



ASEAN Common Position Paper
On
Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
(REDD) in Developing Countries

Submitted by Indonesia on behalf of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam (ASEAN)

Background

Land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) significantly contribute to global emissions. In the past 20 years, it has been estimated that the emissions from LULUCF have reached 1.65 Gt Carbon per year or about 17% of the global emissions (IPCC, 2006). About 75% of this has been from developing countries, especially those which have large areas of tropical forest (FAO, 2006). The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) under the Kyoto Protocol aimed to incentivize developing countries to mitigate these emissions through afforestation/reforestation activities. However, its narrow scope and complicated modalities prevented ASEAN to fully participate and thus did not achieve its objectives to bring about positive afforestation/reforestation in ASEAN. This is evidenced by the fact that, of more than 1,000 projects registered with the Executive Boards of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), only one pertained to forestry CDM. A solution to this is to reform the A/R CDM rules and modalities to ensure developing countries can fully receive the benefits from the carbon market while engaging in positive climate change mitigation. Among the specific points for immediate reform include (i) change of definition of reforestation, (ii) removal of temporary crediting rule from A/R CDM projects, (iii) change of crediting period rules and rules governing deadlines, (iv) eligibility of land, (v) removal of 5-year verification rule, (vi) move to programmatic approaches with flexible boundaries and (vii) development of more simplified methodologies. In the 11th session of the COP, the concept of policy approach and positive incentives for avoiding deforestation was introduced by Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica. The Parties agreed to continue the approach and it was later negotiated under the COP Agenda item No. 5 Reducing Emissions from Deforestation (RED). In the 13th session of the COP, forest degradation was also included into the agenda.

To provide a start for a common position in ASEAN on REDD, the Inaugural Workshop of the ASEAN Regional Knowledge Network on Forests and Climate Change was held in Jakarta on 30 and 31 October 2008. The key considerations presented here in this submission, is a result from this Workshop.

Key Considerations

ASEAN as a strong forestry block comprises of 10 Member States including Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. ASEAN Member States (AMS) have approximately 283.2 million ha of forests, which amount to 33.4% of the total countries' land area, and cover approximately 16% of the total tropical forests in the world (FAO, 2006). Under the forestry agenda, ASEAN has taken initiatives in a numbers of notable initiative, including; a Work Plan for Strengthening Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (2008-2015), developing a regional framework for a Pan ASEAN Certification Initiative, ASEAN Criteria and Indicators for sustainable management of tropical forests, a Regional Action Plan on the trade of wild fauna and flora (2005-2010), Mekong REDD Initiative and the Strategic Plan of Actions of the Heart of Borneo initiative.

To further consolidate the efforts taken and negotiation processes involved to date, which include policy approaches and positive incentives for REDD as well as methodological issues, the following section highlights some common positions of ASEAN.

ASEAN Common Position

1. The method for defining baseline or Reference Emission Level (REL) should be left open to approaches, additional to those based on historical emissions. Due to the erratic nature and scarcity of historical data on emissions in AMS, each country should be allowed to use an approach that best suits its national circumstances and capacity, with agreement on some common parameters between different approaches. Most important is that the choice of method should be based on the effectiveness of the method in demonstrating emissions reduction from deforestation and forest degradation, including the forest conservation and sustainable forest management (SFM) practices in greenhouse gases inventories.
2. Policy approaches should also be left open for a range of mitigation activities (reducing deforestation and forest degradation, SFM, conservation, enhancement of carbon stocks) depending on the capacity and the circumstances of the countries.
3. Positive incentives should be diversified and not only limited to market-based but also fund-based approaches, depending on the readiness of the country.
4. Coverage or Readiness activities under other related financial supports such as Climate Investment Fund and Forest Investment Program should be expanded (e.g. expand to include improved forest management, conservation, and enhancement of carbon stock through SFM).
5. The need must be reiterated for Annex I countries of the UNFCCC to support capacity building, improvement of infrastructure, technology transfer, and exchange of knowledge and experiences for developing countries.