CHAPTER 8

International negotiations on the future climate regime beyond 2012: achievements from Copenhagen to Cancún and benefits to the forests of the Congo Basin

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Preamble

Reference is made to chapter 11 of the 2008 report on the State of the Forests, "Congo Basin Countries and the Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) Process", which explains how the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC) prepared its position for the international negotiations following the 1997 Kyoto Protocol (KP) up until the conclusion of the 14th Conference of the Parties (COP-14) in Poznań in December 2008, which preceded the Copenhagen COP-15. The following chapter continues to document this process, starting with Copenhagen and including the Cancún COP-16 (Mexico), one year before the Durban COP-17 (South Africa).

Photo 8.1:* "*Forest giants*" *are occasionally still found in forest concessions (Wijma concession in Cameroon)

Brief reminder on the negotiations since Rio in 1992 on the eve of the Copenhagen COP-15

Almost two decades ago, countries worldwide met in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), and adopted an important international treaty entitled: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Article 2 of the Convention describes its ultimate objective, which is "to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system". The Convention was geared principally towards mobilizing the northern industrialized countries (Annex 1 of the Convention)[39] to take "mitigating" measures with regard to their GHG emissions and to assist southern countries (non Annex 1 countries)[40] to "adapt" to the adverse effects of climate change brought about by the historical emissions of the northern countries, thereby compensating for the loss of opportunities that they had to suffer.

The Convention, which entered into force on 21 March 1994, recognizes four major principles which are: (i) the precautionary principle, (ii) the principle of equity, taking into account the "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities of each of the Parties", (iii) the principle of pollutants which states that the industrialized countries of the Convention should take responsibility for southern countries' mitigation and adaptation costs, and (iv) the principle of the right to (sustainable) development of all countries. As the Convention did not specify the reduction and stabilization levels for greenhouse gases, the Parties to the Convention decided in

[39]Annex 1 of the Convention includes the industrialized countries and countries with economies in transition.

[40]Developing Countries (DC) and emerging countries are grouped under the label "non Annex 1 countries".

1997 to adopt binding commitments to reduce emissions by adopting the Kyoto Protocol (KP). The Protocol, which is an amendment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), entered into force on 16 February 2005. Without imposing reduction constraints on southern countries, the KP in its first commitment period (2008-2012), contains legally binding measures whereby, in accordance with Annex B of the Protocol[41], industrialized countries have to reduce their collective emissions by 5.2 % from 1990 levels.

To allow the northern countries to meet the commitments they agreed to in Annex B, the Protocol authorizes them to use three so-called "flexible" mechanisms: (i) one of these mechanisms allows Annex I countries to exchange quotas ("Emissions Trading Mechanism"), (ii) another allows industrial entities in these same countries to exchange pollution rights ("Joint Implementation Mechanism"), and (iii) the last one provides for exchanges between the northern countries and entities in the South (non Annex 1 of the Convention), and is entitled the "Clean Development Mechanism" (CDM).

At the 11th Conference of the Parties (COP-11), held in Montreal (Canada) in 2005, Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica, as part of their preparation for the post-Kyoto 2012 negotiations, requested the international community to take into account emission reductions in the forest sector, underlining the impact of deforestation on global GHG emissions. Supported by other countries with tropical forests, including those in the Congo Basin, the new issue of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation (RED) in Developing Countries became one of the major negotiating items among the Parties. Consequently, since 2006, countries and sub-regional or regional entities have shown great interest in this subject. In 2007, the COP-13, held in Bali, was an important step in the process of recognizing REDD as a contributory mechanism for climate change mitigation.

With regard to the Bali Action Plan that centered on shared vision, mitigation, adaptation, financing, transfer of technology and capacity-building, the Central African countries in the COMIFAC group have remained steadfast in their positions (de Wasseige *et al.*, 2009 - Chapter 11 and submissions by Central African countries). In particular, Congo Basin countries initiated the process of extending RED to REDD, thereby incorporating an important new element, which is taking forest degradation in developing countries (DC) into consideration (see box 8.1).

In Bali, the Parties agreed to extend the negotiations for two years with a view to finalizing them in 2009 at the 15th COP session in Copenhagen. These negotiations were to allow for the adoption in Copenhagen of a legally binding agreement on climate change for the post-Kyoto 2012 period; its legal form remains open for debate.

Photo 8.2: Oil exploitation also occurs in the heart of the Congo Basin forests

[41]Annex B of the Kyoto Protocol attributes emission reduction commitments for each Annex 1 country.

Results of the Copenhagen Conference

The 15th Conference of the Parties (COP-15) for the climate Convention was held from 7 to 19 December 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark. There was unprecedented attendance with approximately 45,000 participants, including 130 Heads of State and Government. However, deep-rooted disagreement persisted between the major industrial nations, emerging nations and DC. These related to: (i) the northern countries' objectives/targets for reducing GHG; (ii) the constraints that could be tolerated by the emerging nations, (iii) the financial amounts for adaptation and mitigation and, (iv) the transfer of technology. These divergences prevented the adoption of a new global and binding protocol.

