

Update on discussions relating to REDD-plus

Warsaw, 14 Nov. (Kate Dooley) - Discussions on various matters related to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries and other forest related activities (REDD-plus) have been taking place under the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) in Warsaw, Poland under the climate change talks. Below are some updates:

SBI-SBSTA: Parties short-cut on decision on the coordination of support for REDD-Plus

The contact group on the coordination of support for the implementation of activities in relation to mitigation actions in the forest sector by developing countries, including institutional arrangements met in an open contact group on November 13.

Co-chaired by Madeleine Diouff Sarr (Sénégal) and Keith Anderson (Switzerland), Anderson noted that this group has a very broad mandate. He noted the need to focus on substance and make progress. Co-chair Anderson asked Parties for a mandate to draft a decision text to present the next day, underlining that there are high expectations for a decision from this group.

Brazil took the floor to say that in order to have coordination of support, you need to know how and where the support is going – there is a lot of overlap here with other processes. It noted there was strong convergence around the idea of national coordination entities, with an international body under the Convention. Brazil proposed to start discussions on these points. It outlined two main functions for these entities: the first to keep information on paragraph 71 (Decision1/CP.16) updated in the information hub/repository; and the second to receive results based payments.

PNG, Sudan, Tanzania on behalf of LDCs, Mozambique agreed with Brazil on the need for a national entity, and international body. **Indonesia** said there must be coordination at the international and the national level. It said it was not willing to discuss the function of the national coordinating entity, as different countries have different constitution that will affect their national coordination. **Malaysia** and **Guyana** also agreed it was important to spend time looking at the functions of the international entity rather than the national, and to be careful not to define precise function for these entities.

The **US** said the priority for them was to identify governance functions not yet fulfilled and make sure we are sending the right signals to those who can mobilise finance for REDD-plus.

Mexico said the challenges for coordination will be to ensure that the technical elements of REDD-plus are aligned with other elements of the Convention. It said one way to ensure coordination is to focus on what already exists. It said the Green Climate Fund (GCF) is mandated to coordinate REDD-plus finance, and agreed with the US that focusing on what we already have allows us to see if there are gaps to fill. It said the creation of a defined body for REDD-plus is premature at this point. **Norway** and **Chile** supported Mexico's proposal to identify existing bodies that are already carrying out some of these functions, and said that with a very short time to work on a decision, it was important to focus on what is achievable.

Bolivia said the aim of this work programme is to improve the effectiveness of finance, taking into account all types of approaches, including paragraphs 66 and 67 (Decision1/CP.16). It said non-market approaches are important to REDD-plus, including the provision of adequate and predictable support. Bolivia reminded Parties that

the draft decision cannot only contemplate means of implementation for the REDD-plus carbon centric approach, but it expects a comprehensive decision covering the carbon centric approach; the non-market approach; and the Joint Mitigation and Adaptation (JMA) approach.

The **Philippines** said that the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has developed a joint proposal as presented in Bonn in June. It noted that REDD-plus under the GCF is one of the ways to coordinate support, but it supported Bolivia in the need for support for other forest activities, including adaptation. The Philippines said it was important to refer back to articles in the Convention that refer to the role of forests in mitigation and adaptation as well as other land use activities. A future process is needed to elaborate further on non-market approaches and non-carbon benefits for other land based use activities, not just forests.

Guyana noted that if the Subsidiary Bodies close on Saturday, 16 Nov without a meaningful decision, we see this work could roll into work next week in the work programme under the COP, to which **co-chair Anderson** responded that the COP work programme starts after the this group completes work, so a separation of topics would be ideal.

Colombia said it was premature to establish a body under the Convention. It saw value in proposals for national level coordinating entities, and value in discussing the functions of such an entity. It noted that the recent board meeting of the GCF recognized both REDD-plus and management of forests as separate areas for the GCF, so support for forests is broader than REDD-Plus.

Cameroon on behalf of **COMIFAC**, said it supports the creation of an international body and national level. It said the results of fast start finance show the necessity of having a body for REDD-Plus. It noted that up to now, geographical distribution of finance in REDD-Plus has been lacking in equity - one of the functions of a co-ordinating body would be to rectify such things.

The **EU** supported the co-chairs approach to drafting. It supported Mexico's proposal to explore how exiting institutional arrangements could support the need for coordination of REDD-PLUS, and agreed with Brazil, Indonesia and others on the importance of support at the international level.

