

# **REGIONAL LEVEL CONSULTATION ON PREPAREDNESS OF REDD+ HELD ON 23<sup>RD</sup> JANUARY, 2013 AT BANGALORE**

## **Inaugural Session**

The workshop began with a welcome address by Mr. Shivanna Gauda, Additional Principal chief conservator of Forests, Karnataka Forest Department. Mr. Gauda welcomed the distinguished guests and speakers on the dais and the participants to this workshop. He said that the theme is of great relevance to the forestry sector and the second regional workshop is rightly held in partnership with Karnataka State Forest Department. He highlighted that REDD+ is a financial incentive based initiative to reward forest and biodiversity conservation which can benefit the local communities which are contributing in forest conservation. He mentioned the key initiatives that Ministry of Environment and Forests is taking in this regard. He expressed that the Workshop will create platform for detailed discussion with field foresters on various aspects of REDD+ and enhance our understanding for better implementation of REDD+ activities in India. Dr. Rekha Pai Inspector General of Forests (Forest Policy), Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India delivered the opening remarks. She informed that the Ministry has planned six Regional REDD+ Workshops in various parts of the country. The first regional workshop was held at Bhopal and this is the second regional workshop. The lesson learnt from regional workshop will make better understanding for REDD+ .She also mentioned that simple methodology for the carbon assessment so that communities could assess themselves and high transaction cost could be avoided. The capacity building of all stakeholders including community and

forest department officials is needed with respect REDD+ readiness and preparedness. Financial resources are available with Forest carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) at international level and under Green India Mission at national level. India may join FCPF to generate financial resources for capacity building, readiness and preparedness of REDD+. The Ministry of Environment & Forests may use Green India Mission for the capacity building, pilot studies and organizing workshops for the awareness of REDD+ in the country. REDD+ presents opportunities to address the varied needs and interests of wide range of stakeholders. It helps developed countries to reduce their emission targets on one hand and on other hand it also contributes towards sustainable management of forests in developing

Countries. REDD+ is pro-conservation approach and sensitive towards the needs of forest dependent communities. A balance is needed to be maintained between conservation and dependence on forests. The sustainability issue on forest dependence is critical for the implementation of REDD+ in India. The implementation of REDD+ is impacting the people so political legitimacy is needed. India can play an important role in the REDD+ negotiation to ensure international funding for sustainable management of forests and also ensuring financial incentives for the enhanced carbon stock to the community. REDD+ can prove to be an opportunity for the forest dependent communities to secure additional financial resources from trading of enhanced carbon along with maintenance of their livelihood on a sustained basis, biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services.

Dr J V Sharma, Senior Fellow, TERI set the theme for the workshop by highlighting the principles and key objectives behind organizing this regional level workshop on REDD+. He mentioned Forests are national resource of global concern. Forest Principles agreed at Earth summit in 1992 has mandated for sustainable development of all types of forests, and also authorize member countries of the United Nations to use their forest resource as per their need and priorities. Forests are important globally, nationally and locally. Biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration are concern of the global community while ecosystem services, wood and non wood products and livelihood are the concern of national, sub-national and local community. There is lack of political commitment and means of implementation for sustainable forest management in developing countries including India. The biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration service is possible when forests are managed sustainably. It is the responsibility of developed nation to take care not only the payment mechanism for carbon sequestration service, but also for the implementation of sustainable forest management. The political legitimacy for REDD+ in India is to implement and take the benefits of financial incentives. Reducing emissions from deforestation and Forest Degradation(REDD) is the global endeavor to create an incentive for developing countries to protect, better manage and save their forest resources, thus contributing to the global fight against climate change. REDD+ goes beyond merely checking deforestation and forest degradation, and include incentive for ecosystem services, biodiversity conservation, sustainable forest management and enhancement of carbon stock. India stands to gain a lot from global REDD+ mechanism. It has specifically opened the possibilities for the country to expect compensation

