

MALAWI REDD+ LAUNCH OF UN-REDD SUPPORT

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	1
Acronyms	1
Executive Summary	2
Objectives of the launch event	2
Key Messages.....	3
Summary of Sessions: Day 1	5
Officiating remarks and Opening speeches	5
Introduction to the REDD+ Concept	6
Introduction to the role of REDD+ Beyond Carbon Financing.....	7
REDD+ process and outlook	8
Outputs and Deliverables for the Country Needs Assessment and Targeted Support	9
UN-REDD support to the national REDD+ process	10
Summary of Sessions: Day 2	11
Governance for REDD+	11
National Forest Monitoring System.....	13
Panel Discussion on Strategy-Building and Creation of Strategy Roadmap	16
John Kerkering	16
Elsie Attafuah.....	16
Chris Mwambene.....	16
Launch of the Community of Practice	17
Closing Remarks.....	18
Appendix 1 – Attendance List	19
Appendix 2 – Nation News Article	25

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ACRONYMS

ACB	Anti-Corruption Bureau
CBD	Conservation of Biological Diversity
CEPA	Center for Environmental Policy and Advocacy
CGIAR	Consultative Agency for International Agricultural Research
CNA	Country Needs Assessment
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CURE	Coordination Union for the Rehabilitation of the Environment
DoF	Department of Forestry
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FRL	Forest Reference Levels
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ICA	Institutional and Context Analysis
IPCC	International Panel on Climate Change
LULC	Land Use Land Cover
MNRP	Malawi National REDD+ Program
MRP	Malawi REDD+ Program
MRRP	Malawi REDD+ Readiness Program
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.
SADC	Southern African Development Community
TS	Targeted Support
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-REDD	United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
USFS-IP	United States Forest Service – International Programs
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As an active UN-REDD partner country, Malawi has embarked in a comprehensive reform agenda and has developed a 5-year national action plan for REDD+, outlining key actions to prepare the country to develop and implement REDD+ policies and measures. Since its formal acceptance as a UN-REDD partner country in March 2013, Malawi has advanced its start-up phase of a national REDD+ process with support of the MNRP (Malawi National REDD+ Program) and requested the UN-REDD Program to support specific elements of the national REDD+ initiative. Building on the expertise of the UN-REDD agencies, namely United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Government of Malawi has designed two related capacity-building and scoping initiatives for the national REDD+ process, the Country Needs Assessment (CNA) and Targeted Support (TS).

Through the Malawi REDD+ Readiness Program (MRRP) and other efforts, the pursuit of REDD+ in Malawi has grown and evolved from a nascent, localized initiative to a national-scale program defined by a clear governance structure, work-plan, and vision. Malawi is now a UN-REDD partner country that has embarked on a number of regional REDD+ study tours, and has designated a National REDD+ Focal Point and official REDD+ negotiation team to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

In-county awareness and understanding of REDD+ under the UNFCCC and its implications for Malawi have grown in kind with the progress of the MRP. Significant work remains in building proficiency in some of the finer details of the REDD+ mechanism and related concepts, primary carbon financing and climate change. A concerted investment in the cultivation of such proficiencies – especially among a broader, in-country audience rather than the ones that have been targeted to date – is a requisite for REDD+ to secure genuine, cross-sectoral traction and long-term viability. This UN-REDD launch event was created to provide a touchstone moment for such an investment, offering an ideal platform to facilitate enhanced appreciation and knowledge of REDD+ across targeted audiences. Further, the event consolidated the ownership of key stakeholders for REDD+ and UN-REDD supported activities. The event was attended by 132 people (108 males [82%], 24 females [18%]).

OBJECTIVES OF THE LAUNCH EVENT

1. To enhance understanding among a wide range of stakeholders (government agencies, NGO's, local communities and academia) of Malawi's engagement in REDD+, and inform and nurture high-level political commitment, by sensitization on the range of opportunities and benefits that Malawi could potentially realize from REDD+.
2. To inform stakeholders of the activities supported by the UN-REDD Programme (concept, timeline and implementation of different work streams under the proposed TS and CNA) and gather their initial feedback.
3. To launch a national level community of practice on REDD+.

KEY MESSAGES

- Stakeholders were educated on the historic progress, current state and future pursuits of the MNRP throughout the UN-Launch. The MNRP has been operational since 2012 and has attained several notable achievements by implementing a “no regrets” philosophy to motivate and guide progress. The core benefit of REDD+ in Malawi is promoting biodiversity conservation and securing the provision of ecosystem services including water regulation, timber production, erosion control and the supply of non-timber forest products. Social benefits, such as improved livelihoods, clarification of land tenure, and stronger governance, will also arise from a no regrets implementation of REDD+. A carbon-only approach misses an opportunity to win broader support amongst stakeholders. It is more likely that the necessary high level political support for implementing REDD+ in Malawi can be maintained if REDD+ is clearly linked to wider environmental and societal benefits, and to broader sustainable development goals.

To date, some of the critical accomplishments of the MNRP include the identification of 35 priority items, the development of a draft program of action (2014-2019), capacity building of multiple government departments and initiating links with CSO, UN-REDD, FAO, UNFCCC and other international agencies. In moving forward improvement of the MNRP depends on several critical issues including Malawi’s needs assessment, implementation of targeted support actions, enhancement of REDD+ outreach and policy dialogue and the initiation of local REDD+ projects to draw results and data driven conclusions.

