
Session 4 – Experiences from SFM while Promoting REDD+ – Q&A Session

(Q1: FFPRI, Toma) I have two questions related to the overestimation; one for India, one for Zambia. For India, I think there would not be much the emission reduction or CO₂ removal from atmosphere via forestry, because you have already very high base-lining for those carbon sink of forests. If we expect result-based payment from REDD+, there will not be much incentive in future, I am afraid.

For Zambia, you are in charge of a REDD+ of the REDD+ Coordination Unit. If you say about the issue of the overestimation for other government officials or policymakers, how was their response? Do they still want to keep REDD+ in your country or not?

(Ravindranath) In India if you look under the baseline, there is very little deforestation, and there is a large afforestation program. If REDD+ has to be implemented in India, if you are to talk about additional carbon credits, for example, it will be hard. However, India has clearly stated in all the forest polices to have one-third of the geographic area under forests. Right now we have only 12% of the geographic area under good forests. A large gap is there. We have a huge ambition because we want to go from 12% to 33%. It is possible to show additionality to that extent, even though we have very low deforestation and very high afforestation.

(Kasaro) Regarding over expectations and whether the stakeholders would want to keep REDD in Zambia or not, the fact is that the stakeholders in Zambia do understand that there is deforestation. In fact, at the moment, it is put at between 250,000 to 300,000 hectares per year. That is what we are losing, but we are hoping the work we have done so far; we may update that and come up with at least some accurate data.

The general idea is that REDD is important, and can help reduce deforestation. I think what is very key in the REDD process is the livelihood component of it; how activities that people can undertake would help reduce deforestation. If you really go down to the village, carbon is not an incentive. What is an incentive is the benefit that people can get from the forests. Looking at that direction, the people feel that REDD is required because they would be able to manage the forests and protect them. Of course, they are under pressure, and they will be able to get things like honey, beeswax, mushrooms, and fruits and all these things, and other benefits, that they are able to live with that. With carbon, it is certainly maybe a supplement to what we intend to achieve. In Zambia, REDD has been accepted, but I think people are trying to be a bit more careful that we should be realistic when we are making our plans.

(Q2: Robledo) I have a question for the two of you. You have shown us, quite interestingly, how big this field of tension is between REDD mechanisms that have been agreed to be at the national level,

and many other things that are happening either at the decentralized level. Both of you talk about decentralized monitoring systems, and about benefits and incentives for the communities. There is a field of tension between a mechanism that has been agreed to be at the national level, and many things that need to happen along the chain toward the very local level. My question to you is, what of the challenges in this field of tension have not been yet resolved in your countries and why?

(Kasaro) It might be difficult to identify what has not been resolved. The national-level mechanism is basically a national guide. I do not think it is aiming at being the core implementing system for REDD+, because there will be different actors acting at different levels; at district level and then the lower levels. I think the national process is trying to put in place guidelines where whoever wants to do something related to REDD must follow. I think that is the way I take it. If that is the way we are going to move forward, then it means that the challenge is trying to solve, I think things related to policy always take quite some time. To change from one system to another is not an easy thing. I come from a government department, and I have been part of the process of drafting and redrafting.

We have right now the Forests Act of 1973 that we are using. There was one in 1999, which was a revised one. It was asserted to by the president, but was not activated or say commenced by the Minister, because that act was putting in place the Forestry Commission, which was like a semi-autonomous institution. The old labor laws in the country, they had nothing to do with changing institutional names or ownership. At the time this law was made, it was very easy. You can change the name of a company or change their directors and whatever; it had no effect on the workers. The law now says, any change that occurs to an institution, the people must be laid off, paid their termination benefits, then they decide whether to join or not. The same government developed those laws to try and protect the workers but I think it caught up with the system also. If it meant moving away to the Commission, all the workers in the Forest Department were supposed to have been laid off and then paid, then they decide whether they want to join the Commission. When they calculated the cost, it was quite a huge cost. So they decided, “No, this act should remain like this, because we have the no money to pay and then we move forward and start implementing.”

