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## Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice

Thirty-eighth session

Bonn, 3–14 June 2013

Agenda item 4

**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**

## **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**

### **Draft conclusions proposed by the Chair**

#### *National forest monitoring systems*

1. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) decided to recommend a draft decision on modalities for national forest monitoring systems for adoption by the Conference of the Parties (COP) at its nineteenth session (the text of the draft decision is contained in FCCC/SBSTA/2013/L.12/Add.1).

#### *Measuring, reporting and verifying*

2. The SBSTA agreed to continue its work on methodological guidance for measuring, reporting and verifying, as referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix II, paragraph (c), on the basis of the elements contained in annex I to these conclusions for a possible draft decision on this matter, with the aim of completing this work at its thirty-ninth session (November 2013) and preparing any recommendations for a draft decision on this matter for consideration and adoption by COP 19 (November 2013).

#### *Forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels*

3. The SBSTA agreed to continue its work on guidance for the technical assessment of the proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels, as requested in decision 12/CP.17, paragraph 15, on the basis of the elements contained in annex II to these conclusions for a possible draft decision on this matter, with the aim of completing this work at its thirty-ninth session and preparing any recommendations for a draft decision on this matter for consideration and adoption by COP 19.

*Safeguards*

4. The SBSTA, in recalling the guidance in decision 12/CP.17, paragraph 2, encouraged developing country Parties to continue building experiences and best practices as part of improving their systems for providing information on how all the safeguards were being addressed and respected. It further encouraged developing country Parties to share these experiences and lessons learned with other Parties.

5. The SBSTA invited developing country Parties to submit to the secretariat, by 24 September 2014, their views on experiences and lessons learned from their development of systems for providing information on how all the safeguards are being addressed and respected and the challenges they face in developing such systems. It requested the secretariat to compile the submissions into a miscellaneous document for consideration at SBSTA 41 (December 2014).

6. The SBSTA invited Parties and admitted observer organizations to submit to the secretariat, by 24 September 2014, their views on the type of information from systems for providing information on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected that would be helpful and that may be provided by developing country Parties. It requested the secretariat to compile the submissions into a miscellaneous document for consideration at SBSTA 41. It also requested the secretariat to publish the submissions from admitted observer organizations on the Web Platform<sup>1</sup> on the UNFCCC website.

7. The SBSTA also encouraged developing country Parties and observer organizations to share, via the Web Platform on the UNFCCC website, their experiences and lessons learned from the development of systems for providing information on how all the safeguards are being addressed and respected and the challenges they face in developing such systems.

8. The SBSTA decided to recommend a draft decision on the timing and the frequency of presentations of the summary of information on how all the safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, are being addressed and respected for adoption by COP 19 (the text of the draft decision is contained in FCCC/SBSTA/2013/L.12/Add.2).

9. The SBSTA agreed to consider, at SBSTA 41, the need for further guidance on the issues referred to in decision 12/CP.17, paragraph 6, taking into consideration the submissions referred to in paragraphs 5 and 6 above.

*Drivers of deforestation and forest degradation*

10. The SBSTA recalled that the COP, by decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 72, requested developing country Parties, when developing and implementing their national strategies or action plans, to address, inter alia, the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, ensuring the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, inter alia, indigenous peoples and local communities. It noted that actions to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation should also consider the guidance in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I.

11. The SBSTA recognized the importance of cross-sector coordination in the context of the development of national strategies or action plans in addressing drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.

12. The SBSTA further recognized that international cooperation can contribute to addressing drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.

13. The SBSTA decided to recommend a draft decision on addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation for adoption by COP 19 (the text of the draft decision is contained in FCCC/SBSTA/2013/L.12/Add.3).

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<sup>1</sup> <<http://unfccc.int/redd>>.

*Non-market-based approaches*

14. The SBSTA noted that non-market-based approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests, as referred to in decision 2/CP.17, paragraph 67, are important to support the implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70.

15. The SBSTA further noted the need for clarity on types of non-market-based approaches related to the implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, and whether further methodological work could be needed. It took note of the relationship between this issue and the provision of adequate and predictable support, including financial resources.

