



Forests, climate and people

EU support to combat tropical deforestation

1 Dec 2015

EU Pavilion
Paris-Le Bourget



EU REDD
Facility



Summary by Richard Wakeford, moderator

During the COP21 session of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris, the European Union organised a side event in partnership with Member States and tropical forest nations. The aim was both to illustrate past actions of the European Union and to outline future commitments towards combatting tropical deforestation. This was achieved through the release of a EU brochure on REDD+ financing and contributions from a range of speakers with different perspectives.

This note summarises the main points raised in the side event by the platform participants.

The overall sense of the meeting was that REDD+ is at a turning point. The first stage of developing national strategies and action plans, policies and measures and capacity building has progressed well in many nations. The following stage - of implementing national policies and action plans - was also well on track in a few. Now was the time, according to most of those speaking, to move into the delivery of result-based actions that could be fully measured, reported and verified.

Main speakers

Opening the side event, **Artur Runge-Metzger** (Director International and Climate Strategy, DG Climate Action, European Commission) welcomed the previous day's announcement by the governments of the UK, Norway and Germany of increased resources for REDD+ up to 2020. The EU stands ready to further support multilateral initiatives on REDD+, such as UN-REDD and the Central-Africa Forest Initiative (CAFI). The EU will also offer further technical assistance through the Copernicus Programme, in collaboration with the European Space Agency, equivalent to €30 million annually until 2030. And it is looking at ways of reducing the pressure on tropical forests through more sustainable consumption and purchasing policies, while avoiding to create additional red tape.

Anne-Marie Descôtes, Director General for Globalisation, Development and Partnerships in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that, as hosts of COP21, the French Government saw REDD+ as at a turning point – ready now to take the best ideas and translate them into action. That action would require renewed international leadership and delivery in developing countries. The French Government was keen to see large scale implementation of REDD+ and would also promote action in the French overseas territories. It also continues to strongly support the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) action plan to combat illegal logging.

Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven, Director General in the German Federal Government's Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development presented the German engagement of €1.8 billion in bilateral support to 30 countries including for measures:

- to support REDD+ implementation;
- to restore forest land, especially in Africa; and
- to influence forest management through action in supply chains.

She spoke about the REDD Early Mover (REM) Programme and congratulated the Brazilian Government for their achievements, which showed that this was more than an aspirational programme. She also announced the signature of a REM agreement with Colombia, involving \$100 million of result-based finance. REDD+ countries need to put the necessary frameworks in place and engaged civil society action in Brazil and Colombia provides reassurance that the programme is feasible and can deliver on its aims.

Rodrigo Suarez, the Colombian Government's Director General for Climate Change, continued with an explanation of the experience of implementing REDD+ in his country, in the Amazon basin. As an early mover, Colombia had put in place:

- inclusive governance arrangements at the regional level,
- a sustainable sector development plan (including land use measures)
- agri-environment measures for beef, rubber and non-timber enterprises ; and
- enabling activities such as strengthening institutions

There were also arrangements for local self-governance and measuring, reporting and verification (MRV). Of \$100m, 60% are expected to reach smallholders and local people. In this way REDD+ is being applied at the local, regional and national level, delivering on the green growth objective in the Colombia's National Plan.

Ibrahim Thiaw, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP provided a perspective from the United Nations, referring especially to increased understanding between foresters and agronomists and some good news in the shape of decreasing rates of deforestation. There was still a long way to go, however, before reaching a status of no net deforestation. He went on to cover reasons for addressing forest loss other than climate action: for example forest fires kill and harm people and their livelihoods; and smoke from forest fires closes airports, affects national economies and causes illness in urban and rural residents alike. Illegal logging was also a challenge, especially when linked with terrorism. But action was also needed away from the tropical world: high demands from Europe and developed nations continued to have an effect on forests, and while recognising the EU efforts on FLEGT were helping, some illegal imports came in the shape of pulp. So, increased momentum was necessary and welcome.