Nevertheless, a minimum agreement, expressed as a Declaration entitled the "Copenhagen Accord"[42], was adopted on 18 December 2009 by the Heads of State of 28 industrialized and emerging nations[43]. It represented 80 % of the world's global emissions while the Kyoto Protocol only represented 30 % of emitters. Despite being supported by a large majority of countries, the Accord was not adopted unanimously by the Parties and, therefore, could not be considered legally binding for the United Nations. Consequently, COP-15 could only "take note" of its existence, incorporating it into the regular negotiating process of the United Nations.

The Accord confirms the need to limit global warming to 2°C compared to pre-industrial temperature levels. The signatories, consisting of developed and emerging countries, specified in an annex (made official on 31 January 2010) their respective "commitments" to reduce their emissions. Although these goals/intentions are not binding at this stage, it is nevertheless mentioned that international verification, based on respect for the commitments, is allowed "with respect being given to national sovereignty". Although it still remains extremely vague, this formulation led to an agreement between the USA-EU and BASIC countries.

Photo 8.3: Eucalyptus tree nursery, EFC company (Eucalyptus et Fibres du Congo), near Pointe-Noire, Republic of Congo

At the same time, the Accord includes financial commitments by the industrialized nations, based on $ 30 billion under a "Fast Start"process for a three-year period (2010-2012) for adaptation and mitigation. These same countries "also have as their objective to jointly mobilize $ 100 billion per year from now until 2020 to respond to the needs of the developing countries in the framework of significant mitigating actions". All means are envisaged, "including recourse to markets" so that these financial resources can be mobilized.

A large portion of new and supplementary resources will need to go through the "Green Climate Fund", which was established in Copenhagen. The Fund was set up as an operating entity with responsibility for the Accord's financial mechanism. At the same time, a so-called "technology transfer" mechanism was established in order to speed up the development and transfer of technology that would facilitate adjustment to climate change and mitigate emissions from voluntary southern countries. It is furthermore specified that a governance mechanism, incorporating equal representation from developed and developing countries, would be established, in particular for the purposes of adapting to climate change.

[42] http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/cop_15/application/pdf/cop15_cph_auv.pdf

[43] Including USA, EU and so-called BASIC countries (Brazil, South Africa, India and China).

More specifically, in the context of mitigation measures in the forest sector, article 6 of the Accord recognizes the importance of forest degradation and the effects of emissions from deforestation. It further acknowledges the need for immediate positive incentives for the benefit of DC in order to reinforce the absorption of GHG emissions by the forests through a REDD+ mechanism[44]. Over the period 2010-2012, 20 % of the global sum could be devoted to setting up this REDD+ mechanism, i.e. $ 6 billion.

In view of the urgent need to combat climate change effectively, the outcome of COP-15 in Copenhagen was considered to be disappointing. Although the Copenhagen Accord is positive, it underlines the remaining work that still needs to be accomplished at the Cancún (2010) and Durban (2011) COPs in order to reach a satisfactory, binding agreement before the Kyoto Protocol expires. A number of Parties feel that the Accord has left them with a bitter taste since most of the developed countries accepted that the UN multilateral process could be diluted, which means that Copenhagen was as much a failure as it was an inadmissible opportunity to dispense with United Nations arbitration and any binding climate change agreement. From this point of view, Copenhagen was disappointing but without any agreement at all, it would have been a total failure.

[44]Integrating reduction goals for emissions resulting from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, as well as conservation and forest sustainable management and strengthening of forest carbon stocks.

Box 8.1: Position of COMIFAC countries

Since the Montreal Conference of the Parties (COP-11), held in 2005, COMIFAC countries have chosen to work together to develop concerted and common positions and make their presence felt in climate negotiations. This strategy has attracted close international attention.

Strengths of the various positions of COMIFAC countries in climate negotiations:

From 2005 to 2009, COMIFAC countries presented 5 submissions of views (one submission per year) to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). These submissions related to the following key topics:

- Funding sources;
- Methodological and technical questions;
- Field of application;
- Reference scenario;
- Scale.

The 2007 and 2008 submissions of views underlined the relevance and consistency in the position of the COMIFAC countries as it was presented at Copenhagen in December 2009. In submission No 4 of 25 March 2008 to the 28th session of SBSTA (FCCC/SBSTA/2008/MISC.4), COMIFAC countries requested the explicit inclusion of (i) conservation and sustainable forest management in the REDD, and (ii) the improvement of forest carbon stocks (e.g. forest plantations, agro-forestry). It is these new elements which helped to establish REDD+ in Copenhagen. COMIFAC countries reiterated their wish to have adjusted reference scenarios and highlighted the importance of having two scale levels in the Congo Basin. They underscored their requirements to strengthen their technical capacity for monitoring the forest cover and carbon stocks. In this submission No 4, they reaffirmed their wish for:

