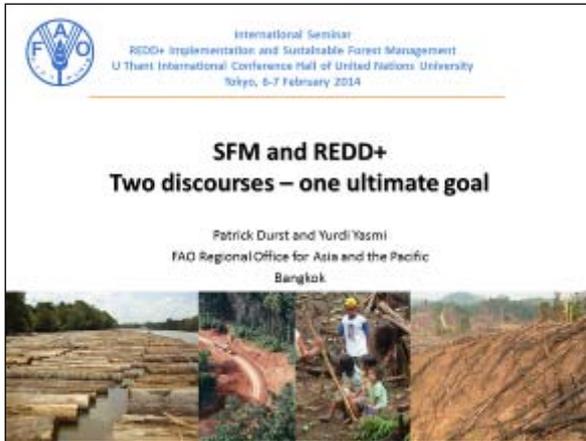


SFM and REDD+: Two Discourses – One Ultimate Goal

Dr. Patrick Durst (Senior Forestry Officer, Asia Pacific Representative Office, FAO)



In my presentation today, I want to talk about the history and evolution of sustainable forest management and REDD+, and particularly about the linkages and commonalities between the two. And I would like to demonstrate that – for the most part – sustainable forest management and REDD+ are traveling to the same endpoint.



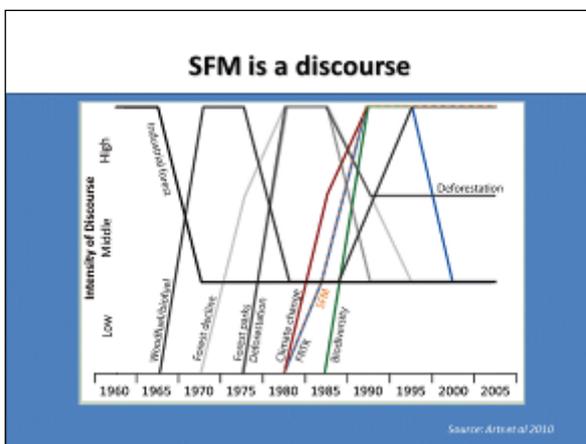
My presentation today will cover three main topics. First, I'd like to touch on the concept of sustainable forest management, where the concept came from, how it is defined. I'll then discuss sustainable forest management processes, and briefly describe what has been achieved so far with regard to SFM. Most importantly, I want to discuss the linkages between SFM and REDD+, how they complement one another, and to what extent we can enhance the synergies between the two.

History of sustainability

- Sustainability 300 years ago - *Sylvicultura oeconomica* by Hans von Carlowitz
- Sustainability as an accepted principle since 18th Century



Mr. Mansur, in his opening remarks this morning already touched on the fact that we can hardly consider the concept of sustainability new. Last year, we celebrated 300 years of sustainable forestry, marking the important contribution of Hans Carl von Carlowitz, a German Administrator for Mining, who was the first to describe and define the concept of sustainability. His seminal work, published in 1713, is generally accepted as the first publication to articulate the concept of forest sustainability. It was later very quickly picked up to provide the conceptual framework for all of forest science and the ideas of forest sustainability that followed.



While the basic concept of sustainability has been with us for a long time, there has been a significant evolution of the priorities for forestry that have been given over the past 50 years, and a number of key themes can be tracked. I quite like this very complicated looking chart published in a publication by IUFRO. It shows some of the discourses that have taken place in forestry over the last 50 years.

‘Discourse’ is a set of concepts and ideas that form our thinking and move us forward on different issues. The best translation probably is a ‘hot topic.’ We can think about what the hot topics have been in forestry over the years. It is quite interesting to see how certain ideas come along

and rise up in our attention span and sit there for a while, and we are very preoccupied by these things and then perhaps drop off to a lower level, mostly superseded by the next hot topic that comes along.

It is interesting to reflect on this as how the forestry debate has shifted over the last half century. For example, industrial forestry dominated most of the thinking from early times through the 1960's, based on the idea that the primary role for forests was to provide for economic growth. As concerns over deforestation and environmental degradation mounted, the industrial forestry paradigm has given way to social and environmental priorities; and particularly in recent times to focus on the provision of various ecosystem services of forests.

