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Submission to the UNFCCC Secretariat on issues identified in decision 1/CP. 16, paragraph 72 and appendix II, in answer to the invitation of paragraph 5 of draft conclusions UNFCCC/SBSTA/2011/L.25

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) herein submits its views on issues identified in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 72 and appendix II, in particular on how to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and on robust and transparent national forest monitoring systems as referred to in its paragraph 71(c).

1. Addressing drivers of deforestation and forest degradation

Addressing drivers of deforestation and forest degradation has been part of REDD+ discussions and UNFCCC negotiations since many years. Decision 2 of COP 13 in Bali already encouraged Parties "... to explore a range of actions, identify options and undertake efforts, including demonstration activities, to address the drivers of deforestation...". Decision 1 of COP 16 reiterated the need for all parties to take actions to address drivers of deforestation (para 68) and requested developing countries, to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation when developing and implementing their national strategies and action plans (para72).

Carefully and systematically analysing and comprehensively addressing all direct and underlying drivers of deforestation and degradation of forests is the priority and key prerequisite to effectively reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and thus enhancing forest carbon stocks in every REDD+ country. While drivers of deforestation vary in different places, particular attention should be given to addressing the conversion of forests to agricultural land, which is by far the greatest driver globally. Overexploitation and unsustainable forest management practices are the main human-induced causes of forest degradation. Measures and strategies to address drivers should seek to harmonize different development objectives taking into account the need for increased food production and improved livelihoods as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation and enhanced environmental conservation. A cross-sectoral "landscape approach", encompassing all land uses would contribute to halting both deforestation and forest degradation while meeting future demands for food and nutrition.

The dynamics and causes of deforestation and forest degradation are multi-faceted, complex and vary from place to place. Direct drivers are associated with a complex set of underlying drivers that need to be tackled if efforts to address the direct drivers are to be successful over the long-term. Along with human-induced drivers, natural drivers -- abiotic and biotic -- of land degradation and land use change have to be taken into account. Natural drivers, such as droughts, predispose forests to degradation (e.g. by pests, disease or wildfires), which sometimes leads eventually to land-use change. The distinction between direct and underlying causes and between human- and naturally-induced change is often not as clear as it might appear. In reality, there are long, complex chains of causation that can bring about deforestation or the degradation of forests.

Drivers of deforestation and forest degradation:

Direct drivers of deforestation include conversion to agriculture, infrastructure expansion and mining, among others. Direct drivers of forest degradation include i.a. long-term overharvesting of forest products (including unsustainable fuel wood harvest), poor harvesting practices and overgrazing. Underlying drivers include range of political, cultural and socio-economic factors, including unsound policies, weak governance and lack of law enforcement, landlessness and unclear allocation of rights, rural poverty, lack of investment and financial resources, population growth and migration, and civil conflict.

Key Aspects to be considered for addressing the drivers:

A place-specific comprehensive analysis of the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation is needed to ground a REDD+ readiness process, including development of a REDD+ strategy in a country. Therefore it is fundamental that **all stakeholders involved in assessing the drivers show their willingness and interest to take up and analyse all relevant information available** to understand the dynamics of change. Experiences from countries involved in REDD+ programmes show a common understanding of the need to assess the drivers in order to provide an informative and analytical tool to ground appropriate response measures, actions and strategies. However the use of different methodological approaches, and data have resulted in analyses with varying levels of depth and scope.

Once all drivers are well defined and their magnitude and interactions understood, a decision framework addressing the priority drivers of deforestation and degradation can be developed. It takes considerable effort, in implementing a REDD+ strategy, to address multiple drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and to reconcile the interests of multiple stakeholders. Setting up response measures should be guided by the principles of effectiveness, efficiency, fairness, transparency and accountability.

While there are many drivers, particular attention should be given to addressing the causes for the ongoing conversion of tropical forests to other land uses, especially agricultural land. Measures to address this complex issue have to take into account that achieving food and energy security will remain the highest priority for individual households and national governments. The agriculture sector is essential to the livelihoods of around 75 percent of people living in rural areas. Also, farmers will need to feed a projected population of 9.1 billion in 2050. For this reason, countries will increasingly have to grapple with competing land-uses and to explore measures to achieve climate change mitigation goals without compromising food security. Therefore it is necessary to adopt an **integrated landscape approach** when designing national REDD+ strategies, policies, laws and action plans. Coherent national strategies encompassing all land uses, recognizing the full value of the multiple goods and services provided by forests and tree resources and aiming at maximizing synergies between sustainable intensification of agriculture and REDD+ ensure the best possible balance among a range of different development objectives.

One of the main causes for conversion of forests to agricultural uses including biofuels are high - and relatively early - positive returns, that attract many farmers, private investors and governments to invest. Incentives provided by a REDD+ instrument and REDD+ policies to conserve and sustainably manage forest land would need to provide adequate income or benefits to the land users to be effective in reducing agricultural expansion onto forest lands. At the same time ensuring that existing policies and strategies support intensification of production of food on existing agricultural land and do not lead to perverse incentives for conversion of forest lands to agriculture with detrimental outcomes will be important.