- A carbon market, which is one of the instruments that can provide sustainable financial resources for the REDD;
- The establishment of a stabilization fund to remunerate the environmental services of standing forests;
- Answers to methodological and technical questions under debate;
- The explicit inclusion of sustainable forest management which, instead of being a factor of degradation, is presented by the Congo Basin countries as a form of preservation. Due consideration should be given to sustainable management providing possibilities for offsetting emissions and increased carbon stocks in growing forests;
- An adjusted reference scenario dependent upon national circumstances. Countries will have to state their choice of factors to be taken into account in an adjustment of their reference scenarios;
- Sub-national approaches which would allow countries to acquire the necessary experience to progressively evolve towards a national approach.

Post-Copenhagen negotiations: what was achieved?

Following the limited progress achieved in Copenhagen, the Parties really wanted to intensify negotiations so as to reach real agreement in Cancún. In addition to the formal negotiations, carried out under the auspices of the United Nations, some countries set up parallel and informal mechanisms to expedite the discussions on certain aspects. One such example of this was the informal negotiations to set up the interim REDD+ partnership that was supported and backed by France and Norway.

During the formal negotiation process, meetings were held in Bonn and Tianjin (China) in June, August and September-October 2010, during the last stretch before Cancún.

Photo 8.4: Human activities continue to push back the forest

Setting up the Interim REDD+ Partnership

In an attempt to encourage discussions and consolidate what the Copenhagen Accord had achieved on REDD+, France and Norway announced that they were ready to work together to implement article 6 of the Accord. Two international conferences were therefore held on 11 March and 27 May 2010 in Paris and Oslo on climate and forests respectively.

With regard to the financial component of REDD+, commitment had already been made to devote 20 % of the overall amount of the "Fast Start" to the 2010-2012 period, in addition to promises of $ 3.5 billion that had already been made in Copenhagen. The Paris and Oslo conferences brought the total amount of money committed for the period to $ 4 billion. These conferences also contributed towards establishing an informal structure called the "Interim REDD+ Partnership", which is responsible for coordinating early financing for REDD+. The "REDD+ Partnership" has as its objective to serve as a "voluntary, legally non-binding, temporary framework" so that partners can intensify REDD+ activities and funding and to this end take immediate measures to improve the effectiveness, transparency and coordination of initiatives and financial instruments.

To ensure governance, the initiative has devised a system of co-chairing by one country from the North and one from the South. The mandate for the co-chairmanship is for six months. In an effort to achieve economies of scale and encourage collaboration, the FCPF[45] secretariat and the UN-REDD secretariat agreed to share responsibility for secretariat services.

Despite its informal status, the REDD+ Partnership raised considerable hope on the part of the COMIFAC member States, all of which joined the initiative. Countries in the sub-region are expecting this partnership to mobilize new and additional financial resources that will allow them to carry out their respective REDD+ related strategies. These countries announced at the Oslo Conference that they needed $ 200 million for the period 2010 - 2012 in order to be able to undertake their activities during the preparatory phase (readiness). The countries in question arrived at this calculation through their respective R-PP[46] and national REDD strategies.

The REDD+ Partnership succeeded in recording all funding[47] proposed by partners, acknowledging that not all promised funds were additional and new resources. Partners from the North recorded their various forms of support by integrating all their ongoing commitments, whether in the context of the REDD process or that of global forest management, and whether they were bilateral or multilateral initiatives.

As a result of this partnership, achievements have been recorded in mobilization and coordination of early funds for REDD+. Nevertheless, countries' needs, especially those of the Congo Basin countries, are still substantial. Increased pressure should therefore be put on northern partners so that they provide developing countries with the additional resources that will enable them to effectively develop their national strategies.

[45] "Forest Carbon Partnership Facility", an initiative of the World Bank.

[46] R-PP:Readiness Preparation Proposal.

[47] The Partnership's website (http://reddpluspartnership.org/en/) provides detailed information on REDD+ financing.

Box 8.2: Declaration of Central African Forest and Environment Ministers post-Copenhagen

(Adopted in Brazzaville on 21 April 2010)

Following the Copenhagen Accord on Climate Change of 18 December 2009, Central African Ministers maintained that:

