

UN-REDD
PROGRAMME



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



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programme

Report of the Fifth Executive Board Meeting

UN-REDD PROGRAMME FIFTH
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING (EB-5)
SESSION 1

2 September 2021

Virtual meeting

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Introduction

1. The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD Programme) held the first session of its Fifth Executive Board Meeting on 2 September through virtual means (Zoom platform).
2. The meeting was chaired by Mette Wilkie, Director of FAO's Forestry Division. The meeting was attended by 27 participants (see Annex I). All documents and presentations are available on the UN-REDD Programme [workspace](#).

Opening

3. The Chair provided welcoming remarks noting this is the second virtual meeting given the protracted challenges we continue seeing around the world due to Covid-19. She highlighted the importance of maintaining close connection between the Programme and its Board members, updating each other on progress and developments, and getting guidance and insights from the Board on how best the Programme can be useful for the critical decade of implementation at scale of forest solutions ahead.
4. The Chair introduced the meeting as the first of a series of three Executive Board sessions over three consecutive weeks, with two subsequent sessions to be held as strategic dialogues on (i) forests in the context of the Food System Summit -on 6 September; and on (ii) emerging climate finance -on 16 September.

Agenda Item 1: UN-REDD progress to date: update and discussion

5. The Chair opened the session noting its objective to provide an update on the overall progress of the Programme since the last Board meeting, including on experience with National Programmes as a modality of support to countries, as well as a specific example from Chile's National Programme. She then invited the Secretariat to present an update on progress of the Programme since the last Board meeting.
6. The Head of the UN-REDD Programme Secretariat provided highlights of results achieved with the support of the Programme, showing the impact generated both cumulatively since the beginning of UN-REDD in 2008, as well as over the past twelve months since the last Board meeting. On the latter, he pointed at (i) the continued development of the future of the Programme, including

finalising the UN-REDD 2021-2025 Results Framework, developing the related Monitoring and Evaluation Framework – which will be shared with the Board intersessionally, as well as carrying out the inception for UN-REDD’s work in 2021 to calibrate the technical assistance to countries’ needs; (ii) the Programme’s adaptation to assist countries in view of the evolving context of REDD+ finance, for example in relation to the launch of the Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest finance (LEAF) Coalition at the Leaders’ Summit on Climate convened by President Biden in April and its call for proposals, where the Programme reallocated efforts to be able to support and provide advice to interested countries; (iii) the shift from REDD+ readiness work into implementation, pointing at unlocking finance – as countries supported by UN-REDD accessed results-based payments from the GCF, as well as increasing ambitions – noting the support to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) reviews, enhancements, submissions to the UNFCCC and implementation plans in many UN-REDD partner countries; and (iv) UN-REDD knowledge exchanges, such as the one held virtually in May on lessons learned for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) from the first pilot phase of GCF RBPs and to familiarize countries with ART/TREES.

7. Sharing highlights from the completion of a decade-long country-support modality of National Programmes, with 26 programmes supported since 2009 and the last two closing this month – Peru and Chile, the Secretariat noted UN-REDD’s catalytic role helping most of these countries reach phase three of REDD+, including accessing GCF payments, bilateral REDD+ schemes, and recently submitting LEAF proposals.
8. The representative from Chile presented experiences and lessons learned with their UN-REDD National Programme (NP). She noted the four targets of Chile’s NDC, including (i) afforestation and recovery, (ii) sustainable management of native forests, (iii) reducing emissions from degradation and deforestation of native forests by 25% to 2030, and (iv) restoration at landscape level. Chile worked with UN-REDD since the beginning of the development of its National Strategy on Climate Change and Vegetation Resources (ENCCRV), touching transversally on the four Warsaw elements, and the support from UN-REDD was key for the progress achieved so far, as they entered phase three of REDD+ obtaining USD 63 million from the Green Climate Fund. In terms of the contributions of the NP to sectoral public policies, she highlighted the proposal for a law on the recovery of burnt forests afforestation. Chile’s strategy to ensure sustainability of the NP activities includes (i) scaling up work on results-based payments, (ii) modifying the national law on native forests, (iii) a post-pandemic economic reactivation plan, (iv) updating the national adaptation plan, and (v) incorporating new carbon price mechanisms and considering compliance and voluntary markets.