The focus on biodiversity, for example, has helped to shape international forestry debate from the 1980's and reached a peak at the time of ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity¹ in 1992. This level of preoccupation and discourse certainly helped to foster the establishment of a great number of additional national parks and protected areas around the world. This strong conservation focus has gradually given way to more people-centered approaches, based around what I would consider more holistic principles of sustainable forest management. Particularly, this has happened in the years surrounding and following the Rio Earth Summit.



Dialogue on sustainable forest management has generally been carried out under a broader umbrella of “sustainable development.” In the 1970's, it was driven by the Club of Rome's “The Limits to Growth” report. In 1987, the Brundland Report that provided an enduring definition of sustainability and laid the groundwork for the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. Of course, a significant outcome for forestry from the Earth Summit was the “Forest Principles,” a consensus statement on the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests.

Following the Earth Summit, the UN established the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests²

¹ <http://www.cbd.int/>

² http://www.un.org/esa/forests/ipf_iff.html

followed by the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, and then the UN Forum on Forests³, all of which were primarily established to help countries to move forward in the implementation of the Forest Principles.

More recently, under UNFF⁴, countries negotiated The Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests⁵, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007. All of these negotiations and background have really helped to frame very strongly the concepts and principles of sustainable forest management.

Definition of SFM

- No single definition of SFM

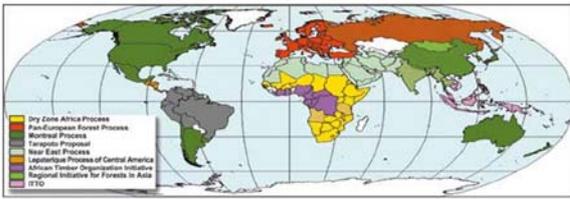
"[a] dynamic and evolving concept [that] aims to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental values of all types of forests, for the benefit of present and future generations".

Source: United Nations General Assembly in the Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (NLBI)

Criteria and Indicators for SFM

- Tools to define and assess progress on SFM
- Help decision making process

Nine processes, 150 countries



It is interesting to note, however, just how difficult it is to define SFM. If you look through scientific literature, you can find dozens of definitions of sustainable forest management. There is even a scientific publication called “One hundred faces of sustainable forest management”. For me, the most interesting and important aspect of this definition, which is probably the most widely agreed upon definition, is the idea that SFM is an evolving concept, and also that it encompasses the three main pillars of sustainability, namely economic, social, and environmental.

³ <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/>

⁴ UN Forum on Forests: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/>

⁵ http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/notes/bali_081207_pc.pdf

It is all well and good to talk about SFM, but how exactly do we measure it, or measure progress toward achieving it? One of the big steps in this regard has been the development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. ITTO pioneered the development of C&I⁶ for sustainable management of natural tropical forests in the early 1990's. This was followed by similar efforts to establish criteria and indicators for temperate and boreal forests through the Helsinki⁷ and Montréal⁸ processes. In all, now we have some nine C&I processes that have been established, some around specific forest types and some around geographic regions. For example, the Tarapoto⁹ process for Amazonian forests, and we have a process for dry forests here in Asia.

The range of criteria and the large number of indicators that have been developed by these processes demonstrate that achieving SFM is neither easy nor straightforward. I often say, if it was that easy to do, we would have done it a long time ago. We know that, especially when we are trying to encompass the full aspects of social, economic, and environmental goals simultaneously, we often run into challenges and conflicts. It certainly creates a lot of challenge for forest managers trying to strike the right balance and achieve desired outcomes within this overall framework.

7 thematic areas of SFM

1. Extent of forest resources
2. Forest biological diversity
3. Forest health and vitality
4. Productive functions of forest resources
5. Protective functions of forest resources
6. Socio-economic functions of forest resources
7. Legal, policy and institutional framework

Source: United Nations General Assembly in the Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (NLBI)

One of the positive outcomes of these processes of C&I was the development of the seven thematic areas that have been widely accepted for sustainable forest management, and have also now been essentially enshrined in The Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests: namely, the extent of forest resources, forest biological diversity, forest health and vitality, the productive functions of forest resources, protective functions, socioeconomic functions, legal policy, and institutional frameworks.

⁶ Criteria & Indicators

⁷ <http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/hel.html>

⁸ <http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/mont.html>

⁹ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/007/y5841e/y5841e12.htm>



Another tool that has been developed, that also helps us to get some idea, or a proxy measure of sustainable forest management is forest certification. As you know, there are two major schemes for forest certification: the Forest Stewardship Council¹⁰ supported program¹¹ and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification¹².

