



The Future of REDD-Plus: Pathways of Convergence for the UNFCCC Negotiations and the Partnership

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Working Paper

In this working paper Antonio G.M. La Viña, who led the negotiations on REDD-Plus in the preparations for the UN Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in 2009, considers the REDD-Plus negotiations and REDD-Plus initiatives, and shares his views on ways forward.

Six months after the official deadline for parties to the Copenhagen Accord to submit their plans for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, a picture is emerging on how far these plans can actually meet the 2°C target set in the Accord. Since the writing of this paper, one hundred thirty-eight countries have engaged or are expected to engage with the Accord, while 8 countries have signified that they will not (USCAN 2010).

Analysis done by the World Resources Institute shows that emission reduction pledges made by Annex I countries under the Accord currently translate to cumulative reductions of 13-19% below 1990 levels—falling far short of the lower limit or -25% cut by 2020 recommended by the IPCC (Levin and Bradley 2010). In a comprehensive study conducted by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (den Elzen et al. 2010), current emission reduction pledges are projected to reduce global GHGs to about 50 Gigatons (Gt) CO₂eq by 2020, some 4 Gt short of the level needed to meet the 2°C target by 2050. The study suggests, among others, that by reducing emissions from deforestation by 50% below 1995 levels and excluding allowance increases from land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) rules, the global community could begin to close this emissions gap and be within the pathway to meeting the 2°C target by 2020 and 2050.

For what it is worth, the Copenhagen Accord is quite clear and certain of the Parties' support for a REDD-Plus mechanism as an important mitigation strategy. As Yvo de

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Boer was quoted as saying, the forest provisions of the negotiations were already “oven ready” (Eilperin 2009). In fact, REDD-Plus was the only mitigation measure specifically referred to in the Accord, which, as it is, is intended to provide incentives for actions contributing towards reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and the enhancement of existing forest carbon stocks. The Accord also opened commitments to “scaled up, new and additional, predictable and adequate funding ... to developing countries,..., including substantial finance to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD-Plus) ...”[\[1\]](#)

Forty-one Non-Annex I countries have also submitted their NAMAs in line with the Accord. **Table 1** of this paper presents the REDD-Plus relevant NAMAs by country. With the exception of a few countries that had quantitative targets (Brazil, China, Ethiopia, Gabon, Mauritania, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Togo and Tunisia), the NAMAs related to forestry were generally descriptive of actions that the countries would undertake. The tentativeness of these commitments is linked, no doubt, to the availability of funding support and technical assistance for implementing such actions.

It is widely known that deforestation and forest degradation are estimated to account for up to a fifth of global anthropogenic CO₂ emissions. The most recent Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) compiled by FAO (2010) shows that global forests store an estimated 289 Gt of carbon in their biomass. At a net loss of 5.2 million hectares per year, the assessment estimates global carbon stocks from forest biomass decreased by 0.5 Gt annually for the period of 2005-2010. However, the FRA estimates that global net loss of forests is now actually decreasing, due partly to decreasing deforestation rates (including in Brazil and Indonesia) and partly to large-scale planting of trees.

This paper focuses only on the REDD-Plus negotiations. However, at the outset let me say that an agreement in these negotiations is not possible unless the broader issues involving institutional arrangements, financing, mitigation targets and legal nature are resolved in the overall process. From a purely narrow perspective of bringing to closure the REDD-Plus negotiations however, I have confidence to predict that an agreement is within reach. In fact, in Copenhagen, it was within reach until the dynamics of the parallel negotiations around the Copenhagen Accord intervened and unfortunately sidelined our final efforts to reach agreement.

Status of REDD-Plus Negotiations

The role of forestry in mitigating climate change was largely left out in the Kyoto Protocol. It was not until 2003 when decisions were made to include reforestation and afforestation under the CDM mechanism. In 2005, at COP 11 in Montreal, the Coalition for Rainforest Nations, through Papua New Guinea, reintroduced the issue of compensating developing countries for reducing national rates of deforestation, calling it REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries). The proposal was well-received and approved by the COP, with a directive to the SBSTA to study the matter and return with a proposed decision by COP 13 in Bali. [\[2\]](#) The Bali Road Map laid the foundation for REDD-Plus as a major mitigation strategy to be tackled by the

AWG-LCA. From Poznan in 2008 to the Bonn meetings of April and June last 2009, REDD discussions moved quickly but with little focus or consensus. It was only at the Intersessional meeting in Bonn in August 2009 that a group under the LCA track was specifically tasked to focus on REDD-Plus, with a draft text separated out as Annex III-C.

Key issues under REDD-Plus in the current negotiations (See: The Little REDD+ Book; Parker et. al., 2009)

1. *Scope.* Recognizing the role of forests in developing countries towards addressing climate change, an international mechanism under the UNFCCC was being negotiated initially with the scope to incentivize activities which reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, or as it was known then in shorthand as REDD. However, subsequent discussions in 2009 on the possible scope of this mechanism widened to include incentivizing the enhancement of existing forest carbon stocks or REDD-Plus/REDD+. While there were also proposals that REDD-Plus should incorporate the role of agriculture as a threat to forests, or REDD++ as it was coined by proponents, current discussions have remained limited to REDD-Plus.
2. *Reference level and scale.* Related to scope, reference levels and scale are critical to the measurement of actual carbon removals and carbon benefits, especially if these are to be verified, priced and traded. The difficulty of measuring carbon benefits lies in the absence of clear baseline data (because this data is not available, or technical and financial barriers limit the ability to measure baseline figures). On the other hand, scale (national or sub-national) is relevant to the level of accounting and crediting of benefits. National reference levels are ideal to prevent in-country leakage. However given the lack of capacity and weak governance in many forest nations, establishing a national REDD-Plus system can take time and a lot of resources to operationalize, and as such would discourage immediate private investments in projects. Hence in the interim, several countries are opting for sub-national scale REDD-Plus activities.
3. *Distribution.* Proposals seek to reward countries with high forest cover and low rates of deforestation (HFLD) for keeping their standing forests or carbon stocks. The objective of a distribution mechanism is to avoid international leakage or address equity concerns within REDD-Plus mechanisms that reward solely based on emissions reductions. Proposals include an international sharing scheme for all revenues from forest carbon and provision of additional funding for HFLDs.
4. *Safeguards and co-benefits.* Incentives for avoided deforestation and removals could impact the culture and livelihood of forest-dependent communities, and add to their marginalization in decision-making and the