These policy issues take a long time, but now there has been a revised act, a bill. And the Forestry Policy of 1998 has also been revised and we have been told that the government will push these things so that they are approved this year. So we are hoping that once that is done, everything will be okay. I think that is the only part which I think has been slow, because in these policies and Acts, there are a lot of provisions that empower the communities and other stakeholders that they can effectively participate in the management of the forests. For example, instead of having national forests and local forests only, this time we have things like nature parks, community forests, botanical reserves and private forests. All these have been put there so that people can decide if they want to manage something. By law, they can be given that. Trans-boundary issues have been put there,

climate change issues and other factors. I think the key issue has been policy and legislation, but I think we are moving in the right direction right now.

(Ravindranath) For India, the Government of India or the Forest Department and other development agencies are confused about what the potential is for REDD+ in India, given there has been a significant level of deforestation and there is a huge afforestation program. On the one hand you have all the national forest policies. The National Forest Policy of 1988, is more or less compatible with the SFM criteria, is more or less compatible with REDD+ Safeguards and so on and so forth. Plus, we have all the technical institutional capacity on the one hand. On the other hand, even at the village level, the Joint Forest Management experience exists all across India. Although it is successfully in some places, it is not so successful in other places. The institutional arrangement, the beneficiary mechanism, even capacity-building has happened.

The real challenges for India in moving ahead with REDD+ is what does this plus component mean? How do you define that? How do you define additionality in that? What is the potential? There is potential in India for enhancing, doubling for area under forest. For a population of 1.1 billion, we want more forests. India is implementing a larger forestation program, but at the same time there is huge demand for fuel wood and so on. In that sense how to really benefit from plus component is a challenge. It is not clear for Indian Government as of now.

(Q3) My question is about the legislation, because I do recall there is one remark by an Indonesian delegate at other seminar probably hosted by IGES. Having legislation is one thing. Implementing it is another thing. My first question is to Mr. Ravindranath, because in your presentation, usually effective legislation means that you are successfully implementing this legislation. My question is why in India you can successfully implement the legislation about sustainable forest management? Is it because the deforestation driver is not so strong, or your country's particular country situation, something similar to, "I have a little bit of information about the small holders business, and etcetera." Is it because of your particular social condition that makes SFM legislation effective? If you have any suggestion to Zambia colleague, because now we learn that Zambia has achieving, in a sense, legislation but it does not guarantee effective implementation. Do you have any suggestions for him?

(Ravindranath) I agree with you. It is one thing to have legislation, rules, and guidelines, and the other is to implement. One of the reasons why in India forest legislations are effective, there are many reasons. One is that there is no conversion of forest land to agriculture, like in many other poorer countries. At the same time, there is a lot of demand for land for infrastructure. Population is growing, and the economy is growing. There is a need for land for infrastructure, for industries and railway lines, roads. That is where it is not easy because they are all institutional demands. That has

to go through a whole range of stringent guidelines.

On the other hand, I must also say that the High Courts are very powerful in enforcing laws on deforestation. Though India has failed on implementing many other important policies, surprisingly, on forest policy, because of community awareness, press, and the judiciary, I would say it is not easy for anyone to go and grab and convert forest.

One recommendation, I know it is not easy to recommend from country's experience to another country's experience, but, awareness through mass media and through NGO's was very important in India. If there is any encroachment, even two hectares of forest, it is on the front pages of newspaper. Some NGO will raise it, and then it is on the television, so people have to take note. I would say community awareness and mass media can play a very critical role in enforcing forest legislation.

(Scheyvens) Mr. Kasaro, the question was not directed at you, but might have some ideas on how your country can effectively implement law.

