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THE IMPORTANCE OF GOVERNANCE AND BENEFIT SHARING IN THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF AFRICA'S FORESTS, TREES AND WILDLIFE

REDD+ Experiences in Africa and Capacity Development on REDD+ Issues

Summary

The aim of this note is to facilitate discussion of experiences and capacity development in the African region related to Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+). The paper presents different REDD+ initiatives on-going in Africa and discusses REDD+ experiences to date with a focus on capacity development needs. The paper also identifies a number of questions for discussion on the implementation challenges associated with national REDD+ climate change initiatives.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Climate change has emerged as one of the crucial challenges facing countries today and in the foreseeable future. Climate change is expected to have major impacts on many sectors and aspects of life, including on agricultural productivity and food security, household economies and environmental sustainability. The effects of climate change are expected to be most acutely felt where vulnerabilities are greatest due to poverty, environmental fragility and/or institutional weaknesses.
2. Climate change is being experienced in various ways in the African region. Temperatures have increased, rains have become irregular, droughts are now occurring more frequently and lasting longer and the risks of losing flora and fauna are greater. In addition, desertification is increasing at an alarming rate, leading to serious food security and livelihood concerns for Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities. African cultures are also under threat as a result of high rural to urban migration in the search for jobs and alternative livelihoods.
3. While climate change puts recent and future development gains at risk, it also offers the possibility of rethinking paths of development and of strengthening efforts to institutionalize sustainability. Heightened political awareness and emerging sources of financing for climate change

mitigation could offer critical support to sustainable development in Africa, including for sustainable forest management.

II. RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

4. The discussions within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) focus both on climate change adaptation and mitigation. During the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UNFCCC in December 2010, the so-called “Cancun Agreements” were adopted. In relation to climate change mitigation, developing country Parties to the Convention were encouraged to “contribute to mitigation actions in the forest sector by undertaking the following activities, as deemed appropriate by each Party and in accordance with their respective capabilities and national circumstances:

- (a) Reducing emissions from deforestation;
- (b) Reducing emissions from forest degradation;
- (c) Conservation of forest carbon stocks;
- (d) Sustainable management of forests;
- (e) Enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

Together, these activities comprise the elements of REDD+.

5. In short, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in developing countries (REDD) is an effort to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests, offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development. “REDD+” goes beyond deforestation and forest degradation, and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

III. REDD+ ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION

6. Several different REDD+ initiatives are being implemented in the region.

- i. **The UN-REDD Programme** is the United Nations collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation in developing countries. The Programme was launched in 2008 and builds on the convening role and technical expertise of FAO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The UN-REDD Programme supports nationally-led REDD+ processes and promotes the informed and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent communities, in national and international REDD+ implementation. It currently has 35 partner countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
 - There are 11 UN-REDD Programme partner countries in Africa (Central African Republic; Côte d'Ivoire; Democratic Republic of the Congo; Ethiopia; Gabon; Kenya; Nigeria; Republic of Congo; Sudan; Tanzania and Zambia). As of 1 January 2012, four of these are in the process of implementing a National Programme (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia) and one additional country (Republic of Congo) has been invited to submit a proposal for a National Programme at the next meeting of the Policy Board, scheduled for March 2012. Together, these four countries have been allocated around US\$ 20 million for REDD+ readiness and “quick start” implementation efforts.
- ii. Led by the World Bank, **the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)** aims to provide a framework for piloting activities to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. It has 37 participating countries, with 14 countries from Africa (Cameroon; Central African Republic; Democratic Republic of Congo; Equatorial Guinea; Ethiopia; Gabon; Ghana; Kenya; Liberia; Madagascar; Mozambique;

Republic of Congo; Tanzania and Uganda). Of these, DRC, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Republic of Congo and Tanzania have so far submitted Readiness Preparation Proposals (R-PPs) to the FCPF.