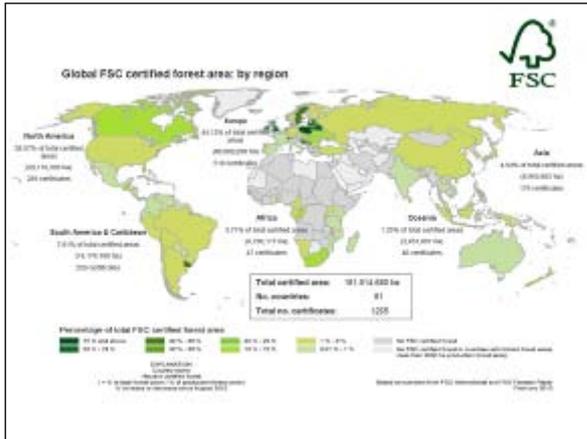


What does certification tell us about where we stand with SFM? To date, we have slightly over 400 million hectares of forests that have been certified by these two major programs, which is the slightly over 10% of the total forest area. This is really not very much when we think of the overall extent of forests. It is even far less impressive when we realize that only a very small portion, only about 10% of the total area of certified forests, is in the developing or tropical countries of the world.

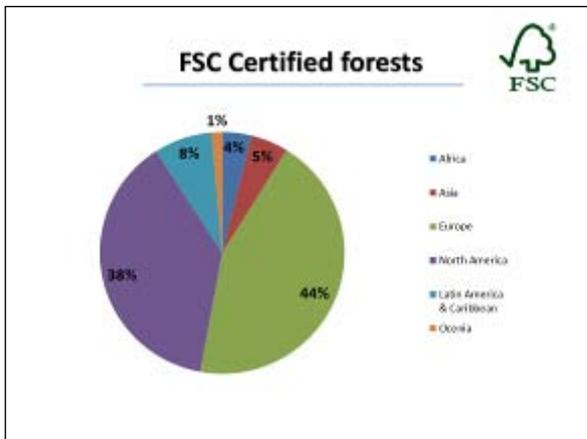
¹⁰ <https://ic.fsc.org/>

¹¹ <https://ic.fsc.org/certification.4.htm>

¹² <http://www.pefc.org/>



This slide gives us a more visual idea of where the FSC-certified forests are located. The darker green shaded countries are those that have a higher percentage of their forests that have been certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. You can see that most of them have been in Europe and in North America. The countries with the gray shading are those that have no certified forests whatsoever. There are quite a number of those especially in Africa.



This is another depiction of the FSC¹³ certified forests. We see that there is roughly 8% in Latin America, and less than 5% are located in Asia and Africa respectively, while over 80% are in Europe and North America.

¹³ Forest Stewardship Council

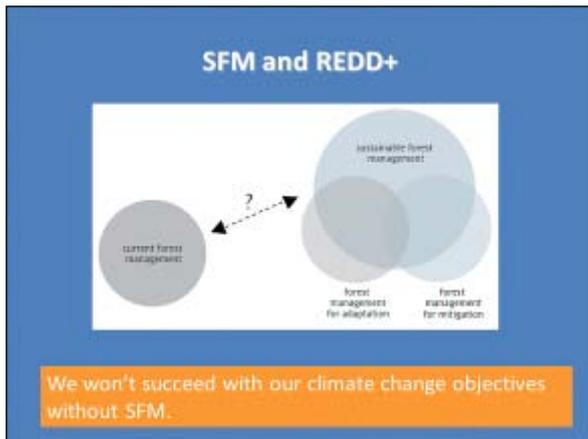


We can take a little bit of measure of sustainable forest management from the amount of forests that have been certified, but we have to take this also with a grain of salt. For the most part, certification focuses primarily on forests that are managed for timber production. As it is a market-based instrument, the people who are interested in certification tend to be those who are looking for market access or to ensure the price that they can receive for their products.

There are quite a lot of forests that are managed for other purposes as conservation areas and protected areas where the managers may not feel that it is really worth the effort to go through certification, or the cost may be more than the perceived benefits. Therefore, we should really look at the level of forests around the world that have been certified as a minimum level of what we can say is really well-managed forest.

There is also another caveat in that certification tends to validate the forests that were already very well managed before. Basically, there is a threshold standard for certification and if you meet it, fine, but there is very little with regard to measuring the progress. Certainly, certification systems provide very little incentive for those forests that are among the worst or poorest managed forests. The managers of these forests are likely to say, “Oh, the threshold is so high, we will never reach it anyway. What is the point of it?”