Feedback from the Board

9. The Executive Board welcomed the progress achieved by the Programme and the value provided at the global and country level, as reported during the meeting and in the background documents, including the 2020 Annual Report and the 2021 semi-annual progress update. Norway suggested to highlight in upcoming annual reports how UN-REDD activities align and create synergies with other ongoing initiatives funded by different sources.
10. The Board appreciated how UN-REDD has adapted to the evolving context of REDD+ finance, continuing to deliver notwithstanding and beyond Covid-19 constraints, and helping countries harness emerging opportunities.
11. The representative from Indigenous Peoples recognised UN-REDD's role in promoting community and indigenous rights, including gender mainstreaming, and all despite the challenges posed by the Covid pandemic. She called on donors to strengthen their support to the Programme, noting the need of continued support and empowerment of indigenous communities, women and youth.
12. The Board commended Chile for its achievements and lessons shared, and congratulated the country on accessing USD 63 million results-based payments from the Green Climate Fund. Responding to questions raised by Board members, Chile explained how local communities – including indigenous communities such as the emblematic Quinquén community where a cultural payment for ecosystem services project is ongoing – as well as farmer communities, are fully integrated into Chile's National Strategy and the country's benefit distribution programme.
13. Pointing at the tremendous pressure for communities in Myanmar due to the military *coup* as well as Covid-19, the civil society representative raised a question on UN-REDD's plans for existing initiatives in Myanmar. The Secretariat noted UN-REDD agencies are conducting risk assessments and reviewing the prospects of project implementation in line with UN policy in Myanmar. Accordingly, UN-REDD is recalibrating actions and putting many on hold. The Secretariat offered to provide a written update after the Board meeting (attached in Annex 2).
14. The Chair and the Secretariat thanked the Board for their commitment and appreciation of the value of the UN-REDD platform, and their insightful contributions.

Agenda Item 2. UN-REDD plans ahead: update and discussion

15. The Chair opened the session and invited the Secretariat to provide an overview of UN-REDD's operational modalities and to introduce the UN-REDD 2022-2025 work plan and budget.

16. The Head of the Secretariat provided a refresher on the four outcomes of the UN-REDD 2021-2025 Results Framework, as well as on the Programme's operational modalities, both introduced at the previous Board meeting, and framing the Programme's future plans. He underlined UN-REDD's intervention principles of country ownership, not leaving anyone behind and being socially inclusive, agility to respond to new opportunities, and working together capitalising on the respective strengths of the UN-REDD partner agencies.
17. The Secretariat introduced the proposed 2022-2025 work plan and budget, which is based on a UN-REDD appraisal of REDD+ prospects and opportunities, noting the final version will be shared with the Board for review and intersessional approval once the funding is confirmed. The Secretariat informed that Norway has expressed willingness to continue supporting UN-REDD financially, in its role in providing technical assistance to countries, including through knowledge management and communications, to advance the REDD+ agenda. With a focus on new results-based financing opportunities, the Norwegian contribution will facilitate countries and other jurisdictions to prepare for and scale-up actions, enhance implementation and ensure the high environmental integrity of results. Finally, he noted the Programme is engaging with other donors and exploring additional resource mobilisation opportunities to be able to cover the full spectrum of the 2021-25 Results Framework.

Feedback from the Board

18. Several Board members affirmed their support to UN-REDD approach for the future. Ghana reinforced that the direction of Programme for 2021-2025 greatly ties in to countries' needs particularly in terms of raising ambition in their work on forest. Colombia voiced a similar message, noting the alignment of UN-REDD's future plans with the country's expectations, and stressing the importance of continued support to communities.
19. Announcing their support as donor for UN-REDD for the 2021-2025 period, Switzerland indicated their thematic contributions to UN-REDD, including (i) social and community forestry, (ii) regional approaches that optimize the use of resources and local know-how, linking communities, jurisdictions, and countries, for example in the ASEAN region and possibly West Africa or other interested regions, and (iii) scaling-up REDD+ by connecting actors from the community level up to the highest policy level where forests become prominent and well-financed nature-based solutions.

