UN-REDD Programme Staff Retreat

8-10 May 2012

This meeting of the UN-REDD Programme staff was convened to provide an opportunity for the staff to build a greater sense of cohesiveness, trust and espirit de corp; identify challenges and opportunities; identify appropriate strategic and operational responses to those challenges and opportunities to ensure ever more effective and efficient delivery of the UN-REDD Programme; and generate input on a vision for the future direction of the UN-REDD Programme that can be used to feed into upcoming decisions of the Strategic Directions Group (now referred to as the Strategy Group).

A list of attendees can be found at Annex A.

Tuesday, 8 May 2012

Welcome, Introductions, and Overview of the Agenda
Yemi Katerere, Secretariat and Tim Mealey, Meridian Institute

Yemi Katerere, Head of the Secretariat, welcomed the staff and expressed his excitement in holding the first UN-REDD Programme Staff Retreat. Yemi emphasized that the retreat may only succeed in meeting its objectives if the participants engage openly, honestly, and creatively in addressing some of the challenges and opportunities of the Programme. He stated that the retreat should not be regarded as an end in itself; it should be seen as one step of many that must be taken in order to improve delivery so that the Programme is seen as a partner of choice within the larger REDD landscape. Yemi informed the participants that retreat outcomes and recommendations will be reported to the Strategy Group, the senior management of the three UN-REDD agencies, at their joint meeting with the Coordination Group (now referred to as the Management Group) on 15-16 May 2012.

Tim Mealey from Meridian Institute gave a brief overview of Meridian Institute and reviewed the UN-REDD Programme Staff Retreat documents. He summarized the agenda and established some ground rules to be observed at the retreat to encourage open, honest, and creative participation. After a brief round of

introductions from all of the participants, the group completed an exercise designed to help them get to know as many people in the room as possible.

Presentation on the History and Current Status
Estelle Fach, UNDP and Clea Paz, Secretariat

Estelle Fach of UNDP and Clea Paz of the Secretariat provided an overview of the history of the UN-REDD Programme and a snapshot of the current status. Following their presentation, questions and comments were received from the retreat participants. The presentation can be found on the workspace.

Questions and Comments

Several staff had comments on about the information provided regarding implementation rates and funding for the Programme. They pointed out some potential reasons for the Programme's low delivery rates. They noted that the speed of the initial UN-REDD negotiations may have heightened expectations regarding the speed of implementing of the overall Programme. The Programme now has the challenge of adapting to the speed of negotiations while ensuring that decisions being made in countries are well-informed and address the complex needs of the countries. The group recognized that improving implementation has broader fundraising implications that should be explored.

Ideas were offered about how to address the funding concerns expressed at the last Policy Board meeting. It was suggested that the funding concerns stem from the standard allotment of $4 million to support country programmes. The Programme's limited funds make it difficult to provide this level of financial support to the 42 countries currently active under the Programme. The group stated that the support that countries receive does not necessarily have to be $4 million as countries have already used their participation in UN-REDD to leverage funds from outside donors. Additionally, the group emphasized that funding is not the ultimate measure of success for the Programme; getting countries ready to implement their REDD programmes is the ultimate goal. It was suggested that the amount of funding made available to countries is not a good measure of success and more accurate measures: building in-country trust and support for REDD, developing quality national programmes, and establishing MRV systems and implementation frameworks.

Presentation on Emerging Challenges and Opportunities
Mario Boccucci, UNEP and Peter Holmgren, FAO

Peter Holmgren of FAO and Mario Boccucci of UNEP presented a summary of the key emerging challenges and opportunities for the UN-REDD Programme. The main topics that were emphasized in the presentation included:

- Positioning and Perception of UN-REDD
- Making a difference in countries
- Operating as One-UN

- Knowledge and Dialogue at international level
- Resource Mobilization
- Programme Management

The points made in this presentation provided a common reference that the participants referred back to during the course of the retreat. The presentation can be found on the [workspace](#).

