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BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Note by the Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

1. In decision XI/19, the Executive Secretary was requested to compile information relevant to the application of safeguards for biodiversity in the context of REDD+² and to submit a progress report to the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting. A compilation of information from Parties was also requested on initiatives and experiences regarding paragraph 67 of decision 2/CP.17 of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (on non-market-based approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests) with regard to its possible contributions to the objectives of the Convention, without pre-judging any decisions by the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC. The eleven submissions received are presented in an information note.³

2. Building on the progress report in UNEP/CBD/SBT/TA/18/13, this note provides a summary of recent developments guiding the application of REDD+ safeguards (section I); an update of activities undertaken by the Executive Secretary in line with the requests in decision XI/19 (section II); and a summary of experiences relevant to the application of REDD+ safeguards as well as on non-market-based approaches, drawing from fifth national reports and revised national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) of REDD+ recipient countries,⁴ and other available peer-reviewed literature (sections III and IV). Concluding observations are noted in section V.

¹ Reissued with corrections to paragraphs 4, 7, 13 and 24.

* UNEP/CBD/COP/12/1/Rev.1.

² REDD+ is used as a shorthand for “reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries”, consistent with paragraph 70 of decision 1/CP.16 of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The acronym REDD+ is used for convenience only, without any attempt to pre-empt ongoing or future negotiations under UNFCCC.

³ UNEP/CBD/COP/12/INF/13. A late submission from the Government of Bolivia is included in document UNEP/CBD/COP/12/INF/13, but not considered in the present note.

⁴ Cameroon, Colombia, Dominica, Myanmar.

I. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO THE APPLICATION OF REDD+ SAFEGUARDS

3. The REDD+ framework reached a significant landmark at the nineteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC in November 2013. Seven decisions on REDD+ were adopted under the Warsaw Framework for REDD+.⁵ These decisions, which address, among other issues, modalities for measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) and results-based finance, provide a positive reference for countries to continue advancing their REDD+ activities.

4. Relevant to the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the decision on REDD+ finance reaffirmed the importance of incentivizing non-carbon benefits for long-term sustainability of REDD+ implementation. With regard to the application of safeguards, the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC decided that countries should provide a summary of how the Cancun safeguards⁶ are addressed and promoted before receiving REDD+ payments.⁷ The types of information to be provided through safeguards information systems (SIS) have yet to be defined.

5. Section I of decision 12/CP.17 contained general guidance on the systems for providing information on REDD+ safeguards. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC agreed that developing countries undertaking REDD+ activities should periodically provide a summary of information on how all the safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of activities.⁸ In Warsaw, it was further decided that the summary of information from developing countries should be provided through their national communication or communication channels, including via the web platform of UNFCCC, after the start of the implementation of REDD+ activities.⁹

6. In addition to these decisions, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice to UNFCCC, at its thirty-eighth session, called for further work on safeguards. It encouraged developing countries to continue building on experiences and best practices as part of improving their systems for providing information on how all of the safeguards are being addressed and respected and for Parties to share their experiences.¹⁰ At its forty-first meeting in Lima, in December 2014, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice to UNFCCC will take into account the views provided by Parties and admitted observer organizations on issues related to safeguards, in its consideration for further guidance to ensure transparency, consistency, comprehensiveness and effectiveness when informing on how all safeguards are addressed and respected.

7. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice to UNFCCC, at its thirty-eighth session, also considered issues relating to non-market based approaches. Views on methodological guidance for non-market based approaches were discussed in an in-session expert meeting at the fortieth session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, in June 2014. Further consideration of issues related to non-market-based approaches and non-carbon benefits will resume, respectively, at its forty-first (December 2014) and forty-second (June 2015) sessions. Environmental and social safeguard systems are also being

⁵ Decision 9/CP.19 on the work programme on results-based finance to progress the full implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70; decision 10/CP.19 on the coordination of support for the implementation of activities in relation to mitigation actions in the forest sector by developing countries, including institutional arrangements; decision 11/CP.19 on the modalities for national forest monitoring systems; decision 12/CP.19 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; decision 13/CP.19 on Guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels; decision 14/CP.19 on Modalities for measuring, reporting and verifying; and decisions 15/CP.19 on Addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.

