

Regional Stakeholder Consultation Workshop: Cox's Bazar

19th December 2011

Summary

Following the UN REDD national consultation workshop in October 2011 the second in a series of regional consultation workshops took place on 19th December 2011 at Cox's Bazar. This workshop involved 80 participants from two south-east regions of Bangladesh: Cox's Bazar district and Teknaf Coastal Forest area. The objective of this session was to bring out the root causes of deforestation and degradation of forest as well as to capture the recommendations/ strategies from the stakeholders in dealing with such consequences. The participants ranged from the regional Government officers of Forest Department to remote villagers, which led to an enlightening exchange of views. The inclusion of University, Research organizations and CSOs further bridged the gaps of discussion in dealing with the continuum of livelihood security at one end and social welfare on the other. At this outset information has been gathered from the regional context, which will be incorporated in the REDD+ Readiness Roadmap preparation for Bangladesh. There will be more upcoming workshops at the regional and local level as per the coverage of forest areas in Bangladesh and UNDP will provide its support as mandated.

Group Formation:

Total 80 participants joined the session and they were divided into two groups namely Coastal Forest and Hill Forest which had two sub groups as depicted below.

Formulation of Groups

<u>Coastal Forest (Group 1)</u>		<u>Hill Forest (Group 2)</u>	
<u>Government Team</u>	<u>Non-Govt. Team</u>	<u>Government Team</u>	<u>Non-Gov. Team</u>
Facilitator: Biplob Chakma (Safeguard WG)	Facilitator: Dr. Farid Uddin Ahmed	Facilitator: Dr. Abdul Quddus (Safe Guard WG)	Facilitator: Mr. Haradhan Banik (REDD National FC)

Overall facilitation: Dr. Ansarul Karim, National Expert, REDD Bangladesh

Coordination: Maruf BAIG, UNDP

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Summary table combining the views from both Coastal Forest and Hill Forest group consisting of Government and Non Government Representatives:

<u>Drivers at the regional level for</u>		Underlying Causes	Recommendations
Deforestation	Degradation		
Development of establishments	Use of forest as livelihood	Use of wood in Brick Kilns, Cold storage, Furniture, boats etc	Improvement of Logistics, Manpower training for FD
Infrastructural Needs	Poverty ridden population	Cultivation of Shrimp/salt	Ban on land leasing from Para Forest
Increasing demand of Agricultural land	Source of energy	Absence of Magistracy power of FD to evict	Formulation of Para Forest related community participation
Illegal settlements	Lack of Education and awareness	Inadequate logistics and manpower of Forest department	Establishing Bio Gas Plants and other farms around forest areas
Lack of Political will	Poor Coordination among Govt. divisions	Allotment of FD land to individuals	Prior approval of FD and CMC for building infrastructure, Brick Kilns/saw mills
Influence of Elites	Poor implementation and weaknesses of applicable laws	Conflict of interest between DC and FD recommendations	Awareness campaigns related to environment & inclusion in Educational Curriculum
Settlement of Refugees and forest villagers	Natural Disaster	Missing alternatives of using fire wood	Demarcation of forest areas on the basis of RS record & Ensuring land ownership
		Unplanned development work	Modernization/up gradation of Forest laws
		Lack of clarity in forest area demarcation	Magistracy power FD for eviction
		Indifference with social forestry related regulations	Formulation of investigations cell dealing forest related crimes

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<u>Drivers at the regional level for</u>		Underlying Causes	Recommendations
Deforestation	Degradation		
		Lack of public/CMC participation	Sand/Stone mining needs to be controlled
		Encroachment of hills, Illegal Brick Kilns and Saw Mill set up	Use of composite materials in Building boats
		Misconducts of Unscrupulous forest officers	Rehabilitation of Rohingya Refugees
		Forced acquisition of land	Strong coordination among FD, Police and DC office
		Illegal trading of wood	Alternative sources of energy in Brick Kiln(HSK, Zigzag)
		Cattle Grazing	Forest Villagers can't have more than three kids
		Forceful acquisition of land by influential elites	Alternative livelihood security for forest dependent people
		Destroying naturally grown flora and faunas	Ensuring effective means of population control
		Harvesting over grown trees instead of focusing on Moribund ones	
		Increasing pressure of tourism	

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Key observations:

- Instead of “Deforestation” and “Degradation” we can use the Bengali term “Bon Ujar” and “Bon Obokkhoy” which is easier for the locals to catch up.
- Both the Government and Non Government participants agreed on the causes in a non confrontational way
- Spontaneous participation of impacted community from the remote areas of Teknaf, Ukhia, Chunati and FasiaKhali is mention worthy
- A simple standard pictorial definition of Deforestation and Degradation can reduce the time for the facilitators to bring participants on a single platform of understanding
- Frustration was evidenced from the Government officers in explaining the harmony between the recommendations of FD and the actions taken by the DC
- Facilitators having the knowledge of local dialect can break the ice more comfortably when interaction is with the villagers and root level community
- Half day session is a bit tight instead couple of hours after lunch can be extended for better result

Attachment: 1

Hill Forest, Non Government Group	
Participants	Mobile
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Shafi Alam	
Hill Forest, Government Group	
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Coastal Forest, Non Government Group	
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Abul Kalam, Gorak Ghata, Moheshkhali	-
Sagar Ahmed, Gorak Ghata, Moheshkhali	-
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