

Pre-Policy Board Information and Knowledge Sharing Session
Wednesday, 5 November 2014
9:30am – 10:30am

« REDD+ National Strategies / Action Plans »

Arusha - Tanzania

Introduction

The session was moderated by Mr. Fabien Monteils, Regional Technical Advisor at the UNDP/UN-REDD Programme. After some opening words, he introduced the four panellists:

- **Ms. Grace Balawag** - Coordinator for the Global Partnership of Indigenous Peoples on Climate Change, Forests and Sustainable Development: a partnership and programme coordinated by Tebtebba (Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education) based in the Philippines, with 17 partners in 13 countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America. Ms. Balawag had been IP observer for Asia in the FCPF PC and Carbon Fund Committee; and is presently the IP Observer for Asia Pacific at the UNREDD PB.
- **Ms. Patricia Serrano** - REDD+ legal advisor supporting in policy and legal processes related to the development of Ecuador's national strategy to the Climate Change under-Secretariat from Ministry of Environment
- **M. Deuteronomy Kasaro** - National REDD+ Coordinator (senior forestry officer), Forestry Department; Ministry of Lands, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection / Mitigation Specialist; Climate Change Secretariat
- **M. Chhun Delux** – Technical expert at the National REDD+ Secretariat (Joint Inter-ministerial Secretariat with Min. of Environment; Agriculture and Forestry; Fishery administration)

Mr. Monteils also highlighted some key characteristics of panelists' countries:

- Zambia has issued a thorough review of REDD+ issues and options to set the basis for the development of its national strategy
- Cambodia has just organised in September a workshop on how to prepare the country to enter the Warsaw Framework (WF)
- Ecuador is moving fast towards the formulation of its strategy (expected by June 2015) and has been a model of excellence with regards to safeguards, stakeholders engagement and multi-sectoral dialogue... so the interest to explore how this translates into the strategy development

The moderator then presented an overview of countries' progress towards finalizing their national REDD+ strategies based on the results of a survey conducted with 30 countries in Africa and Asia. The average progress so far was ranked as "progressing" on step 2.3 out of 5 – whereby background analytical work and consultations are ongoing. Average progress was higher and "well advanced" for countries receiving in-country support from UN-REDD, measuring an average of 3.1, and the support from UN-REDD is globally ranking "high" (4.1 out of 5). Asia and Africa have around the same number of advanced countries, but Asian countries move ahead in a rather homogeneous way while many countries in Africa are still lagging at a very early stage. The survey also highlights the need to improve the general understanding of the Warsaw Framework and its implications for the national readiness process, and particularly in relation to the national strategy for REDD+. Two Asian countries are expected to be ready to publish their national strategies this year, while a group of six to ten pioneer countries are on good track to deliver on the four pillars of the WF by 2016. When

developing their national strategies, the three main areas where countries expect UN-REDD support relate to designing the financial architecture for results-based payments, linking REDD+ strategy to green economy, and engaging dialogue with donors. African and Asian countries have many shared priorities for UN-REDD support, but also differences. For instance, 100% of respondents in Asia requested assistance in engaging the private sector vs. only 40% of African countries. On the other hand, support to assess gaps and design robust and integrated roadmaps for strategy development ranks as the first priority for African countries (80%), but is only considered of major interest by 30% of Asian countries.

Development of the REDD+ national strategy in Cambodia

Mr. Chhun shared the following key messages:

- The strategy reflects the strong commitment of the government to development the right policies to address deforestation and degradation.
- Strategy is a great opportunity for the country to show commitment to donors, provide direction, and to enable access to funding.
- Strategies in Indonesia and the Philippines are very different and do not provide guidance or lessons in comparable circumstances for Cambodia.
- Cambodia has ambitions to move rapidly towards RBPs under the WF.
- It provides a very clear direction on how the country will move towards addressing and eliminating deforestation and degradation.
- Strategy serves to build trust among donors.
- It is developed with wide and varied contribution from different stakeholders (four technical teams, consultation group and the Cambodia REDD+ task force). The consultation group is composed of CSO and IP's representatives.
- The strategy builds on readiness preparation.
- Four elements need to be addressed together: NRS, RFL/RL, FMS and safeguards
- Development steps: Plan, skeleton, draft strategy, public consultation, finalizing and presentation at COP
- Challenges include:
 - o The difficulty in aligning with government policies in different ministries
 - o The lack of guidance or clear guidelines from the UNFCCC on how to develop this
 - o The lack of clear best practices in existing national strategies in neighbouring countries (ex. LAO PDR, Thailand and Myanmar in the case of Cambodia) so to address issues that exist with shared and unclear border lines

Key messages from the African regional workshop on national REDD+ strategies (Nairobi)

The South-South learning exchange was held in October 2014 and was attended by 21 partner countries and other partners and experts. Mr. Kasaro reported on various key messages from the workshop, notably:

- Countries agreed there is a need for one single institution to coordinate REDD+
- This institution should provide a common approach by the different stakeholders
- It would then be easier to deal with the "what", "why" and "how" of the strategy
- There is a need to mobilize support on policy and technical works among stakeholders to strengthen the national approach
- The strategy should focus on the needs of the country so that stakeholders can be associated with the strategies itself
- All sectors involved need to be recognised, for instance agriculture, forestry, energy...