- Elsie Attafua, UN-REDD Programme’s Regional Advisor for Africa, presented to stakeholders on the background of UN-REDD and the diverse ways it supports its partner countries. Harold Chisale, DoF counterpart, later presented the current work streams being implemented by the MNRP, the scope of each project, and expected dates of completion.

The six deliverables are as follows:

Targeted Support

Institutional and Context Analysis (ICA):

- Examines “de facto” application of the formal institutions and rules, therefore looking at how societal norms, business interests, and political strategies relate to REDD+ in Malawi and influence its process,
- Identifies challenges and potential champions for the formulation of the national REDD+ strategy, considering all relevant stakeholders, including Traditional Authorities, forest communities, keeping gender considerations in mind,
- The initial step of the Malawi REDD+ stakeholder engagement strategy envisaged under the 5-year action plan, identifying relevant stakeholders to participate in the national REDD+ process
- Provides information on the institutional capacity, ability and willingness of relevant stakeholders to formulate the National REDD+ Strategy in terms of coordination, knowledge and level of engagement

Timeline: Finalized within the first two months of UN-REDD support

Corruption Risk Assessment (CRA):

- Analyzes the degree of transparency, accountability and inclusiveness of key forest governance processes and institutions, and the extent to which corruption in the forestry sector acts as a driver of deforestation and forest degradation,
- Forecasts and prepares for potential corruption under REDD+, and provides recommendations and tools to inform the design of constituent REDD+ elements that should address corruption and enhance and sustain good practices,
- Builds on the Drivers study and the ICA

Timeline: Finalized by August, 2015

Analysis of Malawi's Resource Tenure Regimes:

- Provides an in-depth review of the resource tenure systems in Malawi's natural resource sectors that will impact the development and implementation of a successful REDD+ program,
- Provides recommendations and opportunities for tenure reforms that support the Government of Malawi in effectively implementing REDD+ ,
- Partners: FAO with ELI & CEPA

Timeline: Finalized by November, 2015

Roadmap to a National Forest Monitoring System:

- Plots the steps required to develop a functioning National Forest Monitoring System, incorporating the four pillars of NFMS, including:
 - Plot-based forest inventory
 - Spatial land monitoring
 - National GHG inventory
 - Reference level setting
- Close coordination with REDD+ Science Working Group will be achieved through frequent discussion, consultation and validation,

Timeline: Finalized by September, 2015

County Needs Assessment

Analysis of Policy and Legal Frameworks:

- Provides detailed analysis of current status of Malawi's natural resource governance frameworks for its potential to support REDD+ implementation,
- Identifies gaps and prioritizes needs and options for meeting them, consistent with the REDD+ Strategy Roadmap,
- Identifies windows of opportunity in a roadmap to operationalize recommendations for reform,

Timeline: Finalized by September, 2015

Roadmap to a 15 year National REDD+ Strategy:

- Describes the respective roles and responsibilities of the key leading institutions and stakeholders, including a single institution mandated to direct and supervise the overall process,
- Identifies the main steps and corresponding support document of the programming process (e.g., an issues and options report, national strategy, investment plan), with adequate regular technical and/or validation processes,
- Provides a stakeholder engagement strategy and capacity building plan,
- Incorporates the other Warsaw Framework design elements (NFMS, FRL, Safeguards/SIS)
- Provides preliminary vision for positioning of the National Strategy document in the wider national planning framework (Climate Change, Sustainable Development, etc.)
- Ensures key leading institutions and stakeholders understand the way forward for the formulation of the strategy, and endorse it.

Timeline: Finalized September, 2015

Knowledge Management

The Community of Practice (CoP) will be hosted by the UN-REDD workspace and mediated by the Communications and Awareness Raising Technical Working Group. The CoP creates a platform through which experts in various fields and organizations can share information regarding REDD+ related issues, which can then be extended to a larger audience. Each target audience is important to the success of the Malawi REDD+ program, but the audiences also reinforce and support each other. The Community of Practice will offer a unique, innovative approach to building national capacities and tap into local expertise and experiences for solutions. Furthermore, it promotes South-South Cooperation as members interact and make solutions available to their peers by providing a forum to articulate, collaborate, participate, and advocate issues related to REDD+.

SUMMARY OF SESSIONS: DAY 1

OFFICIATING REMARKS AND OPENING SPEECHES

Presented By: Mia Seppo, UN Resident Coordinator

Ben Botolo, Principle secretary for Natural Resources Energy and Mining

Hon. Bright Msaka S.C., Minister of Natural Resources Energy and Mining

The first opening remarks were made by the UN Resident Coordinator who began by appreciating the Minister's interest in attending the function. She said it was very reassuring to know that the Honourable Bright Msaka was previously with the disaster risk and preparedness sector, putting him in a key position to understand the need to mitigate the effects of climate change. She added that this occasion is not only important for forestry, but natural resource management overall. REDD+ has the promise of enhancing Malawi's development goals by collaboration with development partners. She concluded by saying "a wise person is he or she who plants a tree knowing that he or she will never sit under its shade".

Mr. Ben Botolo then took the stage to introduce the Minister. He added that the Minister is in a fit position to support the mitigation of climate change as he has personally seen how much Malawi's forests have

disappeared, and the consequences that have arisen as a result of that loss. Following these remarks, he called the Honourable Minister to officiate the occasion.

