

**Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific
(RECOFTC)
Observer (IGO) to the UNFCCC**

A submission in response to Draft SBSTA 29 agenda item 5: Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries:

Paragraph 11: issues relating to indigenous people and local communities for the development and application of methodologies

**Community-based forest management:
a key element of effective REDD methodologies**

This submission is made in association with, and on behalf of, the **Global Alliance for Community Forestry (GACF)** and its member organizations¹.

RECOFTC and GACF;

- endorsing the submissions made by **ICIMOD**² and by **ITC**³;
- reaffirming their commitment to the principles and processes outlined in the Accra Caucus statement on preconditions for REDD, submitted to the UNFCCC climate change talks in Accra, August 2008⁴; and
- based on consultations with grassroots community forestry practitioners from around the world;

consider the following points to be critical for the design and implementation of effective REDD methodologies:

1. Community-based forest management (CBFM)⁵ provides a sound framework through which REDD can provide financial and livelihood benefits to forest-dependent communities and indigenous peoples, by acknowledging their essential role in the long-term, sustainable management of forest ecosystems.
2. REDD projects and strategies that make explicit provision for the distribution of benefits to, or through, CBFM groups, where they exist, will help to ensure that incentives reach those who can deliver REDD results on the ground.
3. ‘Carbon Trust Funds’, modelled on the community funds used in CBFM⁶, are proposed as an equitable, participatory and efficient benefit distribution mechanism for REDD revenue.
4. If the livelihood needs of local people are ignored in the development and implementation of REDD strategies, significant leakage is likely to occur. This risk is particularly acute in the case of centrally-imposed, protection-oriented management strategies, where the right of local people to access and manage forests for livelihood needs is restricted. This risk can be avoided by designing sustainable forest

¹ See www.gacf-online.com for a list of GACF member organisations

² ‘The role of community-based forest management in addressing degradation’

³ ‘Forest biomass assessment in support of REDD by indigenous people and local communities’

⁴ ‘Principles and processes as preconditions for REDD’; Accra Caucus on Forests and Climate Change; Accra, Ghana, 18-20 August 2008

⁵ For RECOFTC’s definition of Community Forestry (CBFM), see page 3 of RECOFTC’s Strategic Plan 2008-13, downloadable from <http://recoftc.org/site/>

⁶ For details of the benefits of community-based fund management in CBFM, see the summary document of the Second Community Forestry Forum, Bangkok, 23-24 March 2007:

http://www.recoftc.org/site/fileadmin/docs/Events/CF_Forum/SHARING_THE_WEALTH_v9.pdf

management strategies for REDD which are based on empirical assessments of local livelihood needs.

5. Sustainable forest management through CBFM, when certified by standards-setting bodies such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), can contribute to REDD while further safeguarding additional social and environmental benefits.
6. REDD, by increasing the economic value of forests, has the potential to lead to an increase in the frequency and intensity of natural resource-based conflicts. REDD strategies must therefore build capacity and effective mechanisms to recognize, analyze, manage and resolve conflicts at the local level.
7. Regional approaches to REDD will help to address international leakage and to facilitate independent verification of REDD results. CBFM methodologies and approaches can transcend national boundaries, facilitate collaboration between neighbouring countries and thus contribute to the development of more effective REDD mechanisms.
8. Capacity building for CBFM is essential to the success of REDD. Forest-dependent communities and indigenous peoples must have access to the necessary knowledge and skills in order to implement CBFM and thus fulfil their role within REDD strategies and access the benefits. Such capacity building can also help to address many of their justified concerns and common misconceptions about REDD.
9. REDD strategies and funding mechanisms should recognize the important role of communication in enabling meaningful participation. Sufficient funds should be allocated to support strategic media engagement and participatory grassroots communication activities for REDD in order for local voices to be heard.
10. Given that the situation in each country is highly context-specific, it is important that REDD approaches remain sensitive, flexible and responsive to the needs of local stakeholders. If rights to use and manage forest resources in a sustainable way are fully respected and capacities duly built, then local people can make a valuable contribution to REDD.