- The coordination of "Fast Start" funds should take into account the specifics of lightly degraded forests in the Congo Basin so that they are treated in the same way as other tropical forests in large basins;
- The coordination should include criteria for ensuring the equitable distribution of "Fast Start" funds that are not only based on the level of deforestation and the will of donors, but also on the needs expressed by the countries. Access and payment procedures should be harmonized and simplified so as to ensure that COMIFAC countries benefit from an equitable distribution of the funds;
- Coordination and transparency mechanisms are instrumental in the success of the REDD+ Partnership. To achieve this, it is important that a system be established to coordinate the sources and early REDD+ funding initiatives;
- The international community is providing for an urgent allocation of $ 200 million as early financing for countries in the Congo Basin to support their activities during the readiness phase. The Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF), the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and UN-REDD are the main implementing partners;
- The international community endorses funding phase 2 of the REDD+ process for ECCAS-COMIFAC member countries to implement national REDD+ strategies that were developed during phase 1. The main partners are the Forest Investment Program (FIP), the CBFF, the FCPF, UN-REDD, the Central African States Development Bank (BDEAC), etc.;
- A small secretariat should be established to monitor and make suggestions for an improved allocation of "Fast Start" funds and initiatives, and representation of Central African countries in accordance with the principle of two countries per region. For this purpose, the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) should be the designated representatives;
- Development partners of ECCAS-COMIFAC countries should harmonize and coordinate their interventions in the context of their national R-PPs;
- The 2nd International Forum on Central Africa Indigenous Peoples (FIPAC 2), to be organized in the Republic of Congo on the "Indigenous peoples' rights and biodiversity preservation processes in the Congo Basin", should incorporate concerns related to climate change.

And call for:

- Developed countries to provide increased assistance and amounts of early REDD+ funding to support adaptation activities;
- The international community to pursue negotiations in order to reach a legally-binding post-Kyoto agreement on climate change;
- The establishment of a sub-regional REDD+ Coordination body, under the auspices of COMIFAC, which will be responsible for establishing policies, strategies, norms and action plans on REDD+ in Central Africa in collaboration with all stakeholders, including development partners, civil society and indigenous populations. The Republic of Congo has been designated to act as the coordinator. The specific terms of reference for such a sub-regional coordination body should be drawn up by the COMIFAC Executive Secretary in collaboration with the authorities of the Republic of Congo;
- Other ECCAS-COMIFAC member States to adhere to the UN-REDD programme, in addition to the DRC and the Republic of Congo.

Tianjin negotiations: final hurdle before Cancún

The last session of the Climate Convention negotiations prior to the Cancún Conference were held from 2 to 9 October 2010 in Tianjin. Although this was the final hurdle before Cancún, where the preparatory negotiations for the post-2012 UN climate regime were supposed to be finalized, this session only assembled 2,300 people, which is twenty times less than in Copenhagen.

Fundamental differences persisted between the Parties on the various key issues being negotiated in the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) and the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA). These were on: shared vision, mitigation, adaptation, financing and transfer of technology.

On shared vision, the Parties continued to have divergent views on the kind of international climate treaty that would replace the Kyoto Protocol. DC continued to call for a legally binding treaty that would reinforce the KP and include all countries, while some developed countries preferred a strengthened Copenhagen Accord with commitments of intention rather than results.

On mitigation in developed countries, aspects that could be integrated into equitable Cancún Agreements were listed as: procedures to ensure transparency in the follow-up process and reporting on targets for emission reductions.

Discussions on mitigation in the DC and in the BASIC countries relate to the voluntary mitigation measures that could be put in place at the national level, funding from northern countries or self-funding in the framework of the NAMAs[48]. Issues under discussion generally relate to monitoring operations (measurement, reporting and verification - MRV) and to financial monitoring of voluntary activities that, when verified at the international level, can be considered to be a violation of national sovereignty. Is it necessary to financially and technically monitor voluntary operations?

With regard to REDD+, while the majority of the Parties agreed on achievements recorded in this area, Bolivia blocked consensus fearing that access to REDD+ credit on the carbon market would lead to a loss of recognition of the multifunctional role of forests, which represent a living environment for rural communities and indigenous populations.

On adaptation, proposals were made for Cancún to create a global committee that would facilitate resource mobilization and the establishment of a global insurance against losses and damages due to climate change.

On funding, consensus was reached to set up a "Green Climate Fund". However, the modalities and operating procedures for such a fund were not specified.

On transfer of technology, discussions related to whether or not to create an executive committee on technology and a network of climate technology centers. The relationship between these two entities, their composition, roles and working methods, were not specified.

Apart from the controversy surrounding the "figures", progress was made in the LULUCF[49] negotiations. A draft decision was prepared for the Cancún Conference. However, there were still divergences on fixing the reference level that would serve as the basis for recording forest carbon sinks in developed countries. This is also relevant to the methodologies that will be applied to REDD+ linked operations to determine the reference levels for each DC, i.e. fixed either on the basis of historic or forecasted levels.

In conclusion, after six days of negotiations in Tianjin, it can be said that hopes had waned. It became increasingly clear that Cancún would not be able to adopt a global agreement on climate change. However, decisions on REDD+, adaptation, finance, and transfer of technology could be adopted in Cancún.

Photo 8.5: The umbrella tree (Musanga cecropioides) is used as building material

Photo 8.6: Agro-forestry helps to maintain trees around villages

[48] NAMAs: Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions.

[49] LULUCF: Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry.