The Minister began by stating that the purpose of this event was not only to launch the UN-REDD support program but also to express the GoM's commitment to supporting REDD+. The Government is eager to implement REDD+ as a way of contributing to global climate change mitigation while at the same time ensuring that ecosystems, livelihoods and the country's economy are sustained. REDD+ is a mechanism that will contribute to the achievement of sustainable economic development through sound management of the environment. Sustainable land use and forest management is key to poverty reduction, food security and economic growth, and can facilitate the achievement of both the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy and the Millennium Development Goals. Malawi's second national communication report to the UNFCCC indicates that agriculture, forestry and other land uses contribute to 95% of Malawi's total GHG emissions. Malawi is agro-based, with 80% of Malawians depending on agriculture and natural resources for their subsistence and household income. Deforestation and forest degradation is high due to over dependency on firewood and charcoal for domestic energy needs and agricultural expansion. Meeting livelihood requirements from diminishing natural resources poses a challenge.

In implementing REDD+, the Malawi Government will not only contribute to the mitigation of climate change, but will also aim at achieving sustainable forest management that will contribute to reduced land degradation, improve agricultural productivity, reduced river siltation, conserve biodiversity, improve livelihoods and attain sustainable economic growth. The Minister concluded by stating that Malawi is very thankful to the UN family and all its partners for UN-REDD support.

Following the Minister's remarks, the Director of Forestry invited the participants to interact with the Minister and offer a few questions before he departed. The Malawi REDD+ Advisor, Yoel Kirschner, posed the question "What would it take to convince the GoM to advocate and support REDD+ completely?" In response, the minister stated that the evidence "speaks for itself", and that the President and his government do not require any further convincing in order to mitigate Climate Change.

INTRODUCTION TO THE REDD+ CONCEPT

Presented by: Stella Gama, Assistant Director of Forestry – Biodiversity, DoF, REDD+ Focal Point

Although the importance of forests are recognized in Malawi, forests have declined rapidly from 45% of land cover in 1973 to an estimated 25.3% today. There are a number of challenges and pressures causing this rapid rate of deforestation including forest governance, illegal activity, population growth, and agriculture expansion and settlement. Additionally, the absence of a proper forest monitoring system inhibits decision-making due to a lack of accurate, accessible, and comparable data on forest resources. Malawi has made great efforts to protect its natural resources by formulating sound local policies like the Forestry Act of 1997 and being affiliated with international agreements such as the Conservation of Biological Diversity (CBD), and the UNFCCC, the originator of REDD+. Since its inception in 1992, the UNFCCC seeks to stabilize GHG emissions allowing ecosystems to adapt to Climate Change. The concept of REDD+ has also undergone various transformations beginning with the sole focus on reducing deforestation in developing countries in 2005 to the full inclusion of deforestation and degradation as stipulated at the Conference of Parties 19.

Ms. Gama further continued to mention that the objectives of REDD+ focus on reducing deforestation and degradation, stabilizing GHG emissions and rewarding developing countries for restoration and conservation of forests. This is said to be important to Malawi as Land Use and Land Use Change (LULUC) are the major causes of deforestation. Currently, Malawi is in phase one of its REDD+ program and building on to the second phase which is promised to produce national benefits including improved forest governance, increased ecosystem benefits and potential financial gains. She concluded by saying that financial benefits through carbon financing are not the primary motive of REDD+, and come second to the more important, realistic and relevant benefits of forest conservation and its associated ecosystem services.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ROLE OF REDD+ BEYOND CARBON FINANCING

Presented By: Yoel Kirschner, Malawi REDD+ Advisor, US Forest Service – International Programs

Succeeding Ms. Gama, Yoel Kirschner made a presentation on the role of REDD+ beyond carbon finance entitled “No Regrets REDD+”. The presentation was guided by two questions; “How would countries with vastly different resource conditions take advantage of the same global mechanism?” and “How would Malawi use REDD+ to achieve its wider natural resource management goals?” More important and immediate than the possibility of financial incentives, REDD+ can facilitate improved governance, increased clarity in land tenure, which leads to higher incentives to keep resources intact, and capacity building in communities, government, and among other stakeholders. Institutionally, REDD+ also has multiple cross-cutting benefits as it requires sectoral coordination, development of analytics and knowledge to undertake REDD+ activities (studies, research, inventories, etc.) and the composition of REDD+ stakeholders represents all major sectors.

The Malawi REDD+ Advisor further mentioned that one immediate challenge facing Malawi is a lack of accurate information on forest cover, given that there are varying land use/land cover classes and deforestation rates in use. There is need for relevant departments to carry out all tasks necessary for the attainment of this required information, including the assessment and inventory of the 6 LULUC classes and subclasses as defined by IPCC. This would foster collaboration among the stakeholders currently represented in the Malawi REDD+ Expert Group, which includes 7 private sector firms, 20 Civil Society Organizations, 10 Development Partners, 6 Government Departments, 4 Ministries, 6 Academic Institutions, and 2 Media Groups.

