into the challenge of ensuring that REDD does no harm and provides benefits in terms of livelihoods and rights. Rights and tenure are crucial issues to address and resolve early in the implementation of REDD. Key items requiring attention are: conflicting claims to resources, state dominance in control of forest, inadequate recognition of indigenous and community rights, and the application of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Setting standards and third party participation can be important to ensure the delivery of benefits and rights to communities.
3. REDD+ could provide 30 percent of the global abatement potential by 2020. Financing in the order of 25 billion Euros per year from all sources is needed. REDD+ initiatives must include attention to the social, economic and environmental aspects, and be based on local and national level decisions on what and where REDD+ should occur, taking into account the variability of countries. REDD+ must start in a phased approach immediately. Delaying action until 2015 would “cost” 16 gigatonnes of carbon lost.

4. Measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) is complex and requires: (1) strong political support complemented by decentralization and involvement of local communities; and (2) long term planning which combines complementary tools (e.g., high tech satellite imagery and low-cost community based carbon inventory). The main concerns during the discussion were on methods for establishing reference levels (historical, projected or historical adjusted; links between national and the sub-national reference level) and the evaluation of leakage.
5. Boreal forests are especially sensitive to global warming and are likely to be severely affected by climate change. Supporting the adaptive capacity of these forests through locally appropriate measures is critical.
6. Realising REDD in the diversity of governance systems needs free flows of information. Disclosure, transparency and responsibility are the key to making REDD and other financial distribution activities in climate change real. Transparency needs to be achieved to avoid or limit corruption at all levels, including at the grassroots level. REDD is a multi level challenge and needs coordination at and across all levels.
7. Beyond the sectoral approaches to forests, agriculture, water and rural development, landscape approaches are currently under development in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Landscape approaches link globally, nationally and locally appropriate mitigation actions (GAMA, NAMA, LAMA) to rural livelihoods and adaptation to climate change. Local priorities may be expressed in terms of water and lack of rights to trees in the right place, rather than related to forests as such. Landscape level integrity is needed for the maintenance of biodiversity. Carbon storage is a co-benefit of meaningful landscape approaches, not its primary driver. A very cost effective mitigation can emerge, however, as examples in Niger show.
8. Biodiversity underpins forest resilience, which in turn underpins the permanence of forest carbon stocks. For these and numerous other reasons the achievement of biodiversity benefits are essential for the success of REDD+. The success of ecosystem-based adaptation and mitigation measures will also depend on valuing the traditional knowledge and rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. This can be best achieved by implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Rio Conventions, the UNFF and other multilateral environmental agreements have a unique opportunity to advance their objectives through collaborative processes.