

Third Voluntary Meeting on the Coordination of Support for the Implementation of Activities referred to in Decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70 (REDD+)

May 23rd 2016, 15:00-18:00h
Altes Hochhaus, Lower Conference Room, UN Campus,
Bonn, Germany

Co-facilitators' Summary of Key Messages

I. Introduction

In accordance with decision 10/CP.19, paragraph 4, the Conference of the Parties (COP) encouraged national entities or focal points, Parties and relevant entities financing REDD+ activities to meet on a voluntary basis to address the needs and functions related to the coordination of support for the implementation of the activities and elements related to REDD+.

The third voluntary meeting was held on 23 May 2016, in conjunction with the forty-fourth session of the subsidiary bodies of the UNFCCC, and was co-facilitated by Mr. Paul Watkinson, COP21/CMP11 Presidency (France) and H.E. Ambassador Aziz Mekouar, incoming COP22/CMP12 Presidency (Morocco).

Parties, their REDD+ focal points and other relevant stakeholders, including civil society, entities financing and/or implementing REDD+, intergovernmental organizations and UN agencies participated at this meeting. It was attended by approximately 140 participants.

A. Opening of the Meeting

At the opening, the co-facilitators welcomed the participants to the meeting and introduced the agenda for meeting¹. The co-facilitators informed the participants that they developed the agenda based on the elements identified in decision 10/CP.19, the suggestions made at the second voluntary meeting last year and the views expressed during consultations with negotiating groups before the session.

With the completion of the policy work on REDD+ methodological guidance under the UNFCCC in 2015, and the recognition of REDD+ in the Paris Agreement, the focus has now fully moved to the implementation of REDD+ which plays a key role in pre-2020 actions. The main objective of the meeting was to share experiences and lessons learned as regards the mobilization and coordination of finance and support for REDD+ implementation.

The co-facilitators informed that prior to this meeting, a short video was prepared to increase the visibility of REDD+ moving into implementation and playing a key role in pre-2020 actions. The video can be accessed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KS-Ww945jpY&feature=youtu.be>.

II. Substantive matters discussed at the meeting

A. Brief presentations by an invited panel representing countries implementing REDD+

¹ <http://redd.unfccc.int/meetings/voluntary-meetings.html>.

Summary of key issues raised during the first panel:

- The first panel showcased presentations of country experiences in mobilizing and coordinating multiple support for REDD+ implementation at national level. Four countries presented their experiences from REDD+ implementation (Peru, Indonesia, Ghana and Brazil).
- The main messages included: i) the need for a clear authority that coordinates REDD+ in the country, and a long-term strategy for more coherent implementation of coordination of support, ii) the need for support for particular elements relevant to REDD+ implementation such as the development of forest reference emission levels (FREL), iii) the importance of non-carbon benefits in REDD+ implementation, and iv) the importance of synergies between existing policies, from phase one (readiness) to phase three (result-based payments) with clear planning, governance, institutional arrangements and monitoring.
- Some participants stressed that there is a need for harmonizing the criteria for accessing funds. In addition, the development of project proposals according to agreed criteria also require consultations with the relevant stakeholders.

The first session focused on countries' experiences in mobilizing and coordinating multiple support for REDD+ at the national level:

1 - Peru shared their experience with coordination of support for REDD+ at the country level. Specifically, they outlined how they improved the coordination of support led by a central authority. Coordination was chaotic at the beginning of implementation. Through an iterative process, Peru improved coordination over time resulting in clearly identified actions. According to Peru, an enabling environment is at the basis of its long-term strategy, with a lead agency at central level while at the same time ensuring wide consultations with stakeholders.

2 - Indonesia shared its experience with the coordination of support for their development of forest reference emission levels/forest reference levels (FREL/FRL). Indonesia is of the view that the existing guidance for REDD-plus, as had been agreed by the COP, is sufficient and that there is no need for additional guidance by the COP. However, they noted that there are specific needs for developing forest reference emission levels, such as data collection that should build on national data collection processes. The identification of needs should be done by the implementing country and should not be decided by the donors. For instance, data collection requires domestic resources. Hence, transparency and clarity of needs on both sides, the implementing country and the financing entities/donors, are important.