The creation of a National Forest Inventory under REDD+ would also be beneficial in promoting capacity building and integration of effort among the various government, community and private structures. It could be better perceived as a “resource” inventory rather than just a “forest” inventory. In Malawi’s case, capacity building has begun, but the development of a Five-Year REDD+ Action Plan was determined to be advantageous, even before a formal and potentially decadal national strategy was developed. Pilot sites such as KULERA and PERFORM provided valuable lessons from which benefits can be amplified.

The presentation was concluded on the point that the “No Regrets” approach on REDD+ facilitates the transformation of the entire natural resource management sector, regardless of the results of carbon financing/results-based payments. The “No Regrets” approach allows Malawi to fit REDD+ into its greater sustainable economic development objectives, as stipulated in the MRP’s vision statement.

Questions and Comments

- *What is the role of REDD+ beyond carbon financing?*

REDD+ would enable Malawi to better understand its existing resources and policy options for management of forests and other land uses. It will be essential to communicate at the policy level and with the public that there are benefits to REDD+ beyond the selling of carbon credits.

REDD+ PROCESS AND OUTLOOK

Presented By: William Chadza, Executive Director, CEPA, Chairman of Malawi REDD+ Governance and Policy Technical Working Group

Mr. Chadza began by reminding participants that Malawi is currently in its REDD+ Readiness phase which is being coordinated through the DoF with support from multiple government stakeholders, international partners, civil society, academia, and the private sector. The pursuit REDD+ is also in line with national development objectives and will foster the creation of sound policy and promote greater adaptation and mitigation to Climate Change.

The REDD+ process in Malawi has involved several objectives including visioning, goal setting and the organization and operationalization of management structures. This process has included study tours, workshops, professional studies, and site based project implementation in order to inform the development of a national REDD+ action plan. To date, some of the critical accomplishments include identification of 35 priority items, development of a draft program of action (2014-2019), attainment of partnership status with UN-REDD Program, accessing financial and technical support from UN-REDD for Country Needs Assessment and Targeted Support and capacity building of the DoF and other governmental departments. The MRP has also managed to initiate links with CSO and participate in UN-REDD policy board meetings.

The road to these achievements has not been without challenge and the MRRP has learned and adapted by making improvements to initial plans. Key takeaways include:

- Tardy implementation could potentially lead to fatigue amongst stakeholders and that the integration and implementation of pilot sites in planning is crucial.
- There is presence of irregularities and weaknesses in institutional, policy, governance, resource tenure, and technical domains and professional studies will help clarify these discrepancies and give these problems direction.
- Stakeholder participation is affected by a thorough understanding of REDD+ necessitating a communications strategy to address lack of awareness and build capacity for advocacy and information sharing at all levels (communities, project implementers, development partners, and government officers, politicians, etc.).

Overall improvement of the REDD+ program depends on several critical issues including Malawi's needs assessment, implementation of targeted support actions, enhancement of REDD+ outreach and policy dialogue and the initiation of local REDD+ projects to draw results and data-driven conclusions.

Questions and Comments

- *There is need for harmonisation and review of all NRM related policies and sectors as all three are concerned with REDD+ in some way.*

One of the actions in the targeted support activity under UN-REDD requires a review of policy that provides an opportunity for integrating policies among sectors.

- *How does the institutional arrangement of REDD+ fit into the decentralisation structure, especially at district level?*
REDD+ fits well with decentralisation as the planning will be done on a higher level while implementation will be done locally.

OUTPUTS AND DELIVERABLES FOR THE COUNTRY NEEDS ASSESSEMENT AND TARGETED SUPPORT

Presented By: Harold Chisale, DoF, REDD+ counterpart

This presentation was entitled “The Six Deliverables under UN-REDD Targeted Support and their link to the Warsaw Framework”. These deliverables include; (1) analysis of policy and legal frameworks, (2) institutional and context analysis,(3) corruption risk assessment ,(4) analysis of Malawi’s resource tenure regimes, (5) roadmap to a national forest monitoring system and (6) the roadmap to a 15 year national REDD+ strategy. These six deliverables align with three elements of the Warsaw framework (1) formulation of a national REDD+ strategy,(2) a national forest monitoring system and (3)safeguards.

Deliverables under UN-REDD support	Element of the Warsaw Framework		
	National REDD+ Strategy	National Forest Monitoring System	Safeguards
Analysis of Policy and Legal Frameworks	X		
Institutional and Context Analysis	X		
Corruption Risk Assessment	X		X
Analysis of Malawi’s Resource Tenure Regimes	X		
Roadmap to a National Forest Monitoring System		X	X
Roadmap to a 15 year National REDD+ Strategy	X		

* The concept, timeline and implementation of work streams of each deliverable can be found in the “Key Messages” section.

In his presentation, Mr. Chisale indicated that national leadership and stakeholder engagement are necessary as indicted in the Warsaw framework. Three elements were identified as being key to efficient REDD+ readiness; (1) the concept that decisions made on any element has strong implications on others, (2) there is need focus on the bigger picture and (3) ensuring coordination and coherence between REDD+ elements.

Question and Comments Session

- *Is there a way of producing the National REDD+ strategy much earlier than 2019?*
There are several steps required in order to implement a National REDD+ strategy and certain studies are yet to be completed so most of the activity at the moment is based on the Action Plan.
- *When will implementation be done if the preparations are taking 5 years, is there any way to fast track the process?*

The strategy involves activities planned over a 15 year period therefore it needs careful consideration. Activities such as setting up forest cover maps and accurate deforestation rates in order to enhance payment mechanisms take time. The need for systematic and scientific processes towards the development of a strategic plan requires professional consultations and key studies in order to compose a document that will stand the test of time.

