

**Informal Meeting of Experts on Methodological Issues relating to Reducing
Emissions from Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
20 – 21 October 2008, Bonn, Germany**

Chair's Summary of Key Messages from the Meeting

I. General

1. In the context of UNFCCC, forest degradation leads to a decline of carbon stocks.

II. Methodologies, tools and data

- (a) IPCC guidelines provide methodologies that can be used for estimating and monitoring emissions and carbon stock changes from forest degradation. These methodologies can be applied consistently over time and under different national circumstances.
- (b) There is need to develop some basic set of guidance to allow all countries to participate on a similar foundation. IPCC guidelines enable countries to take a progressive approach, improving as much as possible through time.
- (c) Remote sensing and the use of ground data need to be balanced. The combination of both can lead to a progressive set of Tier 2 or Tier 3 approaches.
- (d) Forest degradation often leads to loss of carbon stocks in the other four carbon pools (soil, litter, deadwood, belowground biomass), in addition to losses of carbon stocks in the aboveground biomass pool. These losses cannot be captured by remote sensing alone. Ground data is needed to overcome these gaps.
- (e) In many national forest inventories and other external sources, data is already available. Although they may not be perfect, they can be used as a basis for estimating emissions from forest degradation.
- (f) Stratification of forests based on the drivers of forest degradation or on types of human impacts can facilitate the sampling design for estimating changes in forest carbon stocks.
- (g) It was noted that it could be useful to explore comprehensive methodologies when estimating and monitoring emissions and changes in carbon stocks in forests.
- (h) Establishing reference emission levels may require more data than just emissions data, e.g. data on drivers of forest degradation including socio-economic factors.
- (i) The lack of historical data could be addressed by conservative estimation while further work is done to improve data collection and data quality.

III. Monitoring

2. If countries are anticipating being part of a future REDD 'mechanism' they should begin to set up a programme for monitoring forest degradation and emissions.
3. Technology already exists and many countries have been using such technologies to develop forest carbon inventories (for example, remote sensing technologies). There is a need to expand these technologies for monitoring forest degradation and associated GHG emissions and changes in carbon stocks. Although some gaps exist, waiting for replacement by another promising technology will be a time-consuming process.
4. Monitoring requirements should be separated from reporting needs and accounting rules. Countries may wish to design monitoring systems that have a broader perspective than merely monitoring changes in carbon stocks.

IV. Cross-cutting issues

5. Financial support, technical and institutional capacity building, including through regional cooperation (within and across regions), should be strengthened for developing and improving national forest inventories and long-term management of monitoring systems.
6. When considering methodologies and setting up monitoring approaches, due care should be taken of traditional practices (such as slash and burn) and needs of local communities.

V. Further work/ information needed

7. The meeting deemed that it would be useful for SBSTA to consider a request to the IPCC for advice on how to apply its guidance in a consistent and comparable manner for estimating emissions from forest degradation, especially guidance in sampling design and determining carbon densities in forest ecosystems affected by degradation.

VI. Issues for further discussion

- (a) How to deal with natural disturbances?
 - (b) How to distinguish between natural and non-natural disturbances and what are the monitoring implications?
 - (c) Are we able to reconstruct historical trends/rate with existing data?
8. It was noted that the web platform that the COP requested the secretariat to develop in Decision 2/CP.13 constitutes an excellent basis for exchange of information among Parties, relevant organizations and stakeholders (http://unfccc.int/methods_science/redd/items/4531.php).
