

## Civil society in Brazil engages in a open debate about REDD

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A public initiative is currently in process in Brazil with the objective to develop social and environmental criteria for REDD (reduction of emissions from deforestation and degradation). The idea was born during the Katoomba Meeting in early April, last year, in the State of Mato Grosso, when representatives of indigenous groups and traditional peoples expressed concerns about the risks associated to REDD projects and programs that could disrespect traditional rights and generate social conflicts. Their voice also claimed for participation in the development of policies and standards for REDD.

After that, organizations' representatives of indigenous groups, traditional peoples, smallhousehold farmers, environmentalists, timber sector, rural sector and researchers joined a multi sector Committee with one single objective: to achieve a common agreement on minimum requirements for any REDD initiative in Brazil in order to avoid negative social and/or environmental impacts.

Rather than developing a national certification mechanism for REDD, the main idea is to develop a political and technical standard for REDD, as an outcome of an open and sector wide debate, in order to influence the emerging public policies at States and Federal levels, as well as the current and future certification standards that will regulate markets for REDD carbon credits.

A first version of the National REDD Standard was developed by the multi sector Standard Committee and submitted to public consultation period that ends in April, 30. During this period, more than one hundred representatives of indigenous groups, traditional peoples and small household farmers within Brazilian Amazon will be consulted about the Principles and Criteria during three regional meetings in Manaus, Porto Velho and Belem, organized by GTA<sup>1</sup>, CNS<sup>2</sup> and COIAB<sup>3</sup>. "For the first time, those who are the real responsible for protecting the forests, the forest-dependent communities, are having the chance to participate in the development of a set of principles and criteria that will define how they will benefit from REDD and how to avoid the potential social impacts that may exist" says Rubens Gomes, president of GTA.

Other public meetings are being organized in other biomes like the Atlantic Rainforest in the Brazilian Coast and in the Brazilian savannas - the Cerrado, at the same time that companies from different sectors interested in the subject are also organizing their inputs to the standards. All comments are being registered and organized by Imaflora, a Brazilian NGO that is facilitating the national process, with the technical support of IPAM. The Standard Committee will meet again in May to review all comments and suggestions received in order to elaborate the final version of the National Standard for REDD. All documents related to this process, including the comments received and Standard Committee's answers will be publicly available at [www.reddsocioambiental.org.br](http://www.reddsocioambiental.org.br).

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