Japan said that to implement REDD-Plus activities smoothly would take additional time, and the function of the institution is therefore important. Japan would like to share know-how accumulated though capacity building of establishing national forests.

Co-chairs Anderson confirmed he has a mandate to produce a text, which will be provided to Parties by Thursday morning, with an informal to follow. Before closing, he invited interventions from observer organisations.

Climate Action Network (CAN) said that Parties may want to focus on agreeing best practices to avoid barriers to accessing REDD-Plus finance. It said Parties must show commitment to REDD-Plus finance beyond current fast start finance, also important to demonstrate safeguards, with at least one report produced before Parties can access results based finance.

The **Safeguards Working Group (SWG)** noted that indigenous peoples and civil society expressed disappointment in the REDD-Plus SBSTA contact group on Tuesday, 12 Nov. It said they were discouraged by the decision not to re-open the text, and that the only space left for a meaningful action on the Cancun safeguards is in this working group. It said that safeguards must be built into decisions on institutional arrangements and the REDD-Plus finance decision. It also said that a redress mechanism must be built into the framework - where there is money there is conflict.

SBSTA: Civil society and indigenous peoples find that draft decisions on REDD-Plus safeguards and drivers undermine rights, call for re-drafting.

The contact group on REDD-Plus under the SBSTA, chaired by Peter Graham (Canada) and Robert Bamfo (Ghana), met on November 12. Graham reported on the need to conclude methodological guidance on REDD-Plus because of the significance of achieving implementation on the ground. He said this group would aim to complete its work by Friday, 15 Nov with a final open contact group on Saturday, 16 Nov.

The Chair said that work would be based on progress made at SBSTA 38 in Bonn, where draft decisions were forwarded to the COP on National Forest Monitoring, reporting on safeguards and drivers to deforestation. In Warsaw, Parties would complete the final two outstanding decisions from the Cancun mandate, on the technical assessment

of reference levels, and measuring, reporting and verification (MRV). First beginning with a draft text on reference levels, Parties would aim to complete this by Wednesday, 14 Nov. Co-chair Graham called for comments on his proposed plan, and on specific elements of the reference level text.

The co-chair then called for interventions from civil society before opening the floor to Parties.

The **International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC)** expressed serious concern regarding the pre-ambular paragraph on livelihoods in the draft decision text on drivers. It said the term “livelihoods” inherently encompasses the ways of life of indigenous communities, therefore implying that traditional livelihoods “may be dependent on activities related to drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.” As many indigenous communities around the world have demonstrated that their traditional livelihoods are not related to drivers of deforestation. Rather, indigenous peoples’ traditional forest conservation and management practices have contributed both to adaptation and mitigation of climate change. The Caucus noted their livelihoods need to be acknowledged as part of the solution, not part of the problem.

The **Accra Caucus** noted that the draft decision texts from Bonn on drivers and safeguards are inadequate regarding the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, and appealed to delegates to reopen these drafts so that decisions from COP-19 reflect the livelihoods of forest dependent peoples are supported and not targeted as drivers.

The **Global Forest Coalition** said it shared the concerns of its NGO and IPO colleagues on weak drivers and safeguards decisions, and asked what are we doing here if this body is not capable of addressing the real drivers of forest loss?

Co-chair Bamfo then opened the floor to Parties for interventions on the issues.

PNG said it was happy with the way forward suggested by co-chairs, and asked for close coordination with the co-chairs of the joint SBI/SBSTA process on institutional arrangements. It said the reference level and measuring, reporting and verification (MRV) decisions should be agreed together with appropriate governance structure of finance decision as well.

Norway thanked the co-chairs for giving the opportunity to civil society and indigenous peoples to speak. It said that they raised important issues and agreed that the safeguards decision should have been stronger. It cautioned against reopening the decisions, but suggested that issues on safeguards reporting is included in decisions on REDD-Plus finance. It noted concerns on drivers text and said that it was clearly not the intention of Parties or Norway to put the blame on indigenous people and local communities for deforestation. It suggested including a paragraph in the COP report that clarifies the meaning of this paragraph in the drivers decision, and removes any ambiguity.

The Philippines, Colombia, the US, Mexico, supported Norway on the suggestion of a paragraph on the COP report. **Brazil** expressed sympathy with the points raised by civil society, and said it was confident this interpretation issue can be solved without reopening any decisions. Indonesia, Ecuador and Peru noted that these issues should be resolved without opening the draft text.