⁶ Decision 1/CP.16, appendix I.

⁷ Decision 12/CP.19 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.

⁸ Decision 12/CP.17.

⁹ Decision 12/CP.19.

¹⁰ SBSTA 38 (FCCC/SBSTA/2013/3, paragraph 28-33).

discussed under the Green Climate Fund (GCF), with a decision on its safeguards and initial results areas anticipated for 2014.¹¹

II. COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

8. At its eleventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopted decision XI/19, noting the potential of REDD+ to leverage benefits for biodiversity, as well as indigenous and local communities. The Conference of the Parties also took note of the annex to decision XI/19, which contains further guidance in applying the safeguards contained in appendix I to UNFCCC decision 1/CP.16. The decision invited developing country Parties to consider the information contained in the annex when planning and implementing REDD+ activities. Parties, other Governments, and organizations were also invited to consider the mentioned information when preparing national reports and other submissions on progress towards meeting the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and, where applicable, for other relevant submissions under other processes.

9. An overview of activities undertaken by the Executive Secretary in response to the request in paragraph 16 (a) of decision XI/19, to support Parties in promoting REDD+ activities to achieve the objectives of the Convention, is provided in the following paragraphs.

10. A workshop on “Synergies between REDD+ and NBSAPs for Central Africa” was organized in Douala, Cameroon, from 8 to 11 July 2014 in collaboration with UNEP-WCMC and the Central African Forestry Commission (COMIFAC). The workshop focused on identifying links and supporting efforts of Parties to promote the contribution of REDD+ activities towards the achievement of the objectives of the Convention. The workshop facilitated an exchange of views on ways in which REDD+ actions correspond and contribute to NBSAP design and implementation. Participants included government representatives in charge of CBD and REDD+ issues from nine Central African countries, as well as several representatives from international and regional organizations and indigenous and local communities. The workshop report will be made available in an information note.¹² This workshop was part of a series of workshops on ecosystem conservation and restoration related to Aichi Biodiversity Targets 5, 11 and 15.¹³

11. The Secretariat will hold an interregional workshop on REDD+ and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in San Jose, Costa Rica, from 29 to 31 August 2014 to draw attention to practical country experiences on links between REDD+ activities and actions to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. In collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), an analysis of information needs and available information for REDD+ and NBSAPs planning and implementation will be presented, along with spatial data tools to explore synergies. Preliminary feedback on safeguard information systems will also be addressed.

12. Preparations for the launch of forest initiatives at the United Nations Climate Summit,¹⁴ which will be hosted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 23 September 2014 in New York, are also underway. The initiatives have been prepared in collaboration with other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (GPFLR). They are intended to strengthen political commitment towards the development of national restoration targets in line with Aichi Biodiversity Targets 5 and 15 and the Bonn Challenge.¹⁵

13. In line with existing mandates in decisions XI/19 and X/33, the Executive Secretary will undertake further activities to enhance collaboration with the UNFCCC Secretariat and other members of the CPF, the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), UN-REDD, as well as with other relevant organizations and initiatives, to support Parties in promoting REDD+ activities to achieve the objectives of the Convention. The following activities will be undertaken subject to the availability of financial resources:

¹¹ Green Climate Fund: Decisions of the Board – Seventh Meeting of the Board, 18-21 May 2014 (Decision B.07/02) <http://www.gcfund.org/documents/board-meeting-documents.html>.

¹² UNEP/CBD/COP/12/INF/14.

¹³ Further information on these workshops is contained in document UNEP/CBD/COP/12/22.

¹⁴ www.un.org/climatechange/summit.

¹⁵ The Bonn Challenge aims to restore 150 million hectares of degraded land by 2020 through forest landscape restoration.

(a) Building on the findings from the interregional workshop on REDD+ and Aichi Biodiversity Targets, follow up workshops will be organized to assist Parties in making use of existing advice on biodiversity safeguards when designing their safeguard information systems for REDD+. Together with the UNFCCC Secretariat and other relevant organizations, additional efforts will focus on the identification and exchange of guidance to operationalize REDD+ safeguards;

(b) The Executive Secretary will enhance collaboration with REDD+ funding institutions to review biodiversity safeguard requirements for initiatives at national and subnational levels;

(c) Future workshops will also review Parties' experiences in mainstreaming forest biodiversity and climate change considerations into national forest policies. Support to national forest programmes in partnership with CPF members could help foster synergies between NBSAPs and national forest policy and monitoring frameworks. Working with partners will also be essential to identify information needs and information generated on the implementation of the area-based Aichi Biodiversity Targets and relevant indicators to assess progress.

III. SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCES RELEVANT TO THE APPLICATION OF REDD+ SAFEGUARDS FOR BIODIVERSITY

14. Halting the loss of forests and significantly reducing forest degradation, as set out in Aichi Biodiversity Target 5, is vital to any collective effort to combat climate change. Currently, degradation and deforestation of the world's tropical forests are accountable for about 10 per cent of the net global carbon emissions.¹⁶ While the rate of deforestation in the tropics and its relative contribution to anthropogenic carbon emissions has been declining,¹⁷ under business as usual scenarios, Aichi Biodiversity Target 5 will not be met by 2020.¹⁸

15. Leveraging the mitigation potential in the forest sector is critical to meet emission reduction targets. The Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change highlights the potential of policy approaches and positive incentives for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation to help limit global warming below 2 degrees Celsius, through measures to conserve, manage and restore tropical forest.¹⁹ When implemented sustainably, REDD+ activities can be a cost effective policy option for mitigating climate change, with potential economic, social and other environmental and adaptation co-benefits. Afforestation, sustainable forest management and reducing deforestation were noted as the most cost-effective mitigation options in forestry, with large differences in their relative importance across regions.

16. Early efforts to develop REDD+ activities have illustrated that some developing countries take steps to integrate biodiversity concerns in order to deliver positive biodiversity impacts from REDD+. Costa Rica and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, are including information within their REDD+ framework on biodiversity objectives and the actions that will be used to achieve and monitor these.²⁰ However, only after a period of time and trend monitoring will specific information on the application of safeguards for biodiversity and for indigenous and local communities be available.

Experiences and lessons learned with regard to the application of safeguards for biodiversity, including benefits for indigenous and local communities achieved through implementing REDD+ activities

17. Commonly, the development of frameworks for REDD+ safeguards has been found to include the following:²¹

¹⁶ IPCC (2013), The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

¹⁷ IPCC (2014), Summary for Policymakers, Climate Change 2014, Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

¹⁸ See also document UNEP/CBD/COP/12/9.

¹⁹ IPCC (2014), Summary for Policymakers, Climate Change 2014, Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

²⁰ Panfil, S.N. and Harvey, C.A. (2014), REDD+ and biodiversity conservation: Approaches, experiences and opportunities for improved outcomes. USAID-supported Forest Carbon, Markets and Communities (FCMC) programme. Washington, DC, USA.

²¹ This draws upon the information presented to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at its eighteenth meeting (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/13) and takes into account the views expressed at this meeting.

(a) Identification of existing policies, laws, and/or regulations that address safeguards and that are suitable to ensure that REDD+ activities are consistent with the Cancun safeguards. This typically includes preliminary studies and assessments of the potential societal and environmental risks and benefits of REDD+ as well as an assessment of gaps in the regulatory framework of a country required to meet the objectives of its safeguard approach;

(b) Development of a safeguard information system for the collection and sharing of information on how the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected throughout all REDD+ phases. This system may include elements that demonstrate compliance with the legal framework, such as monitoring and information system(s); a grievance and redress mechanism(s); and non-compliance mechanism(s);

(c) Identification of potential linkages with existing institutions, processes and procedures developed to meet the international obligations and policy commitments of a country. For instance, links could be established, where applicable, to the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs), private sector commodity certification schemes, multilateral REDD+ readiness initiatives, and other national processes for data collection, analysis and communication.

18. This is further illustrated by two examples of countries that are at a stage beyond their REDD+ readiness phase, focusing on principles and criteria to connect their REDD+ activities with the Cancun safeguards.

