

SBSTA: Language on drivers puts indigenous livelihoods at risk

London, 19 June (Kate Dooley) – Concerns were expressed by several developing countries including Bolivia, Tuvalu, the Philippines and also by Indigenous Peoples over a draft decision text on addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation which implicated indigenous peoples livelihoods with the drivers of deforestation.

These concerns were expressed at a contact group set up under the Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) on the issue of ‘methodological guidance for activities relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+)’, as well as during the final SBSTA plenary on 14 June. The contact group met several times during the Bonn session (3 – 14 June) and one of the issues it was tasked to address relates to addressing the drivers of deforestation.

The text which raised concerns reads as follows: “*Noting* that livelihoods may be dependent on activities related to drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and that addressing these drivers may have an economic cost and implications for domestic resources”.

At the final contact group meeting on June 13, **Bolivia** made an intervention related to this text in the draft decision. Bolivia noted that it wanted to echo the concerns of Indigenous Peoples with regards to the paragraph in the preamble and expressed concern that this paragraph equally implicates indigenous peoples along with large and small industry. It said that indigenous peoples are engaged in the sustainable management of forest, which is related to the linkages between the conservation of forests and

traditional livelihoods, but these traditional uses are not the same as the drivers to deforestation.

Chair Peter Graham (Canada) responded that the text had been intended to convey the idea that if certain drivers were addressed, then the livelihoods of local communities and indigenous peoples may be indirectly gaining value from these activities. He said the intention was not to imply that indigenous peoples are the drivers but that they may be gaining value from activities that may drive deforestation, and in such situations, national strategies need to be developed with consideration of the impact on indigenous peoples and local communities.

The Chair then welcomed observers to the open contact group, recalling the mandate of this contact group, as expressed in decision 1/CP.16 Appendix II (work programme on REDD+); decision 12/CP.17 (guidance on systems for providing information on how safeguards are addressed and respected and modalities relating to forest reference emission levels and forest reference levels as referred to in decision 1/CP.16), and decision 1/CP.18 paragraphs 38, 39 and 40 (matters relating to support for implementation of REDD+ activities, the consideration of how non-market-based approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests, could be developed and the initiation of work on methodological issues related to non-carbon benefits resulting from the implementation of REDD+ activities).

The Chair noted that since the last contact group, Parties had engaged in a number of ‘informals’ and many hours of drafting, and that the conclusion text had now been accepted and would be forwarded to the SBSTA plenary. He noted that the conclusion text contained two

annexes with possible draft decisions on measuring, reporting and verification (MRV) of forest-related emissions and reference levels. He noted that these annexes reflect a range of views and finalizing these will occupy all the time available to this contact group in Warsaw. The Chair noted that significant progress had been made on the verification issue since Doha, and commended the flexibility which had been shown by all Parties in accepting the annex as basis for negotiations in Warsaw. The Chair said it was not going to be an easy negotiation, but Parties have identified a clear path forward that they could not find in Doha.

The Chair also noted that excellent use had been made of the time here in Bonn, and agreement had been reached on 3 draft decisions to go from SBSTA to COP 19 viz.: national forest monitoring systems; timing and frequency for reporting on the safeguard information systems and addressing the drivers of deforestation and degradation. The Chair congratulated Parties on the spirit of compromise which had resulted in these 3 agreed decisions, noting that these could be the first 3 COP decisions in Warsaw, and that progress had been made on non market-based approaches and non carbon benefits, with a process for further work in 2014 set out.

The Chair stated that if there were no objections, these draft conclusions would be forwarded to the SBSTA plenary, and opened the floor for interventions.

The **United States, China, Colombia, Brazil, the Philippines, Australia, the European Union, Ghana, Japan and Indonesia** all thanked fellow Parties for their constructive work and the Secretariat for their good guidance

Thailand said they look forward to work on the non-carbon benefits and **Papua New Guinea** and **Panama** noted the need to finalise

governance and finance decisions so the REDD+ mechanism is ready.

Norway expressed concern with regard to changes made on reporting for the safeguards information system, and the links to results based finance, and noted a need to revisit this in Warsaw.

In the SBSTA plenary on June 14, during discussion of this agenda item, **Tuvalu** supported by the **Philippines**, raised concerns over the ambiguous language related to livelihoods and the drivers of deforestation, stating that this should not be interpreted as linking indigenous peoples to the drivers of deforestation. On the contrary, it noted that indigenous peoples may be the victims of deforestation and forest degradation. Tuvalu requested this ambiguity be revisited and resolved at COP 19, and that its intervention should be recorded in the report of the session.

The statement from the **International Indigenous Forum on Climate Change** expressed deep concern regarding the reference to 'livelihoods' in relation to the driver of deforestation, noting that 'livelihoods' inherently encompasses the ways of life of indigenous communities, thereby implying that traditional livelihoods 'may be dependent on activities related to the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.' He noted that, as countless of indigenous communities have demonstrated around the world, traditional livelihoods are not related to the drivers of deforestation, rather indigenous peoples' traditional forest conservation and management practices have contributed both to adaptation and mitigation of climate change. Traditional livelihoods therefore need to be acknowledged as part of the solution, not part of the problem.