Cancún Conference: results and prospects

The 16th Conference of the Parties (COP-16) for the Climate Convention was held from 29 November to 11 December 2010 in Cancún, Mexico, and assembled approximately 12,000 participants. Bearing in mind the issues that had been left pending in Copenhagen, and despite the uncertainties and divergences that still existed in Tianjin, many continued to hope that Cancún would achieve significant results on key issues. These included mitigation (including REDD+), adaptation, financing, and technology. With regard to mitigation and REDD+, technical and political difficulties stem from follow-up and monitoring because of the need for measuring, reporting and verifying (MRV) the outcomes of operations with the International Consultation and Analysis (ICA). Negotiations on these issues took place throughout the two-week meeting, with the Parties also meeting extensively in plenary sessions, contact groups, informal consultations and bilateral meetings. During the second week, Ministers from developed and developing countries were "paired" in an attempt to facilitate negotiation on key issues. The negotiations continued all week with regular "stocktaking" plenary sessions, which were held to maintain a degree of transparency and to keep all participants regularly informed on progress made in the negotiations.

As a result of the resolve of the Parties and especially the commitment of the Mexican presidency, the "Cancún Agreements" were adopted on 11 December 2010. The Cancún Agreements include decisions under both the Convention and Protocol negotiating tracks, and contain provisions on adaptation, REDD+, transfer of technology, mitigation and financing. While the substantive outcome was viewed by many as far from perfect, most participants were satisfied with the outcome and indicated that it had restored their confidence in the UNFCCC process. However, in spite of the sense of relief felt by many at securing a result, most participants acknowledged that it represented a relatively small step in combating climate change (see the summary of the principal achievements of Cancún in Annex 2).

The negotiation process on climate change was strengthened after Cancún. 139 of 192 countries, representing 88 % of global emissions, agreed to reduce their emissions. The final outcome mentions two main reduction objectives: (i) not exceeding a rise in temperature of 2°C (notably, the EU position); and (ii) remaining under a rise of 1.5°C (position of the African Group and AOSIS countries[50]).

The "Green Climate Fund" was established to provide funding for mitigation activities and adaptation to climate change. It seeks to attract $ 100 billion a year by 2020. Although the "Fast Start" funding procedure was developing very slowly, the REDD+ Partnership managed to assemble approximately sixty countries in December 2010 and was officially given $ 4 billion for the 2010-2012 period.

With specific regard to REDD+, Cancún adopted decisions[51] that officially recognized this mechanism and prepared for its integration into the post 2012 Protocol/Treaty. Sub-chapter C (paragraphs 68 to 79) of Chapter 3 of the decisions and Annex I deal specifically with REDD+.

Paragraph 70 outlines all the areas covered by REDD+, including the sustainable management of forests, conservation of carbon stocks, and reinforcement of stocks (i.e. tree-planting).

Paragraph 71 confirms the adoption of a national approach, while offering the possibility of working at a sub-national level, provided that it leads to national consolidation. Reference levels as well as monitoring and reporting systems must also conform to this approach. This paragraph is therefore important as it shows the necessity for close coherence and compatibility in sub-national approaches in order to achieve national consolidation. In other words, methods and measures at the level of sub-national territories need to be harmonized. A possible consequence of this is that the base units likely to be eligible for REDD+ will comprise the territorial collectivities that are responsible for land-use planning so as to be able to manage the full involvement of populations and avoid possible leakages.

[50] Alliance of Small Island States.

[51] http://unfccc.int/documentation/decisions/items/3597.php?such=j&volltext=/CP.16#beg

Paragraph 74 states that countries should be responsible for their starting phases in relation to their own specific national or sub-national circumstances. However, the methodology to be used to calculate the reference level is not addressed directly. Reference to IPCC[52] methodologies is too vague to be conclusive. The "historic reference" or the "historic reference with adjustment" remains an important issue for the Congo Basin.

Paragraphs 76 and 77 deal with funding, redirecting issues where decision has not been reached for discussion in the AWG-LCA working group.

Paragraph j in Annex I states that payments will be conditional upon results. This somewhat ambiguous statement probably refers to carbon budgets for operations that have been undertaken. It does not apply to sustainable management or conservation estimates which tend to result in balanced budgets. In short, having stocks or forests that provide environmental services is not remunerated. These will probably be priority issues for COMIFAC countries in future negotiations.

Photo 8.7: Although forests are fairly resistant to fires, their periphery remains vulnerable

After Cancún: prospects and questions

In Cancún, the Parties committed themselves to implementing the REDD+ methodology on a global scale and, to this end, a framework was created whereby the modalities for its implementation could be negotiated. This began in April 2011 and should take two years. It started with the Meeting of the Parties in Bangkok which will be followed by discussions to be held under the auspices of the SBSTA[53].

The Cancún Agreements clearly and explicitly recognize the various REDD+ targets. This opens up a wide range of country-specific opportunities and allows for wider participation by concerned stakeholders in Congo Basin countries to strengthen and develop their historic forest heritage and to combat poverty in rural areas.