16. The SBSTA invited Parties and admitted observer organizations to submit to the secretariat, by 26 March 2014, their views on methodological guidance for non-market-based approaches. It requested the secretariat to compile the submissions into a miscellaneous document for consideration at SBSTA 40 (June 2014).

17. The SBSTA requested the secretariat to organize an in-session expert meeting at SBSTA 40 on the matters referred to in paragraphs 14 and 15 above, and to prepare a report on the meeting for consideration at SBSTA 41.

18. The SBSTA decided to continue its consideration of the development of methodological guidance on non-market-based approaches at SBSTA 40.

19. The SBSTA took note of the estimated budgetary implications of the activities to be undertaken by the secretariat pursuant to paragraph 17 above.

20. It requested that the actions of the secretariat called for in these conclusions be undertaken subject to the availability of financial resources.

*Non-carbon benefits*

21. The SBSTA agreed that it is important to take into account non-carbon benefits when implementing the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70.

22. The SBSTA took note of ongoing work on non-carbon benefits under other international organizations and conventions.

23. The SBSTA further agreed that clarity is needed on the types of non-carbon benefits and associated methodological issues.

24. The SBSTA invited Parties and admitted observer organizations to submit to the secretariat, by 26 March 2014, their views on the issues referred to in decision 1/CP.18, paragraph 40. It requested the secretariat to compile the submissions into a miscellaneous document for consideration at SBSTA 40.

25. The SBSTA decided to continue its consideration of methodological issues related to non-carbon benefits at SBSTA 40.

## Annex I

[English only]

### Elements for a possible draft decision on modalities for measuring, reporting and verifying

[ *The Conference of the Parties,*

*Recalling* decisions 2/CP.13, 4/CP.15, 1/CP.16, 2/CP.17 and 12/CP.17,

1. *Decides* that measuring, reporting and verifying anthropogenic forest-related emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks, and forest carbon stock and forest-area changes resulting from the implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, taking into account paragraph 71(b) and (c), is to be consistent with the methodological guidance provided in decision 4/CP.15, and guidance on measuring, reporting and verification of nationally appropriate mitigation actions by developing country Parties as agreed by the Conference of the Parties, and in accordance with any future relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties;
2. *Recognizes* the need to develop capacities for measuring, reporting and verifying anthropogenic forest-related emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks, and forest carbon stock and forest-area changes resulting from the implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70;
3. *Decides* that the data and information used by Parties in the estimation of anthropogenic forest-related emissions by sources and removals by sinks, forest carbon stocks, and forest carbon stock and forest-area changes, as appropriate to the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, undertaken by Parties, should be transparent, consistent over time and with the established forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels in accordance with decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 71(b) and (c) and section II of decision 12/CP.17;
4. *Agrees* that, consistent with decision 12/CP.17, paragraph 7, results from the implementation by Parties of the activities<sup>1</sup> included in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, measured against the forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels should be expressed in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year;
5. *Encourages* Parties to improve data and methodologies over time, while maintaining consistency with the established or, as appropriate, updated, forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels in accordance with decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 71(b) and (c);
6. *Recalls* the relevant provisions in decisions 17/CP.8 and 2/CP.17 related to the provision of support for reporting;
7. *Further decides* that, consistent with decision 1/CP.16 and with annex III to decision 2/CP.17, the data and information referred to in paragraph 3 above should be provided through the biennial update reports by Parties, taking into consideration additional flexibility given to least developed countries and small island developing countries;
8. *[[Also decides* that the information reported in accordance with paragraph 7 above will be subject to international consultation and analysis as agreed by the Conference of the Parties;]

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<sup>1</sup> As per decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, Parties undertake activities as deemed appropriate by each Party and in accordance with their respective capabilities and national circumstances, noting that significant pools and/or activities should not be excluded.