- iii. The **Forest Investment Program (FIP)** is also led by the World Bank. Its main purpose is to support developing countries' REDD-efforts, providing up-front bridge financing for readiness reforms and investments identified through national REDD readiness strategy building efforts. As of September 2011, two countries, Burkina Faso and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), have submitted investment plans for review and have received endorsement by the FIP Sub-Committee, while Ghana is one of four pilot countries in the process of developing their investment plans.
- iv. The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) has a **Thematic Programme on Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation and Enhancing Environmental Services (REDDES)** aiming at reducing deforestation and forest degradation, enhance environmental services and help improve the livelihoods of forest dependent communities through conservation and sustainable use of tropical forest resources, forest restoration and other related activities in a landscape planning approach. A total of 10 projects in eight countries have been approved to date including support for the development of a National Forest Inventory in DRC and to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation through collaborative management with local communities in Ghana.
- v. There are also several REDD+ related programmes in the African region implemented through bilateral support and private financing. These include initiatives led by Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative, the International Forest Carbon Initiative of Australia, the Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF) and the Clinton Foundation among others. Some countries (e.g. Kenya) are also developing GEF proposals to support REDD+ readiness activities. Several REDD+ projects are also being developed in number of African countries some with involvement of non governmental organizations, joint partnership with private sectors and local organizations.

IV. FAO's ROLE

7. As one of the founding partners of the UN-REDD Programme, FAO plays a key role in providing support to countries to achieve REDD+ readiness. One of the main areas of support is in the formulation of national REDD+ programmes, setting up of national forest monitoring and forest carbon measurement, verification and reporting (MRV) systems. FAO has also recently been accepted as a delivery partner of the FCPF, so will be working even more closely with this initiative in the future.

8. Furthermore, FAO is providing support on specific aspects related to REDD+ to those member countries in Africa which do not yet have a National Programme under the UN-REDD Programme or FCPF as part of its targeted support and through funding from bilateral donors, the GEF and the Technical Cooperation Programme of FAO.

9. FAO is also working with COMIFAC, the CBFF and the African Development Bank to initiate a regional project in the Congo Basin on monitoring systems and national Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) in support of REDD+ in ten countries. FAO was also involved in the formulation of Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Regional REDD+ programme and contribution to the discussions on REDD+ and mitigation/adaptation actions at regional level.

V. EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNT

10. In the African region, countries involved in REDD+ have generated numerous lessons that may be relevant for other countries. The experiences highlighted in this document are not the only lessons to come out of the region, they have been identified as being among the most important, transferrable and potentially useful for new or continued REDD+ readiness activities in African countries.

The importance of widespread understanding of REDD+

11. REDD+ as a concept is relatively new and quite complex, although it has a strong link to sustainable forest management. It is important that the scope and goals of REDD+ are clearly communicated and that a wide audience of people is included in awareness raising and capacity building, since without this widespread knowledge it will not be possible to progress on REDD+ related activities. While REDD+ requires the development of various novel elements, such as Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) systems, a Benefit Distribution System (BDS), and an effective system of safeguards, all captured by the National REDD+ Strategies developed to date, most policies and measures required for REDD+ are not substantively different from those developed over many years in the context of sustainable forest management.

12. In some countries, REDD+ knowledge is concentrated in a few sectors or restricted to some people. It is clear that there is a need to go beyond traditional constructs and include individuals and groups from all relevant sectors in knowledge dissemination. Providing easily accessible, multimedia products to help spread knowledge is key for reaching a variety of stakeholders.

13. In order to ensure there is widespread understanding on REDD+, DRC has now held its second REDD+ University, which is a multi-stakeholder event with the aim to raise understanding about the general concept of REDD+ to a multi-stakeholder audience. From the first engagement on REDD+, Nigeria recognized the need to raise awareness and include people from different sectors and scales from the community level to the highest levels of government. On the first official mission of the UN-REDD Programme, the team went deep into the heart of the Nigerian rainforest to visit the Ekuri community who have been working to conserve the forest for many years, so that there could be first-hand engagement on REDD+ and a common understanding of the forest context in Nigeria. Besides increasing awareness and knowledge of REDD+ it also strengthened the support for the initiative and its advancement.

