

A Roundtable Discussion on REDD and National REDD-Plus Strategy



Non-Timber Forest Products
Exchange Programme

The following is a documentation of the roundtable discussion conducted on June 24, 2010, 8:30am-4:30pm, at the Social Hall, 2nd Floor of the DENR National Office, Quezon City.

Attended by 42 representatives of NGOs, six (6) representatives from FAs/private and business sectors, 16 representatives from the government sector, two (2) representatives from POs/CBOs, and three (3) representatives from academic/research institutions, the RTD is part of the consultation process in the drafting of the National REDD-Plus Strategy which, after a series of consultations on the ground, has been transmitted to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for endorsement to the Climate Change Commission (CCC).

The forum was conducted with supported from the Christian Aid, Oxfam, II.II.II Coalition of the Flemish North-South Movement, the Philippine Tropical Forest Conservation Foundation (PTFCF), and the DENR.

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Quezon City, Philippines
June 24, 2010

Welcome Remarks

Usec. Teresita S. Castillo

Undersecretary for Management and Technical Services
Executive Director, Climate Change Office, DENR

Usec. Teresita Castillo welcomed all participants to the RTD (see Annex 1), briefly providing update on the status of the National REDD-Plus Strategy (NRPS) – that it has been drafted through a consultation process that involved about 300 people, and officially transmitted to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for endorsement to the Climate Change Commission (CCC).

The RTD is part of the different consultation stages. It aims to:

- present Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) mechanism which includes the basic principles, components, and implementation requirements,
- share updates on past and current policy initiatives in the country,
- learn from REDD-like initiatives implemented in the Philippines which includes both fund and market based approaches, and
- identify issues and concerns, challenges and opportunities related to REDD-Plus implementation in the country, i.e. carbon rights, sharing mechanism.

This forum is supported by Christian Aid, Oxfam, 11.11.11, Coalition of the Flemish North-South Movement, the Philippine Tropical Forest Conservation Foundation (PTFCF), and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Opening Remarks

Romy Trono

NGO Representative, Climate Change Commission
Executive Director, Conservation International (CI)

Mr. Romy Trono delivered a speech thanking organisers, fund sources, hosts, and participants to the RTD. He provided context on the engagement of CI-Philippines in the REDD-Plus initiative and his particular role as NGO representative to the Climate Change Commission. A copy of the speech is attached as Annex 2.

What is REDD-Plus and its Components? Global and National Translations

Romeo T. Acosta

Former DENR-FMB Director

Relevant terminologies were first defined and its implications explained- emission, deforestation, degradation, RED, REDD and REDD-Plus. Data on the status of the Philippine forests were presented, with an explication on how creditable REDD can be accounted and how the data shows low deforestation and high degradation. The various issues on the current information and risks associated with committing to REDD-Plus were discussed. See Annex 5.

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Comments/Clarifications:

- The definition of degradation relates to reduction in biomass. Is biodiversity, as an important factor in increasing biomass, not taken into consideration in the definition? How was netting out accounted, in computing as to whether the Philippines is in the state of deforestation and degradation? (*Isagani Serrano, PRRM*)
 - ☞ In the definition of REDD, carbon stock is the primary concern (or what is accounted for); hence, it was highlighted as a technical definition.
 - ☞ Data shows low deforestation and high degradation. There is apparently an increase in forest area, but as presented there are still questions on what was accounted as “forests” in the inventory (e.g. plantations). The closed canopy forest (assuming, but not necessarily, old-growth) is still decreasing.

Updates from the UNFCCC Discussions on REDD-Plus

Lawrence Ang

Consultant, Climate Change Commission Office

The international discussions and negotiations from Bangkok to Copenhagen were described, explaining at which points consensus have been reached (principles, scope, safeguards, phased approach), and in which points there are still pending discussions (NAMA, scale, MRV guidance, finance). The recent related developments on REDD-Plus inside and outside the UNFCCC and its implications were briefly discussed (i.e. Paris-Oslo Process, proposal to include “Reforestation of forests in exhaustion” for Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), and the LULUCF/Guidelines). The presentation was concluded with suggestions for quick action in the Philippines, stressing that the Philippines is considered ahead of other countries doing REDD because of the draft NRPS and therefore this should be optimized as an advantage. See Annex 6.