The Parties have created a mechanism to encourage DC to contribute to mitigation measures in the forest sector through REDD+ activities; however, this mechanism relies on the financial resources (adapted and predicted) that developed countries are willing to provide. A major issue that needs to be dealt with in Durban end 2011 (mandate of the AWG-LCA) is the adoption beyond 2020 of a mechanism linked to restricted market. Congo Basin countries have always said they would prefer a restricted market in order to lift voluntary constraints over the long term.

Decisions on REDD+ identify a progressive approach, starting with:

(i) drawing up strategies and national action plans to be put forward as policies and measures, followed by:

(ii) implementing policies and national measures that require capacity-building, transfer of technology and results-based demonstration activities,

And finishing by:

(iii) evaluating such activities which must be measured, reported and verified (MRV).

In selecting the policies and modalities required to implement REDD+ programs, significant guarantees were given to ensure that environmental, social, socio-economic and legal concerns, including the protection of the rights of indigenous populations, were taken into consideration.

Identifying a national approach, taking sub-national considerations into account, while ensuring national consolidation at the same time that would integrate various monitoring mechanisms adapted to the different scales, requires great stringency to ensure compatibility between sub-national approaches and national "carbon accounting". The precise modalities for doing this are still to be drawn up and agreed upon but it represents one of the main difficulties in the years to come.

Photo 8.8: Dialogue and consultation are essential for the preservation of forest lands

[52]Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

[53]Scientific and technological subsidiary body of the UNFCCC.

Photo 8.9: Slash and burn subsistence agriculture benefits from the richness of formerly forested soils

There is also the difficulty of ensuring supranational coherence at the COMIFAC level so that leakages from one country to another can be monitored and potentially disloyal competition can be avoided.

Two intrinsically important factors are essential in order to ensure coherence at the national and supranational levels: one relates to an accounting basis to establish financial estimates for activities related to conservation and sustainable management, in conjunction with maintaining forest carbon stocks (i.e. the methods employed to fix the reference level) and the other relates to the definition of the "forest" in the context of REDD+.

Common specifications for all countries in the Congo Basin should be used in methodologies to establish each country's reference level. The specifications should be drawn up under COMIFAC guidance so as to avoid any potentially pernicious effects or inconsistencies at the sub-regional level. This does not necessarily mean that the methods for establishing reference levels need to be identical. It would be up to each country to adjust the specifications to suit its own national level by adapting them to the country's specific characteristics. One important question, which also applies to northern countries, is the "historic reference" or "historic reference with specific adjustment to the country". Congo Basin countries have always advocated using a historic reference with adjustment factors due to the low rate of deforestation in Central Africa. This is not the position of many southern countries (notably, Brazil). Coherence at the sub-regional level is the only realistic way to resolve this kind of difficulty.

At the same time, "forest" definition is a real problem. On the one hand, it is perfectly desirable that there should be compatibility with the definition of "forest" as used by the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), especially since REDD+ integrates activities relating to forest carbon stocks increase; on the other hand, as the REDD+ mechanism, which is applicable to Congo Basin or COMIFAC countries, is equally geared towards all other forests, analysis should not be limited to dense moist forests. All forested areas, and notably savannas in drier zones, are affected by REDD+. Current OFAC evaluations only exist for dense moist forests and cover only 40 % of the surface area of the Congo Basin. Therefore, the problem of "forest" definition has a real impact on calculating the deforestation threshold and, consequently, forest degradation.

All these problems have an impact on monitoring activities at different scales and different latitudes, and important questions are still pending:

- Are assessment techniques using remote sensing compatible with "forest" definitions in ecosystems and climate zones and with what is being monitored (deforestation or degradation)? (see box 8.3)
- Are sub-national or national forest inventories suitable and reliable enough to provide the assessments that are required in order to be able to produce equitable financial estimates?
- Over and above a mere interest in establishing carbon accounting at the national level, in accordance with IPCC methodology, could investments and running costs required to measure and announce performance levels become a more permanent feature? This would be in addition to all other benefits for sustainable development and combating poverty in these countries.
- Are there other indirect technical strategies that could be used to indicate performance evaluations?
- How can conservation and sustainable forest management be realistically and positively encouraged when cost calculations are fixed on the "carbon balance" while activities tend towards zero rather than being geared towards positive balances?
- Are Congo Basin countries abandoning the concept of remuneration for maintaining forests for the role they play in stabilizing climate change? This brings us back to the question of payment for environmental services.

Box 8.3: Measuring forest biomass in DRC

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The International Climate Initiative of the German Federal Ministry in charge of the Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety with support from the German Development Bank (KfW) will develop a program with WWF-Germany to map forest biomass in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), develop carbon payment models to finance conservation, and reduce deforestation and degradation.