Norway said that it was important now to make progress on MRV and reference levels. It said the compromise text on verification sends a clear message that verification will be linked to International Consultation and Analysis (ICA) for countries to obtain results based payments. It said verification is key to give confidence for those who provide finance for REDD-Plus but also for countries to learn from implementation over time. In order to facilitate flow of results based finance, it is also important to make progress on the elements of international architecture on REDD-Plus finance, and Norway is ready to work on all three of these elements in Warsaw.

Sudan spoke on behalf of LDCs, pointing out that the work program on results based finance includes non-carbon benefits. It said there is still much that needs to be decided, and this presents a good opportunity to provide conceptual and technical guidance on non-carbon benefits.

China noted the technical aspects of REDD-Plus are advanced compared with other items, and in Warsaw we can make progress not only on technical issues, but also on finance. It commented that MRV and technical assessment of reference levels are closely linked with ICA, which is under discussion in other groups, and said that all these things should be considered comprehensively. It said the reference level assessment should be aimed at improving the

capacity of developing countries in collecting data and improving relevant methodologies.

Indonesia said it would like to see decisions on methodology finalised, but also decisions on finance and coordination of support and governance must be finalised. It noted that REDD-Plus is phased approach, therefore the review of reference levels will need to consider a stepwise approach. It agreed with civil society on the need to bring the issues of drivers and safeguards to the SBSTA Chair. It said these issues needed to be addressed, and there were some things which needed to be improved, but it did not think that reopening the draft decision is wise.

The **Philippines** supported Norway's proposal for a clarifying paragraph in the COP report to say that indigenous peoples are not drivers of deforestation, and noted that it would be good to be clearer on what are the drivers of deforestation. It requested that meetings are open to civil society as much as possible.

On MRV it noted that unless we come to a much clearer conclusion on what MRV is, it is difficult to move towards phase three and results based finance. It said we are just in the demonstration phase, and final decisions on MRV can really move us towards final stage. It said the work programme on coordination and governance of REDD-Plus finance will end by this COP, and questioned where the REDD-Plus finance discussions would go after that.

Malaysia noted the interventions from observers, but said that as the text of concern in the driver decision was in a preambular statement, it does not affect any decision beyond that, concluding that it does not want to open the text on drivers to deforestation.

Thailand supported the co-chairs proposal on the process, but noted that it would like to see all three decisions process at the same speed – MRV and reference levels should not proceed more quickly than the finance decision. **Cameroon on behalf of COMIFAC**, also noted it would like to see progress in a balanced manner, it said without a finance decision, there could be no movement on the others. **Guyana, Colombia, Peru** also said the package coming out of Warsaw must show balance on all three components.

Colombia also said it wanted to highlight a sentiment of success with REDD-Plus being included in the Green Climate Fund (GCF). It said this is a time to anchor REDD-Plus to different areas of the negotiations, in particular ICA.

Brazil noted that options on reference levels should be consistent with the goals of REDD-PLUS - incentives to developing countries to achieve mitigation reductions in the forest sector. Brazil said it would not encourage any approach with compliance perspectives in mind that we have under the Convention for A1 countries. It noted that the process of agreeing reference levels will go more quickly if there is not the addition of new processes, and other issues that are slowing down the MRV text.

Costa Rica shared the concerns of civil society groups and said it believes there is still political space in proper bodies to bring these concerns – in particular on the role of the safeguards. It said they see REDD-Plus as a package, and there is no way to receive results based finance if the safeguards are not respected in all phases of REDD-Plus.

Japan said that REDD-Plus is important not only for climate change but also for sustainable forest management in different countries. It said it was essential to develop reliable reference levels and robust MRV systems to promote REDD-Plus activities.

The **EU** – thanked civil society and indigenous peoples for their interventions but noted that we can solve the issues without re-opening draft decision. It agreed that there needed to be a balance across different issues, and links to other agenda items such as ICA and finance discussions. The EU noted that the reference levels text should be clearer when talking about a proposed reference level and an assessed reference level.

Co-chair Graham then announced that Parties would meet that evening to receive new text, and Parties would then meet in informal consultations on Wednesday afternoon to begin drafting. Graham thanked civil society and indigenous peoples for their comments, and said he would refer those to the SBSTA Chair, noting that the suggestion by Norway and supported by others may be a way forward.