sharing of benefits. Discussions on this topic, particularly on ensuring safeguards for the protection of rights, environmental integrity, and governance took centerstage on the road to Copenhagen. Since then, it is now widely accepted that a REDD-Plus mechanism can only be successful if safeguards and co-benefits such as the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and the alleviation of poverty especially among forest-dependent communities, are realized.

5. *Institutional framework and governance.* At the international level, the nature of a REDD-Plus mechanism is, to a significant degree, still contingent of the overall institutional arrangement on mitigation and MRV, and has to be linked to any possible framework for climate finance and the carbon market (itself uncertain given the positions of some countries on a market approach) to come out of a new global agreement on climate change under the UNFCCC. At the national level, it has become implicit that REDD-Plus will not prosper without a sound framework for governance, not only in forest management, but in land tenure, fund flows, transparency, accountability and participation – in short, good governance.
6. *Finance and markets.* Early on, there was already an awareness that a REDD-Plus mechanism would likely require a mix of voluntary fund and market sources. Following a phased-approach, funds would be needed for readiness and demonstration activities, leading up to a level where the sustainability of REDD-Plus efforts will attract and allow for more market-based investments. Voluntary funds are especially critical for starting readiness activities in countries less attractive to private investments (i.e., countries with weak governance and with lack of capacity for MRV). At the international level, the challenge remains on how a REDD-Plus mechanism can or should be linked to the issue of NAMAs, MRV and existing instruments under the UNFCCC like the CDM. Moving forward on markets however require intensive negotiations as some Parties have fundamental objections to such an approach.
7. *Global target.* Options were initially identified during negotiations for a global target to reduce deforestation by 50 per cent by 2020, by 25 per cent from current levels by 2015, or halt it entirely by 2030. However, as a global target to reduce deforestation has serious implications on MRV and the principle of common but differentiated responsibility between developed and developing countries, the proposal to declare a global target has since been played down.

Strategy towards Copenhagen

When I was asked in June 2009 to facilitate the REDD-Plus negotiations, I decided to follow a very simple strategy to make progress. It was clear to me, having listened to interventions in the plenary debates that Parties were willing to move forward on REDD-

Plus negotiations but that different Parties, or groups of Parties, had different issues and concerns. For some, their concern was on scope – with a few Parties wanting to limit scope essentially to deforestation with many others wanting to expand scope to include other land-use activities, extending especially to agriculture. Quite a few Parties (and behind them significant stakeholder groups) prioritized having social, environmental and governance safeguards as an essential element of a REDD-Plus mechanism. All Parties were of course concerned about means of implementation and the design of the MRV regime for such a mechanism. Finally, the issue on how to incorporate or refer to markets was and is a giant shadow that looms in the future of a REDD-Plus mechanism.

In my view, all these concerns were valid and that my role as the Facilitator was to help Parties address them in a manner that would satisfy the main protagonists. That is why, with the advice of the Secretariat, I started my work in June by having as many bilaterals as possible with as many Parties and groups of Parties that wanted to meet me. The purpose of these bilaterals was to confirm this diversity of interests and to begin exploring ways to manage the differing views in a way that would lead to resolution and not further polarization. This bilateral approach continued to the end as we tried to find closure in each issue.

At this point I also introduced an innovation in the process by meeting with stakeholder groups – indigenous peoples, environmental and conservation groups, private sector and carbon market investors, and good governance and transparency advocates. These consultations were disclosed to the Parties, and no one, to my surprise, actually objected. I would be doing this for the rest of the year - usually allowing each stakeholder group two meetings with me during a two week session.

Another mechanism I used that allowed us to progress much faster than most other negotiating groups was the use of co-Facilitators. While I remained responsible for critical issues like scope and safeguards, I asked colleagues from Indonesia, Canada, Gabon, Guyana, the Netherlands, and Switzerland to work with me to solve issues. Later on, in the final days, I was joined by Peter Graham from Canada to co-chair the REDD-Plus negotiation group.

While the June (Bonn), August (Bonn) and September (Bangkok) meetings were focused principally in consolidating the draft text, in reality, the Parties were already negotiating and making decisions. You do that when you decide to incorporate one particular formulation of an issue while excluding others. The key is to make the Parties whose text is excluded see that their interests remain articulated in the formulation you propose. Because of the bilaterals, the level of trust that the Parties had in me and the Secretariat (whom they had worked with for a number of years) was deep enough that we were able to take risks and make radical deletions and consolidation of the text that would not otherwise have been possible.

By Bangkok, we had made so much progress that I was confident enough to launch initial negotiations in key issues. At this point, I decided to follow a mosaic approach in

arriving at agreement. Upon advice of many, I decided not to tackle scope first and decided to leave that for last. Instead, because of its highly political nature and its prominence among stakeholders, I decided to try to solve issues related to safeguards first. In my mind, if we solved safeguards, we would be able to address implementation issues more expeditiously as we would have dealt with the fears some Parties and stakeholders had of a REDD-Plus mechanism. In fact, those Parties and stakeholders would end up being supportive of a positive conclusion of the process if their concerns were addressed. I was right about this. The story of how the safeguards became incorporated into the draft text deserves a paper in itself, but suffice it to say that it was a dynamic process where Parties gave and took in good faith and in the end agreed that the safeguards were essential for the success of REDD-Plus. This is why from essentially preambular language, the safeguards found its way into operational text.

