

Communiqué of the National Validation Workshop on the draft *Nigeria REDD+ Readiness Programme*

Abuja, 21st February 2011

A wide array of stakeholders interested in REDD+ (Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation “plus”) attended the National Validation Workshop on the draft *Nigeria REDD+ Readiness Programme*, held in Abuja on 21st February 2011. Participants comprised members of non-governmental organisations and civil society, forest community leaders, academic experts, researchers, senior officials from various government structures, representatives from a number of states, members of the business community, professionals of the media, members of international development partners, and the UN-REDD mission, among others. Several of them had attended the national REDD+ workshop held during the first UN-REDD mission last October 2010, when the drafting of the REDD+ readiness proposal was initiated.

The National Validation Workshop was presented with, and examined the key elements of the draft proposal, including the two-track approach to REDD+ in Nigeria to be employed by this programme (consisting of a combination of Federal and State actions, with a focus on activities at community level), the deforestation context, the Results Framework, the proposed forest monitoring and MRV system, and the framework for social and environmental safeguards.

The programme’s outcomes and outputs as proposed in the draft were endorsed. Several amendments were suggested at activity level, and the drafting team agreed to include them in the final draft to be submitted to the UN-REDD Policy Board.

The following aspects were emphasised as priority issues concerning REDD+ readiness in Nigeria:

- i) broad capacity-building and knowledge sharing are necessary since REDD+ is a new concept;
- ii) active community participation and engagement in programme’s activities (e.g. capacity-building and forest monitoring) should be maximised;
- iii) the U.N. rights conventions should inform the REDD+ readiness process;
- iv) gender equality and social inclusion should be mainstreamed;
- v) due clarification and definition of carbon rights and land-tenure matters as they affect REDD+ are required;
- vi) REDD+ activities and benefits should reach communities equitably;
- vii) issues of displacement of deforestation are to be considered;
- viii) detailed work on the definition of forests is needed; and
- ix) private sector engagement and investment in REDD+ should be encouraged.

The assessment of deforestation drivers highlighted agriculture as a major issue and the need to invest in sustainable intensification of agriculture to protect forests and enhance community livelihoods. The plenary highlighted the importance of facilitating the participation of other states in REDD+ readiness in view of their growing interest. It was noted that this would be enabled through outcomes 1 and 2 of the programme. The activities planned for Cross River State will in fact serve as a model for other states with respect to REDD+. In addition, the plenary also indicated the need to strengthen the national policy and legal framework for climate change to ensure that it incorporates REDD+.

The proposed work on safeguards as an integral part of Nigeria’s REDD+ system was welcomed and deemed very important to address human rights issues, inequality, exclusion of communities and other potential risks.

Aware that national level stakeholders for REDD+ need to be better organised to accompany and monitor the development of REDD+, the participants agreed to form a National Stakeholders Forum on REDD+ with particular representation from civil society and non-governmental organisations.

Endorsed in Abuja, on the 21st of February of 2011.