To that extent, certification is kind of like giving an award to the best student in the class rather than the most improved student. In the case of forest management, what we really need to be concerned about is how to improve the performance of those that are not yet up to the standards that we are looking for.



With this background, I would now like to turn to REDD+ and how it relates to SFM. This schematic is intended to show that there is a tremendous amount of overlap between the objectives of sustainable forest management, forest management for climate change adaptation, and for climate change mitigation. It should be clear that in most cases we are not going to achieve our climate change related forestry objectives without achieving sustainable forest management. At the same time, it is also clear that in many parts of the world we have a long way to go in our management before we get to what we can call sustainable forest management.

I want to present two slides that show us some of the attributes of REDD+. We can see that these link very closely to what I presented earlier about sustainable forest management. These are the five areas of REDD+ activities that were agreed upon in COP 16, the Cancun Agreements. REDD+ activities focusing on reducing emissions from deforestation, from forest degradation, the conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

UN-REDD social and environmental principles

- Democratic governance
- Stakeholder rights
- Sustainable livelihoods
- Low carbon, climate resilient sustainable development policies
- Protecting and conserving natural forest
- Maintaining and enhancing multiple functions of forests
- Minimizing adverse impacts on ecosystem services and biodiversity

A small photograph of a person standing in a forest is located at the bottom right of the slide.

Also coming out of Cancun, we had the safeguards that have been developed for REDD+ focusing on some of the principles to be adhered to in implementation. We can see the similarity and

overlap with the seven thematic areas of SFM presented earlier, including such things as consistency with national forest programs, focus on governance, respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, full and effective participation of stakeholders, conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, and enhancement of other social and environmental benefits.

Commonalities of SFM and REDD+

- High importance on (sustaining) forests – *forests matter!*
- Tackling deforestation and degradation
- Require support from local people!



I would contend that what was good forestry before in the past, i.e. sustainable forest management, would undoubtedly serve very well in achieving the new objectives and meeting the new expectations that we have of forests and forestry in the 21st century, including those related to climate change.

If we look at some of these commonalities, we see that SFM and REDD+ both very much give very high importance on sustaining the forest base and recognizing that forests really do matter. They both give high importance to tackling the issues of deforestation and degradation; a lot of emphasis on ecosystem integrity and the multiple functions of forests; recognizing the importance of policies and governance; and most importantly, in many aspects of tying this all together, they require the support of local people and engagement of local people for success.

How can SFM enhance REDD+ goals?

1. SFM practices increase carbon sequestration
2. SFM practices can prevent forest degradation
3. Products from SFM can substitute fossil fuels and more carbon-intensive products
4. Experience with participatory forestry will be important for REDD+



Getting to the heart of the theme of this seminar: how can SFM enhance REDD+ goals? Clearly we can look at the things that SFM can deliver: increase in carbon sequestration. By managing our forests sustainably, we certainly increase their ability to sequester carbon. Sustainable forest management practices address a lot of the issues of forest degradation. Just as one example, we can think about reduced impact logging and how it can significantly reduce the damage that is done to forests as we are utilizing them. As foresters, we know this very well, but in the overall concept of REDD+, we are struggling very much with how to measure and validate this. Wood products from sustainable forest management can substitute for a lot of the fossil fuels and more carbon intensive products. Finally, the experience that we have gained in implementing sustainable forest management, or working toward it, will serve extremely well and be very important in the implementation of REDD+.



Going beyond the question of that slide, in my opinion, an even more important question than what SFM can do for REDD+ is what REDD+ can do to advance the goals of SFM, considering that SFM is actually a broader concept? While it seems apparent that on-the-ground management of forests will not substantially alter under REDD+ compared with what we would consider best practices of sustainable forest management, there are nonetheless significant changes in process that are being driven by REDD+ and the broader climate change programs. Positively, I think these changes in process and approach are helping already to accelerate the progress toward sustainable forest management. These are quite important to take note of.

