Forests and climate change after Doha

An Asia-Pacific perspective

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RECOFTC
THE CENTER FOR PEOPLE AND FORESTS

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Introduction

Over the past three years RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and have brought together regional experts to reflect on the outcomes of the 15th, 16th and 17th Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The resulting booklets "*Forests and Climate Change after Copenhagen,*" "*after Cancun*" and "*after Durban*" were distributed widely and very well received.

In February 2013, RECOFTC and FAO, along with host institution, the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry, brought together eleven climate change and forestry experts in Bogor, Indonesia, to discuss the implications of decisions taken at the COP 18 held in Doha, Qatar in November and December 2012 on the forestry sector of the Asia-Pacific region. This booklet summarizes their responses to a set of 12 key questions raised at the consultation.

In addition to our sincere appreciation of the contributions of all panelists, special thanks go to Ramida Thananachart for organizing the experts' consultation and to Ben Vickers as the primary author of this document, with contributions from Jim Stephenson, Patrick Durst and Regan Suzuki.

The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of RECOFTC and FAO, and are to be considered as the perspectives of the experts speaking in their personal capacity.

Twelve key questions


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Q2 Are forests still leading the way in negotiations?

Q3 Climate change and other forest sector priorities. Are we getting the balance right?

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Abbreviations

A/R CDM	Afforestation/Reforestation in the Clean Development Mechanism
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AWG-ADP	Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
COP	Conference of the Parties (to the UNFCCC)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FPIC	Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
FVA	Framework for Various Approaches
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LCA	Long-Term Cooperative Action (Ad-hoc Working Group within UNFCCC)
MRV	Measurement, Reporting, and Verification
NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions
NFMS	National Forest Monitoring Systems
NMMs	New Market Mechanisms
NTFPs	Non Timber Forest Products
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
RECOFTC	The Center for People and Forests
REDD+	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation plus sustainable management of forests, conservation, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks
REL	Reference Emission Levels
RL	Reference Levels
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment
SIS	Safeguard Information Systems
VCM	Voluntary Carbon Market
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

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Q1

Was Doha a move in the right direction?

"In climate change we have good guys and bad guys, but we need to overcome this old dichotomy between Annex 2 and Annex 1 countries to progress."

Meine Van Noordwijk

"We didn't expect too much, but what was agreed was much lower than expected. However negotiators are now clear where to bring the issues forward next year.'"

Nur Masripatin

"The way that verification got tied up to the money was unfortunate and the failure to close the MRV discussion was a missed opportunity.'"

Louis Verchot

Expectations were low, but still the outcomes of Doha were disappointing. However, COP 18 signaled a small but definite move towards a comprehensive international climate change agreement. A new commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol was initiated, extending the only existing international agreement on climate change by another eight years.

The talks also progressed in other areas. There was growing support from some regional experts for REDD+ to be considered as part of the broader efforts of countries to curb emissions (known as Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions or NAMAs). While this may be a logical development, it has not been explicitly acknowledged in formal negotiations to date. Viewing REDD+ activities – which relate to mitigation actions within the forest and land use sector – in the context of NAMAs could facilitate more cross-sectoral and vertically-integrated planning frameworks for climate change mitigation.

The Durban Platform (a key outcome of COP17) paved the way for all countries to take on emission reduction commitments in the future. Consequently, at Doha, there was a move towards more constructive and collaborative negotiation, giving reason for optimism that parties will be able to reach compromises on issues of contention. Maintaining this spirit of international collaboration is reason enough to continue with these negotiations, even though the end point still seems many years away.

Despite the disappointment of negotiators on a number of points at Doha, there were some positive outcomes. The move towards a multi-sector, landscape approach will potentially put the talks on REDD+ and other mechanisms into a more appropriate context, but will also add complexity and fresh challenges to an already challenging agenda. While negotiators cannot expect to feel fully satisfied by the outcomes of any particular COP, they do expect continuous forward progress, which Doha provided.