By Barcelona, because of the progress in safeguards we had made in Bangkok, it was now possible to finally debate scope, finance, MRV, how REDD-Plus fits or did not fit into the overall NAMA framework, and institutions. At this point, it became clear that we could not include details on these issues into a REDD-Plus legal text or decision and that the best that we could do would be to agree on principles and on processes. Barcelona was essentially about winnowing down further the text to a manageable 8-9 pages that would identify our options with respect to these principles and processes.

The first week of Copenhagen was spent discussing these principles and processes with the Parties able to make decisions on a number of them. The progress on safeguards was consolidated. Scope was decided. A common understanding on a phased approach and how to deal with MRV was agreed on. There was also progress on institutions. At some point, a crisis point in the negotiations, the text ballooned again to seven pages but in the subsequent session, the Parties realized that all our work would be wasted if we did not revert back to a consensus-building mode. Progress then continued so that by the 15th of December 2009, we had a text with only a few brackets left.

State of agreement

When Parties arrived in Copenhagen in December 2009, there were high hopes of firming up an agreement on REDD-Plus, owing to the strong progress towards a consensus document during the preparatory meetings since Bali. Working overtime for almost two weeks, the delegates arrived at key consensus points, including:[\[3\]](#)

Scope: developing country Parties should contribute to mitigation actions in the forest sector by undertaking the following activities: (a) Reducing emissions from deforestation; (b) Reducing emissions from forest degradation; (c) Conservation of forest carbon stocks; (d) Sustainable management of forest; (e) Enhancement of forest carbon stocks. The draft decision also requests the SBSTA to undertake a work programme to identify land use, land-use change and forestry activities in developing countries, in particular those that are linked to the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, to identify the associated methodological

issues to estimate emissions and removals resulting from these activities, and to assess their potential contribution to the mitigation of climate change, and report on the findings to the Conference of the Parties at a future session. This was an important compromise reached between those who wanted REDD-Plus to be solely about deforestation and those who want it to expand to other land uses.

Safeguards: (a) That 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; (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. What remains undecided for the safeguards is the strength of the wording used to commit Parties to apply them when undertaking REDD-plus activities. Bleaney et al. 2010.

Phased Implementation: activities undertaken by Parties ...[should][shall] be implemented in phases, beginning with the development of national strategies or action plans, policies and measures and capacity-building, followed by the implementation of national policies and measures, and national strategies or action plans and, as appropriate, subnational strategies, that could involve further capacity-building, technology transfer and results-based demonstration activities, and evolving into results-based actions [that shall be fully measured, reported and verified]

Reference level and scale. While the text remained bracketed on the issue of scale and reference level, SBSTA prepared a methodological guidance (UNFCCC 2010d) adopted by the COP (UNFCCC 2010c) that “*requests*” developing country Parties to “establish, according to national circumstances and capabilities, robust and transparent national forest¹ monitoring systems and, if appropriate, sub-national systems as part of national monitoring systems” and “*Recognizes* that developing country Parties in establishing forest reference emission levels and forest reference levels should do so transparently taking into account historic data, and adjust for national circumstances.” At a global level, there is a place holder in the preamble of the decision for a quantitative goal on deforestation but there is no consensus on whether this is necessary and useful.

The draft decision also identifies the following principles as guiding the implementation of REDD-Plus activities:

- Their contribution to the objective set out in Article 2 of the Convention;
- That REDD-Plus activities be country-driven and voluntary or put forward voluntarily (these are options in brackets);
- That such activities are undertaken in accordance with national circumstances and capabilities of the country and respect sovereignty;
- That REDD-Plus activities are consistent with national sustainable development needs and goals;
- That they facilitate sustainable development, reduce poverty and respond to climate change in developing country Parties;
- That such activities Promote broad country participation;
- That they be consistent with the adaptation needs of the country;
- That REDD-Plus activities are results-based;
- That such activities promote sustainable management of forests;

Remaining in brackets but with solutions in sight are principles which refer to NAMAs and financing. These brackets will probably remain until other relevant decisions are adopted in the LCA process. Or perhaps process language can be developed to bypass the necessity of such decisions.

While there was no substantive agreement on quantitative targets and the funding mechanism for REDD-Plus, the Copenhagen Accord points to availability of new and sustained funding from developed countries to provide incentives for REDD-Plus actions.

Post-Copenhagen developments

As of the 10th meeting of the AWG-LCA in Bonn in June, there has been no significant change in the negotiating text on REDD-Plus. The only official agenda items to do with REDD-Plus in the June session were on soliciting comments for capacity building under the SBSTA and the LCA plenary. As such, Parties appear satisfied with the outcome in Copenhagen regarding the text, and negotiations were not reopened in any of the substantive matters. What is more important is guarding the possibility that the current REDD-Plus text is changed as a result of negotiations in, for example, LULUCF.

For instance, the 13th meeting of the AWG-KP in June gave way to some initial discussions over the G77/China proposal for a “declare-and-review” regime for Annex I Parties’ reference levels under LULUCF. The proposal was welcomed by several Parties and was seen as a possible breakthrough in rebuilding trust and transparency towards the process of refining the LULUCF as a compliance mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol. If pursued more intently in the succeeding sessions, the “declare-and-review” proposal might have a bearing on future REDD-Plus discussions as it might set a precedent on how methodologies for setting reference levels in-country, and its

implications for crediting, can or should be “reviewed” by third parties based on consistency to the “declared” methodology by the Party.