- Strategies should be tailored to specific conditions and reality of each country (therefore no one model can be applied to all countries)
- The sequencing of the four elements under the Convention should reflect the need to address them all at once
- Effective implementation of REDD+ requires adequate investment and systems in place
- Countries need support during the transitional process
- With regarding to the support from the UN-REDD Programme, countries welcomed overall technical support, but noted risks of confusion with the proliferation of activities that are not always linked to the national strategies, the delays in implementation related to bureaucracy, and sometimes the risk that UN agencies could feel like leading the process in lieu of the national government.
- REDD+ national strategies must capture national development agendas in order to mobilize stakeholders and finance; REDD+ may be long-term, but finance plans must be short-term.
- Effective REDD implementation requires investment, including in people, so as to create motivation. Policy creates direction but one also needs investment.
- Obtaining financial commitments from the international community is challenging. If these are not made available, it will jeopardize the credibility of the process.
- REDD+ requires appropriate national systems to support the strategy; UN-REDD should focus more on building a community of practitioners. More workshops of the kind are needed.

Development of the REDD+ national strategy in Ecuador, and key messages from the LAC regional workshop on national REDD+ strategies (Quito)

Ecuador considers that REDD+ should not be seen as a goal in itself, but as a vehicle to achieve national development priorities in the land sector. When considering drivers of deforestation, it appears that REDD+ performance in Ecuador is connected with five key strategic sectors: forestry, livestock and agriculture, water, food security, and biodiversity. The development of the strategy aims to effectively integrate a REDD+ policy in other sectors based on drivers of deforestation and social and environmental key areas.

The country has identified policy, legal and institutional frameworks as three key elements to developing a national strategy to address deforestation drivers. Various instruments are also critical to ensure that REDD+ activities are fully monitored, reported and verified at national level, and the finance architecture is adequate to channel result-based finance for national performance. Such instruments will be designed in a step-wise approach. REDD+ result-based finance is expected to be invested in strengthening sectorial policy measures, and implementing actions on the ground.

In July and August 2014, 77 participants from 12 of the 14 partner countries in the region attended the Quito workshop on developing REDD+ national strategies. Almost 50% of the participants were women! Participants agreed on the following guidance and lessons learnt:

- Benefits related to REDD+ go beyond payments for REDD+, and begin to be acquired from preparation phase. For instance, in Mexico, inter-sectorial coordination led to more efficient public policies.
- Developing REDD+ national strategies is a process and a mean to reach national as well as international objectives. The aim is to effectively integrate a REDD+ policy in other sectors based on DDs and social environmental key areas.
- REDD+ is a platform for inter-sectorial coordination
- Several countries are creating financial framework to receive funds. REDD+ could be built on laws and rules already in place in LAC region.

- Due to uncertainty over financing options, some countries see domestic in addition to international sources of funds as a way of achieving REDD objectives. Importance of involving private sector is acknowledged. There is a need for initial investment to implement strategy.
- There is a need to strengthen legal and institutional arrangements. Considering the inter-sectorial approach, strategy should not be anchored with ministry of environment.
- A REDD+ national focal point needs to be identified to liaise with the Convention.
- There is a need for inter-operational mechanisms (i.e. agreements between national and international players).
- Tenure was noted by some countries as an areas of work for further development, guidance and support
- Sub-national reference levels can be submitted even if not perfect and ad-interim.
- Informed decision making contribute to the validity of the national strategy and plans

Experience and perspective of CSO/IPO on developing REDD+ national strategies – the case of the Philippines

From the experience of the Philippines, IPO have been engaged since the Bali Action Plan. CodeREDD facilitated the process for IPO engagement in the national strategy development process in the country. The national strategy was developed under the leadership of CSO/IPO and approved by the government in 2011. The strategy underscored the IPs rights act, recognizing the customary right over lands and directories, as well as the transitional forest management practices of local communities

The process faced various challenges, for instance there is still a need to address land claims and tenure issues, and policies remain to be developed as well on carbon rights, benefit sharing, etc. The experience demonstrated the varying priorities existing between different sectors, with the ministry of climate change also dealing with agriculture for example. In some cases, policies are lacking on carbon rights, benefit sharing, and there are limited data for determining REL or RL. MRV system is not yet put in place. Philippines should also align their current strategy with the Warsaw framework, given the strategy was developed prior to the decisions on REDD+ by the COP.

Through this experience, Philippines learnt that building partnerships early on with IP and CSO is crucial. Community-level engagement is necessary but only effective with clear access to information. It is also necessary to include allocation of funds to support community forestry department.

Discussions

In an attempt to capture key messages from the very rich and comprehensive experience shared, Mr. Monteils took note that national strategies are now a reality, and not only countries move forward but they also move forward together, reach out to each other and clearly call for boosting communities of practice in a South-South cooperation spirit.