Comments/Clarifications:

- REDD-Plus was presented as a “golden opportunity”. At present many concerns are still a work in progress and there are still many technical questions. To risk people’s organisations to engage in this venture does not sound like a wise decision. (*Judy Pasimio, LRC*)
 - ☞ The “golden opportunity” pointed out in the discussion is hinged on efforts on how the strategy will be configured and how the stakeholders will work towards achieving their objectives. The NRPS will have to capture and not be in conflict with national interest, e.g. land rights.
- The claim is that the Philippines is more advanced and advantaged than Brasil and Indonesia, but these countries are now in the process of implementing their REDD programs. It seems that the Philippines is a little late on the processes. (???)
 - ☞ For some countries a top-down approach to drafting a carbon action plan is acceptable, and such is the case for Indonesia. However, from a strategic perspective, having a clear-cut strategy [which is now in process with the DENR and the CCC] is the more systematic move to ensure better operationalisation and implementation of REDD programs. At present, there are several expressed interests for carbon trading with the Philippines but these will have to wait until the NRPS has been thoroughly reviewed.

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- It has to be kept in mind that REDD is a means for developed countries to get away with their emissions while developing countries already suffer it. The experiences in CDM, which promised the same opportunities, have been very disappointing. *(Helen Mendoza, Solyspax/PNCC)*
 - ☞ REDD-Plus is not all about the moneys that can be earned out of it, but it is also true that there is a need to be more knowledgeable on the carbon market mechanisms and vigilant on the benefit-sharing mechanisms (i.e. how the community truly benefits from such arrangements).

REDD-Plus and NRPS initiatives in the Philippines

Marlea Muñoz

CoDE REDD Philippines

The presentation contextualized the advocacy initiatives behind REDD-Plus, describing the evolving nature of the advocacies of the NGO network, how these have led to the drafting of the NRPS, highlights of the NRPS, and a brief review of the recent developments including: (1) Philippines on observer status with UN-REDD (March 2010), (2) Philippines as recommended by the Forest Investment Programme of the World Bank expert group as of the additional areas (March 2010), the approval of the National Framework Strategy on Climate Change (NFSCC) (April 2010), and the joining of the Philippines in the OSLO partnership Initiative (May 2010). See Annex 7.

OPEN FORUM

- How strong is our negotiating power without an existing law? Where is REDD aligned in the Environment and Natural Resources Accounting (ENRA)? *(Roy Carbonegro, PKI)*
 - ☞ The Strategy is subject for planning and budgeting. Since the budget call for this year has passed. In the succeeding budget call this year, it will be the government's function (DENR) to propose the line item to the Department of Budget Management (DBM). It is possible that this may not be necessary, depending on what are currently on the line items (e.g. if there are line items that also refer to activities under each strategy). The suggested action point for NGOs and POs would be to follow up on the budget and the various mechanisms required for the Strategy to work under the existing governance structures. In terms of ENRA, the MRV section of the Strategy describes the process. As previously discussed, the activities should be implemented even without REDD-Plus. The NRPS is an assertion of our national interest (not as dictated by international experts but as articulated by local constituents in the consultation processes). This is not for compliance, as it is an initiative from outside of government. The Strategy espouses adherence to standards that are attractive to our ecosystem [not to buyers]. It is not about money but about sound management for our forests. *(Marlea Muñoz, CoDE REDD)*
 - ☞ The ENRA was discussed in the crafting of the NFSCC; in fact, there was an expressed frustration that this was an inactive division at the NEDA. In the Means of Implementation at the NFSCC, there is a section on Environmental Valuation. The nature of the NFSCC is coherent with the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP); hence, all of the outputs will be inputted under the MTDP. In the negotiations, biodiversity protection is an explicit goal of the program and safeguards to ensure this have been imputed. By principle, REDD-Plus should be country-driven. *(Lawrence Ang, CCC)*
- Looking back at the objectives of UNFCCC - "to achieve a stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference

