

TECHNICAL EXPERT MEETING ON LAND USE

Wednesday, 11 June 2014, 10.00 – 18.00

Summary at the closing session of the technical expert meetings by the facilitator Mr. Tony Simons (ICRAF)

At the technical expert meeting to unlock mitigation opportunities in land use in the pre-2020 period, held in Bonn, Germany, on 11 June 2014, Parties, observers and leading international organizations and partnerships engaged in productive discussions on sharing experiences in capitalizing on the potential of land use actions with climate benefits, lessons learned, challenges and plans for further scaling up as well as on sharing opportunities for mobilizing finance, technology and capacity-building to implement land use actions with climate benefits in developing countries. The presentations and interventions were made by representatives of national governments, international organizations and cooperative partnerships, international financial organisations, UNFCCC support institutions, the private sector and civil society.

POLICIES, PRACTICES AND TECHNOLOGY – GLOBAL STATE OF PLAY

Emissions from land use amount to roughly one quarter of global emissions, and land use is the dominant source of emissions in many developing countries. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change IPCC, agriculture and forestry have large, often low-cost mitigation opportunities. Participants pointed out that the land sector should be an important element in the 2015 agreement but also for pre-2020 ambition. They further highlighted that mitigation in land use requires a multiple-objective approach, which maximizes positive linkages with sustainable development and social inclusion, as well as with adaptation, and recognizes the special role of agriculture in food security. A key issue is to combine climate benefits with overall reducing of risks and increasing opportunities for economic development.

Success of such approaches depends on high level commitment, cross-cutting facilitation and policies and measures beyond the forest and agriculture sector. Participants saw a need to incentivize governments and stakeholders to undertake ambitious climate-smart landscape programmes, while contributing to agricultural productivity, forest protection, green growth, food security, rights-based approaches and rural livelihoods. Finding linkages among climate action, conservation and development objectives, including gender, is of critical importance. Participants also highlighted that support for countries needs to be tailored to meet needs within national and international contexts.

Among the key policy options, practices and technologies, participants mentioned that:

- Restoration and reforestation of degraded land was as an activity with large mitigation potential and significant co-benefits, for example in arid and semi-arid lands and peat lands.
- Climate-smart agriculture at nested geographic and social scales has the potential to unlock large mitigation potential, while at the same time contributing to adaptation and rural development, for example through conservation agriculture, improved livestock and manure management, more carbon-efficient and profitable livestock production systems, agroforestry or pest control.
- Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD-plus) remains a mitigation option with high interest among developed and developing countries, also taking into consideration the funding that has already been provided for REDD-plus.
- Good governance across all levels is central to reducing mitigation barriers in this sector and ensuring that multiple co-benefits for rural development and food security are achieved.

- Capacity-building and technical assistance are important components of land use policies in terms of fostering institutional capacity, knowledge and information sharing, and transfer of actionable knowledge to field actors.
- International cooperation and partnerships can play a key enabling role where technical readiness and political will exists for climate action.
- To design effective policies, land use actions have to be supported by research, knowledge management and sharing of experiences.

Participants also voiced a diverse range of challenges and barriers that are often the flipside of good policy frameworks:

- The multiple objectives of land use make an analysis of trade-offs in relation to other land use objectives necessary when planning land use actions with climate benefits.
- Safeguarding critical issues is important, for example avoiding negative effects on food security, women and gender, rights of indigenous people and local communities, biodiversity, etc.
- Implementation of land use actions with climate benefits can take considerable time – long-term policies with clear determination, staged outcomes, patience and continued efforts are needed.
- Many actions are case- and site-specific, and cannot readily be replicated or scaled-up, so demonstration activities are often required to inform full-scale implementation.
- It is of critical importance to involve stakeholders early in the process and to build long-term and stable partnerships with local people.
- The tendency to overcomplicate regulations for land use actions with climate benefits has to be avoided in order to have the flexibility that allows actions to start and improve over time.
- Building readiness capacity for the implementation of actions also takes time and requires up-front funding, and experiences from land use, land use change and forestry activities, such as REDD-plus, show that this can take longer than anticipated.
- A number of emerging problems put additional pressure on the land, such as: depleted/degraded land resources, uncertain tenure arrangements, lower carrying capacity of land but population increasing, land grabbing, limited land resources in some countries heightens competition for land and water among different land uses.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS – FINANCE, TECHNOLOGY AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