Q2

Are forests still leading the way in negotiations?

Forests are still at the center of attention in climate change negotiations, and are likely to remain so. However, there is renewed debate about the proportion of global emissions that can be attributed to the forest sector, with estimates revised downwards from 17% to about 12% in discussions within the IPCC. Nonetheless, it remains a significant amount.

Other sectors have not yet produced technologies for removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere that are both economically feasible and ready for implementation at a global scale. As long as this remains the case, the readily accessible and implementable techniques for mitigating climate change through the forestry sector will give it prominence.

Furthermore, REDD+ has established a clear link between the forest sector and financial incentives, for stakeholders from non-Annex 1 countries. As long as the expectation of such incentives is maintained, it will provide impetus to the forestry discussion track. There is thus a growing desire for further clarity on the form these incentives will take in the future, which was not provided at COP 18.

Two factors may temper this outlook, however. First, the prominence of forests in the negotiations has meant that efforts to ensure minimum standards and safeguards have been concentrated in this sector. This will increase the costs of implementing mechanisms, such as REDD+, in relation to the financial incentives countries are likely to receive.

Second, the movement towards a landscape approach may shift the balance of interest away from forestry and towards agriculture-based interventions. The value of the agriculture sector to most developing country economies, and the consequent importance given to government bodies in this sector, may detract from the current focus on forests.

"The Asia-Pacific region is very dependent on its forest land and we strongly believe that forestry issues can regain the initiative in 2013."

Zaw Win

"With a landscape approach the focus moves away from forestry to agriculture. The link between the two needs to be recognized, but it is important to consider them separately."

Promode Kant

Q3

Climate change and other forest sector priorities. Are we getting the balance right?

From the beginning of the negotiations on REDD+, the trade-offs between climate change mitigation and the wider benefits of forests and other land uses have been clearly recognized. It is also widely understood that safeguards are crucial to prevent negative impacts at the local level. The appreciation of these trade-offs, and their incorporation into REDD+ discussions, can be considered a success of the negotiations.

Doha reaffirmed the need for safeguards, in order to ensure that climate change mitigation activities, at a minimum, do no harm and generate positive social, economic, and environmental impacts. This repeatedly emerges as a very strong message from the COPs. Doha did not see any significant change on this point; design and implementation of safeguards, and verification of their effectiveness, remain within the domestic sphere, for each country to address internally.

Forestry companies want to know how they can maintain their business in a more regulated environment. In countries such as Indonesia, where forestry is an important sector, restrictions on such businesses may have a significant negative impact on the national economy. REDD+ will therefore be limited by the perceived extent of this impact. It will not be allowed to slow down economic growth. The nature of economic incentives in forestry and related sectors is changing, however. It is becoming harder to sell palm oil, for example, if its production is associated with deforestation, and the indirect, negative impacts of this on the profits and reputations of companies and countries, is becoming more apparent. More often than ever before, economic incentives are converging with social and environmental interests.

NAMAs give countries a platform to set out the balance of incentives behind their actions on climate change mitigation and therefore to ensure that this balance is appropriate in each important sector. This is another reason why having REDD+ considered within NAMAs is seen by some as a positive move.

"In Indonesia we are struggling with balancing the expectations of the forestry sector to both reduce emissions and maintain economic growth."

Iwan Wibisono

"If forests are not contributing to economic and social goals broader than climate change mitigation, then they won't survive"

John Lewis

Q4

How fast are we progressing towards REDD+ implementation?

Countries in Asia and the Pacific are proceeding at very different speeds towards REDD+ readiness, and along quite different paths. There is general satisfaction with progress, tempered by realism. Readiness will take longer than initially expected after COP13 in Bali in 2007, and momentum has been maintained largely thanks to the commitment of champions in certain participating countries, and of key donors such as Norway.