The need for coordination of international support

14. With the multiple sources of REDD+ funding available, strong coordination efforts are needed in order to achieve the required impact and assist African countries in their REDD+ readiness activities.

15. An excellent example of such coordination is the DRC, where the National Programme is a joint FCPF and UN-REDD Programme effort and roles for supporting its implementation are clearly defined for the two institutions. DRC has also been selected as one of the pilot countries to be supported under the Forest Investment Program, through which the necessary investments to support transformational changes in the country's forest sector will be provided. At a more operational level, the UN-REDD Programme in DRC is collaborating with the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Brazilian National Institute for Space Research (INPE) to provide joint MRV expertise to the country. Another good example of collaboration involving DRC is the regional project for the Congo Basin on forest monitoring and MRV, which started as an initiative co-funded by the UN-REDD Programme and which will encompass the coordinated and harmonized support to ten countries of the Congo Basin for REDD+ readiness and thus complement activities funded through other means and help share experiences at a subregional level.

Engagement of all relevant stakeholders is essential

16. Reducing rates of deforestation and forest degradation in Africa requires action on many fronts including better land use planning, reduction of the impact of agriculture on forests, tenure security, afforestation around cities and the improved dissemination of more efficient cooking stoves. As countries progress and develop national strategies to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, the cross linkages with the other sectors and themes within national development planning become increasingly apparent.

17. Experiences from Tanzania, Zambia and the DRC demonstrate that there is a need for better cross-sectoral coordination and for specific national teams to be devoted exclusively to REDD+. Among other duties, the national team and the coordinating institution should:

- (a) facilitate stakeholder dialogue and participation;
- (b) ensure a close inter-sectoral approach involving ministries and actors beyond the forest and environmental sectors (agriculture, energy, planning and finance etc.); and
- (c) engage with donors and provide a liaison with international negotiations in progress.

18. Experiences also show that even though the REDD+ structures that have been set up do reach out to the various ministries, it has been hard to obtain consistent and meaningful participation and contributions from outside the traditional forest and environment sectors. Experience from the Republic of Congo as it starts to develop its readiness plan shows that bringing in higher level ministry representatives very early on in the process is useful in terms of demonstrating the importance of cross-sectoral and integrated planning for REDD+ as well as to develop a strong basis for the objectives and interests of other sectors to be taken into account from the onset of the process.

19. An added challenge is to bring other groups to the table. The early involvement of civil society in REDD+ is key to get buy-in and credibility for the process and any products that are produced, such as a REDD+ strategy. Civil society groups, in turn, need to be well organized, develop trust and share responsibilities, so that they can represent their constituencies effectively in the REDD+ coordinating institution.

The need to take a broader-than-carbon approach

20. REDD+ has the potential to deliver substantial social and environmental benefits in addition to its effects on carbon emissions. However, there are also potential risks associated with the implementation of REDD+. These risks have prompted the UNFCCC to provide guidance on social and environmental safeguards for REDD+ in its Cancun Agreements.

21. Countries will need to design their REDD+ Programmes to enhance social and environmental benefits and reduce risks. For many, this represents a new challenge that requires new areas of expertise for those involved in planning and implementing REDD+. Nonetheless, existing expertise and capacity can make a significant contribution to developing REDD+ programmes that respect social and environmental safeguards, especially when those skills are applied from the beginning of the development process.

22. A workshop in Nigeria that reviewed both the draft National Programme and the social and environmental safeguards for REDD+ showed that those developing Nigeria's REDD+ Programme had already paid considerable attention to these. The participants identified numerous potential benefits that might be generated by actions under REDD+, including improved conservation of biodiversity, improved supplies of non-wood forest products, enhanced food security, empowerment of women and young people, employment opportunities and reduced conflicts. They also identified risks associated with some kinds of REDD+ actions, such as loss of revenue or employment, disruption of traditional practices and conflict over ownership rights.