Plenary Discussion of Advantages & Disadvantages and Challenges & Opportunities with the Three Agency/One Programme Operating Environment of the UN-REDD Programme

Building on the points made in the overarching presentation of key challenges, the UN-REDD Programme staff identified the key challenges and opportunities to working in an environment that includes three separate agencies working together to achieve a common mission. The group recognized the need to clearly define the services provided to countries, articulate its comparative advantages, and link REDD initiatives to larger green economy strategies in order to increase stakeholder buy in both in-country and at the Policy Board level. Since climate change is not a top priority for legislators around the world, the Programme must position itself as an integral part of a broader solution for rural development. One of the Programme's key contributions to rural development is the cross-sectoral linkages it promotes within governments, particularly between the forestry, finance, and agricultural ministries. The group stated that the Programme should continue to refine its areas of focus, while also paying attention to the global context in which UN-REDD operates to create crucial linkages to other initiatives.

A key challenge that the Programme faces is in defining its role in readiness preparation within a wide variety of country contexts. While some UN-REDD countries have completed the first step to readiness and are moving towards Phase 2 implementation, others have faced significant challenges and still require basic assistance, such as completing national forest inventories. The group noted the Programme needs to work closely with the countries to carefully identify the best ways to work within these varying contexts. Now that the Programme has been underway for three years, the group recognized the importance of managing expectations and, in particular, the need to communicate realistic timelines for what can be achieved to expectant politicians and their constituents.

The group also identified improving implementation rates as a key challenge ahead. Issues with Programme implementation vary between countries and regions, creating a need for an increase in communicating lessons learned across the Programme. Participants recognized that the Programme is operating within a difficult global political and economic environment, which creates challenges to quick implementation. They suggested that the Programme consider embedding a policy advisor within forestry ministries to assist in Programme implementation, promote inter-ministry collaboration, and encourage governments to think about the linkage between REDD+ and rural economic development.

The group recognized the importance of increasing the UN-REDD Programme's brand recognition and explicitly defining its relationship to the UNFCCC. The high-level perception that the Programme is in competition with UNFCCC should be dispelled because there is much work to be done under the REDD+ framework by all of the players. In reality, the UN-REDD Programme demonstrates how a global UNFCCC policy can be implemented at a country level. The challenge that the Programme faces is clarifying this

relationship to combat the common misperception that the Programme is the financial mechanism for implementing UNFCCC policy. The group emphasized the importance of refining the core work areas of the Programme in order to refine the technical and policy services that the Programme offers and fully take advantage of the comparative advantages of each agency.

Lastly, the group discussed establishing a 'theory of change' for the Programme -- meaning a clear understanding of the changes the Programme is trying to bring about and a clear rational or theory about how to accomplish those changes. Such a theory of change can be used as a guide for determining how to address immediate operational challenges as well as longer term priorities. It was suggested that the Programme's theory of change should give it more flexibility in project scope and delivery in order to develop alternative pathways to preserve forests while reducing poverty. The group explored the possibility of establishing incentive systems, creating methods for tracking the services offered under the Programme, and setting up mechanisms for learning lessons from what has already been done in countries.

The retreat participants then broke into small groups to create ranked lists of the top priorities that the Programme should focus on addressing.

Round 1 of Small Group Discussions

In the first round of small group discussions, the UN-REDD Programme staff were assigned to small groups to generate ideas for strategic and operational responses to challenges and opportunities associated with operating in a Three Agency/ One Programme environment. These small groups consisted of staff members from each agency, with representation of more senior and more junior staff from both the country and headquarter levels. Once in their groups, participants designated a note taker, a discussion facilitator, and a presenter.

Reports from Round 1 of Small Group Discussions

The presenters from each group summarized their list of high-priority challenges and opportunities. After each presentation, all UN-REDD Programme retreat participants were given the opportunity to ask the presenters clarifying questions, offer refining suggestions, and identify cross-cutting themes and linkages. The top priorities identified by the small groups yielded five areas of strategic focus: vision and strategy, country-level implementation, results-oriented programme management, knowledge management, and resource mobilization.

Wednesday, 9 May 2012

Round 2 of Small Group Discussions

Building on the outcomes from the Round 1 discussion groups, retreat participants self selected to participate in one of five groups: vision and strategy, country-level implementation, results-oriented

programme management, knowledge management, and resource mobilization. In this second round of small group discussions, the participants were asked to recommend a list of concrete, concise, actionable solutions to the previously identified challenges. In this second round, the self selection exercise resulted in no participants volunteering to participate in a breakout group on resource mobilization, which resulted in only four small group discussions taking place in this round.