for its pro conservation approach and sustainable forest management resulting increase of forest cover and thereby its carbon stock. India is expecting enhancement of carbon stock to the extent of that would sequester 50- 60 million tons Co<sub>2</sub> by 2020 and addition of more than 1 billion tons of Co<sub>2</sub> over the next three decades. More than 273 million people are depending on forests for their sustenance and livelihood, and also involved in the management, conservation and protection of forests with benefit sharing mechanism on the principle of care and share. REDD+ is an opportunity for the community to take advantage of this incentive mechanism for the conservation of forests. India should facilitate to pass on the financial incentives under REDD+ directly to the community which would motivate community for conservation of forests. India has institutional mechanism in form of Joint Forest Management to do so.

India has strong legal, policy and institutional framework to implement REDD+. National forest Policy envisages the involvement of people for sustainable forest management with an edge given to ecological security, and also ensure the sustenance and livelihood security. The National Government has the responsibility of policy and planning while responsibility of implementation is with state forest departments with the assistance of people through Joint Forest Management mechanism. The enactment of Forest Right Act, 2006 strengthens the involvement of people in the forest governance through an approach of Gram Sabha based forest governance. Forest Right Act, 2006 also provides opportunity for enhancing the livelihood. The Ministry of Environment & Forests has taken policy decision to put Joint Forest Management committees under Gram Sabha. It has also been decided that Gram Sabha will be the core centric

body for the implementation of Green India Mission. Forest Governance at present is in transition stage. The ownership of minor forest produce under PESA is with people or with community. The Joint forest Management institution provides the access of community to minor forest produce on the principle Gram Sabha. The ownership of Minor Forest Produce under Forest Right Act, 2006 may be with individual or group of care and share. This kind of overlapping must be clarified by the Central Government for the better implementation of REDD+. Forest Right Act, 2006 provides Gram Sabha based forest governance model. It should be respected by the Central as well as state governments.

## **Session I. Introduction to and a brief update on the current debate on REDD plus in international climate change negotiations, NAPCC and GIM**

Chair: Mr. Jagdish Kishwan, Former Additional Director General of Forests (Wildlife), Ministry of Environment & Forests, New Delhi

The session began with a brief introduction by Dr. J.V Sharma on the progress in international negotiations under UNFCCC on REDD+. Dr. Sharma further emphasized that despite the slow pace of progress at the international level, implementing REDD+ in India would present opportunities to not only contribute towards mitigating climate change risks but also help in achieving India's sustainable development objectives.

Ms Ridhima Sud, Associate Fellow, TERI gave a presentation on "Evolution of REDD+ under UNFCCC, the emerging architecture and its relevance for India". Ms. Sud highlighted that REDD+ would not only to enable developing countries contribute to global emission reductions but also

strengthens SFM at national and local level; and India should be prepared to avail resources as and when available under the umbrella of UNFCCC for REDD+ implementation.

Dr Rekha Pai highlighted the immense potential of the forestry sector to contribute to global climate change mitigation efforts. Dr. Pai mentioned that India already has progressive policy framework in form of the NAPCC that provides guidance to achieve India's development objectives while yielding co-benefits for addressing climate change effectively and enhancing the ecological sustainability of India's development path. The Green India Mission (GIM), One of the eight missions of the NAPCC, proposes a combination of adaptation and mitigation measures, which would not only help enhancing carbon sinks in sustainably managed forest and other eco-systems but also adaptation of vulnerable species /ecosystems and forest dependent local communities. Effectively implementing the GIM would help achieve many of the REDD+ objectives.

#### Key Discussion Points

1. Institutional Mechanism for REDD+ at the level of JFMC/Gram Sabha which should have linkage to State level REDD+ Cell. State level REDD+ cell will report to National Level REDD+ Cell, and National Level Cell would establish linkage with UNFCCC.
2. Identification of National level Institutions such as ICFRE, FSI, TERI, IIFM, IIS, IIRS for MRV of carbon assessment as well as the assessment of SMF.
3. SMF term agreed at UNFCCC negotiation but definition of SMF is still awaited. In India, SMF is being treated at par with SFM till any specific definition agreed under the umbrella of UNFCCC.