9. *[Requests][Encourages]* developing country Parties seeking to obtain and receive results-based finance to, when submitting the data and information referred to in paragraph 3 above, through the biennial update reports, to supply a technical annex as per paragraph 20 of annex 3 of decision 2/CP.17;
10. *Further decides* that the data and information provided in the technical annex referred to in paragraph 9 above shall be consistent with decisions 4/CP.15 and 12/CP.17 and follow the guidelines provided in the annex to this decision;
11. *Decides* that, upon request of the developing country seeking to obtain and receive payments for results-based actions, [two LULUCF experts from the roster of experts, one each from developing country and developed country Parties]<sup>2</sup> will be included among the members selected for the technical team of experts.
12. *Further decides* that, as part of the technical analysis referred to in paragraph 4 of Annex 4 of decision 2/CP.17, the technical team of experts shall analyse [whether][the extent to which]:
- (a) There is methodological consistency between the assessed reference level and the results from the implementation of the activities from paragraph 70 of decision 1/CP.16;
  - (b) The data and information provided in the technical annex is transparent, consistent, complete<sup>3</sup> and accurate;
  - (c) Is consistent with the guidelines referred to in paragraph 10 above;
  - (d) The results are accurate, to the extent possible.
13. *Decides* that the Party that submitted the technical annex may interact with the technical team of experts during the analysis of its technical annex to clarify issues and provide additional information to facilitate the analysis by the technical team of experts;
14. *Also decides* that the technical team of experts may seek clarifications from the Party, and that the Party is to provide clarifications on the issues raised to the technical team of experts, in accordance with the timetable of the international consultation and analysis process described in the annex to decision 2/CP.17, paragraph 4;<sup>5</sup>
15. *Further decides* that if the Party and the technical team of experts are unable to reach a common understanding in relation to the clarifications provided, it shall be noted in the summary report of the technical team of experts;<sup>5</sup>
16. *Decides* that the results of the assessment of the technical annex will be included in the summary report of the technical team of experts, as referred to in the annex to decision 2/CP.17, paragraph 4;}<sup>4</sup>
17. *Agrees* that [activities][results-based actions] that may be eligible to appropriate market-based approaches that could be developed by the Conference of the Parties, as per decision 2/CP.17, paragraph 66, [will][may] be subject to any further specific modalities for verification consistent with any decision of the Conference of the Parties on this matter.]]

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<sup>2</sup> FOOTNOTE: not prejudice /ICA consistency

<sup>3</sup> Complete here means the provision of information that allows for the reconstruction of the results.

<sup>4</sup> FOOTNOTE: not intended to prejudice related decisions pending under international consultation and analysis, including those related to the technical team of experts

**[Elements for a technical annex**

- A. Summary information from the final report the latest assessed reference levels, including:
- a. The assessed FREL/FRL expressed in tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year
  - b. The activity(ies) included
  - c. The territorial forest area covered
  - d. Date of the reference level submission and date of final technical assessment report
  - e. The period (years) of the assessed reference levels
- B. Results in tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year, consistent with the assessed reference levels.
- C. Demonstration that the results in B are methodologically consistent with the assessed reference level, including:
- a. Data sets and approaches used (e.g., remotely sensed data, national forest inventory (or equivalent))
  - b. Information on the methods/models<sup>1</sup> and assumptions used,
  - c. The year(s) under consideration
  - d. The territorial forest area covered
  - e. Pools, gases and activity(ies) included
  - f. Definition of forest used
- D. Consistency of the results in B with the corresponding information provided in the national greenhouse inventory;
- E. Description of the institutional roles and responsibilities for measuring, reporting and verifying the results.
- F. Provide all the necessary information that allows for the reconstruction of the results.
- G. Take into account, as appropriate, paragraphs 1(c) and 1(d) in decision 4/CP.15. (the reference to 1(d) addresses the issue of uncertainty)
- H. [how to reflect uncertainties – we think this is covered under 1(d) from decision 4/CP.15]
- I. PROPOSED LANGUAGE - If applicable, any change that leads to an inconsistency with the assessed reference levels, taking into account that these changes may only refer to a decrease in relation to the result that would be otherwise obtained.]

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<sup>1</sup> Parties should refer to the IPCC Expert Meeting report on Use of Models .....