In the meantime, in late May in Oslo, 58 countries have signed up for an interim Partnership to 'fast start' REDD-Plus initiatives with funding coming from the pledges initially made in Copenhagen. I will describe developments from this Partnership shortly after a short discussion on financing REDD-Plus.

Financing REDD-Plus

The Eliasch Review (2008) estimates the cost of halving emissions from the forestry sector by 2030 at \$17-33 billion annually. Even in a scenario of full linkage with the carbon market, the Review estimates that the market can only provide around \$7 billion annually by 2020. The shortfall in funding has to be met from other private and public sources, and current pledges are far short of the needed funding.

REDD-Plus mechanisms are attractive to developed countries for offsets. In a modelling study prepared by the Centre for European Economic Research (Anger and Sathaye 2008) integrating avoided deforestation into international emissions trading could reduce the international carbon permit price by half due to the low-cost credit supply from tropical rainforest regions, and resulting in total compliance costs for industrialized countries by more than a third lower if tropical rainforest regions may export carbon-offset credits to the industrialized world. The global forest carbon market is still in its infancy. The cumulative estimate as of 2009 covers 20.8 million tons CO₂ (MtCO₂) valued at US\$149.2 million, mostly from voluntary markets (73%), with only a small volume under Kyoto A/F (Hamilton, Chokkalingam and Bendana 2010). The market will not provide enough money, even in the best case scenario where forest carbon credit is fully fungible with other carbon credits. Public funding will be needed.

Developments within the Paris-Oslo Process / Interim REDD-Plus Partnership

Under the Copenhagen Accord, six countries (US, UK, Australia, Norway, Japan, and France) committed to provide US\$3.5 billion to jumpstart activities on REDD-Plus for the next three years. In the meeting in Paris this March, these countries affirmed their pledges and ratcheted it up by another \$1 Billion.

In May, spurred by the pledges made in Paris, more than 50 countries met in Oslo and agreed to formally establish an “Interim REDD-Plus Partnership” which shall utilize the pledged US\$ 4 billion to assist developing countries reduce GHG emissions from deforestation, forest degradation, and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks between 2010-2012. The event was also attended by UNDP, UNEP, World Bank, as well as representatives from indigenous peoples and civil society.

As of the writing of this paper, 58 countries have officially communicated their interest to join the Interim Partnership, with the secretariat recently establishing a channel for

continued dialogue through an e-group and planned conferences through the remainder of the year.

As stated in the Partnership document[†], the Interim Partnership has as its explicit goals, among others, the sharing of experiences between participants and financing capacity building and technology transfer for readiness activities.

It must be noted though, that as opposed to the Partnership directly making available a new pool of financial resources for REDD-Plus activities, the secretariat of the Partnership has made it clear through recent communications that the Partnership merely opens a new avenue for bilateral and multilateral discussions towards the transfer of finances between participants and the Partnership's donors—which understandably is already raising some questions on whether or not the financing is actually 'new' with regard to its sources, and what the Partnership's relationship is with the REDD-plus mechanism currently being negotiated under the UNFCCC.

As made clear during the Oslo meeting, the Interim REDD-Plus Partnership is transitional and is an effort to catalyze early action on REDD-Plus where this is already possible (e.g. Phase 1 activities). There is an understanding amongst participating Parties that the Interim Partnership shall be subsumed under the official international REDD-Plus mechanism for which Parties are in the process of finalizing under the UNFCCC.

Last July 14-15 a "Technical Experts' Meeting" under the Interim Partnership was held in Brasilia, Brazil to discuss in more detail concrete actions and financing opportunities the Partnership should deliver between 2010-2012, distributing certain expected deliverables between developed and developing countries. Proposals were called for modalities and guidelines to the Partnership's secretariat services, currently assigned to the FCPF and UN-REDD. It was decided that immediate action was to be expedited, among others, towards establishing a voluntary REDD-Plus database and registry for REDD-Plus activities and financing to improve coordination and transparency. It was also decided that a set of workshops shall be organized promoting North/South-South exchanges on key REDD-Plus issues, in particular identifying gaps and overlaps in REDD-Plus financing.

More recently, at the margins of the August session of the UNFCCC negotiations in Bonn, the Terms of Reference for the UN-REDD and FCPF to act as Program Manager and the Facility Management Team, respectively, were finalized alongside the 2010 Work Programme. It is expected that within the remainder of the year, Partners shall submit survey information on existing actions and financing for REDD-Plus in their countries in lieu of the database being developed. Partners have also been requested to identify possible financing overlaps, provide analysis on the effectiveness of existing multilateral institutions, and suggest possible ways to enhance cooperation.

[†] <http://www.oslofc2010.no/pop.cfm?FuseAction=Doc&pAction=View&pDocumentId=25017>

Subsequent technical meetings set for the Tianjin negotiations this October 3-9, and a Nagoya meeting being set for late October are expected to discuss and deliberate Partnership activities, including progress on the database and the 2011-2012 Work Programme, in more detail.

While the substance of the Partnership's 2010 Work Programme, and initial funding for REDD-Plus activities have been generally welcomed by Parties, several civil society groups have criticized the non-inclusive process and lack of transparency within the Partnership in its decision-making towards financing arrangements and multi-stakeholder engagement, despite the declared commitment to be transparent by the Partnership. This was particularly made salient with several countries and organizations complaining they had not been informed, or had only been given very short notice, to participate in the Partnership's activities.

This growing lack of confidence of some groups towards this interim process poses a real problem not only for the Partnership but also for REDD-Plus as a whole as it is giving skeptics of REDD-Plus ammunition to question whether REDD-Plus can be effectively and transparently implemented by Parties come an official REDD-Plus mechanism is in place.

We are yet to see how the newly instituted Secretariat Services under the UN-REDD and FCPF shall perform or improve coordination.

