UN-REDD
PROGRAMME

Independent Technical Review: Honduras R-PP document

General comments to R-PP Document of Honduras (maximum 200 words):

Deforestation is a clear-cut problem in Honduras. With the highest percentage of deforestation in Latin America, as 37 per cent of Honduran forests have disappeared between 1990 and 2005, the country has experienced negative environmental, economic and social consequences. Current trends give little cause for optimism. Illegal logging and forest degradation due to the encroachment of agriculture continue unabated, and are often construed as driven by poverty and corruption. However, the Government of Honduras has signalled political willingness for combating deforestation and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation as part of a nationally-led REDD+ process, as well as other initiatives.

In the Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) for the REDD+ process, the previous Honduran government under President Porfirio Lobo Sosa (2010-2014) has devised a comprehensive and ambitious programme to counteract deforestation—a commitment, which was renewed under the current Presidency of Juan Orlando Hernández (2014-). Honduras has moreover witnessed the growth of an environmental grassroots movement, which checks and complements government efforts in environmental conservation. The current R-PP draft provides a good starting point for combating deforestation and associated emissions, although the programme design could benefit from a number of improvements.

Assessing the draft R-PP against review criteria
(Please refer to the TORs and supporting documents)

1. <u>Ownership of the Programme</u> (maximum 150 words):

> The Honduran Ministry of Energy, Natural Resources, Environment and Mining prepared the sixth working draft of the Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) in October 2014 (original draft from December 2011). Prospects for local ownership of the country-led REDD+ process appear promising for a number of reasons. First, the R-PP is coherent with various national development strategies, including the Country Vision (2010-2038) and the National Plan (2010-2022), as well as sectoral strategies, such as the National Forest Strategy (2004-2021) or National Climate Change Strategy (ENCC), signalling a consensus that combating both deforestation and climate change constitutes a national priority. Second, relevant Honduran authorities have persistently pursued the institutionalisation of a governance structure for REDD+ since 2010. Third, the Government of Honduras has committed approx. $1.3 million (about 15 per cent of total funding) of its own funds to the programme—a sizable sum in light of the country's poor economic performance. Fourth, the proposal portrays a dynamic and vibrant scene of NGOs, associations, cooperatives and indigenous organisations active in the environmental field. Lastly, past government performance indicates a serious commitment to environmentalism. The Honduran government has issued sweeping legislation in form of the 2007 Forest Law, which created the Institute of Conservation and Forest Development and designated 88 percent of the national territory as protected areas. In 2013, Honduras entered negotiations with the European Union about a Voluntary Partnership Agreement on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (VPA-FLEGT).

2. <u>Level of consultation, participation and engagement</u> (maximum 150 words):

> The R-PP details the governance structure (pp. 45, 49) of the Inter-Institutional Committee for Climate Change (CICC), which includes a technical committee with various subcommittees (one of them exclusively dedicated to REDD+), as well as a steering committee and executive secretariat. The participative and inclusive structure incorporates a broad range of relevant stakeholders: central and local government institutions, the private sector, organised civil society, academia, professional and women's associations, farmers, miners, forest cooperatives and producers, and international development partners. Organisations were selected based on transparent criteria of influence, networking, engagement, contributions and knowledge. The structure moreover accords a central role to the *Mesa Indígena y Afrohondureña Cambio Climático (MIACC)*, an interest group which represents indigenous and Afro-Honduran peoples. Many of these stakeholders have been involved from June 2010 in the National Working Group for REDD+ (GNTREDD+), which was designed to facilitate early consultations in order to guarantee participation in and ownership of the process. While this balanced governance arrangement ensures widespread participation, the elaboration and functional division of roles of stakeholders and institutions are not as clearly defined as to avoid overlap or conflicting mandates.

3. <u>Programme effectiveness and cost efficiency</u> (maximum 100 words):

> The overall effectiveness of the programme is largely predicated on an effective governance structure, a comprehensive approach and logical results chain, as well as framework conditions. The governance structure provides a good basis for effective and inclusive decision-making, provided that the high level of inclusiveness is maintained. While activities focus on various drivers of deforestation, not all of them are adequately addressed in the underlying logical framework of the proposal. The programme document moreover defers numerous issues to the future REDD+

strategy. Judging effectiveness based on the current R-PP therefore remains speculative in light of the need for the completion of planned research, the necessity to concretise activities, as well as the absence of suitable strategies for risk mitigation. The budget appears reasonable for a development programme of this scope.

