

## **SustainUS, on behalf of the International Youth Delegation**

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### **April 24th, 2009**

#### **Position on negotiating text for REDD**

The AWG-LCA has called for Party submissions by 24th of April on elements of Paragraph 1 of the Bali Action Plan for incorporating into negotiating text for consideration at the sixth session of the AWG-LCA.

This paper presents the position of the International Youth Delegation (IYD) relating to REDD. It is based on our recent submissions to the UNFCCC. It is the view of the IYD that any negotiating text must address each of the actions and elements laid out in this position paper.

The International Youth Delegation (IYD) is a growing coalition of young people from around the world that are united around a common and shared vision for a bold, just, and long-term global climate treaty that safeguards the survival of all countries and peoples. Comprised of young people working on climate issues from over 50 countries and six continents, the IYD included over 500 members at COP 14 in Poznań. IYD members prepared several interventions and other statements in Poznań, and are looking forward to participating in the various UNFCCC meetings throughout the year in preparation for COP 15 in Copenhagen.

Parties in Poznań this past December repeatedly stressed the need to address deforestation in a post-2012 climate agreement. The science is clear that 20% of world greenhouse gas emissions come from deforestation. Moreover, it is clear that we cannot have a healthy planet without the world's forests. It is therefore absolutely essential that a comprehensive and inclusive international effort be devoted to ensuring that forest ecosystems are maintained as they house both wildlife and people, provide livelihoods for millions of global citizens, and significantly regulate atmospheric carbon. The International Youth Delegation has authored a guiding set of principles for the REDD framework, and we request that you consider these principles when forming the negotiating text for this vital area of climate policy.

The best way to stimulate action is to prioritize actions that will be taken to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation. Actions should be taken in the following order:

1. A REDD mechanism must adopt an overarching policy that makes the protection of carbon stocks in primary forest and other primary ecosystems, including peatlands, its highest priority. It must not encourage logging, conversion of primary forest to plantations or agriculture and other forms of degradation, including the deforestation, degradation and drainage of wetlands.
2. A REDD mechanism must recover or restore degraded forest and other degraded natural ecosystems, including peatlands.
3. A REDD mechanism must develop ecologically sustainable forest management systems in logged areas that are currently the subject of industrial logging practices.

4. A REDD mechanism must conduct afforestation and reforestation with a diverse range of local species in areas of degraded land incapable of natural recovery. The conversion of natural ecosystems to plantations is not an acceptable mitigation strategy.

The following principles should be implemented in a REDD program:

- The dramatic, equitable, and rapid reduction of deforestation, forest degradation, and the emissions therefrom in developing countries is essential to the global effort to stabilize and adapt to climate change.
- The protection of primary forests and other natural ecosystems, including peatlands, along with the simultaneous recovery or restoration of forests and other natural ecosystems, including peatlands, should be the first priorities of a REDD mechanism.
- A REDD mechanism must be focused on the reduction of gross emissions from forest, wetland and peatland degradation (including deforestation).
- REDD must explicitly exclude projects that have a negative impact on biodiversity, since the biodiversity of natural systems is essential to their resilience and reduces the likelihood of carbon lost to the atmosphere after natural disturbances. Biodiverse, natural ecosystems are the most robust ecosystems, and thus biodiversity conservation is a core benefit, rather than a co-benefit, for mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- The primary function of a REDD mechanism must be forest protection and climate stabilization, not profit-generation or emissions offsetting. Any regulation governing REDD should pay attention to the risk of involving sophisticated market trading mechanisms, such as derivatives, and see REDD as development instruments rather than new, tradable commodities.
- Parties should acknowledge strong international demand for forest products as one of the primary drivers for deforestation and take the necessary step to reduce the demand.

#### *Equity*

- A REDD mechanism must make explicit provisions that acknowledge and safeguard the rights, interests and needs of indigenous peoples and local communities in which it operates, and reaffirm rights and benefits under international instruments and treaties, including, *inter alia*, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
- Where REDD schemes and projects will impact indigenous peoples and local communities living in or relying upon forests, the following principles, derived from the UNDRIP, must be explicitly acknowledged and safeguarded:
  - Free, prior and informed consent
  - Meaningful participation
  - The right to self-determination and self-government
  - Equitable benefit-sharing
  - Land tenure and land rights
  - The right to management and customary use of natural resources
- A REDD mechanism must guarantee the security of land/property/customary use rights of local and indigenous communities as well as provide for and encourage their continued direct participation in the conservation of their forests.

- In many countries, participatory legal reviews to clarify tenure and access rights will be essential before funds from REDD can or should be distributed.
- If the rights, interests and needs of forest dependent peoples are not acknowledged and safeguarded in a REDD scheme, social and economic instability, lack of support, and active resistance to REDD will threaten its effectiveness and permanence and could ultimately cause its demise.

#### *Definitional Issues*

- The UNFCCC definitions of 'forests', 'deforestation' and 'forest degradation' must distinguish between native, intact, biodiverse, carbon-rich forest ecosystems and agricultural tree crops. Agricultural tree crops should not qualify as 'forests' and conversion of native, intact, biodiverse, carbon-rich forests into agricultural tree crop plantations must qualify as 'deforestation'.
- Current definitional and monitoring deficiencies and perverse LULUCF rules must be rectified and must not be repeated in REDD.

#### *Accounting & Monitoring*

- REDD accounting must be measurable, reportable, and verifiable. There needs to be mandatory accounting for emissions and removals for forests and mandatory accounting for peatland degradation and peatland management (the same should apply for LULUCF). REDD accounting must be designed to provide strong incentives for enforcing governance of forests at the local and national levels, including making genuine multi-stakeholder engagement, good fiscal governance, participatory law reform and improved forest law enforcement all obligatory.
- REDD must include provisions to measure levels of compliance through robust mechanisms for monitoring, reporting and verification incorporating independent third party review, and to address non-compliance.

#### *Funding*

- Developed countries have a responsibility to provide financial and capacity-building support for developing countries to take immediate action to avoid deforestation, permanently protect, and sustainably manage native forests. Developing nations have a responsibility to prevent emissions leakage and to engage their society in all levels of decision-making.
- Reliable, adequate, transparent and long term funding for REDD must be made available by Annex I countries, in addition to their official development assistance (ODA) commitments.
- Independent and well-governed national trust funds should be established to enable the equitable distribution of benefits, like funds and services, directly to local communities and indigenous peoples.
- REDD should not impinge on developing countries' rights to economic development and independence, and financial support for REDD should encourage the development of alternative sustainable livelihoods.

The International Youth Delegation Forests and Land Use Working Group also support the recommendations made in the Ecosystem Climate Alliance submission on REDD and LULUCF issues.

The points outlined in this submission are of great importance and their consideration an inclusion in the negotiating text are essential to forming an effective and inclusive program on REDD.

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To contact the Forests & Land Use Working Group of the IYD, please email [youthforests@googlegroups.com](mailto:youthforests@googlegroups.com). For more information on the International Youth Delegation, please visit <http://youthclimate.org>.