James Close, Director General Climate Change at the World Bank, stressed the need to scale up REDD+ actions, as poverty could not be eradicated unless global warming was contained within the 2 degree by 2050 goal. The World Bank increasingly aims at addressing deforestation in a programmatic way, balancing between incentives and enforcement at jurisdictional levels. Governments needed to work harder to mobilise private sector funds, to help to accelerate the greening of supply chains. He quoted the example of Cote d'Ivoire, which is on its way to develop a zero-deforestation policy in respect of their cocoa business. In Liberia, housing for rural families was being provided in connection with a rubber supply chain for Firestone. CIB-OLAM is

rehabilitating the cocoa production in the Republic of the Congo, and Zambia is linking up with Cargill.

Professor Stephen Briggs, senior adviser to the European Space Agency, gave an impressive visual presentation, showing the increasing capability of remote sensing of forest fires, logging and destruction. Copernicus, with the Sentinel satellites, is the European contribution to the continuity of systematic global space observations, now and in the future. Satellite data are a fundamental asset for REDD+ and setting up MRV systems on national level.

The UK's Special Representative for Climate Change, **Sir David King**, made clear the importance of greenhouse gas neutrality worldwide. Forest destruction was significant - dwarfing many developed countries' potential contributions - and addressing it needed to form a major part of any overall programme to address climate change. Action required leadership from the forested nations, and while time was pressing, developed nations should and would help. The UK had made available £9billion to boost forest protection, help address deforestation, and promote climate resilient economic growth. The UK Government was also working with private sector businesses dealing in soy, palm oil, beef and paper. The UK also made a collective pledge of \$5 billion for REDD+, together with Norway and Germany.

Sir David went on to say that EU leadership was essential for success and hailed the EU FLEGT action plan as an effective response to illegal behaviour. He welcomed the EU's feasibility study into tackling deforestation through domestic demand policies and encouraging a holistic policy approach to deforestation and reforestation. He expressed the UK willingness to work together with the European Commission to ensure a robust, well-resourced and widely-consulted process leading to a strong EU response to deforestation.

In the panel session that followed, the event heard details of experience with REDD+ implementation in Indonesia, Costa Rica, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. And Lina Barrera of Conservation International pressed for an EU-led regulatory framework and labelling for all products of tropical forests – to drive sustainable consumption.

Conclusion

The event was concluded by **Peter Graham**, leader of WWF International's Forest and Climate Programme. He outlined the progress that REDD+ had made from a simple idea, through various international meetings, to a credible approach ready to incorporate in the outcome of COP21. To achieve the desired results he stressed the need for:

- strong leadership
- challenging targets, based on sound science
- scaling up finance and collaborative action
- accountability in delivering on pledges, commitments, private sector action, satellite and other monitoring

And he made clear that REDD+ needed to be tied into the climate change sensitive development challenge more generally. He challenged the EU to do more to address the drivers of deforestation, through better engagement with the commodity and financial markets, while continuing to provide the funds needed for sustainable development in the forested countries.

Reflection

The side event was successful in its aims of:

- reasserting the role of the EU and its commitment to put in place adequate economic incentives to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation;
- encouraging responsible practice through private sector action to eliminate deforestation driven by the production of forest sensitive commodities;
- explaining the latest datasets and monitoring available through its Copernicus Programme for earth observation that can help everyone involved measure progress
- stimulating further action to ensure a coherent and holistic policy approach to tackling deforestation in line with:
 - the UN Development Goals
 - the 2014 New York Declaration on Forests
 - Aichi Biodiversity Targets
 - ambitious Intended Nationally Determined Contributions.

It was particularly encouraging to hear many of the participants expressing the view that it was time to concentrate on delivery. Over a long period of international engagement in developing the REDD+ process, a good methodology had been created. Now it was time to set realistic targets and put delivery plans in place – not only in developing nations but in the supply chains that continue to tempt unsustainable development to supply relatively uninformed markets in which consumers could not always obtain the facts to enable them to take properly informed purchasing decisions.

It was, perhaps, unfortunate that more time was not available to enable some input from others attending. But there was no obvious sense of frustration or disagreement with the main points put across from the platform.

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1st December 2015