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with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable development to proceed in a sustainable manner." – places the CDM and REDD-Plus as a means for developed countries to get away with their responsibilities. REDD-Plus should be studied and understood, and people should get involved [since it is already here]. However, this should be in the context of look into relevant issues and problems on implementation. As in the past, some strategies look good on paper but not in actuality. Incentives should be recognized, but liabilities should not be missed as well. (*Rosa Perez, Manila Observatory*)

☞ The fear that developed countries will use these kinds of arrangements to their advantage is widely recognized. However, the Kyoto Protocol is also an important factor: (1) the US is not a signatory, and (2) the Philippines has committed to an emission reduction of five percent. The current negotiations are focused on proposed changes to the commitments and the carbon credits for developed countries for every unit of carbon traded. (*Lawrence Ang, CCC*)

- Is the current forestry data comprehensive enough to see the true dynamics of the environment and production? (*Edilberto Nasayao, CCO*)

☞ There are questions on the accuracy of the current available data, and for this reason the updated data is needed as baseline. This should have been started last year. Currently, acceptable data gathered by NAMRIA is at 10 percent only. It is reasonable to speculate on the possibility that removals/extraction is going at a faster rate than its replacement/regeneration. (*Romeo Acosta*)

- Perhaps it would be better to frame REDD differently. REDD and CDM basically have the same DNA CoDE- two things looking for suckers and we can be one of those. It would make more sense and relevance that instead of a REDD-Plus Strategy Paper the group can release a new biodiversity or national forestry strategy paper, and there include a forest definition. We can deviate from the current forestry definition [as adopted by the Food Agriculture Organization] as long as we agree and use that definition in the new national forestry strategy. Another question is - In whose ledger, in terms of greenhouse gas reduction, will it appear when the Philippines reduce emission on REDD agreement? (*Isagani Serrano, PRRM*)

☞ The Philippine Master Plan [or the national forestry strategy document as mentioned in the comment], currently undergoing climate proofing, is still in effect and is referred to as a fundamental document in the NRPS. There is no convention on which is above or under which document or if the NRPS supersedes the Philippine Master Plan. It is undeniable that there are many valid arguments and debates regarding the current forest definition. The NRPS takes note of this and stipulates that a new and acceptable forestry definition should be worked out as a parallel action rather than prior to the proposed Strategy. This is the same with the Forestry CoDE of the Philippines, which is outdated and has lost its relevance. Policy reviews on credit mechanisms and other relevant policies is also proposed in the Strategy. It is important that people's organisations get involved in these efforts. Other REDD implementers are at a more advanced stage, but the Philippines will have to first address REDD-Plus readiness. (*Marlea Muñoz, CoDE REDD*)

- The CDM experience in San Pablo, Siniloan, Makiling, and Tanay has not been very encouraging - only five hectares total were qualified, and the third party qualifiers are too costly. LLDA's position now is to push for old growth reforestation project banking on the contribution of the community and all the work done by LLDA with or without CDM or REDD. The mechanisms for REDD-Plus at this point are not clear to the LLDA. (*Lennie Sandos – Borjz, LLDA*)

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☞ All CDM experiences internationally have been very difficult; there are several ongoing debates on the forest definition still an ongoing debate; cannot change, already approved by NSCB (*Romeo Acosta*)

☞ CDM and REDD-Plus are both difficult, as there are several standards to abide by. For one, documentation is an important factor for success. On the issue of third party verifiers, the NRPS advocates for the organising and capacity building of community of practitioners (CoPs). (*Marlea Muñoz, CoDE REDD*)