19. Costa Rica's National Forest Finance Fund, FONAFIFO, serving as the institution responsible for REDD+, has been working to develop a conceptual framework and methodology for its REDD+ safeguard information system. This project has been supported by the UN-REDD Programme. The Costa Rican proposal is based on existing information systems as recommended by UNFCCC decision 12/CP.17. As of 2013, FONAFIFO has been working to review Costa Rica's legal framework, including relevant policies, laws and regulations and national planning instruments. It has also analysed indicators as well as different national information systems and carried out national consultations with their focal points for relevant conventions including the Convention on Biological Diversity. By means of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), Costa Rica has also been in the process to design a REDD+ Strategy, including an analysis of how and where REDD+ activities may generate positive impacts on ecosystem services to improve human welfare. By December 2014 the proposal for the REDD+ safeguard information system is expected to be validated by the institutions responsible for the system. In 2015, Costa Rica's REDD+ Secretariat will develop a participatory process to analyze the system's proposal together with national REDD+ stakeholders, including representatives from local communities, indigenous territories and other relevant institutions.²²

20. Mexico is one of the first countries to legislate in support of efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. The country reformed its General Law on Sustainable Forest Development (Article 134 Bis) in 2012, in order for the Cancun safeguards and a set of additional safeguards to be applied to policies and activities related to environmental services, including REDD+. Revisions to specific laws focus on harmonizing definitions of key terms, the development of economic tools and instruments to promote environmental services that provide benefits to forest owners and forest land users, and the inclusion of REDD+ safeguards in line with UNFCCC decisions and Mexico's national REDD+ strategy.²³ Mexico is focusing on a broader set of activities, beyond REDD+ activities, for the application of its safeguards, choosing for a sector-wide system that incorporates REDD+.²⁴ As a result, land-based activities are being mainstreamed into key economic sectors and public programmes, and recognized as an essential part of the long-term success of REDD+.

21. Despite a few countries' advancements in designing their safeguard frameworks,²⁵ the application of these systems for REDD+ has yet to occur on a broad scale. Experiences with REDD+ are often limited to a smaller scale and number of sites.²⁶ In addition, the few initiatives which are operational are typically subject to

²² <http://www.un-redd.org/Newsletter2014Issue2/CostaRicaSIS/tabid/133378/Default.aspx>.

²³ http://www.un-redd.org/Newsletter28/Mexico_REDD_Legal_Reforms/tabid/104165/Default.aspx.

²⁴ Rey, D. and Swan, S.R. (2014), A Country-led Safeguards Approach: Guidelines for National REDD+ Programmes.

SNV – The Netherlands Development Organization, REDD+ Programme, Ho Chi Minh City.

²⁵ For example, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Indonesia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mexico and Vietnam.

²⁶ Panfil, S.N. and Harvey, C.A. (2014), REDD+ and biodiversity conservation: Approaches, experiences and opportunities for improved outcomes. USAID-supported Forest Carbon, Markets and Communities (FCMC) programme. Washington, DC, USA.

different safeguards requirements from various funding institutions, which differ in scope and obligation.²⁷ While funder policies aim to avoid harm to biodiversity, some key funders do not require that funded activities provide positive impacts on biodiversity.²⁸ One donor Parties' submission²⁹ noted that national and local governments, organizations, and NGO partners hosting REDD+ projects have in some cases encountered difficulties when applying differing sets of safeguards from different donors. Slightly different priorities and requirements for measurement, reporting and verification can create a burden on recipient countries.

22. Building on the information presented to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, at its eighteenth meeting,³⁰ additional measures which have been found useful for the application of safeguards for biodiversity when planning and implementing REDD+ activities include:

- (a) Inter-ministerial consultations and technical working groups across REDD+ related sectors;
- (b) Integration of national targets under the national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP) into REDD+ plans, and referencing REDD+ actions in NBSAPs;
- (c) Ensuring that the work on safeguards under different multilateral initiatives is complementary rather than duplicative;
- (d) Reduction of the risks of displacement of land-use change to other ecosystems of high biodiversity values and of afforestation or reforestation with non-native species or forests with low species diversity;
- (e) Reduction of the risk of transnational displacement causing deforestation to move into countries that currently have little deforestation;
- (f) Ensuring that safeguards complement the aim to enhance multiple benefits from REDD+ for biodiversity and local livelihoods;
- (g) Involvement of stakeholders in REDD+ design and implementation, including site selection, and management strategies;
- (h) Enhancing multiple benefits of REDD+ for the creation of a sustainable and equitable REDD+ process, including through involving and respecting traditional knowledge, as well as innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities;
- (i) Economic modelling to assess the ecosystem benefits of REDD+ interventions;
- (j) Incentives for livelihoods and biodiversity conservation to be in place in the interim phases (while REDD+ progresses from readiness to full implementation).