This project will pilot new technology for estimating forest carbon stocks, while strengthening local capacity in forestry, remote sensing and REDD related activities. Innovative, spatially explicit methods developed by NASA-JPL will integrate field, aerial LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) and hyperspectral cameras with multiple satellite (optical and radar) data to map forest biomass at a national scale in DRC, as well as assessing areas of deforestation and degradation (figure 8.1). This project will demonstrate new approaches for mapping forest carbon in multiple forest types with various types of imagery, assessing the errors and uncertainties for future improvements, estimating baseline greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and degradation for REDD projects and carbon payment initiatives. Additionally, the work aims to evaluate the accuracy and costs associated with this type of national-level above ground biomass inventory.

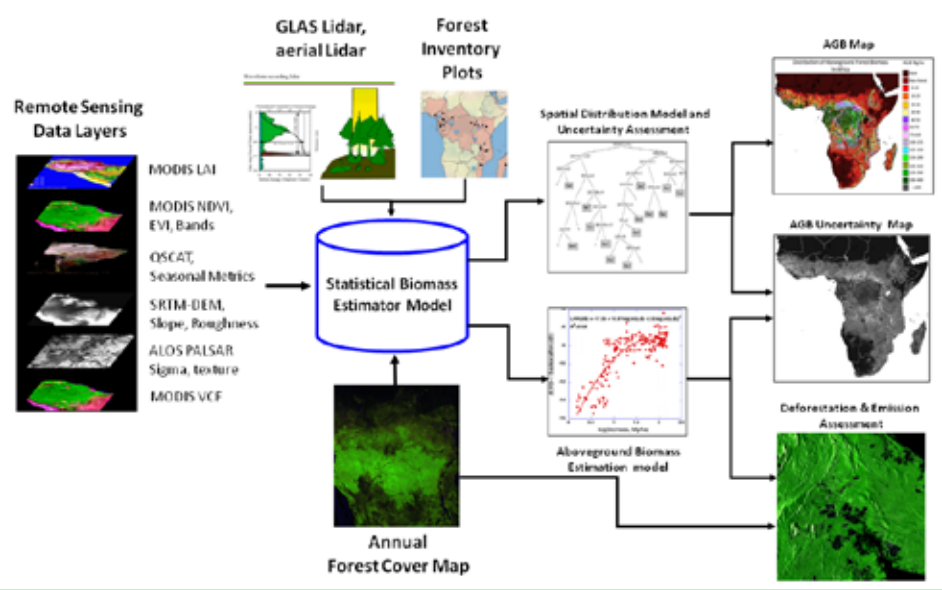

Figure 8.1: Schematic of the approach of the integrated suite of optical and radar satellite data, ground inventories, and airborne, spaceborne LiDAR data

The WWF initiative is supporting DRC government agencies within the Ministry of the Environment (MECNT) and OSFAC (*Observatoire satellital des Forêts d'Afrique centrale*) to build local capacity to integrate field and aerial data, interpret satellite data, and store and disseminate associated information. In addition, the project aims to strengthen ongoing efforts for a national comprehensive forest inventory and monitoring, which is needed to calibrate a national carbon map. The national biomass map will be made available publicly, and for policy decisions through user-friendly, online tool accessible and integrated into government planning and assessment through collaboration with UNEP-WCMC (United Nations Environment Programme – World Conservation Monitoring Centre).

Finally, forestry, remote sensing and REDD-related fellowships for higher education degrees will be offered to DRC citizens through the WWF-US Russel E. Train Environment for Nature program (EFN), increasing local leadership in forest carbon issues. This national forest carbon stock mapping is the largest national effort of its kind, providing the DRC with the necessary components and capacity to develop an accurate map of forest biomass. This map could be used for estimating deforestation and degradation related greenhouse gas emissions, climate conscientious planning and assessment, infrastructure development, scenario building and more.

Photo 8.10: The development of erosion zones is linked to the loss of forest cover

Conclusion

All eyes are now on Durban in South Africa where the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP-17) of the UN Framework Convention will be held. It is hoped that the Parties will be able to finalize and adopt a treaty or a legally-binding protocol on climate change.

Congo Basin countries are totally committed, particularly to REDD+, and are extremely vigilant with regard to the modalities that will be adopted on forest degradation, forest conservation and sustainable forest management. They are also keeping a close eye on other relevant issues (adaptation, financing, transfer of technology and capacity-building).

Until the adoption of all pending decisions, countries in the sub-region are actively pursuing their preparations to join REDD+. Since 2008, the six forested countries, members of the COMIFAC, have received FCPF funds to develop their R-PPs. Some countries, such as the DRC and Congo, are also recipients of UN-REDD funds. These countries are currently at advanced stages in developing their R-PPs which aim to make it possible for countries to secure the services of the REDD national Strategy and Action Plans (box 8.4).

Under COMIFAC's guidance, countries in the sub-region are determined to do everything possible to benefit fully from the opportunities offered by REDD+ mechanisms to strengthen their respective capacities. Initiatives and projects are therefore being implemented at both the national and sub-regional levels. Examples of sub-regional initiatives are:

- Sub-regional project to strengthen institutional REDD capacities in the Congo Basin, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), executed by the World Bank and expected to last for five years (2011-2016);
- Sub-regional MRV project, developed by the FAO in collaboration with INPE[54], to be submitted for CBFF[55] funding.