23. The review by the group showed that the draft National Programme already included many elements that would help to enhance benefits and reduce risks of REDD+ activities. Furthermore, the necessary capacity for these elements was either in place or explicitly included in plans for capacity development. However, the links between Programme elements and the enhancement of benefits and mitigation of risks had not been made explicit, and the discussions identified several ways in which they could be strengthened.

VI. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ON REDD+

24. It is clear that REDD+ provides a great opportunity that is essential for the mitigation of climate change. It is also apparent that REDD+ will require a tremendous amount of work to ensure countries move through the three phases of readiness, demonstration and full implementation and reap the rewards. Although efforts to date have produced a myriad of lessons and successes, three inter-linked aspects emerge time and again as the key to unlocking the REDD+ puzzle: sharing of knowledge, coordination and targeted capacity development.

Knowledge should be collected and shared

25. The knowledge related to REDD+ comes in many forms, from forest data to economic statistics, and covers topics from MRV to the valuation of ecosystem services to relevant forest laws and policies. This knowledge needs to be captured, well-organized, clearly explained and shared broadly. The establishment of a knowledge base is central to REDD+ readiness as well as in progressing through the stages of REDD+. Knowledge cannot remain in silos; tools, lessons and experiences need to be connected across countries, regions and from the global to the local level.

Coordination is key

26. Coordination, be it of funding, sectors, stakeholders or international agreements, is one of the most complex yet rewarding challenges in terms of efficiency gains for REDD+. Coordination must happen within all levels (local to international) and across all scales for maximum impact. The issue of coordination is not one of countries alone but requires improved coordination by multilaterals, with donors and in collaboration with NGOs.

Capacity development is required at all levels and must respond to identified needs

27. Capacity building is required at all levels, from activists to politicians, foresters and communities, for all parties to be able to engage effectively in the development and implementation of REDD+ strategies.

28. Before the National Joint Programme (NJP) was formulated, early involvement of national actors using participatory approaches was a critical success factor in identifying the capacity development needs. As a result capacity development was carried out at both technical and political levels. At the technical level, the National Forestry Resources Monitoring and Assessment (NAFORMA) project and the UN-REDD Programme are supporting the government's efforts to strengthen the technical capacity for forest monitoring in the Forest and Beekeeping Division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. Several technical training courses and workshops have been held and a forest monitoring unit has been established. At the policy level, work has focused on enhancement of the policy formulation capacities in the country and has significantly speeded up the Tanzanian Forest Policy process.

29. The UN-REDD Programme and the FCPF is jointly implementing a country needs assessment to help target future activities of the two programmes to the needs of countries.

VII. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE COMMISSION

30. The momentum and political will for REDD+ have been essential for the gains that have been achieved to date, in a relatively short timeframe. This energy and commitment cannot be lost, but instead needs to be catalysed and scaled up for continued success. In addition, open dialogue, consultation and capacity building need to continue as priorities for building strong REDD+ mechanisms in countries.

31. Country teams and partners need to take the time to assess the progress of REDD+, determine the efficacy of different activities, and identify challenges and opportunities in order to revise plans and programmes as necessary. REDD+ has proven to be an innovative and viable climate change mitigation solution and readiness programmes and national strategies need to continue that solution-oriented, inventive focus.

32. Deliberating on the issue of REDD+ in Africa, members of the AFWC may wish to focus discussion around the following questions:

- a) What actions would AFWC members like FAO to take to support countries' efforts (nationally, regionally or internationally) on REDD+?
- b) What actions could members of AFWC take in their own countries to increase commitment for national action and regional cooperation on REDD+?
- c) What type of capacity building is needed in countries (at both the political and technical levels) so they can effectively participate in and support REDD+ initiatives?