

Colombia

20 November 2012

**Taking steps to facilitating the full, effective and sustained implementation of REDD+**

**Submission by Colombia to SBSTA 37 - Agenda Item 5:**

Colombia wishes to present views in advance of the SBSTA discussions at the 18<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties in Doha, Qatar, 26 November – 1 December 2012, regarding *Methodological guidance for activities relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries*. Colombia has presented another submission on related issues of REDD+ finance modalities and procedures to the AWG-LCA 15 – Agenda Item 3. (b) (iii).

***With reference to decisions 2/CP.13, 4/CP.15, 1/CP.16, 2/CP.17 and 12/CP.17***

**Consideration: Securing the environmental integrity and equitable implementation of REDD+.**

**Modalities for reference emission levels and/or reference levels (REL/RLs) should encourage an early and broad participation of countries while pursuing environmental integrity and avoiding perverse incentives.** REL/RLs expressed in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year that are implemented at the national and, as an interim step, subnational level serve as benchmarks for assessing each country's performance in implementing the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70.

**It is prudent and environmentally conservative to construct subnational REL/RLs that eventually, in their aggregate, will serve to develop a national REL/RLs, as indicated in paragraph 71 b) of decision 1/CP.16.** A step-wise and environmentally robust approach in the development of national REL/RLs includes the development of subnational REL/RL that help to build a transparent set of data and the supporting systems and expertise which serve as a step towards an integrated, spatially explicit national REL/RL.

**Dividing the countries into reference regions of a significant area, or jurisdictions, can provide more accurate estimations of projected emissions with less uncertainty.** Environmental integrity in emission estimates and reporting is supported by complete, transparent, consistent, accurate and conservative data. REL/RLs submitted to the UNFCCC should be substantiated with information that allows for the technical assessment of the data, methodologies, and procedures used in their development. In countries with a high diversity of ecosystems, social and development levels, deforestation agents and drivers, it is a challenge to estimate future emissions with reduced uncertainty at one single national REL/RL.

**The registration of subnational reference emission levels and/or reference levels in the context of a national forest monitoring system allows broad participation of countries, reduces international leakage, and creates broad incentives for early emission reductions and forest carbon enhancements in developing country Parties.** The environmental success and integrity of REDD+ depends on a broad international

implementation of REDD+ activities. The widespread and full implementation of developing country Parties of national REDD+ schemes is not likely in the short term due to lack of human resources, technical capacity, and available data. Therefore, limiting the participation of such Parties until they have full national MRV systems and a national REL/RL in place increases the risk of unaccounted international leakage. This risk can be effectively mitigated by encouraging broad REDD+ participation through flexible approaches that allow governments to develop REL/RLs at significant subnational scale or jurisdictions in the context of a step-wise approach towards national REL/RLs in accordance with decision 12/CP.17 para.10, with a national forest monitoring system in place (as indicated in para. 77 of decision 1/CP.16).

**The registration of subnational REL/RLs allows developing country Parties to participate sooner in results-based payments while promoting the building of capacities and MRV systems.** The implementation of REDD+ requires a massive capacity-building effort that should go in parallel with the implementation of results-based actions. If a Party decides to participate in the incentive mechanisms at the subnational level as an interim measure, national monitoring systems have to be in place and the participating countries have to report on the displacement of emissions due to REDD+ actions.

**A stepwise approach for national MRV systems and REL/RLs can relate to the gradual expansion of the scope of the REL/RL.** Provided that such approach is environmentally conservative and robust, developing country parties can start with estimating certain carbon pools at the national level while excluding others. A stepwise approach of measuring and reporting the activities listed in decision 1/CP.16 para. 70 would allow a country like Colombia to begin with estimating carbon in aboveground forest biomass and deforestation emissions as a first step within the third phase of REDD+. Countries would have to include significant carbon pools and activities affecting forest greenhouse gas emissions, according to national circumstances, as a starting point for the stepwise approach to MRV. Subnational monitoring systems within the national system can develop at different speeds, for example incorporating more carbon pools and REDD+ activities for a given region of the country.

**With respect to a decision prepared under the auspices of the SBSTA, Colombia proposes the following:**

- Recalling decision 12/CP.17 para. 11, Colombia reiterates the agreement that subnational forest REL/RLs may be elaborated as an interim measure, while transitioning to a national forest REL/RL, and that interim forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels of a Party may cover less than its entire national territory of forest area.
- In reference to decision 12/CP.17 para. 9 and para. 13, Colombia welcomes the invitation to developing country Parties, on a voluntary basis and when deemed appropriate, to submit proposed forest REL/RLs, that can cover national or, as an interim step, subnational areas of significant scale, and calls upon developed countries to contribute financially to the development of these REL/RL.
- In support of a step-wise approach to national REL/RL as referred to in decision 12/CP.17 para.10, Colombia supports the clear indication that the step-wise approach to REL/RL refers to (1) activities; (2) carbon pools; and (3) significant areas, which can refer to administrative jurisdictions of a critical size, and biomes or ecoregions.
- Equally, in support of a step-wise approach to full national MRV, Colombia supports the

indication that the step-wise approach to MRV refers to the gradual inclusion of (1) activities; (2) carbon pools; and (3) gases, (4) significant areas, which can refer to administrative jurisdictions of a critical size, and biomes or ecoregions. The country must include the most significant sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the evolving national and subnational MRV systems as well as national monitoring of displacements of emissions as minimum requirements for the third phase of REDD+.

- When establishing procedures that enable the technical assessment of the proposed forests REL/RL in accordance with decision 12/CP.17 para. 15, Colombia emphasizes that such assessment should cover national and subnational REL/RLs.
- Colombia emphasizes that subnational monitoring and reporting may be an essential element of MRV systems and that subnational monitoring and reporting to the UNFCCC should be done under the auspices of the developing country Party.
- Colombia also stresses that measures that counter deforestation drivers have to be driver and location specific and require subnational coordination and implementation.