

High-level panel event on the land sector and forests

Organization of the panel

The panel will be organised by COP 19 Presidency with the cooperation of Finland

Time: COP19, High Level Segment Monday 18 Nov, 15-17:00

Venue: National Stadium; room: TBC

Participation: Open to all Ministers or Heads of Delegations. It will be open for Observers.

Chairs: COP 19 Presidency: Under-Secretary of State, in Ministry of Environment Janusz Zaleski

Chairs:

- Minister of Environment of Finland Ville Matti Niinistö
- Representative from Indonesia, TBD

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I. Background

Humankind is depended on productive land resources and the ecosystem services provided by them. The land sector, including forests, is very important from the climate perspective. Since the inception of the UNFCCC negotiations, Parties have devoted attention to these issues, acknowledging their ability to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Moreover the land sector plays a significant role in sustainable development by, for example, catalysing poverty eradication and creating new green jobs.

The land sector also has the potential to play a significant role in increasing motivation at national level to contribute towards achieving the global 2°C objective (as part of a package of tailored commitments which take into account countries' respective mitigation capacity). The sector has a lot of cost-efficient mitigation potential ranging from reducing deforestation and degradation, increasing carbon stocks through different measures and substituting fossil fuels and energy-intensive materials. For example, In the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, emissions from deforestation in the 1990s were estimated at 5.8 GtCO₂/annum.

For these reasons, the land sector and forests should be elements of any post-2020 agreement. In the immediate near term, the carbon mitigation benefits of swiftly reducing deforestation could be greater than the benefits of afforestation. That is because of due to the relatively large scale of deforestation: between 2000-2005 there was a reported net loss of 7.3 million ha/annum.

At the moment, discussions on land the land sector under the UNFCCC take place under different tracks and in a variety of fora.

Parties currently take a variety of approaches to land use mitigation potential:

- All Parties to the Convention are obliged to report emissions and removals from land use sectors in their National Communications.
- For Kyoto Protocol countries with quantified emission targets for the 2nd Commitment Period, the KP accounting rules as adopted in Durban will apply.
- Non-Kyoto Protocol countries, or KP countries without a QELRO for the 2nd Commitment Period, are taking different approaches: some will apply KP rules, others will not. The role of LULUCF in pledges to 2020 is still not clear and should therefore be clarified.
- For developing country Parties, a different concept of land use in relation to climate change (REDD+, NAMAs) applies.



In summary, the current system contains four different ways to address land use in three distinct groups of countries. The new climate agreement will be based on the guiding principle that all Parties will contribute to the overall 2°C target: the rules for reporting/accounting emissions and removals from land use will also need to be framed and gathered together into a common, transparent and comparable approach.

Within the multifaceted system that has emerged from the UNFCCC process, there are several commonalities of approaches between LULUCF and REDD+. These include elements of reference level concept, natural disturbances, carbon pools, key categories, soil carbon, and anthropogenic/non-anthropogenic nature of emissions and removals. A new framework for the land sector could sensibly be created by building on existing reporting and accounting systems.

II. Overall objective

Begin a discussion on the potential role of the land sector, including forests, after 2020 and determine its role in the future climate regime.

III. Specific Objectives

1. To set out a possible set of overarching principles which could guide the expert level as it prepares suggestions on how to address the land sector in a future climate regime.
2. Set the scene under the Climate Convention to exchange ideas and possibilities for developing a common and comparable framework for the land sector and forests in the post 2020 regime which is applicable to all.
3. Discuss types of incentives that Ministers may have in mind, which would allow full exploitation of the mitigation potential that could also strengthen the mitigation and adaptation potential of the land sector and forests.

IV. Results

Chair's report and Conclusions or set of recommendations which will to be submitted to the COP President and to the ADP Chairs, as appropriate.

V. Suggested questions for debate

1. What are the key priorities and measures for the land sector and forests in your government's national climate change activities and policies?
2. How best could the land sector and forests be incentivised to contribute to reaching the overarching objective of the Convention?
3. What practical steps could be taken under the UNFCCC in the negotiations during 2014-2015 to ensure that this sector provides can fully deliver a meaningful contribution after 2020 is an integral part of the 2015 agreement?

VI. Programme

- Opening by the COP Presidency Under-secretary of State in Ministry of Environment of Poland Janusz Zaleski, Opening speech
- Key note speaker (Minister of the Environment of Finland Ville Niinistö,) – “Role of the land sector and forests in the post-2020 regime”
- Key note speaker (Representative from Indonesia) –TBD
- Facilitated roundtable discussion
- Summary by Chairs