## Annex II

[English only]

### **Elements for a possible draft decision on guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels**

*[The Conference of the Parties,*

*Reaffirming* that, in the context of the provision of adequate and predictable support to developing country Parties, Parties should collectively aim to slow, halt and reverse forest cover and carbon loss, in accordance with national circumstances, consistent with the ultimate objective of the Convention, as stated in its Article 2,

*Recognizing* that [in the context of the provision of adequate and predictable support to developing country Parties,] developing country Parties aiming to implement the actions listed in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, are responsible for the establishment of their forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels,

*PLACEHOLDER [on training]*

*Recalling* the provisions of decision 12/CP.17,

1. *Decides* that each submission referred to in decision 12/CP.17, paragraph 13, shall be subject to a technical assessment;
2. *[Adopts* the guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels contained in the annex to this decision;]
3. *Invites* Parties, in particular developing country Parties, and, as appropriate, intergovernmental organizations to nominate technical experts with the relevant qualifications to the UNFCCC roster of experts;
4. *[Decides* that proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels and the outcomes of the technical assessments shall be considered for possible adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its next session.]
5. *Takes note* of the estimated budgetary implications of the activities to be undertaken by the secretariat pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 2 above;
6. *Requests* that the actions of the secretariat called for in this decision be undertaken subject to the availability of financial resources.

**Annex: Guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions by Parties on proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels**

**Guidelines for technical assessment**

*Objectives*

1. The objectives of the technical assessment are:

*Subparagraph (a)*

*[Option 1]*

To assess the degree to which Parties have provided transparent, complete, consistent, and accurate information to support the construction of the forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels,]

*[Option 2]*

To assess the degree to which Parties have provided information in accordance with the guidelines for submissions of information on forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels in the annex to decision 12/CP.17 in the construction of the forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels,]

*Subparagraph (b)*

*[Option 1]*

To provide, as appropriate, technical [recommendations][suggestions][guidance] to the developing country Party,]

*[Option 2]*

To offer a facilitative, [non-intrusive,] technical exchange of information on the construction of the forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels with a view to provide developing country Parties with the capacity for the construction and [continuous] [appropriate future improvement of the forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels, subject to national capability and policy][future] improvement of the reference levels [that would be reflected in subsequent submissions of the forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels, as appropriate],]

*[Option 3]*

To offer a facilitative, [non-intrusive,] technical exchange of information on the construction of the reference level with a view to provide developing country Parties with [suggestions, as appropriate,] [the capacity] for the improvement [and/or technical

adjustment] [, as appropriate,] of the reference levels, taking into account national circumstances,]

(c) To provide a technical assessment [to support consideration by the COP at its subsequent session of the forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level to be used],

[Notes that this technical assessment should be facilitative in nature,]

*[Scope Option A*

2. [A technical assessment of the data, methodologies, assumptions and procedures used in the construction of the forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level of a developing country Party to determine whether it is consistent with the guidelines in the annex to decision 12/CP.17, ]

*Paragraph 3*

*[Option 1*

Taking into consideration the voluntary basis of submissions of forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels, the assessment team will assess the following:]

*[Option 2*

Taking into consideration the voluntary nature of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, the assessment of the submissions by Parties on proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels by the assessment team will assess the following:]

(b) The extent to which the Party has identified pools, gases and activities included in the forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level and explained the reasons for omitting a pool, a gas or an activity from the forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level and whether the coverage of pools in the forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level is consistent, and justification of why omitted pools were deemed not significant,

(c) The description of approaches, methods and models used in the construction of forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels,

(d) The extent to which the forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level value is consistent with the information and descriptions provided by the Party,

(e) The extent to which the information was provided by the Party in a transparent manner,

(f) Whether a description is provided of domestic policies relevant to the construction of the forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels and how these policies were used in the construction of the forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels,

(g) [Whether confirmation has been provided that the construction of forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels do not include assumptions about changes to domestic policies.]

4. As part of the technical assessment, the review process may provide technical recommendations to the developing country Party on the construction of its forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels. This may include the recommendation to make a technical revision to elements used in its construction.