COMIFAC countries should find these projects helpful in their search for solutions to the methodological and technical problems related to REDD+. Nevertheless, there are as many problems as there are expectations and other ways need to be found to deal with these problems.

[54]National Institute for Space Research (Brazil).

[55]Congo Basin Forest Fund.

Box 8.4: REDD process in the DRC: State of play and outlook

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REDD National Coordination

Context

Since January 2009, the DRC has been engaged in the preparatory process of the international mechanism for the Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+). This process is under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Tourism (MECNT), in partnership with the United Nations REDD Programme (UN-REDD) and the World Bank (FCPF program).

To date, the following steps have been taken:

In May 2009, establishment of the REDD National Coordination.

In August 2009, the process was officially launched during a workshop in Kinshasa facilitated by the Minister of the Environment.

In November 2009, a Decree from the Prime Minister was issued establishing the governance structure for the REDD process in the DRC, which is:

- The National Committee is the decision-making body and steering committee for the process;
- The Inter-Ministerial Committee is the body responsible for implementing the REDD strategy;
- The National Coordination is responsible for the day-to-day management of the process.

In March 2010, the DRC became the first African country to obtain approval for its national Preparation Proposal for REDD (R-PP) from the UN-REDD Policy Board and the FCPF Participants Committee. This gave the DRC a solid internationally-recognized road-map and substantial funding with which to start program implementation.

The REDD+ preparatory program in DRC comprises four components:

1. Coordination and overall guidance;
2. Development of the REDD strategy;
3. Experimentation program or pilot projects;
4. Early programs.

Component 1: Coordination and overall guidance

Officially established in August 2010, the National REDD Committee and the Inter-Ministerial Committee are actively engaged in the:

- Consideration of national REDD+ financing mechanisms in the DRC;
- Consideration of distribution of REDD+ funds at the local level;
- Establishment of registration procedures, support for and approval of REDD+ projects in the DRC.

REDD National Coordination:

A coordination mechanism was established for the implementation of the R-PP "Information, education, communication and consultations":

The implementation of the information, education, communication and consultations plan is carried out by:

- Producing communication tools (e.g., films, plays);
- A large scale country-wide information and consultation campaign;
- The establishment of a national radio network on REDD.

Component 2: REDD strategy

The national REDD strategy is built on two pillars: studies and tests. Several studies are under way on the causes of deforestation, test results, implementation framework and strategic socio-environmental impact studies.

Priority will be given in the coming months to designing the configuration of the REDD financial mechanism in the DRC.

Thematic Coordination Groups, involving all concerned stakeholders, will further enhance the REDD national strategy.

The DRC is developing a global vision for its MRV system. Major challenges in this area relate to the coordination of support by the multiple partners involved (FAO, Brazil, Japan, USA, France).

Component 3: Experimentation program (Pilot projects)

In addition to studies, the DRC believes REDD+ pilot projects that would assist in the trial scheme required to develop a complete operational national strategy should be undertaken. At present, there are three different types of pilot initiatives in the DRC:

(i) The National Coordination has launched 8 geographically-integrated pilot projects in order to test a range of programs in a geographically-defined area;

(ii) The technical direction of the Ministry of the Environment has launched 2 sectoral projects to explore the potential of agro-forestry and community forestry;

(iii) Projects for voluntary carbon markets.

In order to boost REDD+ projects for voluntary carbon markets in the DRC, the government is currently working on the creation of a transparent mechanism to negotiate and validate partnership contracts.

A register of all REDD+ projects and initiatives in the DRC is also being established to promote transparency and find synergies in the implementation of REDD+. A test version has been presented in Cancún and is available on-line since February 2011. This register will be an important tool for the government administration to monitor incoming funds on a day-to-day basis and evaluate their impact.

Component 4: Early programs

The principle of early programs is to allow activities which, based on feasibility and carbon yield criteria, are identified as urgent to be organized quickly and on a large scale, without waiting for a strategy to be defined. Seven potential programs are envisaged:

- Sectoral Program 1: Peri-urban reforestation;
- Sectoral Program 2: Agricultural intensification in forest zones;
- Sectoral Program 3: Delivery of improved stoves to all urban centers;
- Sectoral Program 4: Combating illegal logging;
- Enabling Program 1: Zoning and land use planning;
- Enabling Program 2: Harmonization and land security;
- Integrated district-wide program.

Financing

Funds committed for the preparatory phase for REDD+ in the DRC are substantial: $ 22.6 million for components 1 and 2 (UN-REDD, FCPF, other donors); $ 39 million for the experimentation program, component 3 (CBFF); and $ 65 million expected from the World Bank/FIP for the implementation of early programs. Hundreds of millions of additional dollars will be necessary for the implementation of these programs.