20. Norway congratulated UN-REDD on how it shifted gears within the parameters of its strategic framework to address the LEAF opportunity and assist interested countries, while also attending to other commitments predating LEAF.
21. On a question by Japan on UN-REDD's plans to support countries to access GCF results-based payments, LEAF and Paris Agreement articles 6.2, 6.4 and 6.8, the Secretariat confirmed that – resources allowing – the Programme will continue responding to country demand, and noted this topic will be discussed in depth during the Board's strategic dialogue on emerging finance on 16 September.
22. The Chair congratulated Norway and Switzerland on behalf of the Board for their funding support, and extend the encouragement to other donors to contribute to the Programme. She thanked the Board for their insightful reflections and valuable inputs, and encouraged members to provide any other comments and feedback in writing to the Secretariat.

Closing

23. Summing up key feedback and guidance from the Board, the Chair noted the support to UN-REDD's approach for the future and the need to further scale up UN-REDD's work, as well as to ensure enhanced support in the domain of Indigenous Peoples in local communities.
24. The Chair also noted that the 2022-2025 work plan and budget will be shared with the Board for intersessional decision once funds are confirmed.
25. The Head of the Secretariat reiterated his thanks to the Board for their comments, which are testimony to the value of the Programme and contribute to the co-design of the future UN-REDD partnership.
26. The Chair invited any further feedback or clarification questions and, hearing no question, closed the first virtual EB meeting, thanking the Board members and all colleagues.

Annex 1: Final List of Participants

		Name	Country/Agency/Constituency	Designation
1	Ms.	Gabriela Soto Nilo	Chile	Alternate LAC
2	Ms.	Yaisa Lorena Bejarano	Colombia	Member LAC
3	Ms.	Roselyn Fosuah Adjei	Ghana	Alternate Africa
4	Ms.	Lovakanto Ravelomanana	Madagascar	Member Africa
5	Mr.	Rijatahiana Haingomanantsoa	Madagascar	Member Africa
6	Ms.	Ibu Laksmi Dhewanthi	Indonesia	Alternate AP
7	Mr.	Yajnamurti Khanal	Nepal	Member AP
8	Mr.	Shankar Adhikari	Nepal	Member
9	Mr.	Leif John Fosse	Norway	Member
10	Ms.	Hilde Dahl	Norway	Member
11	Mr.	Keith Anderson	Switzerland	Member
12	Mr.	Pierre-André Cordey	Switzerland	Member
13	Mr.	Takayuki Ishikawa	Japan	Member
14	Mr.	Gustavo Sanchez Valle	Civil Society Organizations/Local Communities	Permanent Observer
15	Mr.	David Ganz	Civil Society Organizations	Alternate Observer
16	Ms.	Dolores 'Lola' Cabnal	Indigenous Peoples Organizations	Permanent Observer
17	Ms.	Mette Wilkie	FAO (Chair)	Member
18	Ms.	Astrid Agostini	FAO	Member
19	Mr.	José Carlos Fernandez	FAO	Member
20	Mr.	Julian Fox	FAO	(Observer)
21	Mr.	Tim Clairs	UNDP	Alternate
22	Mr.	Josep Garí	UNDP	Alternate
23	Mr.	Gabriel Labbate	UNEP	Alternate
24	Mr.	Steven Swan	UNEP	Alternate
25	Mr.	Mario Boccucci	UN-REDD Secretariat	Secretariat
26	Ms.	Mihaela Secrieru	UN-REDD Secretariat	Secretariat
27	Ms.	Frances Lim	UN-REDD Secretariat	Secretariat

Annex 2: Update on “Integrating mangroves sustainable management, restoration and conservation into REDD+ Implementation in Myanmar: UN-REDD Technical Assistance”