☞ Many have already tried to deviate from the FAO-adopted forest definition. If the group will push for this, there has to be a concrete justification on the need to deviate. Should there be an agreement the key is to defend that it is REDD, then it goes to third party verification which only looks into consistency of methodology with implementation. (*Lawrence Ang, CCC*)

- Consultations are important for IPs. It is good that their agenda is now on the table, their stakeholder articulated, and positions on issues affecting them are taken on by the proposed Strategy. These should not be lost in the translation of the document into project implementation. (*Voltaire Tupaz, EEDTFIP*)

☞ “No rights is no REDD” is a clear position that is taken on by the draft NRPS. (*Marlea Muñoz, CoDE REDD*)

Sablayan, Mindoro Case: Community-based Forest Restoration Project in Sitio Palbong, Barangay Batong-buhay, Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro

Nestor C. Gacillo, Project Manager of Palbong CBFM

Mithi Laya S. Gonzales, Site Conservation Action Specialist, HARIBON

The case is about an NGO (BirdLife Asia) & private sector (Value Frontier) collaboration for a Forest Restoration Project in Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro. The project features a triple benefit to the environment (conservation of biodiversity, mitigation of effects of climate change, contribution to the local community) and allocation of financial support from companies to the local communities. The case presents the results of the project, the challenges encountered in the process, and its potential as a REDD site. See Annex 8.

Imugan Case: The Kalahan Educational Foundation (KEF) Experience

(video showing on the methodology used by the Kalahans of Nueva Vizcaya in their carbon trading project)

The CI's Peñablanca Experience: Facing the Additionality, Biodiversity and Community Challenges for Audit Certification of a Forest Restoration

Oliver Corozza, PhD

SYSTEMS Unit, CI-Philippines

The Peñablanca Sustainable Reforestation Project is a six-year (2007-2013) project co-implemented by Toyota Motors Corporation in 2,500 hectares in five barangays in the Peñablanca Protected Landscape and Seascape (PPLS). The Project promotes forest conservation within the area, as well as demonstrates the compatibility among multiple uses of forests. It is implemented through CDM and uses all indigenous species.

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Highlighted in the case is the experience of Conservation International in satisfying necessary standards, in this case using the voluntary standards developed by Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA), in implementing a forest carbon project. See Annex 9.

Comments/Clarifications:

- Since it is a protected area, then this is managed by the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB). Who will receive the payments from carbon trading- the ISF holder who in the first place was not able to protect the area, the LGU who also subsidizes costs for maintaining the area, or the NGO (CI) who is operating in the area? The area is supposed to be protected but there is evident data on cutting that has resulted to deforestation. (???)
 - ☞ The payment recipients are those who have rights to the land (the ISF holders). It is difficult to claim that the residents are the same people cutting the trees. The project is only three years old and monitoring will have to be done to ensure that cutting will be prevented. (*Oliver Corozza, CI*)
 - ☞ This is a reforestation project in a section of a deforested area, which is currently at a phase where the baseline has only been recently established. There is yet to have a discussion and decision by the stakeholders on whether they want to engage in REDD-Plus and carbon trading. The current livelihood of the residents is charcoal making. With the project and the awareness campaign, this has been reduced by up to 60 percent. This is as far as the project has accomplished, and further monitoring will provide more data that can be useful in the future. (*Rovena Boquiren, CI*)

- Why was it necessary to use these standards in implementing the community-based project? (???)
 - ☞ The CCBA standard was used to ensure continuity/sustainability of the project. Also, without using the standard it would have been impossible to pass international standards which open more opportunities for international support. (*Oliver Corozza, CI*)

REDD and Environmental Standards

Beechie de la Paz

Advocacy Officer, Haribon Foundation

The draft REDD-Plus Social and Environmental Standards is an initiative facilitated by the CCBA and Care International. While it is a work in progress, it is proposed that the standards can be used in the REDD-Plus implementation not only to ensure risk mitigation for IPs and local communities but also to define and build support for a higher level of social and environmental performance for REDD-Plus programs. See Annex 10.