No country in the region has yet developed all of the four compulsory elements specified in the Cancun Agreements. A national Reference Emission Level (REL) or Reference Level (RL) is yet to be developed by any Asia-Pacific country. National REDD+ strategies are in various stages of development in the region, with Indonesia and Vietnam having complete national-level documents. National Forest Monitoring Systems (NFMS) and Safeguard Information Systems (SIS) are also most advanced in these two countries, but are still several years from completion.

In other countries, including Cambodia and Papua New Guinea (PNG), there is strong political commitment to REDD+, but slower progress towards REDD+ readiness. Two voluntary projects in Cambodia provide an important boost to the development of the SIS and the development of sub-national strategies, with the help of coordinated assistance from multilateral programs and bilateral donors. Japanese assistance has been particularly important in both these countries for NFMS development. In Myanmar, the government has had a strong political commitment to REDD+ readiness over the past year and is making steady progress in strategy development, with financial assistance from Norway.

South Asia is relatively less advanced in REDD+ readiness than Southeast Asia, although most countries in South Asia have at least initiated the development of national strategies. India has not yet made concerted efforts to develop the elements specified under the Cancun Agreements, but many state governments now have dedicated 'REDD Cells', chiefly to organize capacity building events, and to oversee voluntary REDD projects.

"Most Asian countries are in Phase 1 of REDD+ Readiness and are working to get through Phase 1 as quickly as possible."

Zaw Win

"In our country we are committed to REDD+, there is strong political will and we have people trying to put the system in place."

Senson Mark

Q5

How significant is the failure to reach agreement on verification for REDD+?

"We need a decision on the MR so that countries can move forward. The V is going to come in Phase 3 and there may be space to remove it from the current discussion."

Louis Verchot

"For REDD+ countries there are continually more requirements put on them by the international community. Verification is already included in the NAMA process, which should be sufficient."

Nur Masripatin

Negotiators on Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) for REDD+ were unable to progress as far as expected at Doha chiefly due to disagreement on issues related to verification between developed and developing countries. Industrialized countries are not required to subject their national reports on emissions and removals of GHGs to independent international verification. The verification requirements for future NAMAs of developing countries will not be any more stringent. Brazil and other developing countries therefore argue that, if REDD+ can be considered an integral part of a NAMA, then independent international verification of performance should not be required.

The difference between REDD+ and other elements of a NAMA, according to a number of mainly Annex 1 countries, is the direct link between REDD+ performance and financial commitments from these countries. Becuase REDD+ finance is performance-based, parliaments and taxpayers can hold their governments accountable for its impact, in a way that they cannot for other forms of overseas development assistance. Government treasuries will therefore demand the highest standards of verification, or threaten to withhold the funds.

The idea that the system of verification will be determined, and implemented, by those who pay for REDD+, rather than those who implement it, is sensitive. All agree that high standards of verification are desirable, but cannot agree on who should actually perform the verification. In technical terms, this is not a very wide bridge to cross, but it is politically fraught. When everything else is in place with agreement on the 'M' and the 'R', it may be easier to address the 'V'.

It is possible, therefore, to continue working on Measurement and Reporting, which are more clearly technical matters less affected by political sensitivities, and leave Verification until later. However, countries such as Indonesia are concerned that it would be difficult to approach the next stages of negotiations in this way. It would be inconsistent with NAMAs, where the M, R and V are all intrinsically linked. In practice, the issues related to verification will probably be deferred until the less sensitive, technical discussions are completed.

Q6

What progress has been made on safeguards for REDD+?

The priority in Doha was to finalize discussions on MRV and NFMS, with most discussion on SISs taking place in side events and outside the COP. Countries agree that the seven safeguards listed in the Cancun Agreements provide good guidance for an SIS, and that these systems should be flexible, based on existing tools and policies where possible, and adapted to national circumstances.

No countries are arguing for international standardization of SIS. However, there is still a strong lobby within civil society organizations for reporting on the outcomes of safeguard monitoring, and for external verification. Echoing the debate on the V of MRV, governments of industrialized countries have an obligation to demonstrate to taxpayers that their money is not being directed towards activities with adverse social and environmental impacts.

