

Policy Position Paper on

REDD

(Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation)

June 2009



Summary

CARE believes that the post 2012 climate change agreement must include mandatory social standards and safeguards to ensure that REDD activities:

- Do not lead to violations of human rights or in any other way cause harm to poor and marginalised groups.
- Include mechanisms for equitable sharing of benefits arising from REDD with, as well as within, indigenous and local communities in developing countries.

Social standards and safeguards are necessary regardless of whether the financing for REDD is generated and distributed through market- or non-market mechanisms.

Safeguards and benefit sharing mechanisms for REDD

Deforestation in developing countries currently accounts for 20 % of the human induced emissions of carbon dioxide. In order to keep the global temperature rise as far below 2 degrees as possible, CARE believes that efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation in developing countries must be part of the post 2012 climate change agreement.

But we must not forget that the Worlds forests are home to 60 million indigenous people, and that as many as 300 million people, most of them very poor, depend on forests for their daily survival.

Experiences from other forest related economic activities have illustrated the importance of protecting the rights and interests of such indigenous and local communities. In the past we have seen too many examples of communities being evicted from their lands and even more cases of access to forest resources being severely restricted. Despite new social safeguards designed to prevent these negative social impacts (e.g. World Bank policy on displacement and protected areas) there continue to be numerous cases of forest management and conservation initiatives causing negative social impacts, especially in countries with weak governance.

A new REDD mechanism must ensure that all relevant collective and individual human rights are respected. In particular, CARE wants to emphasise the importance of the rights of indigenous and local communities to participate in processes that might affect them, to ownership of the lands and natural resources traditionally owned or occupied, to free and prior informed consent (FPIC) and to development.

Elite capture of benefits related to forests is all too common. Poor people in developing countries, and especially women and marginalized groups who do not have ownership over the resources on which their survival depends risk being overlooked in the distribution of benefits from REDD.

When establishing a global REDD mechanism, CARE therefore believes it is essential to ensure equitable sharing of benefits. This applies both between communities and other actors, and within communities themselves, so that a fair share of benefits reach indigenous and local communities, and women and marginalised groups within these communities.

When establishing mandatory social standards and safeguards to protect rights and ensure equitable sharing of benefits, the UNFCCC should draw upon experiences gained from other processes, such as the EU FLEGT initiative. The establishment of institutions and procedures ensuring adherence to social standards and safeguards should be an integrated part of a “readiness-process” that builds the capacity of developing countries to become ready for REDD. Such a process should also include environmental standards and safeguards that protect forest biodiversity and ensure that REDD activities result in measurable, reportable and verifiable reductions of emissions.

CARE therefore believes that the post 2012 climate change agreement must include mandatory social standards and safeguards to ensure that REDD activities:

- Do not lead to violations of human rights or in any other way cause harm to poor and marginalised groups.
- Include mechanisms for equitable sharing of benefits arising from REDD with, as well as within, indigenous and local communities in developing countries.

Social standards and safeguards are necessary regardless of whether the financing for REDD is generated and distributed through market- or non-market mechanisms. These standards and safeguards must be developed at global level and put in place before any REDD mechanism becomes operational.

A precondition for achieving effective social standards and safeguards is the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities in all REDD related processes, including UNFCCC processes. Furthermore CARE believes the post 2012-agreement must include specific references to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other relevant human rights instruments, and must ensure that all REDD activities are carried out in accordance with such rights.

Finally, CARE believes that any REDD mechanism which is put into operation needs to be systematically monitored and evaluated for negative and positive social and environmental impacts.

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