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# The Republic of Congo's REDD "Readiness Preparation Proposal" (R-PP) creates controversy, continues

22 July 2010

Despite controversy surrounding it, the R-PP of the Republic of Congo was deemed of sufficient quality to move forward in the process, at the sixth Participants Committee meeting of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF).

**The Republic of Congo's REDD "Readiness Preparation Proposal" (R-PP) creates controversy, continues to move forward**

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Tropical deforestation and forest degradation are currently contributing to 17-20 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) responsible for the world's changing climate. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) insists that limiting GHG emissions from the forest sector in developing countries through the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) mechanism is crucial to address the continuous dangerous anthropogenic interference with the world's climate system.

REDD is meant to compensate developing countries for slowing their rate of deforestation in order to protect the world's climate through reduced emissions, but also it provides opportunities for biodiversity conservation and income generation for socio-economic development. Multiple REDD-related initiatives are being launched throughout the developing world under the direction of the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). Developed in 2007 by the World Bank's Carbon Unit, the FCPF aims to channel financing for country-led forest sector reform by providing value to standing forests. It has the dual objectives of building capacity for REDD in developing countries in tropical and subtropical regions, and piloting a program of performance-based incentive payments in selected countries, in order to set the stage for a future global REDD carbon market.

One of the specially targeted regions for REDD activities is the Congo basin in Central Africa. The Congo basin, the second largest tropical forest in the world after the Amazon, is a 500 million acre wide area situated in between six African countries - Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Republic of the Congo (RoC). The Basin is estimated to contain 26 percent of the world's rainforests, and several countries in the region have been selected by the FCPF to implement the REDD program, among them the RoC.

With 22,471,000 hectares of forests, the RoC is second only to the DRC in terms of tropical rainforest coverage among Congo basin countries. Over 80% of the forested land in the RoC belongs to the national forest estate, which makes the state the primary forest owner in the country. But, these forests are the principle source of subsistence (food, energy, shelter, medicine, etc.) for more than 60% of the country's population.

Currently, the RoC- like many other countries in the Congo basin region- is poorly ranked on transparency and governance indexes measuring rule of law, human development, and corruption. Under an atmosphere of total uncertainty, REDD made its debut in the RoC with the approval of the country's Readiness Plan Idea Note (R-PIN) in 2008. Between February and April 2010, the RoC completed the formulation of its REDD Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP), which was submitted to the FCPF on April 19th, 2010. The R-PP was up for two examinations: (a) the review by the FCPF's Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) for completeness and quality in meeting the criteria for R-PPs set forth by the FCPF Information Memorandum, and (b) formal assessment during the FCPF's sixth Participants Committee (PC) meeting in Guyana from June 28th – July 1st, 2010 along with other R-PPs from Argentina, Costa Rica, Kenya, and Nepal.

Before the release of the TAP review, the Congolese Platform for the Sustainable Management of Forests (Plate forme Congolaise pour la Gestion Durable des Forêts), a platform of civil society organizations working on forests and REDD issues, sent out a statement denouncing the lack of public participation in the R-PP formulation.

In the statement (dated June 10th, 2010), the platform stated that civil society and indigenous peoples in the RoC "have not been involved in the process of developing the Congo RPP. The Platform had access to this RPP on short notice; which did not allow it to make its contribution on the contents of this **document** (PDF, 300KB)".

The original TAP review of the RoC R-PP was not very positive. On June 14th, 2010, the TAP completed

