

Submission of the Republic of Colombia on behalf of Colombia and the United States of Mexico

SBSTA work program on methodological issues related to REDD+

September 29, 2011

The Republic of Colombia and the United States of Mexico, welcome the opportunity to provide its views on (1) modalities relating to forest reference emission levels and forest reference levels and (2) guidance on systems for providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected; as referred to in appendix II of decision 1/CP.16., in order to contribute to the SBSTA work program on methodological issues related to REDD and look forward to a constructive exchange of views with other Parties leading to a successful outcome by COP17.

We would like to take this opportunity to highlight that in our view, decisions on methodological issues should be coherent with decisions on the financial mechanism that will enable the future REDD mechanism.

(1) Modalities relating to forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels

This submission has been prepared in accordance with the general guidance submission outlined in the Annex to document FCCC/SBSTA/2011/2

1. Scope: The scope of the process for developing forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels in each participating developing country should be to:

- Develop a national forest reference emission levels (REL) and/or forest reference levels (RL), or if appropriate, as an interim measure, subnational forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels according to CP.16.1 paragraph 71(b)
- Aim to develop Reference Emission Levels and/or Reference Levels of greenhouse gas emissions and removals by sinks associated with deforestation, forest degradation, conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, according to CP.16.1 paragraph 71b of decision, in accordance with national circumstances.
- The RELs or RLs, should be based on national definitions of forests to be submitted by Parties to the UNFCCC Secretariat as agreed by the SBSTA.

2. Purpose of RELs and RLs:

- Establish scientifically sound guidelines for the construction of REL and/or RLs from the forest sector in order to assess the impact of mitigation actions undertaken by developing

countries and estimate emission reductions and enhancement of forest carbon stocks generated through the implementation of national and subnational policies and measures taking into account the ultimate goal of the convention and REDD+ actions, and in the context of adequate and predictable finance.

3. Characteristics of the guidelines to be designed by the SBSTA for the development of RELs and RLs:

- The guidelines should aim to include emissions and removals associated with deforestation, forest degradation, conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, as deemed appropriate by each Party and in accordance with their respective capabilities and national circumstances.
- Be comprised of national forest REL and/or RL or, if appropriate, as an interim measure, subnational RELs and RLs, to be communicated by parties to secretariat.
- Be scientifically robust and based on transparent, accurate, comparable and consistent information
- Avoid unnecessary barriers for countries to participate in the REDD+ mechanism, including financial and technical burdens of RL and REL requirements
- Allow for the gradual addition of carbon pools to be included in monitoring and setting of REL and/or RL associated with deforestation, forest degradation, conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in line with available data, technical requirements and financing.
- Allow for the periodic review and update of RL and RELs by countries.
- Be consistent with the principle of environmental integrity, including consideration of the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change guidance and guidelines, as adopted or encouraged by the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate, as a basis for estimating anthropogenic forest-related greenhouse gas emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks and forest area changes

4. Guidance for the construction of RELs and RLs:

- They should consider appropriate historical data to account varying anthropogenic forest-related greenhouse gas emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks and forest area changes.
- There are several approaches to estimate forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level, which should be considered; i) extrapolation of past trends of deforestation into the future, ii) projected average historical deforestation or iii) deforestation predicted based on modeling and planned activities. Transparency and comparability of RELs and

RLs should be ensured in the consideration of potential approaches. All of these should be explored and developed

- Financing for national capacity should be secured for the construction and updating of REL/RLs
- Allow for the review process of RL and RELs by a group of experts, as soon as a financing mechanism for REDD is established.

(2) Guidance on systems for providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected

Recalling paragraph 71(d) of the Cancun Agreement that requests developing countries undertaking REDD+ actions to develop a *system* for providing information on the safeguards, we support the idea that the system to provide information on how the safeguards are treated and respected should be developed nationally, respecting the capabilities and circumstances of each developing nation. This means that a specific country will have its own system, oriented by general guidance and principles to be provided by SBSTA and the COP, and not by **a single system** that will be required to be implemented by all countries. Thus, it is of utmost importance that the COP agrees on clear general principles and workable guidance.

Equally important is to maintain the system for information on safeguards distinct from the MRV system to report on emissions and removals for carbon.

1. Characteristics and Design of the information system

The national system should contain publicly available (**transparency**) data and information relevant to indicate how the safeguards are being addressed and respected. Since these data and information are expected to originate from several sources, it is important to ensure **consistency** of the information (that is, the information is based on the same set of assumptions, methodologies, guidance) and **completeness** in the sense that all the safeguards should be addressed. The type of data and information to be included in the system of information should be a national decision, guided by the general principles agreed by the COP, and should not generate unnecessary barriers so as to promote the broad participation of countries in the REDD+ mechanism and should be **distinct** from other systems for REDD+ support (e.g., MRV system).

The purpose of the System should be to inform stakeholders about how the safeguards outlined in Appendix 1 to Decision 1/CP.16 are being addressed and respected, in the sense of minimizing the adverse and negative impacts, potentiate the positive ones, and assist in promoting good practices. All those interested should have access to clear, easily accessible and well structured information. The information should be relevant for local, regional, national and international stakeholders. All the information deemed to be relevant to inform how the safeguards are being treated and respected should be shared openly. The data and information should flow continuously, as deemed appropriate. Each participating country shall inform about the

arrangements and responsibilities for the design, implementation, operation and maintenance of the system, as well as organization of the data and information provided. To ensure efficiency and cost-effectiveness, the national information system should cater information needed in an integrated and coordinated way. This can be achieved by building the information system on existing data and institutions, so that it complements or is consistent with the objectives of the country's national forest program and relevant data sets and processes.

The system should be designed with a view to accommodate for changing needs for information in the future, and be adaptable to technical changes, if necessary.

2. Provision of data and information

Each participating country shall identify the national agencies and organizations in charge of providing data and information, while ensuring effective stakeholder involvement at all stages of development of the System, from its design to its effective implementation. The provision of data and information for the system should be flexible; while for some of the safeguards data and information may be more frequently available, for others it may not. Data and information addressing all the safeguards should be made available within a timeframe to be defined domestically and respecting national circumstances and capabilities.

3. Potential barriers, including barriers, if any, to providing information, on addressing and respecting safeguards

Potential barriers include lack of data and information, lack of financial resources and capacity to generate information on how the safeguards are being treated and respected, establishment of the institutional arrangements necessary to ensure continuous flow of relevant data and information, including its dissemination to local communities and indigenous.