Discussion on REDD Issues, Concerns, Challenges and Opportunities

(Panel discussion with presenters, Tebtebba and IP organizations, representatives of DENR-PAWB and FMB, representative of NCIP)

- How would existing policies affect REDD implementation, e.g. IFMA requires plantation establishment. There are supposedly intermediate plans that IFMA policies would be changed. Will it be consistent with REDD? (???)
 - ☞ IFMA is a production sharing contract, while REDD is intended as a means to protect the forests. There are arguments that IFMA should not cover the natural forests (this is yet to be

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resolved). The interest should be in sustainable forest management rather than which production agreement is more beneficial. (*Romeo Acosta*)

- Since REDD is not an imposition, because it should be country-driven and voluntary, it is strongly suggested that the issue of forest definition be resolved first before engaging in implementation. The present forest definition classifies plantation as forests and this can be a gap in the implementation (implementing something where the basis is flawed). (*Blas Tabranza, Jr., Haribon*)
 - ☞ In principle, when something is wrong with the interpretation of the law, you go back to the preamble. The same principle is followed in the current draft NRPS. The document lays down basic values and as such it ensures that natural forests will not suffer in favour of plantations. In the series of consultations that were launched in 2009, participants were consulted on the elements of the forest definition. It is made clear in the draft NRPS that there is no way that IFMA will find its excuse to transform existing natural forests into plantations to hasten increase of timber stocks. The NRPS also challenges CSOs to engage LGUs and government agencies and monitor the implementation of these principles. (*Marlea Muñoz, CoDE REDD*)
 - ☞ The conflict regarding forest definition always crops up in all fora. The challenge is really in engaging the executive agencies and to ensure that in defining the forest, the interests of the stakeholders are held of primary importance in the operational principles. (*Lawrence Ang, CCC*)

 - The standards are so rigid (i.e. CCBA, social and environmental standards). Has there been an application already? Is it possible for the Philippines to create a pseudo system/a local pool of third party verifiers before calling on auditors, given that third party verifiers cost about \$20,000? (*somebody who works with DENR but also does part-time work with ADB???*)
 - ☞ The purpose of the international auditors is that they are licensed to certify that the project has passed international standards. The services are quite expensive as it is also a business on their side- it is even difficult for someone from a third world country to make it to the team, and they are not willing to provide a training for local verifiers. The NRPS espouses the idea of building a pool of local auditors as part of capacity building. (*Oliver Corozza, CI and Marlea Muñoz, CoDE REDD*)
 - ☞ Some countries have piloted the draft REDD-Plus social and environmental standards (which includes Nepal, Ecuador, Tanzania, Brasil and Indonesia. Partnership with government is an essential strategy in piloting these standards to ensure effective implementation. Since the Philippines is now among the additional areas for the WB's Foreign Investment Programme, partnership with government and working with country systems should be observed and monitored as part of the piloting process. (*Beechie dela Paz, Haribon*)

 - What is the general pulse on REDD-Plus in terms of opportunities for indigenous peoples? Currently, there are mixed signals – some are saying it can be an opportunity to further push for IP rights while some are saying it can tip the balance. Because some REDD-Plus areas may overlap with mining areas, how will REDD-Plus complement the given situation? (*Helen Magata, Tebtebba Foundation*)
 - ☞ The consultations and the draft NRPS are clear on the principle of “No rights, no REDD”. The peoples’ pulse depends on the information they get. IPs in the Philippines have more access to information than those from other countries. The NRPS classified mining as a driver of deforestation; IP communities have different stands regarding this as some thrive on mining as livelihood while some are vehement in their struggles against it. Some quarters package REDD-Plus as a money-making mechanism, while CoDE REDD advocates that the NRPS should be one that is directed towards biodiversity conservation. IP communities will be more extensively informed with
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on REDD-Plus and its implications - that it is intended to protect their rights, culture and benefits. (Marlea Muñoz, CoDE REDD)