General requirements for the analysis of drivers of deforestation and forest degradation:

- Key drivers, both direct and underlying, are rooted inside and outside the forest sector and may have local, national and global aspects. A robust analysis of drivers must evaluate the impact of drivers at all levels, look beyond the forest sector and consider their relationship to all land use activities.
- Competing land uses, socio-economic factors and commercial interests driving deforestation and forest degradation involve different authorities and stakeholders. Thus, analytical assessments of drivers should ensure the full and effective participation of all stakeholders. This could be facilitated by, for example, establishing collaborative mechanisms or using existing information-sharing platforms. Care should be taken to ensure the informed and meaningful participation of all stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and forest-dependent people, and that gender representation is provided for.
- National REDD+ strategies and programmes, designed to comprehensively address and respond to all types of drivers of deforestation and forest degradation should be based on a nationwide assessment of drivers. However, in some cases an analytic assessment of drivers at the sub-national level may be better able to capture the full variety and diversity of causes and drivers, especially if socio-economic and biophysical conditions vary within the country. Sub-national studies and data should be merged into a national analysis.

- The analysis should be based on existing data coming from monitoring systems and other sources. However many countries lack sufficient empirical data. In these cases appropriate actions should be taken to verify, update and fill gaps in the data to facilitate an informed understanding of the situation. In this regard REDD+ countries requesting support should be assisted to strengthen their capacities and further develop monitoring systems, including community-based monitoring, where feasible and appropriate.
- Methodically the diagnosis or formulation of problems related to deforestation and forest degradation must be conducted systematically and logically and take into account the application of methodical approaches relevant to different national circumstances. A starting point for the assessment of drivers should be the detection of the location and extent of deforestation and forest decline, based on data from national monitoring systems and/or remote sensing, complemented by historical data, relevant reports, studies and statistics and an assessment of potential future threats in order to anticipate and minimize risk.
- Collection of qualitative information from stakeholders, particularly those at the sites of deforestation and forest degradation e.g. through key informant interviews, focussed group discussions, participatory rural appraisal sessions and livelihood analyses will be important for understanding the dynamics of the drivers. This data will be important to supplement and validate other sources of information to come up with a comprehensive analysis of the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in each site.

2. Robust and transparent national forest monitoring systems

FAO considers that a “**National Forest Monitoring System**” (NFMS) **should be a comprehensive approach that collects, analyses and reports information needed for a wide range of forest monitoring needs aimed at sustainable management of forests including for REDD+ mitigation actions**. An NFMS may include a variety of tools and methodologies for data collection and analyses, and incorporate information derived from monitoring and information systems in other sectors.

To obtain a robust and transparent NFMS for REDD+ it is crucial that:

- the system is developed to fulfil the five reporting principles under the UNFCCC: transparency, accuracy, consistency, completeness and comparability
- the system is developed in the context of clear policy and institutional arrangements and with long-term objectives
- the NFMS should build on existing institutions and monitoring systems to recognise and take full advantage of existing knowledge and systems and develop the capacity and implementation ability to help ensure continuity over several decades
- rigorous, transparent and verifiable scientific approaches are used to assess mitigation results;
- the country has an open access data policy for as much information as possible, including all biophysical data.

Each NFMS should consider the national social, economic, environmental and governance contexts. The systems therefore need to be nationally specific while ensuring compatibility with international reporting requirements. It is not feasible or desirable to develop a standard approach to national-level monitoring for application in all countries. At the same time, there are several key functions of NFMS where international efforts to develop approaches or methodological options can benefit countries that do not yet have full capacity to fulfil these functions. In addition there is potential to bring synergies and efficiencies where proven methods and tools can be adapted to meet national needs to speed up implementation.

The design and implementation of the NFMS should involve all relevant stakeholders and include capacity development where required to ensure their full and effective participation.

The NFMS should provide accessible, transparent and timely delivery of all relevant data and information to all relevant stakeholders.

The information generated by the NFMS should serve a range of purposes, including to:

- Assess the status and condition of the forests over several time periods to enable the changes in key forest statistics so that the sustainability of operations and management can be assessed
- Facilitate the development or improvement of national REDD+ strategies and action plans
- Support in providing information to the agreed REDD+ safeguards
- Assess the contribution to forests to national development goals and to climate change adaptation strategies
- Ensure credibility and accountability of REDD+ institutions to key stakeholders
- Assist with country reporting to the UNFCCC on a periodic basis as required
- Assist with reporting to donors and investors on the impacts of REDD+ activities.

The NFMS needs to be cost-effective recognising the need to carefully assess and balance the amount of money allocated for measuring and monitoring and keep this in proportion with the overall management and regulatory enforcement activities of forest agencies and other sectors considering national priorities and contexts.

Furthermore, the information should be freely accessible, including over the internet, and be presented in a range of formats and languages as needed to ensure access and understanding by the full range of stakeholders, including local communities and indigenous peoples.

An NFMS does not operate in isolation and to be fully effective needs to be part of a wider system of policies and institutions that operate under good governance and financial practices.