Also, while the Partnership in its output document from Brasilia outlined its commitment to observe the principles and safeguards set out in the current draft decision text on REDD-Plus under the AWG-LCA, there is some question as to how such safeguards shall be enforced with reference to the non-legal nature of the Partnership as well as its "interim" status.

Nonetheless, large financing is supposedly already flowing to forest-rich countries thanks to the Interim REDD-Plus Partnership. Widely publicized is Norway's pledge of US\$1 billion to assist Indonesia with its REDD-Plus efforts. This in turn led to Indonesia, responding with a declaration of a two-year moratorium on new permits to clear natural forests and peatlands and the possibility of undertaking reforestation activities. There is much speculation that Norway's pledge has a lot to do with Indonesia's announcement in January that it plans to plant 21 million hectares with trees as part of the government's program to reduce greenhouse emissions by 26 percent relative to business-as-usual levels by 2020, or by 41% if provided with international financial support. However, environmentalists are concerned that reforestation in Indonesia would focus on planting commercial timber and oil palm, which is the major cause of burning of natural forests and peatland drainage—hence, demonstrating the question of how safeguards such as that of protecting biological diversity and natural forests shall be implemented under the Interim Partnership.

REDD-Plus Initiatives

But perhaps what all these recent developments ultimately demonstrate is that with REDD-Plus, we are at least very fortunate that there is an emerging global experience on the ground, even before a formal agreement can be reached. In a survey of REDD-Plus projects compiled by CIFOR in 2009 (Wertz-Kanounnikoff and Kongphan-apirak 2009), they recorded more than a hundred REDD-Plus projects, 40% of which were demonstration projects, and 60% on readiness. Their survey included some related projects where carbon was not an explicit goal. Sixty-eight percent of these projects were still on the planning stage. Data from the survey shows that there are about equal number of projects in Asia, Africa and Latin America, but that Asia leads in terms of size of project areas, especially focused in Indonesia. There are also more demonstration projects in Asia (Indonesia) than anywhere else. Most of the funding comes from public sources (multilaterals and bilaterals) than from private investments.

What is interesting from the preliminary findings is that projects (esp. on readiness) are targeted in areas where there is high additionality potential (high forest cover, high deforestation rate) but areas where governance is a challenge. These areas are not likely to be prioritized if funding came from private sources and the primary concern was carbon effectiveness for market trade in emission reduction credits (Cerbu et al. 2009).

The results, though still early, can greatly inform the negotiations, perhaps making the talks more complex but well-grounded. The strategy forward is to use the field experiences to guide the unresolved issues in the negotiating text, as well as validate the agreed upon parts (without having to reopen the debates on these points). The issues that could benefit most from actual experience relate to the phased approach and its link to financial flows, MRV and safeguards. This field experiences should then feed into the design of an efficient international institutional architecture that will make REDD-Plus actions more effective on the ground.

Phased Approach

There is a growing consensus on a three-phased approach to REDD-Plus actions, which could be overlapping (Wertz-Kanounnikoff and Angelsen 2009):

Phase 1: countries prepare a national REDD-Plus strategy through participatory consultations, start capacity building in MRV and begin demonstration activities.

Phase 2: ‘more advanced readinesses, where the focus is to develop and implement policies and measures (PAMs) to reduce emissions as provided in the national REDD-Plus strategy.

Phase 3: full UNFCCC ‘compliance’. At this level, countries are compensated solely for quantified reduced emissions and removals, subject to rigorous MRV.

The phased approach allows more countries to participate in REDD-Plus even if they are not yet ready for full compliance. Each country can enter at any phase where it has the capacity. Incentives for REDD-Plus are linked to performance at the various stages.

The sources of funds vary according to the phase of REDD+ implementation. Market sourced funding are not likely to come in until Phase 3. In Phases 1 and 2, funding will come mainly from public sources. MRV requirements in Phase 1 and 2 are linked to the preparatory activities needed for full compliance – such as consultations, policy and institutional reforms and capacity building. In Phase 3, MRV will be directly related to the quantity of emissions reduced or carbon removed.

Table 1. Phased approach linked to financial flows and MRV (excerpt Streck et al. 2009; Wertz-Kanounnikoff and Angelsen 2009).

Phase	1. Readiness	2. Advanced readiness	3. Compliance
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National REDD+ strategy development, including: Identification of REDD+ policies and legislative action; National consultations; Institutional strengthening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National REDD strategy implementation including: Land tenure and governance reforms; Forest law enforcement; Forest management planning; Reduced impact logging; Expansion of forest reserves; Agriculture modernization; Modernization of wood energy supply; Wildfire and pest management; Payment for environmental services. 	
Performance indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy adopted Legislative and policy assessment completed Consultations conducted Institutions in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies enacted Measures enforced Proxies for forest carbon changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantified forest carbon changes (tCO₂e), compared to a reference level
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial support for national strategy development and readiness activities (e.g., FCPF, UN-REDD, bilateral initiatives) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding from bilateral and multilateral sources and COP-mandated funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily linked to compliance carbon markets, but might also be via global fund
MRV systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity development and basic monitoring capacities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced monitoring capacities and setting reference levels

In *Realising REDD+*, CIFOR gives snapshots of what five countries go through in getting ready for REDD-Plus (Bolivia, Cameroon, Indonesia, Tanzania and Vietnam). It is at once incremental and wholesale. Countries struggle to find the lead actor/ agency to initiate development of a national REDD-Plus strategy. Do you create a new institution (superagency or coordinating body), or work with existing ones (more often than not, a host of agencies with entangled mandates)? The challenge is to coordinate decision-making in a wide array of issues from land-use planning, biodiversity conservation, land tenure/ownership, rights to forest resources (and eventually including carbon), even poverty alleviation and economic development. In all the cases, the common approach were that REDD was framed in the context of sustainable resource

management and socio-economic development. In terms of process in REDD strategy development, there is a strong commitment to stakeholder engagement, especially of forest-dependent communities and indigenous peoples.