- How will REDD be operationalized given the several unresolved issues of IPs, e.g. mining, land rights? Carbon trading will become a very important commodity and this could spark conflict among IP communities; how will this be managed? (Geraldine Agoy, Tebtebba Foundation)
 - ☞ One of the operational strategies is to look into existing mechanisms that are working and build on it, e.g. engagement of non-government and government sectors. NCIP is among the important players in this mechanism and its future (whether it remains with the DENR or not) changes the process – if it remains within DENR, it is automatically carried into the REDD-Plus councils. (Marlea Muñoz, CoDE REDD)
 - ☞ Under the Governance section of the NRPS, sub-national REDD-Plus coordinating agencies are mandated to resolve grievances and disputes related to REDD-Plus. (Beechie dela Paz, Haribon)

- Cutting was not allowed in natural forests before, then IFMA gave a go signal. Is it true that there is an Administrative Order [issued last year] that stipulates that what the IFMA said cannot be revoked, and another AO that cutting is allowed in protected areas? Is it possible for IFMAs to be revoked to prevent further cutting of trees in these areas? (???)
 - ☞ There has never been a policy that prohibits harvesting in natural forests; what is only prohibited is the cutting of wood in old growth virgin forests (production in second growth forests allowed). Hence, there has been an advocacy to finally classify the forests into production and protection forests. Although verification is needed, there is recollection that there is a DENR policy to stop conversion of natural forests even in inadequately stocked forests. It is highlight improbable that cutting in protected areas will be allowed. (Romeo Acosta)
 - ☞ There are many components of the NIPAs that requires further assessment Since some issues cannot be resolved in this forum, these can be discussed in a separate policy forum. (Marlea Muñoz, CoDE REDD)

- In Sablayan, it is important to note as well how the communities acquire their daily subsistence requirements. Also, kaingin is an important practice among IPs. Will REDD-Plus deprive IPs of this cultural practice? (Malou?)
 - ☞ The Project in Sablayan alone is not sufficient to sustain the community needs; rather, it supplements the needs or tides them through difficult seasons. There are other sources of livelihood which includes planting, harvesting of non-timber forest products, and others. (Mithi Laya Gonzales, Haribon)
 - ☞ The draft NRPS espouses the protection of cultural practices. It integrates into the sectoral plans (see under Governance section); hence, uses as fundamental bases the forest land use plans, local development plans, and the Community Resources Management Frameworks and Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plans (ADSDPP). Therefore, the proposed NRPS hopes to manage leakage as effectively and efficiently as possible [by zoning areas]. The REDD-Plus does not reinvent the community plan; the only thing it introduces is the systematization of how sustainable forest management is implemented – which have to be measurable, reportable and verifiable. (Marlea Muñoz, CoDE REDD)

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Synthesis

Beechie de la Paz

HARIBON

REDD is only one among the many policies that should be discussed in addressing the environmental issues at hand. The Philippines can come up with its own framework and policy on forest management, taking into high consideration policy coherence. Inconsistencies will have to be resolved by choosing one over the other.

Haribon is in the process of drafting the Forest Resource Management Act, and is urging organizations to support the initiative.

Closing Remarks

Jose (Oggie) Canivel

Executive Director, PTFCF

The day's discussions are important, as these are not just about REDD, but about the forest and the people.

Mr. Canivel told the story of how when he was informed of his task to deliver the Closing Remarks he went through his common reference books – the Giving Tree (by Shel Silverstein) and The Man Who Planted Trees (by Jean Giono) – and thought these were no longer relevant. He realised during the discussions, however, that there was hardly talk of carbons. The discussions focused on trees, building livelihoods and protecting forests.

Mr. Canivel urged the participants to continue these discussions at the regional levels to the local, just as these discussions are also continuous at the higher levels of government. Hence, he claimed that this is not a closing but rather an opening of the selves to more discussions and dialogues on protecting the environment.

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**ANNEX 1:
Directory of Participants**

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ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Round Table Discussion on REDD and National REDD-Plus Strategy

Social Hall 2nd Floor DENR National Office, 24 June 2010

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