

Japan's View on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries

Submission from Japan

1. introduction

At its 25th session, SBSTA invited Parties and accredited observers to submit their views on reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries to facilitate discussions at the second workshop focusing on: the discussions of ongoing and potential policy approaches and positive incentives, and technical and methodological requirements related to their implementation; assessment of results and their reliability; and improving the understanding of reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries. SBSTA also invited Parties to consider, as appropriate, relevant provisions of other conventions.

Japan welcomes the opportunity to submit its views on this issue taking into consideration previous international discussions and information from Parties, observers and the secretariat.

2. General Views on Ongoing and Potential Policy Approaches and Positive Incentives

Possible Outcomes of 'Incentive Approach'

Reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries is global issue to be tackled to meet the ultimate objective of the Convention. As already stated in our first submission on this issue (FCCC/SBSTA/2006/Misc.5), Japan recognizes it is important to reduce and further reverse the loss of worldwide forest coverage through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation.

In this respect, Japan believes that 'positive incentives' to reduce deforestation in developing countries could lead one of the possible measures to achieve the objective of Article 2 of the Convention. However, as discussed in the first workshop, causes of deforestation are rooted in various and complex social/economical needs such as expansion of agricultural/grazing land, energy security, expansion of infrastructure and development of forest resources. Therefore, Japan believes that it is necessary to take into account the various fundamental problems such as alternate livelihood, poverty alleviation, reformation of land-use policy, establishment of sustainable forest management practices and price formation system of forest related products and services.

Enhancing Sustainable Forest Management

While policy approaches discussed under this issue aims to reduce GHG emissions, policy instruments should be designed taking into account enhancement of sustainable forest management. With a view to various and essential functions of forests, policy and measures to address deforestation/forest degradation should focus on not only carbon flux but also promotion of sustainable forest management and conservation of biodiversity.

Financial resources for policy approaches

Considering positive incentives, financial sustainability and stability is fundamental for ensuring ecological sustainability and community participation. Therefore, various technical points such as sustainability, stability, scale and efficiency should be carefully assessed on financial resource basis, i.e. ODA, possibly related funds or market mechanisms, taking into consideration of future framework of actions taken under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol.

3. Technical and methodological issues

Issues to be further assessed

In the previous submission, Japan stressed that 1) causes of deforestation, 2) practicability, 3) consistency of current system should be carefully assessed for the consideration of scientific, technical and methodological issues. Especially, Japan suggested that causes of deforestation should be fully reviewed at first in order to ensure that different policies and measures are appropriately applied depending on the causes of deforestation. Japan acknowledges that Parties discussed and exchanged information on wide range of causes in the first workshop, and draw outputs that there is no universal approach that could control deforestation and that a balance of regional specific factors would have to be considered. Based on these outputs, our discussions should focus on practicability and consistency with the current system including AR-CDM in the future discussion.

As for technical issues to be discussed, Japan mentioned some key issues in its previous submission such as additionality, leakage, non-permanence and accounting method in the case of reversing from source to sink. These issues should be practically assessed taking into account consistency with relevant rules and discussions under the Kyoto Protocol and IPCC Good Practice Guidance for LULUCF.

Technical Points on Evaluation of effect of ‘positive incentives’

Introducing ‘positive incentives’, additionality of human induced activities would be carefully assessed on an equitable basis. Not only physical aspects such as base-line or reference emission rate but also impact of additional policies and measures towards sustainable forest management should be considered. Scientific and equitable methodologies should be designed through experimental studies conducted in several countries and regions in cooperation with relevant international organizations, NGOs and Parties in this regard.

In this respect, monitoring methods should be developed with focusing on land-use change as well as land-cover change. Felling occurring in the course of sustainable forest management and deforestation/degradation must be distinguished to ensure sustainable forest management in the long term perspective. However, present remote sensing technology has some constraints to clearly distinguish these changes. Technical guidelines is needed to describe technical requirements including ground survey and alternative technologies as additional information based on IPCC Good Practice Guidance for LULUCF and IPCC 2006 Guidelines in terms of monitoring land-use change.

In addition, the data obtained by the Advanced Land Observing Satellite (ALOS) developed by Japan are expected to contribute to development and improvement of observation technology on emissions from deforestation/forest degradation.

4. Synergy with Relevant Organizations

As mentioned in the previous submission, Japan believes that it is efficient path to have synergy with relevant organizations and institutions including member organizations of Collaborative Partnership on Forest. Especially, Japan emphasize that it is important to focus attention to one of the descriptions of Global Objectives toward 2015 agreed on 6th meeting of UNFF that “reduce and further reverse the loss of worldwide forest coverage through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation” and actions to be taken under this issue should lead to not only slowdown deforestation but also reverse the loss of worldwide forest coverage through sustainable forest management.