The next challenge is to formulate or reformulate laws and policies consistent with the REDD framework of payment for performance in reducing forest loss or enhancing carbon stocks. In many countries the laws are unclear about land tenure and consequent right to the resources on the land. Does this include carbon? The added incentives brought by REDD-Plus can only heighten the existing struggles for access and control over forest resources. The technical challenges needed to meet MRV requirements are also overwhelming – from process skills in consensus-building and coordination to technical skills in measuring carbon changes at project through national scale.

Phases 1 and 2 are going to be very costly financially as well as politically. Decades of programs in forest management have shown little impact in slowing the resource loss and REDD-Plus could follow the same course. We cannot even contemplate a Phase 3 if the failures of previous programs are not addressed. Sunderlin and Atmadja (2009) examine past forest programs and conclude that the failure is due to inability to address the main trend in deforestation - which is that political and economic elites drive decisions on forest land use, favouring industrial scale conversion of natural forests to silvicultural or agroindustrial plantations or other uses. Forest dwellers and conservation groups are largely powerless. In order not to repeat the mistakes of the past, they pin their hope on popular mobilization to pressure the political leadership to make REDD-Plus successful. This ties up to the movement in the negotiations to have strong language on safeguards and effective stakeholder participation.

Environmental and Social Safeguards

Early in the debates on a REDD mechanism for developing countries, civil society and indigenous peoples' groups were wary of the impact of a carbon-market oriented mechanism will have on local forest-dependent people. Even as consensus has been reached on safeguard mechanisms, there are groups advocating for rejection of REDD-Plus. The Durban Group for Climate Justice echoes the argument that:

REDD would transform the carbon in living trees into private property so that it can be awarded or transferred to private corporations in the North. Despite efforts to create safeguards to prevent the violation of the human rights of Indigenous Peoples and forest-dwelling communities, there is no guarantee to their effectiveness. In the worst case, REDD could inaugurate a massive land grab that would leave Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities with nothing. In the North, meanwhile, REDD credits would enable fossil fuel-related corporations to maintain business as usual, to the detriment of communities affected by fossil fuel extraction and pollution.

The crux of the matter is how effective will national implementation of REDD-Plus protect the rights of forest-dependent local and indigenous peoples. These rights include:

- Respect for indigenous knowledge on forests and forest resources;
- Right to share in the benefits from REDD-Plus; and
- Right to participate in decision-making.

In the sense that these rights are anchored on some kind of claim or tenure, the implementation of these rights requires clarity in the law with respect to the type of tenure, which grants property rights in forest carbon. The recognition of forest carbon (as property) right have to also be linked to a legal analysis of transparency norms, legal standing and transparent access to decision-making in each tropical rainforest country (Lyster 2010).

Parallel to the negotiations under the UNFCCC, the UN-REDD Program developed a set of social and environmental standards for implementing REDD actions. The standards were developed to guide governments, NGOs, financing agencies and other stakeholders to design and implement REDD and other forest carbon programs that respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities and generate significant social and biodiversity co-benefits. The standards are a set of principles, with corresponding criteria and indicators. These include [\[4\]](#) :

1. Rights to land, territories and resources are recognized and respected.
2. The benefits of the REDD+ program are shared equitably among all stakeholders and rights holders.
3. The REDD+ program contributes to sustainable livelihoods and poverty alleviation for forest dependent peoples.
4. The REDD+ program contributes to broader sustainable development and good governance objectives.
5. Biodiversity and ecosystem services are maintained and enhanced.
6. All relevant stakeholders and rights holders are able to participate fully and effectively in the REDD+ program.
7. All stakeholders and rights holders have timely access to appropriate and accurate information to enable good governance of the REDD+ program.
8. The REDD+ program complies with applicable local and national laws and international treaties and agreements

The challenge is to translate the general language in the negotiating text into the national strategies and action plans required in REDD-plus actions at the national and local level, and ensuring that application of the safeguards is included in the obligations of developing country parties for the measuring, reporting and verifying of REDD- plus activities.

The Proposals by Saudi Arabia, Bolivia and Turkey

During the August meeting, to the surprise of most countries, three countries introduced new text and radical changes to the existing REDD-Plus text. These texts were

proposed by Saudi Arabia, Bolivia and Turkey and relate to carbon capture and storage technologies and the Cochabamba proposals, specifically removing the “emissions” from REDD-Plus and just focusing on reduced deforestation and degradation without the enhancement component.

The Chair of the REDD-Plus group then did a wise move by accommodating the new additions as a separate option, and maintaining the original text as another option.

Those in charge of facilitating the REDD-Plus negotiations will have to deal with these emerging issues and conflicts effectively by Cancun.

The Way Forward

In a paper that I wrote for FIELD earlier this year, I reflected on the overall experience of the Copenhagen negotiations (which, to me, include the whole process since the Bali Conference in December 2007 and particularly the negotiation sessions in 2009 that I participated in). Based on my experience as the REDD-Plus facilitator, in that paper, I made the following conclusions (La Viña 2010):