4. Management of risks and likelihood of success (maximum 150 words):

The R-PP does not (yet) provide a coherent risk analysis. This leaves numerous *potential* risks, such as conflicts among key stakeholders, shifting relations among institutions, differential social impacts of activities or difficulties in translating strategic plans into implementation, unaddressed. The document does not include any concrete proposals for social and environmental safeguards, but defers this question to a future Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA). Based on current information, the strong national ownership and the participatory and arguably effective governance structure detailed in the R-PP indicate that prospects for the success of the programme are high, yet much depends on the careful implementation of the programme.

5. Consistency with the UN-REDD Programme Strategy (maximum 150 words):

The R-PP document is fully consistent with the UN-REDD Programme Strategy (2011-2015) and does not contradict any of the programme vision or mission, the 2011-2015 objectives, work areas or guiding principles elaborated in the UN-REDD strategy.

6. Compliance with UN-REDD Programme Rules of Procedure and Operational Guidance (maximum 150 words):

The R-PP is fully compliant with the UN-REDD Programme Rules of Procedure and Operational Guidance. The country-led formulation of the proposal followed a participatory approach, which engaged, besides the public and private sector, with indigenous people, civil society and a wide range of other stakeholders, whose interests are affected by the programme. The Honduran Minister of Energy, Natural Resources, Environment and Mines, Mr. José Antonio Galdames, and the head of the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Honduras (CONPAH), Mr. Bayardo Alemán, have validated the R-PP in accordance with the guidelines. The Ministry has organised a workshop in October 2014 in which 60 stakeholders from government, civil society and international development partners participated. Finally, the document was submitted by Mr. Galdames to the Resident Representative of the United Nations, Ms. Consuelo Vidal-Bruce, in Honduras for consideration.

Assessing the draft R-PP by component
(Please refer to the TORs and supporting documents)

1. <u>Component 1: Organize and consult</u> (maximum 300 words):

> Component 1 of the Honduran R-PP demonstrates a strong commitment to engage a wide range of stakeholders in the development of REDD+. Since its creation in 2010, Honduras has consistently developed the Inter-Institutional Committee for Climate Change (CICC), a cross-sectoral platform, which includes 37 organisations from various sectors, and linked the committee with indigenous groups under the CONPAH, which has been identified as key stakeholder for the programme. In the framework of the REDD+ preparation, Honduras conducted a capacity assessment to identify training needs with support from development partners. Based on this assessment, a training plan has been prepared, but would benefit from the further concretisation of activities and expected outcomes. The implementation of capacity building measures has begun with a first national workshop for more than 60 government employees in September 2014. The nascent REDD+ structure has moreover engaged in dialogue and rapprochement processes with indigenous groups, which were incorporated into the governance structure. However, the R-PP does not elaborate a clear concept for a complaint mechanisms and the redress of grievances, which is required to mitigate the risk of alienating indigenous and other social groups. The proposal furthermore does not clearly address information sharing and transparency in the relevant section (p. 220).

2. <u>Component 2:</u> Prepare the REDD-plus Strategy (maximum 300 words):

> Component 2 of the R-PP provides a historical overview of land use patterns, forest policy and governance based on a review of previous research, and demonstrates the limitations of these studies. The section outlines the major underlying and direct causes of deforestation in Honduras in its various dimensions, including political, legislative, institutional, technical, socio-cultural and financial factors. However, this section only provides a short description of these drivers and treats them as static, structural causes, rather than dynamic incentive structures and power relations. Consequently, the discussion of causes fails to account for such issues as political economies and corruption; networks among criminal actors, particularly ties between narcotrafficking and illegal forestry economies; as well as illicit production chains and trade relations in their local and transnational dimensions, each of which provides (dis)incentives for deforestation. The section moreover fails to provide a thorough review of existing national legislation, but rather focuses on visions and strategies of which there is no shortage in Honduras. Component 2 moreover highlights the relevance and complementarity to the REDD+ process of the since January 2013 ongoing negotiations with the European Union about Voluntary Partnership Agreement on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade. While the section outlines principles for a future REDD+ strategy and links strategic options to both causes and the plethora of existing strategies, it does not contain a definite analytical framework or Terms of Reference for the strategy. The outlined workplan and processes for the REDD+ institutional setting are adequate, even if the tentative time plan is generic (2012, 2013, 2014, etc.). The document does not include concrete proposals for social and environmental safeguards, but provides a number of principles and a workplan to satisfy this criterion, while committing to conducting a Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) in the future.

