SUBMISSION on Safeguard Information Systems (SIS) on the Types of Information on How the Safeguards are Being Addressed and Respected

Submission by Tebtebba
(Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education)
Also on behalf of the
Indigenous Peoples' Global Partnership on Climate Change, Forests and
Sustainable Development

This submission is in line with the consideration of SBSTA at its **forty-first session** (December 2014), inviting the following:

- 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;
- 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.

This submission reiterates the Cancun Agreements wherein parties agreed to develop a robust and transparent national forest monitoring system for the monitoring and reporting of REDD Plus activities, including sub-national monitoring and reporting as an interim measure. The establishment of a robust national forest monitoring system is meant to monitor and report on how developing States-Parties are reducing their emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, conserving and enhancing forest carbon stocks and sustainably managing forests. Paragraph 71(d) of the Cancun Agreement further requests developing country Parties to develop a Safeguard Information System (SIS) for providing information on how the safeguards in the Cancun Agreement are being addressed and respected.

Under the Cancun Agreement, there are 7 safeguards, which are officially recognized to be promoted and supported when undertaking REDD Plus activities. These safeguards are as follows:

a) Actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements;
b) Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty;
c) Respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities, by taking into account relevant international obligations, national circumstances and laws, and noting that the General Assembly has adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP);
d) Full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, including, in particular, indigenous peoples and local communities;
e) Actions that are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that actions are not used for the conversion of natural forests, but are instead used to incentivize the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services, and to enhance other social and environmental benefits;
f) Actions to address the risks of reversals;
g) Actions to reduce displacement of emissions.

Indigenous peoples emphasize that these safeguards are meant not only to mitigate the risks of adverse social and environmental impacts of REDD Plus activities but also to strongly promote benefits beyond carbon emission reductions, such as increased land tenure security, enhanced biodiversity, improved forest governance and conservation, respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities, and ensuring the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and local communities.

Following the recognition and adoption of these agreed safeguards, it is crucial to consistently monitor how these safeguards are adequately addressed and respected on the ground. The agreement further requests that developing countries should provide a periodic summary of information on how all of the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected through national communications or communication channels agreed by the COP after the start of implementation activities; sharing lessons on safeguard processes and safeguard information systems through submissions and the UNFCCC Web Platform.

A system of information, otherwise known as Safeguard Information Systems (SIS), is needed in order to ensure and monitor implementation of REDD Plus activities and address potential adverse impacts (risks), avoid perverse incentives, and maximize multiple benefits of activities.

Given these developments in the UNFCCC negotiation, real and ultimate outcome of REDD Plus implementation must account the practical and immediate impacts this could have on indigenous peoples and local communities, which should be appropriately collected, recorded and communicated to the national SIS. These impacts must be consistently monitored, collected, recorded and communicated to the national SIS and reviewed in consultation with indigenous peoples.

For indigenous peoples, the success of REDD Plus implementation is not only limited to the recognition and adoption of safeguards but to its actual operationalization on the ground.

It is important that opportunities and policies for capacity-building are available to indigenous peoples to strengthen their ownership of REDD Plus initiatives. Direct funding must also be accessible, sufficient and equitably distributed among indigenous peoples and local communitiess. Integral to effective mitigation and adaptation to climate change is the participation of women, especially indigenous women, whose historical contribution and roles in these areas have been recognized. Decision making should ensure gender sensitive approaches across components of any REDD Plus activities and related projects.

Domains and Types of Information Revelant to Indigenous Peoples

In the implementation of safeguards, the perspectives of indigenous peoples, including indigenous women and youth, and local communities should be recognized and supported. As decided in the Cancun Agreements, the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples is recognized in all phases of REDD Plus implementation, hence, their experiences are indispensable and should therefore be included in the national SIS.

Data and information on safeguards must be based on a clear and informed set of assumptions, methodologies and guidance and real experiences and should therefore originate from different sources, especially those that are collected from the ground. The broad participation of all sectors of indigenous peoples, including women, youth and the elderly, to provide relevant indicators for monitoring safeguards implementation and be part of the process must be ensured.

Many indigenous peoples around the globe have their own traditional monitoring systems in relation to changes in their diverse ecosystems and well-being. These are based on their traditional knowledge and holistic view of their environment, but they also use and adopt new technologies. As highlighted by Elinor Ostrom, Nobel Prize winner for Economics, "when local users are given harvesting rights, they are more likely to monitor illegal uses themselves." In the Philippines alone, some examples of community-based monitoring as part of their traditional forest/resource management systems include the *lapat* system among the Tinggian indigenous peoples, and the *lampisa* water management practice among the Kankanaey Igorots of Sagada, Mountain Province.