- *How much will the Anti-Corruption Bureau be involved in the REDD+ corruption risk assessment?*

The ACB will be invited at the formulation of the oversight for the corruption reduction mechanism and a permanent position may be considered.

UN-REDD SUPPORT TO THE NATIONAL REDD+ PROCESS

Presented By: Elsie Attafuah, Senior Regional Technical Advisor - UN-REDD Regional Programme for Africa

Ms. Attafuah began by stating that trees are the lungs of the world, stipulating the great importance of forests and the relevance of the UN-REDD programme and the opportunities it offers. Launched in 2008, the UN-REDD programme currently partners with 60 countries supporting nationally-led REDD+ processes. With the expertise of FAO, UNDP and UNEP, UN-REDD also promotes the informed and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders in national and international REDD+ implementation. Overall the goal of the programme is to support countries implementing REDD+ by increasing their capacity and potential for emissions reductions and enhanced forest carbon stocks, while contributing to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

UN-REDD seeks to adopt a human rights-based approach for programming, ensuring representative gender participation, through capacity building and by employing results-based management to carry out its tasks. The programme is guided by these principles and emphasizes the importance of making all information open-sourced and timely.

Ms. Attafuah also described the funding and governance structures of the UN-REDD Programme, whereby the roles of each structure (FAO, UNEP, UNDP and the secretariat in Geneva), donors and the policy board were clarified. The UN-REDD Programme has potentially significant global leverage, since 34% of the world's forests and 54% of all tropical forests are located in UN-REDD partner countries. Since its inception, there have been a number of trainings in capacity building to carry out REDD+ initiatives, including governance, transparency and accountability, and stakeholder engagement. UN-REDD provides both international and direct support with various options including policy and technical advice, national programmes, community of practice, targeted support, and country needs assessment.

Malawi should embrace the idea that despite REDD+'s complexities, several opportunities exist that require strong governance frameworks and institutional capacities with dedicated support from all key institutions, partners and stakeholders. This also requires a move away from the "business as usual" mentality to "business unusual", which requires new ways thinking and new knowledge.

Questions and Comments

- *Is there a regional potential for a cross-boundary partnership to leverage lessons learned?*

Malawi is a priority country and UN-REDD is dedicated to building such relationships. Zambia for instance has many similarities with Malawi and this could easily facilitate such a cross-border partnership especially

considering that there is information, goods, and services which are always being exchanged between the two countries.

- *What are the chances of Malawi receiving UN-REDD National Programme status?*

The requirement is to make a strong case of an existing foundation to suit such a position. Malawi is one of the countries on our priority list and targeted support under UN-REDD is an important readiness building block.

SUMMARY OF SESSIONS: DAY 2

Day two of the workshop included two sessions running concurrently, allowing participants to choose which they were interested in attending. Session one focused on REDD+ governance, while the other constituted the National Forest Monitoring System. These sessions ran through the morning and both groups reconvened after to report the outcomes and summary of their discussions.

GOVERNANCE FOR REDD+

Legal and Policy Frameworks Assessment

Presented By: Marius Walter, Governance Specialist, UNDP/UN-REDD

Titus Zulu, Principal Forestry Officer, DoF, Forestry Extension Services

Saustin Nkolokosa, Forest Officer, DoF, Government Counterpart

Moses Juwawo, Forest Officer, DoF, Government Counterpart

Nyuma Mughogho, Deputy Director of Forestry, DoF, Forest Extension Services

The presenters teamed together to describe the scope of the Comprehensive Policy and Legal Frameworks Assessment that is currently being implemented through the CNA. This assessment will provide a detailed analysis of the current status of Malawi's natural resource governance frameworks and describe its potential to support REDD+ implementation. This includes research on policies, laws, regulations, institutional frameworks, implementation, compliance, and will involve working with stakeholders to identify gaps and prioritize needs and options that are consistent with the REDD+ strategy roadmap to operationalize recommendations for reform.

This assessment will include a desk study of Malawi's policies, previous governance studies and lessons from other REDD+ countries which will require close coordination with the REDD+ Governance Working Group. The assessment will also include consultation with stakeholders through structured interviews, focus groups, site visits and stakeholder workshops.

The final report will include:

- Inventory and assessment of Malawi's programs, policies and laws in the land, natural resources, and forest management sectors, considering both mitigation and adaptation-focused programs and policies;
- Identification and assessment of gaps and overlaps and issues related to implementation and enforcement that may impede implementation of REDD+

- Identification and prioritization of needs for improving REDD+ governance
- A Roadmap for addressing priority those needs in a realistic and timely manner, consistent with the REDD+ Strategy Roadmap

Land and Forest Resource Tenure and REDD+ in Malawi

Presented By: Gracian Banda, National Consultant, CEPA

Amanda Bradley, Tenure Specialist, FAO/UN-REDD

William Chadza, Executive Director, CEPA

Teddie Kamoto, Assistant Director of Forestry, DoF

Jessica Troell, International Consultant, Environmental Law Institute

The next team of governance presenters described the progress being made on the Analysis of Malawi's Resource Tenure Regimes, being carried out under the TS framework. Tenure includes the mechanisms and processes (including laws, customary practices, and institutional frameworks) determining how citizens and groups articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their rights and obligations with respect to the management and use of resources. Tenure security is the certainty that a person's right to land or resources will be recognized by others and protected in face of challenges. Insecure tenure presents risk that rights to land or forest resources will be threatened by competing claims, and prevents people from taking into account future values of their land or resources.