"Discussions in the corridors at the COPs are changing. Developing countries are recognizing the need to report on safeguard implementation internationally."

Louis Verchot

"Private developers are having to comply with both voluntary standards and national safeguards – which is an obstacle for them. It is important to emphasize simplicity for safeguards at the national level."

Stepi Hakim

In contrast to the MRV debate, however, there are clear indications that negotiators are beginning to understand each other's positions on SIS. On social and governance issues, including that of stakeholder consultation, negotiators have largely moved on, leaving CSOs and multilateral programs such as UN-REDD and FCPF to develop practical guidance. Confidence has been built by the progress on approaches such as Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), in which countries including Indonesia and Vietnam voluntarily adapt their national forest governance systems (including SISs) to gain access to European Union markets for forest products.

Although there is more work needed to incorporate environmental safeguards into national SISs, there is a risk that work on safeguards becomes too complex and diverts emphasis from the business of strategy development and MRV for REDD+ itself. Rather than develop specific systems for REDD+ SIS, there is much that can be achieved by incorporating safeguard elements into existing forest inventory techniques, and this is indeed the approach being taken in much of Southeast Asia.

Much of the attention on SIS is the result of a perception that REDD+ involves involuntary infringements on land rights. These fears were stoked by early unregulated and poorly-informed, voluntary REDD initiatives in places such as PNG. However, private sector companies across Asia increasingly accept that safeguards are part and parcel of good business practice. Indeed it is dangerous to separate the two. Efforts should now focus on simplicity and convergence, helping companies and other stakeholders comply with both emerging, national SIS and the voluntary systems with which they are already becoming familiar.

Q7

What is the relevance of the Green Climate Fund for the forest sector?

"The GCF is very ambitious but it is not clear how much money it would actually attract. And would we really be ready to use the money?"

Promode Kant

"If there is a GCF window for PPP it would be a step in the right direction to leverage necessary private capital."

John Lewis

"Accountability has been a problem for the GEF which is seen as making resources difficult to access for developing countries."

Louis Verchot

Doha saw a decision that the GCF would be based in Asia (Republic of Korea), but there is still no clear indication of the timing and scale of finance that will be available. The GCF will contain a window for REDD+, but there is no indication whether the funds to fill it will come from Annex 1 country commitments or from the private sector. Countries seeking support in the region are currently providing submissions to the UNFCCC on their priorities for GCF finance and so far there does not appear to be great enthusiasm to direct funds towards REDD+ and the forest sector.

To leverage investment from the private sector, the GCF could create a window for Public Private Partnerships (PPP). This would allow private sector investment that is currently looking towards forestry voluntary carbon markets to be redirected towards national REDD+ programs.

It is difficult to imagine that the GCF would not be part of UNFCCC architecture and therefore accountable to the COP. Under current COP policy, this means that all parties will be involved in decision-making regarding GCF management and fund disbursement. This would likely slow down its operation. Based partly on the current submissions from parties, the GCF is expected to develop a proposal for its own management before the next COP. It would be preferable if direct oversight could be delegated to a small, focal group of countries. This may allow the GCF to incorporate lessons from the performance of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Many countries see the GEF as too complex, creating difficulties for developing countries to access funds. The GCF must reduce this complexity, attract private sector investment, and focus on making funds available for countries that have the greatest need and the commitment and capacity to use funds effectively. If GCF modalities allow this to happen, this will open a number of doors for the forest sector, and will demonstrate how the differing investment priorities of CSOs, foresters, and investors can be accommodated.

Q8

What does the move towards landscape-based approaches mean for REDD+?

In real world settings, different categories of land use do not exist in isolation. REDD+, however, encourages us to measure and address forest sector emissions without reference to those from agriculture, wetlands, rangeland and other land types. One consequence of this is the undue importance attached to how forests are defined. Seven different definitions of forest will give us seven different rates of deforestation. A landscape approach to GHG emissions allows us to short circuit this issue. Definitions of land use categories do not matter when the landscape is monitored as a whole.