Recap

In line with United Nations Country Team (UNCT) Engagement Principles, “criticality analysis” of UN-REDD Mangroves Technical Assistance (TA) was undertaken from February-March 2021 by the TA interagency working group (FAO, UNDP, and UNEP) to assess the continuation, revision, or halt of work delivery. Based on the result of the analysis, the interagency working group (IWG) prepared an activity matrix, outlining the activities to be paused or continued, and proposed alternative activities to be pursued. With approval of the UN-REDD Management Group (MG) and agencies’ representatives, the activity matrix was shared with Norad on 14 April 2021 and subsequently approved in May 2021. Later in May, the IWG shared with Norad a Progress Update/Information Note along with Post-military Coup Context Analysis and Responses to Norad’s Comments on the Results Framework. In the last week of June 2021, the IWG again provided Norad with follow-up situational updates and the TA implementation progress between May and June 2021. A similar update was also provided as part of the UN-REDD Programme 2021 semi-annual progress update.

Progress update between July and August

As per the agreed work-plan indicated in the activity matrix, policy and coordination support to Myanmar government remains on hold, whereas desk-based remote work and community focused initiatives are being pursued:

- Continuous progress and on-going work under Output 2 (analysis of field data, mangrove biome mapping, methodology and accuracy assessment – generation of a mangroves mask and classification, methodology and training material);
- Finalization of briefing paper on “Subnational REDD+ planning and implementation in Asia – a review of country cases” to be published as UN-REDD brief paper.
- Ready to sign Letter of Agreement with Service Provider (MERN) for activities 4.2-4.3 (Community Forests and Community Forest Enterprises established in Delta Region)
- Ongoing procurement process for Output 4, activities 4.1 and 4.3 (Community Forests, Community Forest Enterprises, Community Protected Areas), and awareness raising of the importance of mangroves.
- Preparation of scoping study of mangroves values and ecosystem services under Output 2, activity 2.4. The report will be ready for stakeholder review in late September 2021.
- Under Output 1, activity 1.3, generic safeguards guidance for non-government organizations and community led natural resource management will be ready for review in one month.

Latest developments between July and August, and implications for the TA

The overall political situation in Myanmar remains extremely dynamic and volatile. A rapid return to the path of democracy is widely believed to be an unlikely scenario. Particularly worrying is escalating armed conflict in ethnic States and Regions including in proposed project locations and an increased armed resistance manifested in the forms of regular explosions at government offices in rural and urban areas as well as assassinations of military elected officials. To compound matters, daily rate of Covid-19 infections and death toll have been unabated over the past two months. As a consequence of the combined security and Covid-19 situation, movement restrictions have been imposed across the country, posing serious challenges to the implementation of on-the-ground project activities. The crisis of the banking system has continued since the February 1 coup creating additional hurdles to the delivery of the TA. However, alternative approaches have been sought out in synergy with agencies’ country offices.

In mid-September, the UN General Assembly is expected to deliberate on the approach to be followed with regard to engaging the Myanmar Government. Both the *de facto* authorities and the ousted

National Unity Government (NUG) are vying for recognition by the UN and wider international community. The Myanmar population anxiously awaits with high expectations. Regardless of the decision by the General Assembly, NUG is under tremendous pressure to turn “revolutionary talk” to “action”. Local media outlets are reporting stronger networks of civilian armed forces with NUG calling for the people to be prepared for “emergency”, therefore the next few months are widely believed by the general population to become a turning point for the country. While the IWG has been making progress through continuous desk-based activities, field activities are in the preparation stage. In terms of the future implications on the TA, it is highly unlikely that any opening towards re-engagement with the Myanmar government will occur before the end of 2021, while the current *de facto* Government has stated that they plan to hold this “care-taker” Government until mid-2023. The unfolding political landscape in the next few months and evolving UNCT Engagement Principles will largely shape the future design and modality of the TA delivery. The IWG will re-assess the situation towards the end of 2021 to provide more details on implications on the implementation of the TA.

While drafting this Note (Sept. 7th) we have received a "breaking news" indicating that: The National Unity Government just declared a nation-wide war against the military. Intense resistance is expected which will increase incidents in both number and intensity. Agencies' country offices are already responding with safety guidance for all staff. It follows that what we reported in this Note is to be considered valid until Sept 6th, leaving the future evolvement even more uncertain.