Reports from Round 2 of Small Group Discussions

The presenters from each group summarized their list of high-priority challenges and opportunities. After each presentation, all UN-REDD Programme retreat participants were given the opportunity to ask the presenters clarifying questions, offer suggestions for refinement, and identify cross-cutting themes and linkages.

Team Building Exercise

The UN-REDD staff participated in a team building exercise titled "The UN-REDD Amazing Race." Participants were assigned to one of seven teams. Each team competed for one hour in a scavenger hunt, answering questions about the UN-REDD Programme's history and current status that were hidden around the hotel. The UN-REDD Amazing Race also gave participants the opportunity to engage in creative brainstorming sessions which allowed them to identify ways to promote interagency cooperation and to create taglines to market the Programme's mission and purpose. Photos of the teams can be found on the workspace.

Thursday, 10 May 2012

Plenary Session

Before breaking into small groups to refine the recommendations drafted in Round 2, retreat participants discussed the necessary steps to ensuring effective follow through after the retreat. To ease accountability concerns, each small group was asked to identify responsible parties for each recommendation. The Management Group (previously referred to as the Coordination Group) stated their intention to consider all recommendations made at the retreat, noting their plan to consult with each other afterwards to determine the best way to take the recommendations forward. To ensure that each of the topic areas was properly represented, several retreat participants volunteered to form a fifth small group focusing on drafting recommendations about resource mobilization.

Round 3 of Small Group Discussions

The third and final round of small group discussions was focused on explicitly stating the challenges, making specific recommendations to the Programme's senior management groups, and identifying the key decision-making and implementing parties. The Programme staff split up into five different groups, with each group focusing on vision and strategy, country-level implementation, results-oriented programme management, knowledge management or resource mobilization.

Reports from Round 3 of Small Group Discussions

The following is a summary of the recommendations the breakout groups made to the UN-REDD Programme senior management groups. After each presentation, all UN-REDD Programme retreat participants were given the opportunity to ask the presenters clarifying questions, offer suggestions for refinement, and identify cross-cutting themes and linkages. The consolidated list of the recommendations from all five groups can be found in Annex B.

Vision and Strategy

The Vision and Strategy group focused on clarifying the link between the UN-REDD Programme and the UNFCCC process, revising the Programme strategy, and promoting interagency collaboration. The group suggested that the strategy be consistently updated to reflect changes in the global landscape. In order to effectively scale up the Programme, the group suggested developing a package of Programme elements for countries and establishing appraisal missions in which specialized teams visit countries to develop tailored actions to be undertaken by partner countries. The group also proposed restructuring the work areas to include a list of core services that result from broader consultations. All of this work is to be carried out by Action Teams appointed by the Management Group.

Country-Level Implementation

The Country-Level Implementation group made several recommendations about in-country political commitment, results-based management, linking global and national programmes, fund management and staff training. To ensure Programme continuity and political commitment, the group recommended establishing UN policy advisors in countries. They recommended that the Strategy Group call for a half day session on UN-REDD at the next regional Resident Coordinators' meeting to strengthen the role of the Resident Coordinator in countries. The group suggested that the Programme consider establishing a default financial arrangement of national counterparts receiving cash transfers from only one UN agency. The final recommendation that this group made is that the National Programme Teams organize regular training for UN-REDD staff for induction. The group assigned National Programme Teams and the Management Group as the responsible parties for most of the recommendations.

Results-Oriented Programme Management

The Programme Management group explored a wide variety of issues and challenges. To gain clarity on Programme decision-making, the group recommended that the Strategy Group and Management Group finalize their Terms of Reference, which fully reflect the functions of each group, by the end of May 2012. They emphasized the need to delegate authority necessary for the Secretariat to fully perform its functions. The group recommended the circulation all Management Group and Strategy Group meeting minutes to the UN-REDD staff to ensure that information regarding management decisions is disseminated properly. To address the lack of responsiveness and effectiveness of the Management Group, the group recommended that the agency representatives on the Management Group establish clear procedures for getting input from their respective staff on agenda topics. There is a lack of trust both within the agencies and between agencies. To address both of these issues, agency staff members need sufficient authority to take decisions and each agency needs to be trusted to represent the entire Programme. To improve interagency collaboration, the group suggested establishing clear positive incentives for staff to collaborate with each other. Most of this work is to be carried out by the Management Group in consultation with the Strategy Group.