Moreover, most countries in Asia and the Pacific locate their REDD+ focal points within their national forest administrations. This often results, either by default or design, in the omission from REDD+ strategies of those forests that lie outside of the forest administration's remit. A landscape approach could help to overcome this problem. It is also widely accepted that REDD+ results cannot be assessed by the monitoring of forests alone. Many REDD+ activities will involve changing practices in, for example, agriculture and energy use, so a certain amount of landscape-level integration in MRV is inevitable.

Landscape approaches are also consistent with the way in which forest-dependent people (including indigenous peoples) see their surroundings. Tenure and land rights issues are not solely about forests, and addressing these issues in relation to forests alone may result in artificial and inequitable outcomes. Securing a fair distribution of multiple-use tenure and land rights while mitigating land-based GHG emissions requires a landscape-level approach.

"The landscape approach is conceptually good, but bringing it into practice is very challenging. We should keep the discussion open and learn from experience."

Nur Masripatin

"If we are serious about reducing emissions we need to monitor them at the landscape level."

Meine van Noordwijk

"The problem is integration across sectors. At local levels it is extremely difficult – at national levels, hopeless."

Stepi Hakim

A landscape-level approach to GHG emissions has certain clear advantages over a forest-specific mechanism such as REDD+. In the long term, it is worth aspiring to such a goal. However, in the context of current negotiations and practical implementation, it may not be appropriate to make a wholesale shift away from REDD+ and towards an all-inclusive system. The prospect of additional complexity in field measurement and monitoring, and coordination of diverse administrative systems, could damage the confidence that negotiators have built up in REDD+.

However, despite enthusiasm among industrialized countries, there is little appetite in Asia and the Pacific for a formal expansion of REDD+ into an all-inclusive landscape-level mechanism. The countries are highly aware of the challenges in trying to integrate sectors, and there are concerns that forestry would be subsumed by sectors with greater political traction such as agriculture.

Q9

Can we incentivize the non-carbon benefits of forests through REDD+?

There is much that can be expanded and further developed in the interface between the UNFCCC and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). One of the more promising approaches for linking climate change and biodiversity on the ground is through mechanisms such as Payment for Environment (or Ecosystem) Services (PES). PES provides us with three distinct paradigms. The first is the commodification of services into tradable goods. This is how PES is usually communicated, and this trend has continued with voluntary forest carbon markets and with REDD+. This idea is readily understood by investors, but it is difficult to translate into ground reality. Rights to land and forests are not neatly divided into these separate service categories, and the services themselves are not neatly linked to specific forest units.

It is therefore important to move the REDD+ debate away from this paradigm towards the other two PES concepts: payments based on compensation for opportunity costs and generation of co-finance. As well as being more flexible and more aligned with the facts on the ground, these paradigms allow for the integration of climate change mitigation, or 'carbon benefits', with other social and environmental services, or 'co-benefits'.

"We need more articulation from UNFCCC regarding the financing of REDD+ carbon before we look beyond to financing non-carbon benefits."

Jiang Chunqian

"My worry is that we are at the first stage of REDD+ and too many co-benefits included will weigh things down – particularly from a monitoring perspective."

So Thea

For example, arguably the greatest benefit of REDD+ in Indonesia is the co-investment that the mechanism promises to generate in community-based forest management, such as *hutan desa* (village forest), and the consequent enhancement of forest use rights. Much of this investment will come from the government itself. From the perspective of forest managers, incentivizing multiple benefits is desirable, and does not necessarily involve complex methodologies. Trying to incorporate monitoring and validation of co-benefits into the UNFCCC negotiations on REDD+, however, may add a further layer of complication.

