

ECOSYSTEMS CLIMATE ALLIANCE

Position on negotiating text for REDD

24 April 2009



global witness



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The AWG-LCA has called for Party submissions by 24 April 2009 on elements of paragraph 1 of the Bali Action Plan for incorporation into negotiating text for consideration at the sixth session of the AWG-LCA.

This paper summarises the position of the Ecosystems Climate Alliance (ECA) relating to REDD. It is based on our recent submission to the UNFCCC¹. It is the view of ECA that any proposed negotiating text must enable the incorporation of all the elements laid out in this Position Paper as REDD is refined before and after COP15. ECA respectfully asks that the Parties and the AWG-LCA consider our views in preparing the negotiating text.

1. A Comprehensive Approach to Protecting Natural Ecosystems

- Any REDD mechanism must adopt an overarching policy that has the protection of primary forests as its highest priority. Such protection should encompass the above ground and below ground biomass of natural forests.
- The recovery or restoration of degraded forests, including deforested and drained peat swamp forests, must also be ensured.
- REDD must not benefit industrial logging, nor the conversion of natural forests to plantations or other types of industrial agriculture, nor the conversion and drainage of other natural ecosystems for these purposes. Instead it must focus on real reduction of deforestation and forest degradation and prevent loss of soil carbon from forested and deforested wetlands.
- Biodiversity conservation is a core benefit rather than a co-benefit for mitigating against climate change. Natural ecosystems are generally more carbon dense than degraded ecosystems. Degradation significantly reduces their carbon storage and sequestration potential, as does conversion of natural forests to plantations. Well-functioning ecosystems have greater resilience to climate change which will aid in their natural adaptation.
- Comprehensive accounting of carbon stores, emissions and removals from the forest sector is possible in some circumstances, and in those circumstances should be implemented. Accounting must be of gross emissions.
- Where comprehensive accounting is not possible, proxy indicators can and must be utilised to detect and prevent degradation.

2. Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

- REDD must respect and promote the rights, interests and needs of indigenous peoples and local communities, and reaffirm rights and benefits under other international instruments and treaties, including, *inter alia*, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
- The following principles, recognized in the UNDRIP, must be ensured:
 - Free, prior and informed consent,
 - Meaningful participation,
 - The right to self-determination and self-government,
 - Fair and equitable benefit-sharing,
 - Land tenure and land rights, and
 - The right to management and customary use of natural resources.
- REDD must be developed through broad consultation and multi-stakeholder processes, involving, *inter alia*, establishment of national REDD groups.

¹ Response to calls for submissions on the UNFCCC processes, 5 Feb 2009 <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2008/smsn/ngo/083.pdf>

3. Good Governance

- Widespread poor forest governance must be improved, with REDD providing strong incentives for building good governance of primary forests and other natural ecosystems at local, national and regional levels, including, *inter alia*:
 - enhancing transparency of forest management by participating governments,
 - enhancing transparency of national REDD processes through genuine multi-stakeholder engagement in national REDD groups,
 - good fiscal governance,
 - participatory law reform, and
 - improved forest laws and enforcement of such laws.
- REDD processes should support existing forest governance multi-stakeholder processes, such as the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) initiatives.
- Incentives should be linked to performance measured against a set of internationally agreed governance indicators and monitored independently. Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM) is a tried and tested method, developed over the last nine years to improve management systems and compliance with laws in the forest sector at a national level and can be adapted for use in REDD.
- A national approach should be taken (e.g. national-level accounting, regulatory frameworks, reference levels, and monitoring and enforcement systems) to achieve coordination of REDD initiatives and avoid sub-national leakage.
- Regional initiatives are needed in areas where large forests are shared among several countries to avoid leakage across borders, strengthen national initiatives and enable the development of coordinated monitoring and regional forest law enforcement.
- Independent and binding complaint and conflict-resolution mechanisms must be incorporated within REDD.