Tenure reform is a very large, long-term and politically-charged undertaking, as we have seen in Malawi with the time it takes to reform the land legislation. There is however potential with REDD+ to undertake targeted and shorter-term improvements to specifically target and understand these aspects of tenure that have broader implications for reform at the national level and can provide co-benefits in sustainable resource management and livelihoods improvement. These co-benefits include delineating local rights and issues with security and strengthening local land and forest institutions to incentivize communities to participate in REDD+ and enable them to participate meaningfully and equitably. Secure tenure rights on paper don't translate to secure tenure rights in practice, and we need to know how both *de jure* and *de facto* systems work. As mentioned during the workshop, the internationally-accepted *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests* provides a useful framework for analysis as well as guiding principles in the process of reform.

The following are potential challenges:

- Gaps in legislative framework governing customary tenure of forest lands
- Lack of information on land tenure in practice (incomplete titling under existing laws)
- Reforms initiated, but stalled
- Lack of coordination and transparent decision-making across sectors
- Conflicts over land use
- Drivers of deforestation and forest degradation are not addressed in a coherent way across sectors
- Lack of compliance and enforcement of forest tenure

Next the team discussed the assessment methodology and timeline. They are looking at legal and policy frameworks, but also what is happening on the ground from the perspective of land and forest tenure in communities and across customary systems to understand the bigger picture. The assessment will identify sites indicative of different systems, as well as a project sites (KULERA) and less well-developed project sites to assess their challenges.

Assessment Methodology and Timeline:

- Desk study, including Comparative assessment with lessons from other REDD+ countries (May-June 2015)
- Identification of stakeholders and selection of sites (May 2015)
- Interviews and focus groups (including site visits) (June-August 2015)
- National policy and legal assessment and policy dialogue (July-Sept 2015)
- Project level case study (KULERA) and site visits (July-Aug 2015)
- Next planned event: Inception Workshop in June 2015

It was agreed that policy coherence is a critical issue for REDD+ governance in Malawi as there are conflicting policies across sectors which require harmonization. The following points were agreed upon as critical issues:

- Effective implementation of coordination efforts
- Lack of awareness of relevant policies and laws
- Lack of capacity and understanding
- Laws don't reflect policies – need to push legal reforms to reflect policy goals
- Stakeholder engagement in REDD+ needs to be strategic, both vertically (among levels of government and with local communities) and horizontally (across sectors)
- Incomplete devolution challenges the implementation of forest management, participatory decision making and forest reserves.
- Communities lack the capacity to take on a 5-year process of co-management
- Conflicts between the traditional system and formal structures
- Capacity of forest management agencies, extension services and other gaps hinder the effective management of forests
- Gender issues: forestry is perceived as a male domain; women are only related to firewood collection and not to managing forests.
- General land scarcity is pushing deforestation onto reserves and estates
- Perception that trees belong to government acts as disincentive for forest stewardship
- Requirement for both clarification of tenure rights and security on customary land
- There is a lack of accountability and long term thinking, resulting in deforestation. Poverty is a contributor to this problem.
- In public lands, decisions are made in favour of mining, road construction and infrastructure projects without transparency

Additional Comments

- Benefit sharing as a social issue in governance should be investigated, as this is critical especially when engaging communities for pilot projects and phase II activities.
- Women are not the only vulnerable group; youth are equally at a threat of missing out on involvement in forestry activities.

Presented By:**Henry Kadzuwa, GIS Unit Head, DoF, Government Counterpart on NFMS****Till Neeff, Forest Officer, FAO/UN-REDD****Custom Nyirenda, M&E specialist, DoF, Government Counterpart****Bennet Mataya, Senior Lecturer, Forestry, Mzuzu University**

The national forest monitoring system (NFMS) is a set of data collection efforts undertaken by governments in the context of forest and climate change policy. For the purpose of Malawi's NFMS, it includes four main components: land monitoring, plot-based forest inventory, an approach to reference-level setting, and the national GHG inventory. The Malawi Government through the Malawi REDD+ Secretariat situated in the Department of Forestry is in the process of establishing a National REDD+ Program. Two critical elements of a National REDD+ Program are Forest Reference Levels (FRL) and a National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS). The roadmap provides the first comprehensive steps towards establishing the design of such NFMS and FRLs, through an enumeration and detailed description of required tasks.

REDD+ relies on an approach for measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) to track results and ultimately as a basis for results-based payments. As per the Warsaw Framework, countries wishing to participate in REDD+ need to provide four mandatory information streams, three directly relate to MRV and the fourth one indirectly (the Safeguards Information System). The NFMS is one of the three mandatory information systems directly related to MRV.

A draft inception report was presented in a working session at the launch of UN-REDD support to Malawi. The intention was to inform key potential NFMS agencies on what a NFMS is and how the NFMS for Malawi could be developed by undertaking certain required tasks.