In Bali and Cancun, international community already had a general idea of what strategies should look like. From the very early experience in the Philippines, to those countries getting ready and progressing, the need for broad consultation, to root the strategy and analysis in relation to deforestation drivers, among others have been confirmed through these experiences. But we have also learnt and new elements have emerged. Being “ready” with the four pillars of Cancun doesn’t mean implementing policies and measures and accessing result-based payments: the transition is not straightforward. In order to bridge the gap, developing national strategies has raised as a relevant

process to bring the pieces together, to engage a wide array of stakeholders, cross-sectorial ministries, carry out policy dialogue with political leaders and international partners, and to align REDD+ with the overall development agenda of the country.

Then the moderator turned to Ms. Serrano as she mentioned the need to use REDD+ to leverage policy reforms in other sectors... How did Ecuador reach this conclusion and how does the Government think it can be materialized in practice? Ms. Serrano stressed three key elements:

- The REDD+ idea has evolved from a goal in itself (reduce emissions and mitigate climate change) to an instrument to contribute and achieve broader national objectives related to sustainable development
- Concretely, REDD+ in Ecuador is not about a stand-alone policy. In order to tackle deforestation most effectively, we envision to use REDD+ as a lever to various sector-specific policy reforms
- Illustration: There is a policy for productive transformation in the Amazon promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture, where Ministry of Environment as the leading entity on climate change, mitigation and REDD+ policies has engaged a dialogue in order to set up arrangements that allow for upgrading the policy to make sure that it would comply with REDD+ objectives.

Cambodia then provided more details on the national workshop held in September 2014 to understanding the Warsaw Framework, and key findings related to its implications for the development of REDD+ national strategy. Mr. Chhun recalled that the strategy is one of the four requirements under the UNFCCC REDD+ rulebook, and Cambodia has ambitions to move rapidly to RBPs under the WF. He stressed that the strategy need to build on key policy documents and present the strong commitment of the country government to address deforestation and forest degradation. The strategy should also provide clear direction to the government and stakeholders to achieve goal in reducing/eliminating deforestation and forest degradation.

As Zambia is now well advanced in the development of its strategy, the moderator then turned to the REDD+ national coordinator to share views on what have been the strengths and possible challenges for UN-REDD in its assistance to the country. Mr. Kasaro stressed the valuable support from UN-REDD in Identifying key components of the strategy through stakeholder process and, and connecting the dots based on national circumstances and needs to set and implement the roadmap. In the case of Zambia, agencies agreed to work together to support the national vision and programme behind the government. UN-REDD also supported with technical issues according to country's needs, for example with linking the strategy development with other components like the reference level. Mr. Kasaro finally insisted on the need to foster south-south community of practice...

Mr. Monteils eventually invited panelists to come back on the reasons why it is important to develop a national strategy, and notably how it can serve the overall national objective towards result-based actions and result-based payments. The following points were made:

- Mr. Kasaro / Zambia:
 - o Countries signing bilateral agreements will still need to develop national approach to guide the implementation of the projects as well as guidance in form of a National strategy. Therefore, they will still develop strategies.
 - o Zambia is working on a Bio Carbon Fund project in the Eastern Region. The challenge is how to bring various stakeholders (communities, private sector and government) to a common approach and show performance and report about it. Therefore, the strategy will help harmonize the approaches.
- Ms. Serrano / Ecuador:
 - o Countries need to be coherent with UNFCCC Cancun and Warsaw decisions, and so develop national REDD+ strategies.

- Strategy is a key process to join the pieces of the puzzle, i.e. the national architecture to implement REDD+. In Ecuador, national strategy will allow to having the elements of the plan for implementation ordered in a correct way, to set goals as a country and how to achieve them, in a way that clearly defines targets and expectations.
- Strategy is also important as a way to define at national level the different roles of institutions that will be in charge of REDD+ implementation at local level.
- The strategy is also a useful basis for coordination with donors, so to make sure they align their support with national priorities
- Mr. Chhun / Cambodia:
 - In Cambodia, REDD+ national strategy is developed in the context of the national climate strategy, as a declination for forest-related action and strategy
 - Cambodia wants to demonstrate its commitment to the international community in fighting climate change, and the strategy is a way to set governmental policy-related commitment
 - The strategy also contribute to building trust with donors, as it is challenging to attract financial partners
- Ms. Balawag / CSO-IPO :
 - It is important to ensure broader participatory processes of multiple stakeholders at multiple levels from national to local level in developing the REDD+ national strategies.
 - There is also a need to ensure coherence of national strategies with the UNFCCC Cancun and Warsaw decisions
 - National REDD+ strategies and activities should be within the framework of national development plans and poverty reduction.

Relevant material and presentations of the session can be accessed on the UN-REDD website:
<http://www.un-redd.org/PolicyBoard/13thPolicyBoard/tabid/794436/Default.aspx>