- (1) The legal form of the outcome of the UNFCCC negotiations must be decided as early as possible if we expect closure in these negotiations. There will be no agreement in Mexico if we do not decide legal form early. This is because it is not possible, at some point, to advance any the negotiations unless we know what they are for. It is like traveling to an undefined destination where we will end up going around in circles.
- (2) There is a cost in efficiency in keeping the negotiating processes transparent and participatory. But as the debate on the Copenhagen Accord illustrate, this is demanded by many Parties and stakeholders. The irony about the Accord and the discord it created is that whatever agreement we will finally get in mitigation and finance, the two most difficult issues in the negotiations, is likely to approximate the agreements in the Accord but getting there properly is just as important as these agreements. Because there is no way around this demand for transparency and universal participation, extra effort must be made to put into place mechanisms that reduce inefficiency while keeping the process universally open and consultative.
- (3) Implementing best practices in social accountability is key to success and support for the process and its outcomes. This means engaging stakeholders - informing them, providing them access, and allowing them opportunities to influence the outcome. I am currently writing an account and analysis of how specific texts in the draft REDD-Plus decision evolved as a result of this engagement with stakeholders. The most strategic, persistent and ultimately influential of those stakeholders, in my experience, were the indigenous peoples and the transparency advocates. They would be

followed by the conservation advocates and environmental activists whose attention, to some extent, was divided between pushing for effective safeguards while making sure that REDD-Plus met environmental and conservation objectives. The carbon market lobby was also active but my impression was that they grappled throughout the process with what they wanted in and out of an agreement. In any case, I really believe that stakeholder participation was an essential ingredient for the progress we made in REDD-Plus in Copenhagen.

- (4) Getting the sequence right in making decisions in the negotiations regarding what to prioritize and emphasize is important. Judgment calls have to be made based on an analysis of interests and how best to balance them. Later in this paper, I will share my account of how the REDD-Plus text developed through a consolidation and negotiation process where such choices were made and in a sequence that was strategic. But chairs and facilitators must however secure the trust of the Parties so they can make these decisions on sequence.
- (5) Finally, and to me probably the most crucial decision to be made, we need to abandon the comprehensive package or single undertaking approach where "Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed." Continuing this approach is doomed to failure and should be abandoned in favor of a more disaggregated approach to negotiating climate change issues. My vision of how the negotiating process should unfold is first to secure agreement on a mosaic of issues that are ready for adoption (including the REDD-Plus decision), insert process language that will link its operation to other relevant decisions that might have to be decided later, and adopt the full package later when Parties are in fact ready. By securing early agreement on such issues as REDD-Plus, technology transfer and adaptation, trust will be built between the Parties and more importantly the work on the ground on these critical issues will proceed and accelerate to the benefit of climate and sustainable development.

As a corollary to the last point above, where there is already agreement on operational elements that can already lead to concrete action on the ground despite the lack of a full agreement, such activities should be explored but while exercising consistency to the agreed elements and explicitly having as a goal contributing towards further consensus-building. I say this with reference to new developments such as the Interim REDD-Plus Partnership which presumably will go until 2012. While initiatives such as this are to be welcomed for its potential to fast-track and further generate the much-needed momentum and global experience towards realizing benefits for communities and the global climate, Parties at some point must be able to draw together the lessons from their engagement with such interim measures, and take the opportunity to come to a common position which shall hopefully promote breakthroughs which result in the resolution of the remaining critical issues within the official UNFCCC negotiations.

The Interim REDD-Plus Partnership, as essentially a transitory mechanism, should be oriented towards not only the distribution of funds and facilitating capacity building, but also towards identifying—perhaps even exposing—and demonstrating, at this early stage, possible gaps and opportunities in prospective institutional arrangements, MRV regimes, and the scale of financing needed under an official REDD-Plus mechanism come this becomes agreed upon under the UNFCCC. It should also explicitly direct its resources towards providing a head-start for both developed and developing countries to engage internally and with each other towards a better understanding of country positions and predicaments, and then translating these into common positions which shall influence enlightened discussions and ultimately build consensus and agreement within the REDD-Plus block, more importantly crossing over this spirit of collegiality, cooperation and consensus-building from the Partnership in the other negotiating blocks within the AWG-LCA. I am hopeful this can all manifest as soon as Cancun this December. I see efforts like the Interim REDD-Plus Partnership as smoothly transitioning into a registry of REDD-Plus countries and a database of REDD-Plus activities and resources under a prospective official mechanism which shall then absorb the resources and re-assess the agreed modalities of the Partnership based on the new climate agreement under the UNFCCC.

To these five imperatives for success, I must add the importance of a UNFCCC Secretariat that can provide the highest possible technical support and strategic advice. For the record, in the REDD-Plus process in the Copenhagen negotiations, I had that kind of support. While I take primarily responsibility for whatever mistakes were committed in the REDD-Plus process, the credit for the success should be shared with my colleagues from the Secretariat who were not only technically excellent but were politically wise as well. Even more critical, the Secretariat supporting me had the trust and the confidence of the Parties.

At the beginning of this paper, I shared my view that a REDD-Plus agreement is within reach if only the bigger issues critical to the overall process are resolved decisively. I reiterate that point in this conclusion and venture to add that bringing to closure the REDD-Plus negotiations will also go a long way in helping the overall process. Indeed, such closure will build trust and will illustrate that consensus on difficult issues is achievable. The reason why the prospects are good for a REDD-Plus agreement is that the interests of Parties are now aligned; with many developing countries ready to move forward with implementation and with developed country partners having a big stake in the early operation of a REDD-Plus mechanism.

What can Parties and others who are interested in the establishment of the REDD-Plus mechanism do to sustain this momentum?

First, from a process point of view, I think it is important to protect the agreements already achieved. I am talking particularly about scope, the safeguards, the phased approach, and the MRV related consensus points. For this reason, I prefer limited meeting time for this issue in the sessions before Cancun. In the first place, there are

many more complex and difficult issues that have to be resolved in the LCA process and more time should be devoted to those issues.

Second, the focus in the process should be on the remaining issues which I would characterize as mainly bilateral or involving only a few Parties. An example is how to address the demand for allowing sub-national reference levels and accounting. A similar approach could be followed to resolve the issue of financing and the necessity of a global goal on deforestation although the solutions identified and agreed to would have to be brought to the bigger group for adoption.

