

## United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

The climate change meetings held in Warsaw from 11-23 November included the 19th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 19) of UNFCCC; the ninth session of Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CPM 9). The 39<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 39) and of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 39) and the third part of the second session of the *Ad hoc* Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) were also held.

The following points help to put the Warsaw meetings into perspective:

- The devastating impact of super-typhoon Haiyan, which hit the Philippines just before the COP convened, and the recently released climate change findings of the IPCC Working Group 1 underlined the urgency for strong mitigation action.
- COP19 marked the half-way point between agreement at Durban in 2011 to negotiate a post-2020 instrument by 2015. Parties and the public are concerned about the slow rate of progress in the negotiations under the ADP.
- The so-far expressed level of ambition for emission reductions by developed countries for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol is insufficient to keep global warming to within 2<sup>o</sup> C.
- With the Green Climate Fund capitalized to only a minor amount, the Adaptation Fund coffers limited and the price of carbon on the market very low, developing countries view the financial support to help them address climate change (particularly extreme events) as insufficient and are not confident that developed countries will meet their commitment to provide \$100 billion per year by 2020.
- The number of negotiating groups and items in parallel continues to increase, compounding the complexity of the negotiation process. Also, the proliferation of UNFCCC committees, bodies, etc. has increased the budget needs of the UNFCCC Secretariat. The Secretariat asked COP to approve a 50% increase in its budget.

Key outcomes of the meetings are as follows (see <http://unfccc.int/2860.php#decisions> for decision texts):

- A roadmap from now until December 2015, when the agreement is to be reached on the post-2020 instrument, was adopted. Parties are invited to communicate their (emissions reductions) “contributions” by the first quarter of 2015. A list of elements to be included in the agreement was not annexed to the final decision, so the outlines of the instrument are still to be drawn.
- The Warsaw Framework for REDD+, a comprehensive package of seven REDD+ decisions, was adopted, thus causing some to dub the Warsaw climate change meetings “ the REDD+ COP”.
- The “Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage”, a mechanism “under existing Convention bodies” to address loss and damage associated with extreme weather events and slow onset events in vulnerable developing countries was established.

- A decision was adopted requesting developed countries to prepare biennial submissions on their strategies and approaches for scaling up climate finance from 2014-2020 and to continue deliberations on long term finance was adopted. Long term finance continued to be a contentious issue; many developing countries, calling for clarity and predictability, asked that developed countries declare mid-term targets on the way to reaching \$100 billion per year by 2020, but developed countries rejected giving quantified benchmarks leading up to 2020.

## **Decisions and conclusions reached on REDD+ and LULUCF**

### **REDD+**

COP adopted a comprehensive package of decisions on REDD+, consisting of: three draft decisions agreed at SBSTA 38 in June 2013 (on drivers, national forest monitoring systems, and safeguards) and two draft decisions completed at SBSTA 39 on technical assessment of forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels, and on modalities for measuring, reporting and verifying of REDD+ actions. This completes the work of SBSTA's work programme on methodological issues on REDD+, as requested at COP 16 in Cancun. Two more decisions were adopted by COP: one on REDD+ financing, including for results based actions under a COP work programme; and another on coordination of support discussed under a joint SBI/SBSTA agenda item. The decision on financing sends a strong signal, including to the Green Climate Fund, that countries are eager for implementation with results-based payments. For the texts of these seven decisions, see: <http://unfccc.int/2860.php#decisions>.

The significance of the agreements reached in Warsaw on REDD+ is that the framework for results-based payments for REDD+ is now in place. Countries that have the required elements for REDD+ (a national REDD+ strategy, a national forest monitoring system, a forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level) can begin to access financing from various sources for results on the basis of an agreed metric: tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. Even though further work on REDD+ will be carried out (i.e. on ways and means to transfer payments for results-based actions and the provision of financial resources for alternative approaches; on systems for providing information on how safeguards are being addressed and respected; and on methodological guidance for non-market-based approaches and non-carbon benefits resulting from REDD+ activities), Warsaw represents a key milestone in making REDD+ operational.

More information on the COP decisions on REDD+, indicating the body under which the draft decisions were negotiated, is provided below

### SBSTA

- **Decision on modalities for national forest monitoring systems (NFMS)**

Key points:

- NFMS be guided by the most recent IPCC guidance and guidelines as adopted or encouraged by COP for developing countries, as outlined in the reporting guidelines in decision 17/CP.8 and referred to in decision 2/CP.13, for estimating emissions and removals, forest carbon stocks, C stock changes and forest area changes

- NFMS provide data that are transparent, consistent over time, and suitable for MRV for REDD+ as well as consistent with guidance for MRV for NAMAs
- NFMS should be built on existing systems, assess different types of forest, be flexible, reflect the phased approach for REDD+, and may provide information related to safeguards
- **Decision on timing and frequency of presentations of the summary of information on how all the safeguards referred to in appendix I of decision 1/CP.16 (for REDD+) are being addressed and respected**

Key points:

- The information to be provided by developing countries in their national communications or on the REDD web platform on the UNFCCC website.
- Provision of information is to start after the start of implementation of REDD+ activities and be done at the same frequency as the submissions of the countries' national communications and, on a voluntary basis, via the REDD web platform on the UNFCCC website.