(Kasaro) In the *Zambian* context, the implementation has been a challenge. As it has been explained from the Indian point of view, agriculture is not a big issue in terms of getting the forests. In the *Zambian* context, the majority are people that live rural areas. In these rural areas, in terms of agricultural practices, they have to do some practices in particular areas for maybe three or four years or so, then they would try to move to another area. They try really to do this in the best way that they can to increase productivity.

It is a challenge. When you come to implementing it, you really need to ensure that, when you talk of REDD+, it is not just the trees. You also have to look at the livelihoods. How can you improve people's performance so that they do not open up more land? In fact, there was one observation in one of the areas where we observed slash and burn system. Over a certain period of years there was a change of the forest. The forest is coming back, and after analyzing the situation, they were saying that there was government support to the local communities to be more productive in specific lands. That gives an idea that we need to be a bit more practical, as it was explained, at the community level. Let them take the responsibilities of certain actions. I think that way will be more effective.

For the forest sector, regarding issues in the *Zambian* context, even the support to the forest sector had over the years been going down. I cannot hide this. If you came to *Zambia* and you went to a district forest office, the challenges that they are faced with are serious. They are supposed to be interacting with communities, they are supposed to be monitoring forest resources, but you go to a district office now, some of them do not even have a bicycle. They do not even have basic forest inventory tools. How would you expect them to perform?

It is a whole range of things, but I think with the current approach where everyone is looking at the forestry sector as an important sector as it is now, we are very hopeful that, within the current zeal of the government, we can move these policies and see the changes that can occur. It is the government pushing us, which has been very good.

(Q4: IGES, Yamanoshita) I think it relates to additionality. I am interested in community REDD+ involvement. In the existing community, for forestry management and joint forestry management, there are existing policies. I do agree that REDD+ should be used for the forest management. I have a question about the joint forest management in India. With REDD+, what sort of additionality or improvement can we expect? For instance, the REDD+ might increase the revenues from carbon, and the JFM budget might expand. Is that all? Or, because it is REDD+, with the conventional JFM maybe there are things that have not been achieved, and will we be able to expect more from this, or anything that will be improved? If so, what sort of improvements in what sort of areas, and what specifically will the improvement be?

(Ravindranath) You are saying that you already have this Joint Forest Management institutional system functioning, and how it can benefit from REDD+. Yes. There is one distinction I forgot to mention. Under the Joint Forest Management program, good primary forests are not given to communities. Only degraded forests are given to communities to protect, regenerate, and get the benefit.

When I made a presentation to one of my ministers, I said that India was not keen on 'REDD' at all, and maybe to some extent 'plus', but I told him there are some pockets in India. In most parts of India forests are protected. There is no deforestation, except in North East, where there is some level of shifting cultivation and deforestation or degradation happening. There I said, we should really use REDD+ to provide incentives, use the JFM institutional structure, but resource of REDD to provide incentive to communities to halt forest degradation or forest conversion to shifting cultivation. There is opportunity in some parts of India. Though I agree with you, under REDD+, there may not be a great incentive for joint forest management for village communities. There is no great incentive, except in one pocket where you can use the REDD+ incentive through JFM to generate revenues for communities to reduce or halt deforestation.

(Q5: UNU, Rastall) Thinking about the Indian situation first, I was just wondering about the land availability situation. You mentioned that there is a very little forest loss, there is also very little natural forest degradation, so it only leaves the carbon stock enhancement group, which means that perhaps the carbon revenues derived from that and the carbon credits will be quite small. If that is the case, is there sufficient economic incentive to reverse land use? Is the land available to convert old agricultural land back into forest land or other land use types, and then is there sufficient economic incentive to do

so?

In Zambia the situation is obviously completely different. I imagine that in Zambia, its population is probably rapidly expanding at the moment. Also, over the last five years you how the news has changed about business in Africa, and there is a lot of interest. It is going to be the engine of growth. I think there is a lot of interest in Zambian resources, mining potential, and for agricultural development. Just looking at that map, the sheer size of some of the lakes that you have in Zambia is going to have a lot of economic interests. I would like you to elaborate a little bit more on the opportunity costs study. Maybe you could discuss some of the tradeoffs and whether the real potential of REDD+ for setting Zambia on more of a green economic pathway, rather than a business-as-usual pathway that we have seen in many developing countries.