Finally, the most important contribution that could be made to make sure that a REDD-Plus mechanism in fact becomes operational is to continue to invest in those programs and activities which test and pilot the various elements and components of the mechanism: make available the funds; conduct the preparatory activities; build capacity for and set up the MRV system; implement the safeguards. To paraphrase a famous line from one movie: If we build it, they will come. Indeed, if we build the REDD-Plus mechanism on the ground now, there will be a REDD-Plus agreement in Mexico and, if not, soon after.

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Endnotes

[1] Paragraphs 6 and 8, Copenhagen Accord.

[2] See http://www.tropicalforestgroup.org/articles/printable/REDD_history.pdf for a short summary, accessed 02Feb2010.

[3] Report of the AWG-LCA. FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/17.

[4] UN-REDD Social and Environmental Standards factsheet

[5] There is no definition of sustainable management of forests, but FAO definition on SFM can be a guide: The stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfill, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national, and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems.

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Table 1: NAMAs of Non-Annex I countries related to REDD-Plus

NAMAs by country*	REDD-Plus					Others
	(a) Reducing emissions from deforestation	(b) Reducing emissions from forest degradation	(c) Conservation of forest carbon stocks	(d) Sustainable management of forest ^[5]	(e) Enhancement of forest carbon stocks	
http://unfccc.int/home/items/5265.php (as of 19Jul2010)						
Afghanistan						None
Antigua and Barbuda						None
Argentina		Rules for land use;		Rational and sustainable management of native forest	Investments in new forest enterprises and enlargement of existing forests	
Armenia	✓				Restoration of degraded forests; afforestation	
Benin				Sustainable management of natural forests	development of plantation forests	
Bhutan						No mention of forestry in general emission reduction pledge
Botswana	✓				Planting forests	
Brazil	Reduction in Amazon deforestation (est 564MCO2e); reduction in 'Cerrado' deforestation (est. 104MCO2e)				Restoration of grazing land	
Cameroon						Recognize the critical role of REDD-Plus – but must be linked to additional,

						predictable and sufficient funding for developing countries.
Central African Republic	✓	✓		Sustainable management and certification of production forests; Promotion of silviculture, non-timber forest products and community/ private plantations		
China					Increase forest cover by 40M hectares (by 2020 from 2005 level); increase forest stock volume by 1.3Bm3 (by 2020 from 2005 level)	
Congo	✓	✓		Sustainable management and certification of production forests	Silviculture in degraded and dense forests; development of private and village plantations;	
Costa Rica						No specifics of forestry actions
Cote d'Ivoire				Improve sustainable management of State forests		
Eritrea					✓	
Ethiopia	a) 528736.70 square kilometres of natural high forest area b) 4390.96 square kilometres of deciduous forest land c) 60360 square kilometres of national parks	198175 square kilometres of existing forests that are providing non-timber forest products maintained as buffer	52695 square kilometers of forest in exhaustion or production forests established and sustainably managed for the purpose of sequestering carbon enhanced district level reforestation actions			

	sustainably managed in order to reduce GHG emissions from deforestation and forest degradation	area for mitigating desertification 51496 square kilometres of wetlands wisely managed and sustainably used	for the increment of vegetation cover of 214440 square kilometres of degraded lands, lands affected by gullies and slopes including through the management of community areas closed off to grazing	
Gabon			Sustainable management (including international certification) – target 12M ha by 2020 Inventory and zoning of forests, conservation of biodiversity,	reforestation/afforestation
Georgia				No mention of forestry
Ghana			✓	Rehabilitation of degraded wetlands
India				No mention of forestry in general emission reduction pledge
Indonesia	✓	✓		Carbon sequestration
Israel				None
Jordan				Grow Nature Reserves areas by including new Reserves to the

					existing ones.	
Republic of Korea						No specific mention of forestry in general emission reduction pledge
Macedonia		prevention of illegal cutting			Forestation and reforestation;	prevention of forest fires;
Madagascar				improve management of protected areas;	Reforestation in 22 regions;	Development of REDD+ policies, pilot projects, institutions, technical capacity, IEC, finance
Maldives						None
Marshall Islands						No specific mention of forestry in general emission reduction pledge
Mauritania					Reforestation to increase forest cover from 3.2% in 2009 to 9% in 2050.	
Mexico						No specific mention of forestry in general emission reduction pledge
Moldova						No specific mention of forestry in general emission reduction pledge
Mongolia	✓	✓		Improved forest management (natural regeneration,	reforestation	

				plantation forestry, agro-forestry)		
Morocco					Reforestation of 50,000 ha/yr by 2013 and 1M ha by 2030 based on Plan adopted in 1994;	Prevention of forest fires
Papua New Guinea						No specifics of forestry action
Peru						No specific mention of forestry
San Marino						None
Sierra Leone	✓		The Establishment of a network of twelve Protected Areas by 2015.	Sustainable management and protection of Forest Reserves and Catchment areas in Sierra Leone including mangroves, coastal and inland Wetlands. Improve forest governance to maintain the proportion of land area covered by forests to at least 3.4 million ha by 2015	Delineation and Restoration of Vulnerable Habitats and Ecosystems in the Western Area of Sierra Leone.	Provide support for a national assessment on forest resources.
Singapore						No specific mention of forestry in general emission reduction pledge
South Africa						No specific mention of forestry in general

						emission reduction pledge
Togo					Reforestation to increase forest cover from 7% in 2005 to 30% in 2030.	
Tunisia				Increased rate of protected areas in the total forestry area from 17% in 2009 to 20% in 2009 in 2024, through the creation and development of 20 new protected areas in the forest zones.	Increase of forest cover to 16% in 2020 from 12.8% in 2009, by achieving 250,000 hectares of reforestation based on an annual average of 27,000 hectares from 2012;	