5. The assessment team shall refrain from making any judgment on domestic policies taken into account in the construction of forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels. ]

*[Scope Option B*

2. A technical assessment of the data, methodologies and procedures used by the developing country Party in the construction of the reference level(s) in accordance with the guidelines in the Annex to Decision 12/CP.17, covering the following:

(a) The extent to which the information used maintained consistency with anthropogenic forest-related greenhouse gas emissions by sources and removals by sinks as contained in the national greenhouse gas inventories [para 8 decision] and/or with historical data [Annex, (a)];

(b) The extent to which the information provided was transparent, complete (FOOTNOTE), consistent and accurate, including methodological information, description of data sets, approaches, methods, models, if applicable, and assumptions used. [Annex, (b)], and whether the reference levels are national or cover less than its entire national territory of forest area [para 11 Decision].

(c) Whether a description of relevant policies and plans has been provided. [Annex, (b)]

(d) If applicable, whether descriptions of changes from previously submitted reference levels are provided, taking into account the stepwise approach (FOOTNOTE PARAGRAPH 10 OF THE DECISION) [Annex, (b)][paragraph 10 Decision]

(e) Pools and gases, and activities included in the reference levels, and justification of why omitted pools and/or activities were deemed not significant. [Annex, (c)]

(f) Definition of forest used and, if different from the one used in the national GHG inventory or from the one reported to other international organizations, an explanation of why and how the definition used was chosen; [Annex, (d)]

3. The assessment team shall refrain from making any judgment on domestic policies.]

**Procedures for technical assessment**

*General procedures*

6. Each submission will be technically assessed by an assessment team in accordance with the procedures and timeframes established in these guidelines.

7. Each assessment team will conduct a thorough and comprehensive assessment of the forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level and will prepare a report under its collective responsibility.

8. The technical assessment process will be coordinated by the secretariat. The assessment team will be composed by LULUCF experts selected from the UNFCCC roster

of experts. Participating experts will serve in their personal capacity and will be neither nationals of the Party undergoing the technical assessment, nor funded by that Party.

*Composition of the assessment team*

9. The assessment team will be composed of at least [two][three] LULUCF experts. The secretariat shall ensure that at least one expert each from a developing and a developed country will be selected from the roster of LULUCF experts.

*Timing*

10. In order to facilitate the secretariat's work, each Party should confirm to the secretariat, their active experts on the LULUCF roster of experts who will be able to participate in the technical assessment of forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels.

11. Assessment sessions will be organized [one] [two] [three] times a year. Submissions received no later than [six] weeks ahead of a session will be assessed at this session. The assessment sessions will take place at a venue designated by the UNFCCC secretariat.

12. The secretariat should forward all relevant information to the assessment team at least [four] weeks before the start of the assessment session.

13. Prior to the assessment session, the assessment team should identify any preliminary issues requiring clarifications from the Party, as appropriate.

14. The Party that submitted the forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level may interact with the assessment team during the assessment session of their submission to clarify issues and provide additional information to facilitate the assessment by the assessment team.

15. The assessment team may seek additional clarifications from the Party no later than [one] week following the assessment session. This may include technical inputs to the Party on the construction of its forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level. The Party is to provide clarifications on the issues raised to the assessment team no later than [five] weeks following the request. As a result of the facilitative process referred above, the Party may modify its submitted forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level in response to the technical inputs of the assessment team.

16. The assessment team will prepare a draft report and make it available to the Party no later than [eight] weeks following the assessment session. The report should include a short summary.

17. The Party will have [three] weeks to respond to the draft report of the assessment team.

18. [If the Party does not agree with the results from the assessment as included in the draft report, in responding to the Party's comments, the assessment team will seek advice from a small group of experienced reviewers to be convened by the secretariat.]

19. The assessment team will prepare a final report within [three] weeks following the Party's response and the report will be sent to the secretariat for publication via the web platform on the UNFCCC website.<sup>1</sup> The final report will contain the technical assessment, technical recommendations, if appropriate, and the responses by the Party and where

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<sup>1</sup> <<http://unfccc.int/redd>>.

provided, the advice of the small group of experienced reviewers convened by the secretariat.

20. The secretariat will prepare a synthesis report of the technical assessment process of the forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels [ for consideration by the COP at the next session after the final report referred to in paragraph 18 above]. The synthesis report will be made publicly available via the web platform on the UNFCCC website.]

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