- **Decision on drivers of deforestation and forest degradation**

Key points:

- Encourages continued work to reduce the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and to share the results of the work, including on the REDD web platform of UNFCCC website, and encourages developing country Parties to take note of the information from ongoing and existing work.

- **Decision on guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels**

Key points:

- Adopted guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of voluntary submitted reference levels by developing countries. The decision lists the information to be submitted by countries and assessed by an assessment team, the composition of the assessment team (one LULUCF expert from a developed country and one from a developing country), the periodicity and timing of the assessment and of the preparation of the assessment report.
- Invites Parties and relevant international organizations to support capacity-building for development and assessment of reference levels

- **Decision on modalities for measuring, reporting and verifying**

Key points:

- Decides that the data and information used by Parties to estimate forest related emissions and removals, forest carbon stock, and forest area and carbon stock changes resulting from implementation of REDD+ activities should be consistent over time and with the established forest reference emissions levels and/or forest reference levels, and should be provided by Parties voluntarily in a technical annex in their biennial update reports (BURs), and expressed in tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> eq per year
- Decides that upon request of a developing country Party to receive payments for results-based actions, two additional LULUCF experts should be participating in Technical Team of Experts for ICA (one from developing and one from developed countries) will carry out an

analysis of the technical annex and prepare a report, indicating areas for technical improvement and capacity-building needs.

COP

- **Work programme on results-based finance to progress the full implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70.**

Key points:

- Encourages entities financing activities through a wide variety of sources, including the Green Climate Fund in a key role, to channel finance in a fair and balanced manner, including the number of countries to receive payments and to provide financing for alternative policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches.
- Agrees that the actions of countries seeking results-based payments must be fully measured, reported and verified, and recalled that the countries must have all the elements of REDD+ in place (ref. to national REDD+ strategy, reference level/reference emission levels, safeguards information system and NFMS)
- Decides to establish an information hub on the REDD web platform on the UNFCCC website and requests the secretariat to insert in the hub the following information provided by each Party: results for each period in tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per year and a link to the technical report on the assessment of the annex to the country's biennium update reports (BURs); assessed forest reference emission level(s) and/or forest reference level(s) in tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> eq/yr; summary of information on how the safeguards are being addressed and respected; a link to the national REDD+ strategy or action plan (as appropriate); information on the NFMS; and the quantity of the results for which payments were received in tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> eq/yr and the entity paying for the results.
- Requests the UNFCCC secretariat to organize an expert meeting to discuss the information to be included on the web platform and the format for insertion of it and to prepare the meeting report for consideration by SBI 41 in December 2014
- Requests the Standing Committee on Finance to consider ways and means to transfer payments for results-based actions and the provision of financial resources for alternative approaches.

SBI/SBSTA

- **Coordination of support for the implementation of activities in relation to mitigation actions in the forest sector by developing countries, including institutional arrangements.**

Key points:

- Interested Parties are invited to designate a national entity or focal point for liaison with UNFCCC secretariat and bodies under the Convention
- Focal points encouraged to meet together annually in conjunction with June meetings of subsidiary bodies, but with the first meeting to be in December 2014.
- SBI to review in December 2017 the outcome of these meetings and consider need for alternatives for the coordination of support for implementation of REDD+ activities.

### LULUCF (SBSTA conclusion: FCCC/SBSTA/2013/L.26)

Very little progress was made due to the limited negotiation time allocated to this agenda item.

The issues on the table were:

- possible additional LULUCF activities for inclusion under the CDM
- alternative approaches for addressing non-permanence of CDM activities
- more comprehensive accounting of LULUCF emissions and removals, including through a more inclusive activity-based approach or a land-based approach
- application of the concept of additionality of LULUCF activities.

Only the first two issues were discussed. The SBSTA conclusion on this agenda item consisted of a roadmap for addressing them, as follows: i) countries and observers to continue to make submissions on these issues until 28 February 2014; 2) by 26 March 2014 the UNFCCC Secretariat to prepare a technical paper based on these and on submissions already received (see FCCC/SBSTA/2013/MISC.18 and Add.1; FCCC/SBSTA/2013/MISC.19); the secretariat to organize a workshop before SBSTA 41 (Dec 2014) and to prepare the workshop report for consideration at SBSTA 41.

SBSTA 40 will continue consideration of more comprehensive accounting of LULUCF and the concept of additionality. It was agreed that any outcomes on these points would not be applicable for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

### Other significant developments

- On 19 November, a High Level Panel Event on the Land Sector and Forests was held to begin a discussion on the potential role of the land sector, including forests, after 2020 and to determine its role in the future climate regime. A report of the workshop will be made available by the UNFCCC secretariat.
- The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, announced that he is convening a Climate Change Summit for Heads of State on 23 September 2014 at the UN Headquarters in New York.
- An announcement was made that \$280 million would be contributed by Norway, the US and the UK to the Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes (ISFL), a new multilateral facility managed by the World Bank to promote reduced greenhouse gas emissions from the land sector, including through REDD+, more sustainable agriculture, as well as smarter land use planning and policies.
- Norway announced that it would continue to fund REDD+ activities at least at the current level until 2020.

### Upcoming sessions of the COPs/CMPs

The next three COP/CMP meetings will be held as follows:

- COP 20/CMP10: Lima, Peru 1-12 December 2014
- COP 21/CMP11: Paris, France 30 Nov-11 December 2015
- COP 22/CMP12: Dakar, Senegal Nov/Dec 2016