Instead of considering co-benefits as an extra, as the term implies, we should instead recognize them as an intrinsic part of the design of REDD+ strategies. For example, reaching agreement on reducing timber extraction is easier when the area in question is also a source of high-value Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), which can sustain the level of income generated from the land. In short, REDD+ must incentivize co-benefits if it is to prove relevant and cost effective in the long term. In many cases, it should be possible to achieve this without the requirement of additional funds, apart from the positive incentives that would accrue through the REDD+ mechanism.

Q10

What are the new financing ideas that might affect forest carbon initiatives?

"This is one of the successes of Doha - better clarity on market mechanisms. It is a step forward and there is evidence of progress in process if not in outcomes."

Promode Kant

"For forests this is new hope, because the only market mechanism available for forests is the CDM, so we hope that new market mechanisms will work for REDD+.'"

Nur Masripatin

One of the key developments at Doha was the advance in thinking on potential financing arrangements for climate change in general. This represented a significant maturing of the UNFCCC process, of relevance for REDD+ and forest carbon financing. There are two main ideas – the Framework for Various Approaches (FVA) and the New Market Mechanisms (NMMs). Seen as positive developments, there was constructive negotiation on both of these approaches. However, the eventual outcome of these negotiations is difficult to predict. Discussions are expected to proceed slowly but steadily under the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (AWG ADP) until 2015.

The FVA requires a set of criteria to be developed within the UNFCCC that can be used to validate country-level carbon financing mechanisms. This is intended to facilitate all future international UNFCCC mechanisms, including REDD+. The criteria are yet to be defined. The NMMs, on the other hand, are particularly relevant for the forest sector. The only mechanism currently available through the Kyoto Protocol is the Afforestation/Reforestation methodology under the Clean Development Mechanism (A/R CDM), which has not generated much investment in the sector. Negotiations on NMMs must incorporate lessons from A/R CDM and be relevant for national approaches such as REDD+. This will be a challenge, but the development of domestic carbon markets in places as diverse as California and China offers grounds for optimism.

Both FVA and NMM recognize that carbon financing and carbon markets must incorporate the needs and priorities of different investors: domestic, regional and international; government and corporate; voluntary and compliance markets. The Voluntary Carbon Market (VCM) has been an important source of experience for the development of FVA and NMMs, but it cannot contribute to national commitments directly. Instead a method is needed whereby NMMs are able to generate private sector interest and investment in REDD+. This should not just be about offsets, because countries such as China, India and Indonesia, and many others, will be taking on national voluntary commitments. To avoid double accounting, any offsets would have to be isolated from these commitments.

Q11

What role for forests in climate change adaptation?

"Adaptation, not mitigation, is the primary driver for local actions and decision making."

Meine van Noordwijk

"Joint adaptation and mitigation funding is in the REDD+ negotiations and could help in reaching an agreement on market approaches."

Iwan Wibisono

For many people, it is much easier to understand the relevance of climate change adaptation than mitigation. Adaptation as the primary rationale for local-level action on climate change therefore makes good sense and applies equally to local communities in forest contexts. To date, however, more adaptation financing has been directed towards engineering approaches and research, particularly within the agriculture sector. So-called 'buffering' approaches, which are about the maintenance of sensitive ecosystems or environmental functions, are more relevant to forestry, but have received less attention. Forestry's role in climate change adaptation needs to be better recognized by all parties including the UNFCCC, and matched with greater financial support.

In reality, mitigation projects and programs are often in direct competition for finances with adaptation projects and programs, while the activities implemented are the same (e.g. afforestation). The problem is that the further removed from the ground, the more the two concepts are disconnected in terms of discussions and understanding. Some CSOs have been dissociating themselves from mitigation activities specifically because of their disapproval of market-based mechanisms, and focusing on adaptation instead. However, forest sector interventions that are planned and financed as adaptation activities often end up having a carbon impact as well, and could therefore still be structured to generate additional finance through voluntary offset markets.