Proposed Structure for NFMS Roadmap for Malawi

Potential NFMS agencies present during the working session commented on the nature of consultations, and which agencies are likely to be involved in NFMS. A problem tree analysis session was conducted on one of the pillars of NFMS—plot-based inventory.

Methodology (Tools and Process)

Three presentations were made covering the scope and objectives of the roadmap for Malawi's NFMS, background on NFMS for REDD+, and methodology for developing Malawi's roadmap for the national forest monitoring system. Each presentation was followed by a short question and answer session. Participants asked to be provided with more detail about methodology.

Session Outcomes

A question was raised about what the roadmap was supposed to achieve and what the participants were expected to do during the working session. This question arose as the roadmap team attempted to present and facilitate an activity to populate a matrix table outlining agencies' roles was curtailed as participants felt agencies' roles were already outlined by the Science and Technical Working Group of the REDD+ Expert Group. The National Consultant and team members were requested to review documentation of the working group and come up with the list and the expected roles. The team would then conduct consultations and interrogate agencies' roles and functions and identify any capacity gaps. The session also agreed to avail participants the full interview and questionnaire instruments for the inputs.

As part of discussion on *plot-based inventories*, the issue of sampling for NFI was discussed. There was the view that the number of permanent sample plots was not adequate for a proper NFI. The issue of scale was also raised as well as determining: *what is the adequate number of sample plots?* Other participants felt that resources to conduct NFIs may also be limited.

A view was made that data development is not a problem; but it is how to access and make use of available data which is the issue. Also, there is issue of under whose custody the data should be. In other words, *How and by whom is data managed?*

On the subject of forest definition, some participants felt there was no need to labour on this task, since Malawi through its SADC membership should have agreed to the SADC forest definition as adopted. There is still uncertainty over this assertion.

Concerning Land Use/Land Cover maps, one participant informed the session that four separate projects have produced LULC data sets and maps. Such projects were undertaken by agencies such as LTS, JICA, FAO and RCMRD, and were considered in the DoF-Department of Surveys joint effort with USFS in their development of national standards for land use/land cover classification. The roadmap should therefore build on these efforts and products, and Malawi should coordinate this and other activities in Malawi before the launch of MRV. Although NFMS is largely scientific and technical the debate on coordination triggered discussion on governance since it is an integrated issue.

Questions and Comments

- There are 5 land use/land cover maps present to date for the same time period with different classification schemes, which is alarming and calls for coordination of activities between partners.
- The definition of a forest is not agreed upon in Malawi
- Institutional profiling will assist in harmonisation of the information currently available, and clarify how they fit into the NFMS.
- Department of Surveys has developed guidelines/mapping standards which should be considered when pursuing and advocating for adoption of the proposed national LULC standards.
- There is need to look at the works of other regional projects like SADC-GIZ, JICA, and USAID, to see how best their work can contribute to Malawi's REDD+ activities.
- There is need to upgrade the Remote Sensing infrastructure in Malawi's existing GIS Labs
- Lack of a coordinated approach by agencies prevents effective monitoring of forests
- There is a lack of commitment and continuity to standards and practices. There needs to be a "longer term memory" which will coordinate all efforts to come up with permanent solutions. The Technical working groups should be in a leading position to coordinate and create data on Malawi's forests
- Malawi is rich in data yet there is no official deforestation rate. There is need to identify ways to use existing data in order to come up with a national deforestation rate.
- There is no standard way of data collection, meaning amalgamation of data sets to provide information on forests is challenging. There is a need to formulate a systematic method of data collection.
- Form follows function. First define what must be done, and then identify the appropriate personnel or agency to carry out the task.

Panel Discussion on Strategy-Building and Creation of Strategy Roadmap

The panel of experts included John Kerkering from USFS-IP, Elsie Attafuah from UN-REDD, and Chris Mwambene from CURE, and the session was facilitated by Ted Kamoto, Assistant Director of Forestry, DoF.

JOHN KERKERING

What are the core prerequisites and processes for developing a national strategy?

The one area of key importance is the need to understand the drivers of deforestation, and this issue has been addressed throughout our discussion. However, there is need for rigorous data collection to create a reference point, on to which you can formulate national strategy options. There is already a lot of existing data in Malawi from previous studies that development partners, departments, researchers and universities produced. The issue is the consolidation and ability to access, share and compare all of these different data sets together, which requires leadership and a centralised NFMS. The idea is not to just create data and lose track of it, but to make the system work and do justice to historic and future data.

ELSIE ATTAFUAH

What challenges in the strategy development process have you encountered in your work with other countries? What lessons can you offer Malawi regarding the strategy development process?

Lessons for Malawi

The government should propose a strategy in which other high-priority efforts can align in parallel, allowing mainstreaming of REDD+ with other NRM goals. For instance, Zambia included the revision of its forest policy in the formation of its national REDD+ strategy. There is need for strong partnerships and involvement of stakeholders, including research partners and academia. All interest groups should be kept aware of progress and activities, which requires strong national coordination to ensure the expectations of communities and stakeholders are addressed. As a country it is important not to be over-ambitious; rather, priorities and the requirements to achieve them should be focused on. Processes such as forest monitoring should be institutionalized and owned by the host agency, helping ensure sustainability.

How long does it take to develop a national REDD+ strategy?

