



*German NGO Forum on
Environment and Development*

LIMITING CLIMATE CHANGE – CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY

Position Paper on the REDD Mechanism

Agreed by the Steering Committee on 26 March 2009

Situation

1. Without effective protection of forests and reduction of emissions from deforestation, forest degradation and land use changes it is hardly possible to protect the climate and to limit the global temperature increase to less than 2°C. At the same time, forests and biodiversity will be massively damaged without effective climate protection. Political strategies for the protection of forests, biodiversity and the climate thus have to be considered in close connection.
2. The logical consequence is the start of negotiations within the UN Climate Convention about REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) and the intensive participation of the CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity) in these talks. We see a REDD mechanism designed in such a way as an opportunity for the protection of forests and the biodiversity of forest ecosystems. However, REDD can only be an additional contribution to a larger mix of political instruments.
3. New large protected forest areas, import bans for illegally logged timber, changes of land-use intensive consumption patterns, reduction of demand for unsustainably produced timber and agricultural products as well as the expansion of forest areas managed in a nature-oriented and sustainable way remain on the agenda for forest protection.
4. However, we also see a real danger that REDD could be designed in a wrong way and then contribute to protecting neither forests nor the climate but on the contrary even undermine these objectives. REDD has to guarantee protection of natural forests.
5. The environmental integrity of any REDD mechanism needs calculation rules and quality criteria for forests that are significantly improved compared to the Kyoto Protocol. There must be a clear distinction between natural forests and forests close to nature on the one hand and plantations on the other hand. Emissions from forest degradation must also be taken into account.
6. The inclusion of REDD certificates into carbon markets would flood these markets with cheap certificates as long as reduction commitments of industrial countries are insufficient. The effectiveness of carbon markets for climate protection as well as their ecological integrity would be called into question. Carbon-intensive investments in industrial countries such as coal-fired power plants would remain economically attractive. The destructive carbon-intensive economy would be prolonged for decades and the necessary emissions reductions would not be achieved. Therefore we strongly support the EU's decision to rule out the inclusion of REDD into the carbon markets at least until 2020.

Requirements for future REDD mechanisms

Forest conservation must become economically more attractive than forest destruction. A future climate agreement must fulfill the following criteria:

7. REDD commitments must be additional to reduction commitments for fossil fuel emissions and cannot be a substitute for them. REDD mechanisms must not reduce forests to their role as carbon sink but must equally address the protection of ecosystem functions independently of the carbon sink function and the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.
8. For the distribution of REDD money there should be a solution that allows prioritization and regulation based on criteria.
9. Areas of high carbon sink and biodiversity importance should enjoy priority. The HCVA concept (high conservation value areas) and the methodology of the WCMC (UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Center) Carbon and Biodiversity Atlas present a possible basis for the selection of REDD target areas.
10. National REDD strategies, reference scenarios and systems for the calculation of emissions from the forest sector have to replace a purely project-based approach (such as currently in the Clean Development Mechanism CDM) in order to avoid leakage effects to other forests within the country. Funds should be distributed at least partly only after demonstrable successful implementation and depend on complying with the biodiversity criteria.
11. The REDD mechanisms have to be separated clearly from the reduction commitments of industrial nations and therefore need their own category of emissions reduction certificates that are not fungible with certificates from fossil fuel emissions reductions. For every industrial nation, such REDD commitments should be in proportion to the reduction commitments for fossil fuel emissions.
12. All REDD mechanisms have to be compatible with the objectives to limit global warming to not more than 2°C, that industrial nations have to reduce their emissions by at least 30% until 2020 (compared to 1990) and the emerging economies deviate by at least 15% compared to their business as usual scenarios.
13. National REDD strategies have to recognize the land rights of local communities and indigenous peoples. For their conservation services they have to be entitled to REDD funding. For this purpose implementation and complaint mechanisms on national and international level need to be worked out. National strategies have to follow a human rights-based approach based on the United Nations Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities as enshrined in this declaration, including their right to free, prior and informed consent as well as refusing to agree to REDD activities in their forest areas.
14. The identification of forest areas suitable for REDD and effective monitoring must be assured. In most countries support for capacity build-

ing is necessary already at the beginning of REDD mechanisms. National REDD strategies should be worked out between ministries to ensure a higher degree of commitment compared to strategies designed by only one ministry.

15. Afforestation and reforestation should not be covered by REDD. Plantations only temporarily store carbon. Compared to primary forests they contribute neither to protecting the climate nor biological diversity.

16. REDD mechanisms must be designed according to the principle of trial and error to allow for their flexible further development. Within the principles and criteria described above they should leave the participating nations enough leeway to take their national circumstances into account. They should be designed as simple as possible to make them applicable in as many countries as possible.

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