3. <u>Component 3: Develop a National Forest Reference Emission Level and/or a Forest Reference Level</u> (maximum 200 words):

Component 3 delineates criteria for establishing reference levels and details a sound technical assessment framework based on the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS), specifically VM0015 Methodology for Avoided Unplanned Deforestation, for historical and current forest and carbon data, as well as future projections (2000, 2005, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, etc.). Reference levels are linked to drivers of deforestation, but are not integrated with the monitoring system in component 6. The section moreover provides a clear description of the necessary processual steps to establish reference levels within a multi-stakeholder framework, in which primarily governmental agencies and academia partake. With development partner support, the first activities have begun to establish reference levels for the year 2010.

4. Component 4: Design Systems for National Forest Monitoring and Information on Safeguards (maximum 300 words):

The Honduran R-PP proposes a 2-phase (design, implementation) system for strengthening capacities, monitoring activities and carbon data, and provides specific details on the concrete steps and processes to be undertaken (p. 218). Having received technical assistance from development partners in 2013 and 2014, the Honduran government has involved a variety of key stakeholders in a coherent institutional arrangement for this purpose. The section provides details on information sharing, as well as the main data, capacity and information technology requirements. This section of the R-PP moreover provides some principles for the design of an integrated monitoring system for multiple benefits, but these principles remain too generic and fall short of a concrete workplan.

5. Component 5: Schedule and Budget (maximum 300 words):

The tentative timeline for REDD+ readiness in component 5 (p. 245) provides a clear guideline for implementation. The budget appears reasonable for a development programme of this scope. The only concern is that the budget does not allocate any funds to component 6 (Design of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework), which may potentially compromise its effectiveness.

6. Component 6: Design a Program Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (maximum 300 words):

Component 6 provides a simple monitoring and evaluation matrix. Although the system is easy and practical for implementation, the indicators—some of which lack precision—are formulated as activities rather than in terms of a logical, results-based framework.

Suggestions for improving the technical design of the R-PP Document of [insert country name] (maximum 400 words):

The Honduran Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) for the REDD+ provides a good starting point to combat deforestation and associated emissions. In light of the assessment above, this Independent Technical Review proposes the following suggestions for improvement:

1) Elaborate and sharpen the functional division of the roles of institutional stakeholders in the REDD+ governance structure in order to avoid overlap or conflicting mandates.

2) Clarify the various drivers of deforestation and treat them as dynamic incentive structures and power relations, rather than static structural causes. A further exploration of such issues as political economies and corruption; networks among criminal actors, particularly ties between narcotrafficking and illegal forestry economies; as well as illicit production chains and trade relations in their local and transnational dimensions, would help improve the logical framework and provide new strategic options for combating deforestation.

3) Provide a detailed analysis of existing national legislation in order to assess the need for complementing REDD+ activities with additional national legislation as needed.

4) Provide a coherent risk analysis, incorporating risks that go *beyond* the scope of the proposed Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), for example conflicts in the governance structure of the programme or difficulties in implementation due to resistance from affected parties.

5) Concretise the activities of the training plan with a view to expected outcomes.

6) Incorporate a clear concept for a complaint mechanisms and the redress of grievances, which invariably arise in successful change processes, in the proposal.

7) Allocate an adequate budget to component 6 (Design of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework).

8) Reword the Monitoring & Evaluation system with a view to clearly define its indicators, and ground these in a logical, results-based framework (rather than a focus on activities).

9) Update the (few) out-dated passages in the proposal, for example, p.38, which refers to an activity in 2013 in the future.