4. Initially, fund based mechanism for REDD+ projects is recommended but later possibilities of market based mechanism could be explored.
5. Green India Mission may be used as opportunity to have fund based mechanism for financing REDD+ projects. Financial assistance may be provided to communities to prepare baseline and Capacity Building. The compensation of their efforts for conservation should be on the basis of enhancement of carbon stock and implementation of SMF.
6. There is need to have provision of pilots of REDD+ under the External Aided Projects in future as well as also in the existing projects.
7. The funds available under CAMPA and thirteenth and fourteenth Finance Commission may be used for pilots of REDD+.

## **Session II. Forest Governance in context of REDD plus**

Chair: Mr. A K Bansal, Former Additional Director General of Forests (Forest Conservation), Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India.

Dr J V Sharma made a presentation on “Forest governance in the Indian context of FRA and PESA”. In his presentation, Dr. Sharma spoke about the forest governance structure in India and the key questions while reconciling varied stakeholder interest. Dr. Sharma also discussed in detail the Forest Rights Act and the issues in regulation; the policy directions on forest governance by MOEF for decentralized forest governance. Dr. Sharma further proposed four models for community based forest governance that can be applicable in the country.

Mr. Subhash Chandra delivered a presentation on “Poverty Alleviation in the context of REDD Plus”. Mr. Chandra emphasized that REDD+ efforts in the country will enhance ecological services while significantly contributing to the rural economy as enhanced forest resources will create more livelihood opportunities . He also stressed that forestry to be integrated with national development programme for holistic approach to poverty alleviation.

### Key Discussion Points

1. The Forest Governance should exclusively with Gram Sabha through Community Forest Management Committee (CFRMC) where rights for Community Forest Resource (CFR) under Forest Right Act, 2006 has been recognized. If JFMCs exists in such areas, may be merged with CFRMC.
2. JFMCs shall be a sub-committee of Gram Sabha where CFR under FRA has not been recognized. This institutional arrangement should be regularized by the state governments with resolution or notification or amendment in the legislation as the case may be state wise.
3. The forest governance in NE states, Van Panchayats in Utrakhand and Jharkhand is already people centric. The minor adjustment such as representation of women and mechanism of benefit sharing.
4. The role of forest department in above mentioned 1-3 models may largely focus on monitoring, technical support to Gram Sabha and also in the protection of forests through legal instruments till Gram Sabha is empowered.

5. The forests may supplement the income of the people living in and around forests through minor forest produce and other benefit sharing mechanism but can not be a source of total livelihood. Other sectors should come forward to provide livelihood to the forest dependent communities to avoid unsustainable harvest from the forest and also alleviate poverty.
6. Capacity building of communities as well front line staff of the state forest departments.

### **Session III. Methodology and Capacity for carbon assessment, leakages and additionally of carbon**

Chair: Mr. Dipak Sarmah, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Government of Karnataka

Co-Chair: Ms. Indu K Murthy, Centre for Sustainable Technologies, IISC, Bangalore

The session began with a presentation by Dr. Alok Saxena, Additional Director, IGNFA, Dehradun on “Methodology for carbon assessment, monitoring and capacity building”. Dr. Saxena provided an overview of five general principles under the UNFCCC to guide reporting of estimates of emissions and removals and the approach to forest carbon stock assessment.

Mr. Rajiv Pandey made his presentation emphasizing the need for baseline data and reference level for carbon assessment in REDD+ projects. He also mentioned the key issues and constrains of implementation of REDD+ project in India. He discussed in detail approach for Reference Level estimation. Mr. Pandey also highlighted the need for having a robust MRV

mechanism supported by activities such as data collection, data analysis, and information management, reporting and quality assurance in the country. He concluded by highlighting the need for capacity building of forest professionals and participation of local community in assessment and monitoring of forest carbon stocks.