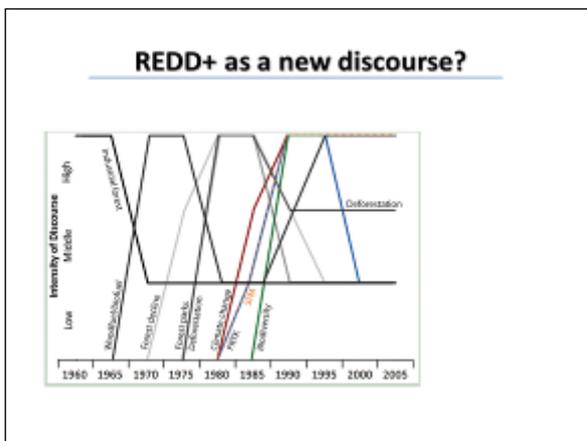
First of all, the increased amount of funding flows that are coming and anticipated through REDD+ are bringing forestry back to the center of attention internationally and in most of the countries where forests are important. Secondly, REDD+ is driving considerable investment in MRV and forest monitoring and assessment to the point where we now already have more and better information about forests and forest resources than ever before. This is also a very important tool to help us improve forest management more generally.

In looking more carefully under REDD+ at the real drivers of deforestation, we are engaging with a much wider range of sectors that have influence on the forests than we have in the past. We have talked for a long time about these other influences from sectors outside forestry, but we have always struggled with how to engage them. I think we are still struggling with how to engage them under REDD+, but we are giving more attention to it and making more effort to do it.

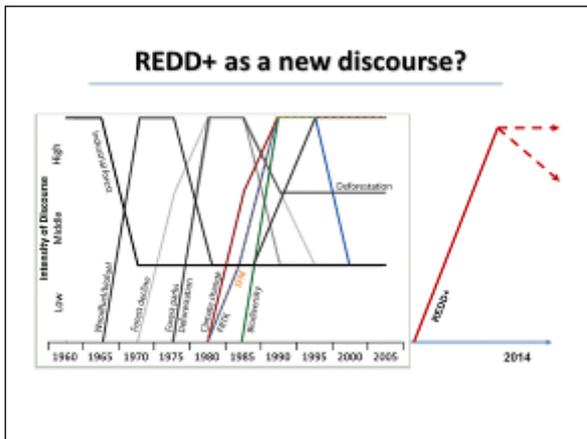
We are giving renewed emphasis to forest governance, in particular tenure issues that are so critical for success in forest management. REDD+ is also providing more opportunities for the engagement of local communities and indigenous peoples. There is more emphasis being given under REDD+ to FPIC¹⁴ and gender perspectives than we have in the past under sustainable forest management approaches.

In total, we can see already that REDD+ is pushing us and accelerating the pace of what we have been trying to do under SFM for a long time. One of the major remaining challenges though is still in moving REDD+ beyond a forest protection or preservation mentality to fully embrace the sound management, utilization, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. To date, most REDD+ attention and funding has focused on reducing deforestation, and considerably less on the second “D” and the “+” in REDD+. For us to really tie to the concepts of sustainable forest management and REDD+ together, we need to see more attention on that second “D” and on the “+”.

I think we have some opportunities with this through increased attention to green economy, the whole concept around green building, and green jobs. We can also learn considerably from the past with respect to what has been achieved in Japan and Korea, in particular the experience here in Asia, with trying to tie together these concepts of green economy and using these to push the agenda further.



¹⁴ Free, Prior, and Informed Consent



To conclude, I want to come back to this confusing slide that I had at the beginning and revisit this chart. Let us extend the timeframe beyond 2005 that is here, and ask ourselves what major new strands in the forestry dialogue have emerged. Without a doubt, we can say that since the UNFCCC COP meeting in Bali in 2007, REDD+ has become the dominant theme in the forestry discourse.

The question we have to ask ourselves is just how this REDD+ theme will evolve in the future. Is it going to remain at a high level with things like sustainable forest management and biodiversity, or will it drop down and be overshadowed by the next hot topic that comes along in the next few years?

For now, it certainly seems that REDD+ is serving the forestry community quite well in many respects. But we also have to recognize that it also has the potential to draw attention and resources away from broader SFM interests and needs. We already see that happening in some countries.

It is interesting for me to reflect, for example, in going to meetings, there is almost never a meeting these days on a topic that is not related to climate change or REDD+ in forestry. There is nothing wrong with that because REDD+ has actually grown and expanded and embraces virtually the same concepts that we have had for a long time in sustainable forest management.

Of course, what we would all like to see is that these synergies continue and that the shared goals of sustainable forest management and REDD+ prevail for the benefit of both in the years to come.