At the international level, there is agreement among most developing countries in Asia and the Pacific on the benefits of joint mitigation/adaptation activities in the forest sector. However, there is still reluctance from some countries to link such joint activities to a market mechanism, whether REDD+ or otherwise, for a number of reasons, including resistance to market-based approaches. We need to complete financing negotiations for REDD+ before we can move forward meaningfully on this issue.

At the national scale, it is necessary for those involved in both adaptation and mitigation activities to coordinate and strategize opportunities for linking these in the forest sector as well as jointly identifying financial needs. NAMAs are useful in this regard, particularly when analyzed alongside National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs). REDD+ activities identified as part of a NAMA will also include some activities from the NAPA, thus allowing prioritization of national requests for financing (from the Least Developed Countries Fund, for example) on activities without a direct mitigation impact.

Q12

What's next for REDD+?

Due to the relatively advanced state of REDD+ negotiations compared to other items of the Bali Action Plan, expectations of progress are always high. This heightens the disappointment when negotiations hit a snag, as they did at Doha over the issue of verification. However, this is an impediment that is hopefully temporary, and may either be solved this year or postponed to be addressed at a later date. In any event the REDD+ negotiations will continue steadily onward.

The countries do not advocate abandoning the UNFCCC process for alternative negotiation channels. Instead they recommended exploring the benefits of following multiple channels at the same time. UNFCCC will, and should, remain the official process for garnering international agreement on tackling climate change, and the key arena for compromise, but other multilateral, regional, and bilateral opportunities are also to be explored for their potential to advance climate change action in the forest sector.

"As long as the UNFCCC agreements aim to reduce GHG emissions, then forestry will continue to be part of the negotiation process."

Jiang Chunqian

"I'm not sure there is still demand for the Voluntary Carbon Market due to the lack of progress in the UNFCCC negotiations."

Stepi Hakim

Q12

continued...

Other global and regional mechanisms exist which will continue to move REDD+ forward. The REDD+ Partnership, after a disappointing first two years, promises to be a strong platform for increasing the levels of investment in the forest sector. ASEAN is also a key regional agent, whose potential as a knowledge and strategic planning hub has not yet been fully realized. Finally there is much potential for continued bilateral cooperation initiatives such as the Norway/Indonesia partnership, as long as they conform to international codes of practice rather than the narrow interests of the parties concerned.

Emerging economies such as China, India, Indonesia and Malaysia will all develop voluntary national emission reduction targets over the coming years, and they are looking to the forest sector as central to early action. This promises a continuing future for REDD+, but in the short to medium term it may not generate as much market-based finance as some private sector investors had hoped.

The upcoming fifth IPCC assessment report is likely to reduce the estimated proportion of global GHG emissions due to forest-related activity from 17% to about 12%, but this remains significant and it is unlikely that REDD+ will drop off the global climate change agenda. The landscape approach will grow in significance over the coming year, but should not have an impact on REDD+ negotiations in the short term. However, the link between NAMAs and REDD+ will become clearer.

REDD+ is confirmed as a part of the AWG-ADP discussions, and there is a clear program of REDD+ topics for the year leading up to COP 19. The UN-REDD program is moving into a significant new phase in Vietnam, with nationwide piloting of performance-based positive incentives over the coming years. The World Bank's engagement in REDD+ readiness, through both the FCPF and the Forest Investment Programme (FIP), is likely to progress significantly in 2013, with national initiatives in Indonesia, Lao PDR, Nepal and Vietnam.

There is a huge difference in awareness, between COP 13 in Bali and COP 18 in Doha, of both the importance of climate change and the relevance of forestry to the debate. Given the range and scope of current and upcoming activities, reports of the "death of REDD+" are premature. The mechanism will remain a central part of the climate change discussions throughout 2013 and beyond, and an important source of funding in the forest sector in Asia and the Pacific.

"We shouldn't move REDD+ outside the UNFCCC process but at the same time should not depend on it for everything related to REDD+."

Iwan Wibisono

"I still think that REDD+ will make it into the post-Kyoto agreement."

Senson Mark