### Key Discussion Points

1. The projects under REDD+ should be at the level of JFMC/Gram Sabha
2. The baseline for the existing stock may be financed under GIM or any other scheme.
3. Capacity building of communities and front line staff of the state forest departments for the assessment of carbon stock.
4. State REDD+ Cell should build the capacity in the state to use GIS-Remote sensing Technology to verify the carbon assessment done.
5. Five pool of carbon (AGB, BGB, Litter, dead wood and Soil Carbon) should be used for the measurement of carbon.
6. There is need to institutionalize the indicators for SFM in the monitoring system of forest department.
7. Methodologies for carbon assessment established by IPCC should be used for REDD+ Projects.
8. The Government of India should nominate agency or agencies to provide certificates for carbon stock under REDD+ concept.

### **Session IV: Carbon Based Forest Financing**

Chair: Mr. A K Verma, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Government of Karnataka

Panel Discussion on carbon based forest financing was chaired and moderated by Mr. A.K. Varma, PCCF, Karnataka express his concerns regarding identification of reasons for the failure of ARCDM. He also emphasized to improve the gaps and hope for the success of REDD+. Dr. Madhu Verma emphasized upon the importance of other ecosystem services and also their valuation. Dr. Jagdish Kishwan has importance of MRV for getting financing from voluntary market. .The compliance market is yet to be negotiated. He mentioned that there is need to have MRV mechanism at national level to take benefit of voluntary market. Dr. J.V. Sharma focused on the implementation of REDD+ at national level through national level schemes and projects and have in built provision of funds for the compensation of conservation efforts of the community. He supported the fund based mechanism to finance additionality of carbon under REDD+ concept. Dr. Rekha Pai mentioned that simple methodology for the carbon assessment so that communities could assess themselves and high transaction cost could be avoided. She also mentioned that we should not wait for the negotiations under UNFCCC but have more and more pilots under various schemes wherever possible to build our capacity and to strengthen MRV mechanism. Mr.A.K.Bansal also emphasized to use CAPMA and Finance Commission funds for more and more pilots to have better understanding of REDD+ so that we could avail the benefits if at all it comes. Mr. A.K.Varma concluded with a remark that MOEF should circulate the guideline for REDD+ at the earliest and need of more and more pilots for better understanding of REDD+. On the basis of panel discussion, the following recommendations have been agreed:

1. The Central Government should develop strategy for the implementation of REDD+.

2. More pilots of REDD+ under JICA, USAID Projects, CAMPA, GIM, Finance Commission and other schemes.
3. There is need to have national level consultation on the outcomes of regional level workshops to develop national level guidelines for REDD+.
4. Identification of institutions for MRV of carbon and other ecosystem services. FSI could be the institution.
5. Identification of Center of Excellence for REDD+ from whom State Governments could take technical assistance.
6. Development of simple methodology for carbon assessment.
7. Inclusion of REDD+ pilots under externally aided Projects.

## **Concluding Remarks**

Mr A K Bansal, Former Additional Director-General of Forests (Forest Conservation), Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India mentioned that REDD+ is sustainable forest management with additionality of carbon assessment and addressing the leakages, and mechanism for compensating the conservation efforts of communities. He emphasized the need to be prepared for REDD+ so as to not lose the opportunity if it comes through international negotiations under the umbrella of UNFCCC. He said that experiences from pilots can help in identifying gaps in our knowledge and addressing gaps through capacity building at various levels. He also emphasized the need to have more pilots under national level schemes/projects such as GIM, JIACA, Finance Commission and CAMPA. He also mentioned to have more people centric forest governance. Initially

JFMCs as a sub-committee of Gram Sabha and should move towards exclusive Gram Sabha based forest governance.

The workshop concluded with a vote of thanks by Mr. Srinivasulu, Conservator of Forests (Project Formulation and Planning), Karnataka Forest Department.