23. In addition to the information provided to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, at its eighteenth meeting,³¹ a review of the revised NBSAPs of Cameroon, Colombia, Dominica, and Myanmar provides information on how national REDD+ processes could contribute to NBSAP implementation. Mutually beneficial activities that have been identified include:

- (a) Addressing drivers and underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation;
- (b) Funding protected areas and sharing economic benefits from conservation with local communities;
- (c) Examining options for different land uses, considering the contribution of REDD+ activities to local development and to the conservation of biodiversity;
- (d) Mainstreaming forestry issues in national development plans, national adaptation plans, national disaster risk reduction plans and their respective financing strategies;

²⁷ UN-REDD Programme Policy Brief, No.3. Putting REDD+ Safeguards and Safeguard Information Systems Into Practice.

²⁸ Panfil, S.N. and Harvey, C.A. (2014), REDD+ and biodiversity conservation: Approaches, experiences and opportunities for improved outcomes. USAID-supported Forest Carbon, Markets and Communities (FCMC) programme. Washington, DC, USA.

²⁹ UNEP/CBD/COP/12/INF/13 (UK's submission).

³⁰ UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/13.

³¹ UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/13.

(e) Enhancing inter-sectoral coordination and consultations;

(f) Supporting the achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Target 5, 7, 11 and 15 through improved monitoring and data collection.

24. Further information on national level synergies between REDD+ activities and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, including five case studies, are included in an information document.³²

IV. SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCES REGARDING NON-MARKET-BASED APPROACHES SUCH AS JOINT MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION APPROACHES FOR THE INTEGRAL AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FORESTS AS A NON-MARKET ALTERNATIVE

25. Information submitted by Parties and organizations in response to notification 2013-113 (Ref. No. SCBD/SAM/DC/CS/ac/82980) on non-market-based approaches was limited and has already been reported to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, at its eighteenth meeting.³³ No further information has become available since.

26. The in-session expert meeting organized at the fortieth session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in June 2014,³⁴ recognized the need to further define the scope and purpose of non-market based approaches and to better understand which aspects of non-market-based approaches should be included under the framework for various approaches. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice agreed to continue its consideration of the development of methodological guidance on non-market-based approaches at its forty-first session (December 2014).³⁵

V. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

27. Although the implementation of national REDD+ safeguards has yet to be carried out, this report presents examples of Parties' experiences in identifying and developing their safeguard frameworks and offers insights for REDD+ recipient Parties exploring ways to proceed with their safeguard commitments with respect to biodiversity and indigenous and local communities.

28. Thus far guidance on REDD+ safeguards information systems offers a flexible approach for countries to define their social and environmental objectives and carry out other aspects including reviewing existing laws, policies and regulations, assessing gaps, benefits and risks, and identifying the type of governance and monitoring process to follow. Despite the approach, a considerable number of countries still require further support to set their national safeguards information systems.

29. As access to finance from more than one source is often required to achieve REDD+ readiness, developing countries are often faced with conflicting safeguard requirements. Meeting a wide range of decisions, funding requirements, national policies and voluntary guidelines, can be onerous for recipient countries.

30. Additionally, opposing safeguard requirements, especially those that are not consistent with the Cancun safeguards, can create potential burdens for recipient countries, leading to activities that overlap and create high transaction costs. Funding institutions, carrying out REDD+ initiatives at national, subnational and project level could review their safeguard requirements to ensure alignment to the Cancun Safeguards, and likewise make use of the guidance in decision XI/19 on biodiversity conservation and indigenous and local communities.

³² UNEP/CBD/COP/12/INF/15.

³³ UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/13.

³⁴ http://unfccc.int/meetings/ Bonn_jun_2014/workshop/8278.php.

³⁵ Noting document FCCC/SBSTA/2013/3, paragraphs 38–42, and decision 9/CP.19, paragraph 8.