The amount of time required is specific to each country. On average, most countries in the region have taken 3-4 years, given that stakeholder involvement is requisite, and parliamentary or other high-level political approval is desirable. There is no prescribed period in which the process must be completed, but we should look at what is needed and the available capacity to do it. Malawi may actually take a shorter time if lessons are learned from earlier developers like Zambia and DRC.

Chris Mwambene

How should Malawi embrace the strategy development process?

There are numerous issues that need to be addressed and the important thing is to isolate priority issues while not being overly-ambitious. We need to mainstream the strategy development process so forest conservation can be taken as a norm. The process of developing a strategic plan should be accompanied by a functional process whereby capacity is considered in terms of personnel and other resources. The REDD+ process requires a lot of capacity in the government departments, academia and even the communities in all technical needs including baseline assessments, monitoring and emission factors. Because REDD+ will involve a lot of stakeholders, we need a good communications strategy that advocates the benefits and expectations, including not only the scientific ones but also the social aspects which are very important to communities.

Questions and Comments

- *What could lead to failure of the REDD+ strategy development process and REDD+ in general?*
Lack of coordination is one factor that has led to many problems in various countries. There should be proper management of interests and priorities on all sectors, and this requires strong leadership at the national level.
- *If REDD+ is said to be more than just forest, should we divert our process by involving one department more than others?*
All other departments should be involved right from the beginning in order to include all involved sectors, e.g., agriculture. The forestry department may be a leader, but it is not the only player and there should be dialogue.
- *What are the approval processes of a REDD+ strategy once it has been developed?*
The approval process varies among countries and the stage at which the strategy is currently set. Involvement of parliament is not pre-determined or prescribed for all countries. There should be evidence-based activities and interventions to not only convince potential partners but also communities regarding the benefits of going ahead with REDD+.
- *How legally binding should the national REDD+ strategy be made with regards to the fact that there could be other multi-national companies and groups which may come in with their own REDD+ strategies? For example, the Clinton-Hunter foundation came in with their own strategy regardless of the presence of government regulations.*
One way to resolve this issue is to have statutory instruments to regulate activity. For example, the DoF can register and regulate all proposed REDD+ activities and fold them into prescribed national standards for MRV, Safeguards, FREL, etc. We should empower people and stakeholders to comply with national standards.

LAUNCH OF THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Presented By: Charles Gondwe, Communications Officer, DoF

Mr. Charles Gondwe made the final presentation of the workshop and presented the launch of the community of practice. He defined the Community of Practice as “a group of practitioners who share a common interest or passion in an area of competence, who are willing to share the experiences of their practice.”

The Community of Practice is a platform through which experts in various fields can share information on REDD+ related issues which can then be extended to a larger audience. Information shared is subjected to technical review before it is disseminated. The community of practice offers a unique, innovative approach to building national capacities by tapping into local expertise and experiences for solutions. Furthermore, it promotes South-

South Cooperation as members interact and make solutions available to their peers, and provides a forum to articulate, collaborate, participate and advocate issues related to REDD+. Topics can range from the evaluation of recent REDD+ assessments, tenure, policies, national forest monitoring systems, or any other topic of interest. The community of practice will be hosted by the UN-REDD workspace and mediated by the Communications and Awareness Raising Technical Working Group.

CLOSING REMARKS

Following the final presentation, Mr. Teddie Kamoto spoke on behalf of the Director of Forestry, remarking on how progressive and successful the workshop had been, and then called on the UN-REDD Regional Advisor for Africa to say a few words on behalf of UN-REDD.

Elsie thanked the GoM for its efforts, willingness, and determination since becoming a partner country of UN-REDD. She added that UN-REDD is ready to work with Malawi and facilitate the attainment of its national development goals.

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THE NATION

TUESDAY, MAY 5 2015

BUSINESS

COMPANY TRACK

Forestry Department launches Redd+ programme

BONIFACE PHIRI
STAFF REPORTER

The Department of Forestry last weekend launched the Redd+ initiative which is expected to reduce deforestation in the country.

Speaking to *The Nation* on the sidelines of the launch in Lilongwe, assistant director of forestry Teddie Kamoto said through the UN-sponsored Redd+ programme, the country will benefit in terms of forest conservation.

According to Kamoto, the initiative aid communities through incentives to sustainably manage forests.

"People have always blamed our department for having poor monitoring systems, but I am glad to inform you that through this new initiative, we are putting in place a National Monitoring System, which will address the different challenges. The department will partner with the private sector and local communities in managing forests; this means monitoring



PHOTOGRAPH: NATION

Chikangawa is one of the forests that have been plundered

will not only be the responsibility of the department but all players in the system."

Kamoto, however, could not give the country's annual rate of deforestation.

"Currently, we have estimates that range from 0.6 percent to 3.4

percent while in some cases forests have been deforested by 20 percent, but we are putting the figures together so that we have a true picture of the rate of deforestation," said Kamoto.

In his presentation, Malawi Redd+ adviser Yoel Kirschner called for

a multi-sectoral approach in the implementation of the initiative.

"We need to join hands in implementing this programme and this can be done through a grouping called Redd+ experts which involves government, the private sector and civil society

organisations (CSOs)," said Kirschner.

Through the Redd+, the Department of Forestry has drawn a five-year programme, namely Redd+ Action Plan and the department's Strategic Plan which is expected to be operational by August this year. ■