4. Compliance - Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV)

- REDD must include provisions to measure levels of compliance through mandatory and robust systems for MRV and support capacity building to enable their establishment.
- MRV systems for REDD should address:
 - scientific and technological monitoring
 - governance and social monitoring
 - demand-side monitoring
- Scientific and technological monitoring for REDD should strive to adopt a simple approach, based on observable impacts addressing all land use changes, which captures: carbon carrying capacity and carbon stock changes; gross emissions from deforestation and degradation of natural forests; and effects on biodiversity health.
- Scientific and technological monitoring should be carried out through ground-based monitoring involving indigenous peoples and local communities as well as remote sensing technologies. In circumstances where it is not yet practical and cost-effective to adopt a scalable methodology for assessing a carbon stock-change approach, reliable proxy indicators of degradation (such as length and location of logging roads) should be adopted as an interim measure.
- Governance and social monitoring should address: progress with implementing good governance practices against an internationally agreed set of indicators; activities by national authorities in relation to the management of forests and reducing illegal activities; the transparent and equitable distribution of all transfers of REDD funds; the impact of REDD on indigenous peoples and local communities; and steps taken on conflict resolution.

- Developed countries should implement and report regularly on demand-side measures related to forest and (selected) agricultural products (see below).
- Independent third party monitoring and verification at international and national levels must be an integral part of the system, applying to both developed and developing countries.
- The REDD framework must include a system to identify and respond rapidly to non-compliance.

5. Financial Incentives

- Reliable, adequate, transparent and long term funding for REDD must be provided by Annex I Parties, in addition to their current official development assistance (ODA) commitments.
- Annex I Parties must not use REDD as an opportunity to avoid making deep and real cuts to domestic emissions from other sources.
- Independent and well governed national funds should be established to enable the equitable and direct distribution of benefits - services and funds - to indigenous peoples and local communities in recognition of their important role in protecting forests and providing ecosystems services.
- REDD funds should be directed initially at essential building blocks for good governance and improved forest law enforcement, clarifying land tenure issues and securing the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, and building robust MRV systems involving independent monitoring.
- REDD funds must not benefit industrial scale logging or agro-industry/industrial plantations.
- Allocation of REDD funds should be linked to performance, not only in reducing emissions but also in addressing governance, biodiversity and social issues, against internationally agreed indicators.
- Capacity building should be country-specific and directed by governance indicators. It should be coordinated by the UNFCCC, and support indigenous and local communities, civil society, and government institutions.

6. Demand-side Management

- Developed countries must show leadership by applying demand-side measures to reduce demand for, and trade in, forest and agricultural products derived from or produced on converted or degraded natural forest lands (especially those produced unsustainably or in contravention of national and international law) through adoption and implementation of policies in their own countries as well as through support for relevant policies and measures in developing countries.
- Policies and measures should include, *inter alia*, cooperative enforcement mechanisms including mechanisms to enhance coordination among relevant national agencies as well as bi-lateral and regional coordination on forest law enforcement, training for judges and prosecutors on relevant laws, capacity building for forest law enforcement, and establishment of independent forest monitoring programmes and timber tracking systems.
- As a fundamental first step, Annex I Parties should implement domestic prohibitions on trade in illegally and unsustainably sourced wood and wood products, with credible sanctions for non-compliance.

The Position Paper represents the views of the following organizations. Contact details for each organisation are listed below.

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The Ecosystems Climate Alliance (ECA) is an alliance of environment and social NGOs committed to keeping natural terrestrial ecosystems intact and their carbon out of the atmosphere, in an equitable and transparent way that respects the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. ECA recognises that avoiding emissions of terrestrial carbon stored in the soils and biomass of forests, peatlands and wetlands represents the largest potential single opportunity for cost-effective greenhouse gas mitigation. ECA advocates climate, forest and land use policies to give strong, equitable, transparent and positive incentives free of perversities for avoiding the degradation of terrestrial carbon stores and for rehabilitating degraded land, supported by effective forest governance, robust monitoring and demand-side policies to ensure meaningful outcomes.