(Ravindranath) I agree with you that, given that there is no deforestation of good forests in India, it will not happen also in the next 10, 20 years. India also has a policy right upfront at the top in the National Forest Policy to bring one-third of its geographic area under forest cover. Every time, the Prime Minister and the Forest Minister, they have mentioned it. That means that we really have to look for degraded forest land, wastelands, what we call marginal crop lands, which are not fit for cropping, or the productivity is low, whether they can be converted into forests through plantations or through natural regeneration. It is really potential that they are looking at. We have 20% of area under forest, out of it only 12% is good, and how to bring it to 33%. That is a challenge.

The Government of India is seriously considering options of providing incentives for communities and farmers to convert degraded land, wastelands, marginal land into forests and plantations and agroforestry. That is the only option. Obviously, these lands are degraded. That means even if you want to promote natural regeneration or rice plantations, the growth rates may be low, the incentives may be low. Yes, it is true, but we need to find maybe some other incentives along with grass, soil, water conservation, and so on.

We should really combine that as a part of the landscape planning so that these degraded lands also became a part of a watershed program or a landscape development program so that all land can be regenerated. Communities get not only benefit from the forest but from water and so on and so forth.

(Kasaro) For Zambia, I think the issues you raised are what probably is driving the deforestation that we are seeing. As I indicated, the population concentration is along what we call the 'Line of Rail'. This is where most of the activities are taking place. One thing that should be noted is that Zambia has been for the past maybe 10 years or so performing well economically. Actually, is it three years ago, Zambia was moved from the least developed country into the lower middle income country.

It is a challenge. There is development that is coming. The economic indicators are

certainly not indicating what is happening at a complete rural setting. There is, of course, mining, and I think Zambia is probably among the top three in terms of production of copper. That is the kind of activity which is going on there and that has attracted a lot of other investment, infrastructure development and all these.

But I think the study in terms of opportunity cost has shown that it is possible to reduce Charcoal production since opportunity costs are low. It is clear that, in the rural setting, REDD will be able to push in the type of initiative or investment that would, for example, stop charcoal production, if we can find appropriate technology or another source of energy in the cities. In the urban areas, the people that are there are people that mostly are not using electricity, and they are the ones that are using a lot of charcoal.

Then, even those with electricity, maybe including myself, we also use charcoal because there is this thing we call load-shedding where power is shut off on a rotating basis. For example, Monday is for such and such area, Tuesday such and such area. I have not, for example, switched to gas, so that when power goes, I quickly switch to another system. These areas around the cities, that is where the population is high.

In rural areas they do not use charcoal. They use firewood. Firewood, in most cases, the local communities collect from already dried wood from the forest. For charcoal, they use greenwood. Because the opportunity cost is telling us that, at least from what has been found out, charcoal can be dealt with by introducing other things. In a rural setting, there is a possibility that we can reduce this. Then in the cities we find alternatives to dealing with energy. I think that is how I can explain it. I hope it gives a bit of a picture about Zambia.

(Scheyvens) We heard that SFM is an evolving concept, but in fact everything is evolving. I really took this out of these two presentations and the discussion. The landscape is evolving in terms of drivers of deforestation and degradation. They are not stagnant. They are changing over time and they are presenting new challenges. Countries have introduced policies. They have different practices for forest management and they have learned from those as well. If you look at the policies and laws, they are evolving over time. You can see that in Zambia, but you can also see that in India with some of the new legislation that has been introduced and is related to the forest management.

Since REDD+ is about climate change mitigation, one of the big challenges is how to support this positive evolving process in countries where they are strengthening their policies for forest management and trying to find effective ways of introducing and implementing those policies.