Knowledge Management
This breakout group recommended that the Programme establish a policy for knowledge management in order to prioritize it at all levels. The group also recommended that the Programme establish a planning process to develop interagency results-based work plans for all outcomes of the Global Programmes. The third recommendation is to the managers and supervisors of the program. The group recommended that they ensure that their staff members are given time to complete knowledge management activities. The fourth recommendation is to increase the ease-of-use of the UN-REDD logo by developing a straightforward clearance process with varying levels of flexibility. They proposed establishing discussion paper series in which approval would not be required by all agencies to publish additional papers within a given series. The fifth recommendation that this group made is to review the current UN-REDD Programme online workspace to assess whether additional tools are necessary to fulfill the Programme's need for a common knowledge database with accessible statistics and data. The final recommendation is for the managers to provide clear guidance on reporting to their staff in order to ensure that the challenges reported accurately reflect the issues occurring in countries. In their comments, the retreat participants noted that many of these recommendations rely upon Action Teams and the Coordination Group. The participants suggested reassessing these assignments and utilizing the Secretariat in carrying out these tasks.

Resource Mobilization
The group recommended that the Programme begin utilizing the existing resource mobilization plan. In order to ensure the efficient use of existing funds, they proposed forming an official "Action Team" to define models for resource mobilization for Tier 2 and models to use existing funds to support countries through targeted support. They noted that this work can be linked to the ongoing Country Needs Assessment that should be completed in June. For the third challenge, operationalizing Tier 2 and recognizing its potential range of modalities, the group recommended that the Management Group and other relevant high-level leadership groups resolve political issues that arose at Policy Board 8. They recommended that the resource mobilization plan be presented to the Strategy Group and formally adopted, with the Secretariat in charge of its implementation. The group determined that the Programme

must assist countries in establishing National REDD+ Funds. They also recommended that the Management Group and the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office establish a generic framework for establishing National REDD+ Funds that could be tailored to fit individual countries. This framework could be based on a successfully demonstrated example from one or two countries. Most of this work is to be carried out by the Secretariat.

Closing Remarks
Yemi Katerere, Secretariat and Charles McNeill, UNDP

Yemi ended the UN-REDD Programme Staff Retreat by sharing his appreciation for the participants in helping to meet the overall objectives of the retreat. He expressed his appreciation for the honest messages that the group conveyed about issues of leadership, the efficient delegation of authority, the complexity of the Programme's structure, and the challenges associated with working across multiple agencies. Yemi noted that the Management Group has a strong commitment to following up on the retreat outcomes and that all members of the UN-REDD Programme staff have important contributions to make to the overall success of the Programme.

Charles McNeill, speaking on behalf of the Management Group, expressed gratitude for the insightful and authentic engagement of Programme staff at all levels throughout the retreat. He thanked all those who assisted in planning the retreat and emphasized that the future of the Programme lies in the hands of the staff. He stated that the Management Group members are engaged and ready to work with the Strategy Group to address the challenges and opportunities identified in order to secure the position of the UN-REDD Programme as a key player in the larger REDD+ landscape.