3 - Ghana (on behalf the African Group) shared its experience from considering non-carbon benefits (NCB) and their importance for the implementation of REDD+. A range of NCB categories (governance benefits, ecosystem services, adaptation and increased resilience, economic and livelihood benefits, social and cultural benefits) were identified. It was noted that there are also other opportunities when considering NCBs in REDD+ implementation (e.g. leveraging political support, links to sustainable development goals). For Ghana, the main challenges include quantification of costs (in valuation of NCBs), tracking NCB during implementation, their integration into national strategy, and accessing funds and capacity building. Implementation of NCB requires substantial support in all phases of REDD-plus implementation.

4 - Brazil highlighted that REDD+ implementation is a step-wise approach, and showcased their process towards full implementation of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+, while building on national policies. Brazil sought synergies between existing policies, from phase one to result-based payments with clear planning, governance (in a multi-sectoral and multi-level manner), institutional arrangements and monitoring systems together with support from both domestic and external sources. Brazil noted that various stakeholders were involved in the step-wise process in all phases of implementation.

During the discussions, the example of the Asia-Pacific Partnership which provides opportunities for strong private sector involvement in scaling up action and finance was raised. A donor country participant noted the importance of implementing the safeguards, multi-sectorial involvement of relevant government agencies and harnessing the knowledge of local experts.

Summary of key issues raised during the second panel:

- In this session, financing entities shared their experiences in providing and coordinating support for REDD+.
- One common message was that support is needed in all three phases of REDD+ implementation, and that there is a need for a multi-disciplinary and flexible approach, with strong country ownership.
- During the session on Questions/Answers:
 - Participants highlighted the relevance of the GCF Initial Logic Model and Performance Measurement Framework for REDD+ results-based payments;
 - Some participants stressed the need for also considering the role of the private sector in financing REDD-plus. Some noted that this process should send a clear signal to the private sector and the relevance of their involvement by making recommendations to the COP or its subsidiary bodies;
 - However, other participants expressed concerned as to whether this voluntary process is in a position or have a mandate to provide recommendations to the COP or SBI that a clear signal be sent to the private sector;
 - Some participants highlighted the importance of considering the role of REDD+ implementation in fulfilling Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
 - It was also pointed out that the inclusion of NCBs in GCF support is important.
 - Some participants asked for consultation opportunities for the upcoming GCF document on modalities for results-based payments, expected in October 2016. Currently, the GCF has no mandate to seek such consultations.
 - Some participants expressed concerns over the accessibility of finance for phases 1 and 2 and several participants stressed that the access to REDD+ finance (e.g. from GCF) should follow the guidance of the WFR, in other words, there should not be additional eligibility criteria required. However, further clarity on GCF procedures for accessing results-based payments is needed.

B. Brief presentations by a panel representing entities financing REDD+

1 – One of the members of the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF) gave an update on the committee's work in 2015 and 2016 with a focus on improving the coherence of support and requesting financing entities to provide updates on procedures and timelines for consideration of funding proposals for REDD+ activities, including result-based payments. The main points included:

- SCF is engaged with the various entities providing forest finance to explore ways to improve the coordination of support, mainly through sharing information with these entities.
- The SCF's summary report of the SCF Forum on financing for forests held in Durban in 2015 was forwarded to COP21. It highlighted *inter alia* the need to ensure policy coherence and financial incentives, the importance of addressing drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and the need to promote sustainable management of forests.

2 – A representative of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) presented the state of play of operationalizing the Fund. He informed that the GCF is considering past experiences learned from other Funds, in particular when developing its procedures for results-based payments. The GCF is now operational and will be ready for result-based payments for REDD+ in October 2016. However, payment procedures are yet to be in place. On readiness, the representative clarified that funding support for country readiness is for supporting countries to access funds from the GCF and not about supporting country actions to get ready for full implementation. The representative of the GCF explained that the GCF is considering all three phases of REDD-plus, from readiness to results-based actions. In addition, the GCF expects the private sector to play a role in its funding portfolio.

To a question from the participants about the links to the nationally determined contributions (NDC), the GCF noted that its strategic plan has defined that NDC should be turned into investment documents as a

frame to discuss priorities and instruments to implement the NDC. Many developing countries have included forests and the land use sector in their intended NDCs.