Implementation of land use actions with climate benefits and adaptation and sustainable development co-benefits requires a combination of finance, technology and capacity-building. The issue of the need for equal access to financial and technical support in relation to land use was mentioned. It was noted that integrated and cross-sectorial approaches can open opportunities to combine various streams of financing, including mitigation and adaption financing and public and private financing. These streams of financing are important at different stages of program management: upstream for planning and capacity-building for example and for investments during the implementation phase; and downstream for example for operation and maintenance. Financial and implementing organizations further explained some challenges with the management of cash flows in multi-year development of land use programmes. Participants highlighted the importance of the private sector, although it was emphasized that a variety of actors will be needed to engage in large-scale landscape approaches and this will likely involve the need for coordination of governments, private sector, local and indigenous communities, civil society and other stakeholders. Participants also highlighted their expectations that the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action should help to achieve land use actions with climate benefits.

WAY FORWARD

Discussing the way forward, participants welcomed the rich discussions and sharing of lessons learnt. They further expressed expectations that, as a result of engagement in the technical examination process, Parties and relevant initiatives and partnerships might be in a position to more effectively facilitate and implement policies and actions around the options identified above with the

potential to contribute towards the pre-2020 ambition and also towards preparing for the post-2020 policy frameworks. The specialized international organizations and partnerships should continue to be involved in the TEM process and assist Parties within the scope of their mandates in moving this process forward towards effective implementation.

ACTION BY PARTIES

In discussing the way forward and while presenting their on-going efforts, participants suggested that:

- Countries' priority is increased productivity of the land, which can support the adoption of climate-smart practices by rural populations and help to limit expansion of productive activities into carbon-rich areas (but trade-offs and synergies as well as local contexts need to be analyzed).
- Many Parties welcomed the rich exchange and emphasized that they are interested in continuous sharing of examples and learning from each other's experiences.
- Some developing country Parties highlighted that enhanced ambitions by all Parties would be needed to meet the 2020 gap; and that they could increase ambition if predictable finance and technology support were made available.
- Several Parties called explicitly for a role for REDD-plus to enhance pre-2020 ambition, and in this context developing country Parties emphasized the need to have continuing and scaled-up support, while developed country Parties highlighted their existing and on-going bilateral and multilateral support for REDD-plus.
- Participants also highlighted a number of existing and developing multilateral collaborations and partnerships, particularly in forest monitoring and in the field of research on agricultural practices and climate change.
- It was suggested that efforts be focussed on those activities that have the largest potential for short-term results, for example awareness raising, aligning fragmented efforts, identifying land use activities that promote mitigation and adaptation and rural development, and identifying barriers that are relatively easy to address (e.g. acquiring satellite images for land use monitoring).

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Parties encouraged existing institutions, namely the Technology Executive Committee and the Climate Technology Centre and Network as well as the Green Climate Fund, to be actively engaged in assisting countries in scaling up deployment of land use actions with climate benefits.

International organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Bank were commended for their support to countries and encouraged to continue their efforts to assist countries in scaling up of the implementation of land use actions with climate benefits and adopting better land use management practices for development.

UNFCCC SECRETARIAT

Parties greatly appreciated the dialogue during the meeting between Parties, international organizations and partnerships. They saw the utility in continuing the sharing of experiences and good practices within the UNFCCC in order to facilitate enhanced actions on land use actions with climate benefits, and also providing visibility and recognition of the efforts and action.

Updating the technical paper on the mitigation and sustainable development benefits of actions, initiatives and options to enhance mitigation ambition in order to include discussions of this technical expert meeting was also deemed relevant.