Annex A: List of Attendees

Melissa Aytekin, FAO

Mario Boccucci, UNEP

Tim Boyle, UNDP

Emelyne Cheney, FAO

Tim Clairs, UNDP

Barney Dickson, UNEP-WCMC

Thomas Enters, UNEP

Estelle Fach, UNDP

Francesca Felicani, FAO

Serena Fortuna, FAO

Julian Fox, FAO

Josep Gari, UNDP

Adam Gerrand, FAO

Pierre-Yves Guedez, UNDP

Tina Hageberg, UNDP

Dina Hajj, UNDP

Silje Haugland, UNDP

Matieu Henry, FAO

Peter Holmgren, FAO

Onye Ikwu, Secretariat

Reem Ismail, Secretariat

Inge Jonckheere, FAO

Thais Juvenal,   Secretariat

Yemi Katerere, Secretariat

Rogier Klavier, FAO

Aki Kono, UNDP

Gabriel Labbate, UNEP

Jennifer Laughlin, UNDP

Tsegaye Lemma, UNDP

Mette Loyche Wilkie, FAO

Danae Maniatis, FAO

Elisa Marzo Perez, FAO

Mari Matsumoto, MPTF Office

Sharon McAuslan, Secretariat

Charles McNeill, UNDP

Tim Mealey, Meridian

Danilo   Mollicone, FAO

Clea Paz, Secretariat

Leo Peskett, UNDP

John-Erik Prydz, Secretariat

Diego Recalde, FAO

Cheryl Rosebush, Secretariat

Alberto Sandoval, FAO

Maria Sanz Sanchez, FAO

Joel Scriven, FAO

Thomas Sembres, UNEP

Gaya Sriskanthan, UNDP

Kimberly Todd, UNDP

Tiina Vahanen, FAO

Annex B: Table of Recommendations from the 2012 UN-REDD Staff Retreat

1- VISION AND STRATEGY			
Issues/Challenges	*Recommended Actions*	*Responsible Parties*	*Deadline*
Clarifying UN-REDD's relationship with UNFCCC; incorporating UNFCCC developments into UN-REDD strategy	Define relationship with the UNFCCC in the UN-REDD mission/ vision; capture UNFCCC developments since Cancun and Durban and incorporate them into the strategy; propose mechanism to consistently incorporate UNFCCC developments into the strategy in a timely manner	Action Team appointed by MG	
Revising strategy; measuring impact across countries	Restructure work areas to reflect core services and incorporate them into a "Package of Core Services" that UN-REDD offers; develop theory of change that contains deliverables attached to recognized products as well as deliverables dealing with the enabling environment Draft new strategy, including consultations with countries; develop business process for appraisal in countries, including appraisal missions of specified teams to develop tailor-made actions	Action Team appointed by MG develops package, SDG and PB approve Action Team appointed and managed by MG; SDG and PB approve	
Turning competition into constructive collaboration	Organize delivery of core services through interagency Action Teams led by designated team leaders	Action Team leader and members appointed by MG	
2- COUNTRY LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION			
Issues and Challenges	*Recommended Actions*	*Responsible Parties*	
Ensuring Programme continuity and in-country political commitment	Embed UN policy advisor (in addition to technical support) in UN-REDD countries	MG/ National Steering Committees endorse; Secretariat incorporates into handbook	
Increasing results-based management	Emphasize the importance of results-based reporting and lessons learned to agency teams	Secretariat and agencies	
Linking Global Programme to National Programme	Reorient Global Programme to support national activities by creating targeted GP plan to meet technical needs of National Programmes; assign budget lines in GP for National Programme start up capacity assessment (proposed budget $100,000); ensure that agency country offices have necessary	Global Programme Action Team appointed by MG	

	funds to provide country level support		
Strengthening RC supportive role in the Programme	Hold half-day session on UN-REDD at the next regional RC meetings	SDG endorses; MG implements	
Defining and assigning a "lead agency"	Establish principles on how to determine country level lead agencies based on comparative advantages; define what it means to serve as lead/supporting agency	MG endorses; National Programme Teams implement.	
Managing funds efficiently	Arrange for each national counterpart to receive funds from one UN agency; where there are multiple UN agencies for a country level counterpart, all apply the same cash transfer modalities (HACT); agree upfront on amount of funds for UN agencies to utilize with national counterparts	MG endorses; National Programme Teams implement	
Using RPP template effectively	Recommend ways to streamline, simplify, and make necessary modifications to RPP template for various country circumstances	Secretariat	
Establishing regular trainings for Programme staff	Organize regular trainings for UN-REDD staff for induction, COP decision updates, thematic work areas, UN-REDD guidelines, etc.	MG approves budget; Secretariat/ National Programme Teams implement	
3- RESULTS-ORIENTED PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT			
Issues and Challenges	*Recommended Actions*	*Responsible Parties*	
Clarifying which leadership group makes what decisions	Finalize and implement the ToR for the SDG and MG that full reflects the functions of each group	MG/SDG	May 2012
Strengthening Programme structure	Review current structure; undertake analysis to consider options; strengthen Programme to increase results-based efficiency	SDG decides; MG implements.	
Clarifying the role, responsibilities and functions of the Secretariat	Review roles, responsibilities, management and performance of Secretariat. Secretariat should propose responsibilities to be delegated to them to MG	MG reviews/ approves proposal; Secretariat implements	
	Consult with regional/country staff in the review of the Secretariat (as clients).	MG/SDG	
	Delegate authority to the Secretariat that is necessary to fully perform its functions	MG/SDG; agencies	
Distributing management decisions effectively	Disseminate MG and SDG meeting minutes to all UN-REDD staff	MG approves; Secretariat disseminates	
Increasing	Hold frequent meetings with agendas	MG	