3 – The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) of the World Bank (WB) shared their views regarding key challenges in the coordination of support, including the need to break silos and move towards a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectorial approach and expedite the mobilization of financial resources. They noted that countries can give inputs on how to shape the funds of the World Bank, are eligible to apply for access to the Funds for all phases of REDD-plus. The FCPF noted that coordination at the multilateral level has improved over time. While the FCPF is working with other funding entities to attempt to harmonize indicators for financing and reporting when assessing proposals by countries, they noted that at the same time they are expected to follow the rules and safeguards provided by the Bank.

4 – The Germany – Norway – United Kingdom initiative (GNU) represents one example of coordination of support among REDD+ donor countries. They aim to support all phases of REDD+ and encourage broad country participation in REDD+ with a wide coordination of stakeholders. They had announced a forest financing pledge of USD 5 billion for the period 2015-2020 at COP21. The representative noted that a multitude of finance sources can be a challenge but it can also serve an advantage because they can help to shape tailored support for countries.

5 – The Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) is a multi-donor initiative supported by Norway, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the European Union focusing on phase 2-type investments for REDD+ implementation. Brazil participates in CAFI as a South-South cooperation partner. CAFI focuses on high forest cover countries and at the moment is targeting six countries (Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Gabon, Central African Republic, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea). CAFI's approach offers a solution to bridge the investment gap in a specific region, through a coordinated donor approach at country level. CAFI supports countries to leverage financing sources from other Funds, such as the GCF. One CAFI partner country elaborated further how CAFI is providing support to implement policies and activities at national level, such as governance, land tenure, mitigation actions in forestry as well as in agriculture and energy. He stressed that high-level ownership and establishing a multi-stakeholder steering committee are important to ensure effective actions.

III. Planning for future voluntary meetings – views and proposals on potential topics of discussion

Overall, the participants shared the view that these voluntary meetings provide a unique opportunity to exchange information and share experiences and lessons learned in the implementation of REDD+. Participants provided views on potential topics for discussion at the next meeting, including:

- Involvement of the private sector in REDD+ financing and implementation; (although different views were expressed on this matter),
- The need to consider the importance of safeguards in the coordination of support,
- To explore ideas and ways on how to scale up REDD+ finance,
- Gaps and needs in capacity-building; exploring ways to strengthen and enhance sharing of knowledge, especially considering linkages to the Paris Committee of Capacity building.

IV. Update on the technical assessment (TA) process for proposed forest reference emission levels/ forest reference levels.

A representative of the UNFCCC secretariat gave an update on the TA process for proposed FRELs/FRLs in 2014, 2015 and 2016.² Specifically, the objectives of the TA process are to:

- Assess the degree in which information on the FREL/FRL is in accordance with guidance of decision 13 /CP.19, and

² <http://redd.unfccc.int/fact-sheets/forest-reference-emission-levels.html>.

- Offer a facilitative, non-intrusive and technical exchange.

The TA process assessed one country's FREL/FRL in 2014 and another 5 in 2015. These reports have been published. In 2016, 9 countries have proposed their FREL/FRL and the technical assessment of these submitted FREL/FRL is expected to complete in November this year.

The secretariat highlighted a key challenge for organizing the annual technical assessment sessions which is to ensure the sufficient availability of LULUCF experts. The secretariat recalled the invitation to Parties to nominate LULUCF experts who can actively participate in the technical assessment process and to update the roster of experts. Experts are encouraged to take the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol training courses and examinations in order to be better prepared for the technical reviews and assessment processes.

For the 2017 technical assessment session, Parties should submit their proposed FREL/FRL by 2 January 2017. Parties are requested to provide early notification of their intention to make a submission by 31 October 2016 to allow the secretariat to better prepare for the technical assessment session and ensure the availability of LULUCF experts. The secretariat noted that it is improving the process with each session through lessons learned.

V. Conclusion

At the end of the meeting, the co-facilitators concluded with one key question for the participants to consider further, that is how to make REDD+ work at scale, and that coordination of support seems to be a fundamental element that should be taken into consideration in this regard. Furthermore, the coordination of support should consider the two sides:

- i) REDD+ countries who face challenges in coordinating support for REDD+ implementation (see examples of Peru and Brazil),
- ii) Donors/financing entities should further strengthen their efforts to better coordinate among themselves and harmonize their support (see examples of GNU, CAFI, World Bank).

Knowledge sharing and continued learning on how to coordinate support will be essential for making REDD+ work at scale, and to allow it to seize the opportunity to play a fundamental role in enhancing mitigation actions in the pre-2020 period.