Indigenous peoples' communities and partners under the Indigenous Peoples' Global Partnership on Climate Change, Forests and Sustainable Development and other indigenous networks have been working together to integrate and strengthen community-based monitoring and information systems (CBMIS) to ensure the respect, recognition and protection of their rights and traditional knowledge; full and effective participation in processes at all levels; and ensure fair benefits for indigenous peoples in REDD Plus policies and programs. Their role is crucial to the implementation of REDD Plus as they have shown great work in sustaining the remaining forests around the globe through their traditional knowledge and customary practices. The partnership believes that CBMIS is a way to collect strong evidence and information, which reflects real stories and the extent of implementation at the community level, to inform both the national and global policies and programs.

As agreed by the partnership, CBMIS refers to the bundle of documentation, research and monitoring approaches related to biodiversity, ecosystems, land and waters, and other resources, as well as, human well-being. This is used by indigenous peoples and local communities as a tool for management and documentation of their resources and status of their well-being. The framework used for CBMIS is the holistic approach to indigenous peoples' sustainable, self-determined development (IPSSDD). It integrates the ecosystems/ecological dynamics; cultural and human rights- and sustainability-based approaches with conscious concern on gender, intergenerational and cultural diversity; and indigenous peoples' economic development and well-being.

To ensure transparency, accountability, relevance and comprehensive information, national information systems should contain publicly-accessible information that are sensitive to indigenous peoples' concerns.

For indigenous peoples, monitoring and reporting through community-based and participatory monitoring tools and methodologies is a rich source of baseline data and information, and of monitoring identified indicators at the national, regional and global levels in a more cost effective and sustainable way.

The Indigenous Peoples' Global Partnership on Climate Change, Forests and Sustainable Development has agreed on a number of core domains for CBMIS that comprehensively includes the types of information and indicators for monitoring, which will also feed into how the REDD Plus safeguards are being addressed and respected on the ground level, and would be helpful in developing robust and transparent national Safeguards Information Systems. These core domains and the types of information that integrate gender considerations and intergenerational elements are the following:

Land, territories and resources: To reflect indigenous peoples' control over their customary lands, territories and resources, recognition of indigenous peoples' land tenure rights by the state, business sector and others, also reflecting the historical context and prevailing conflicts between customary and statutory   control and ownership. To show the trend or change in biodiversity over time as a result of sustainable resource management by indigenous peoples;

Traditional knowledge: To reflect status and trends on the value of innovations and the extent to which traditional knowledge is being utilized, recognized, respected and promoted in relation to indigenous peoples' territorial management and well-being. This will also show how traditional knowledge, practices and initiatives of indigenous peoples and local communities are recognized, promoted and fulfilled;

Full and effective participation: To reflect status and trends in indigenous peoples' level of representation and participation in decision-making processes, especially in major decision-making bodies. To be able to inform how community processes, protocols and systems on free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)C are recognized and adopted;

Traditional governance: To reflect status and trends in the practice, adherence to traditional governance systems by indigenous peoples, and its relation to contemporary institutions and governance practices. To be able to show how traditional knowledge is recognized, pro-

tected and promoted through improved policies or programs by the government and other stakeholders;

Human rights: To reflect status and trends in the recognition, respect and promotion of indigenous peoples' rights (collective and/or individual) as provided by a number of international human rights instruments, laws, protocols and conventions, including the UNDRIP. To report on cases of violations resolved both in customary ways and the formal systems. To highlight trend on the use of grievance redress mechanisms where customary principles and institutions are incorporated;

Costs and Benefit Distribution: To reflect status and trends in costs and benefit distribution, beyond effectiveness, efficiency, but especially equity in the context of indigenous peoples and local communities. To monitor whether the benefits go to those who have historically sustained forest conservation or to those who change their behavior due to anticipated incentives from REDD Plus.

These core domains and types of information will be provided through the community-based monitoring and information systems, with the meaningful participation of indigenous peoples within REDD Plus countries. Building the capacities and strong collaboration among indigenous peoples and government agencies/institutions implementing REDD Plus are vital to be able to contribute to these types of information necessary for the sub-national and national Safeguard Information Systems on REDD Plus implementation. These information will also contribute to the National Monitoring/Assessment frameworks on how REDD Plus safeguards are being addressed and respected.