responsiveness and effectiveness of MG	reflecting inputs from the national/regional field level; effectively delegate decision-making		
Increasing levels of trust within agencies	Delegate authority to agency staff members to make decisions in processes and/or meetings	Agencies	
Increasing levels of trust between agencies	Allow comparative advantages to be reflected in the actual participation/ contribution processes and meetings; allow staff to represent the Programme, not just their agencies	MG endorses; agencies implement	
Improving interagency collaboration	Identify positive incentives for collaboration (e.g. 360 evaluations based on trust and delegation); learn from successful regional/national level models of collaboration	MG endorses; agencies implement	
Strengthening Secretariat's authority	Authorize Secretariat to take action on a "no objections" basis after a specified time period	MG endorses; Secretariat implements	
Improving information sharing mechanisms	Strengthen information, dissemination and feedback mechanisms for all staff, including regional and national levels; develop, regularly update and circulate full UN-REDD staff list	MG endorses; Secretariat implements; agencies assist with updating staff list	
4- KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT (KM)			
Issues and Challenges	*Recommended Actions*	*Responsible Parties*	
Prioritizing KM	Develop a KM strategy	Action Team appointed by MG	
Making information widely available	Develop interagency results-based work plans for all outcomes in the Global Programme with assigned responsibilities to better capture where knowledge is being generated	MG endorses; GP working group implements	
Accurately estimating time for staff to undertake KM activities	Better reflect time needed for KM in work plans and ToRs	Supervisors	
Simplifying the process to release UN-REDD branded material	Develop straightforward clearance process and flexibility. (i.e. adopt a "discussion papers" series that doesn't require all agencies to clear/approve every paper added to the series)	Action Team proposes; MG delegates authority; agencies implement	
Assessing information and knowledge sharing needs	Review workspace and assess whether additional tools are needed	MG endorses/appoints focal point	
Reflecting full range of Programme challenges in	Provide clear guidance on reporting staff; make more time made available to complete reports	Supervisors endorse, staff implement	

reports			
5- RESOURCE MOBILIZATION (RM)			
Issues and Challenges	*Recommended Actions*	*Responsible Parties*	
Increasing contributions to the MPTF (Tier 1)	Finalize RM plan by the end of June 2012; adopt RM plan by end of July 2012 and take action to implement	SDG/MG	June/July 2012
	Be accountable for implementation and guidance (i.e. going to capital of donors and organizing round tables, etc.)	Secretariat SDG/MG	
	Establish joint high level involvement to secure funds		
Using existing funds efficiently	Use existing funds for targeted country support.	MG	
	Assess lessons learned and effectiveness of current National Programme and targeted support models, linked to the work undertaken on the CAN, where applicable, by the end of July	Secretariat Secretariat	July 2012
	Establish objective process to prioritize targeted support in line with country needs (including initial roadmap development, basic capacity development, and training)		
Operationalizing Tier 2	Resolve PB Tier 2 issues by the end of October 2012	Secretariat/MG SDG	October 2012
	Define roles and responsibilities for collectively mobilizing funds while considering the wide diversity of modalities (to be defined by the Action Team); allow flexibility to accommodate them	Action Team	
Supporting countries/meeting demand to design national REDD+ finance arrangements	Support design of a demonstrations/generic model of National REDD+ Funds to fulfill UN requirements from donors, for example related to quality assurance and safeguards on an interim basis while building national capacities	MG/ MPTF Office	