



POLICY PAPER

Intended Nationally Determined Contributions from Forestry in ASEAN Countries



Prepared by the ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN)
in collaboration with the Non-Timber Forest Products – Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP) Asia

Misty morning in Sarawak, Malaysia

Photo by Earl Paulo Diaz (NTFP-EP Asia)

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ASCC	ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ASFCC	ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Framework on Climate Change and Food Security
BAU	Business-as-usual
CFS	Central Forest Spine
COP	Conference of Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
GHG	Greenhouse gas
HOB	Heart of Borneo
INDCs	Intended Nationally Determined Contributions
LULUCF	Land use, land use change and forestry
PAS	Protected Area Systems
PPF	Protected Public Forest
REDD	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
RF	Reserved Forest
SMED	Small and medium-sized enterprise development
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Introduction

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member States have carried out individual and collective actions to address climate change, including curbing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, taking into consideration common but differentiated responsibilities, national circumstances and respective capacities, among others. ASEAN Leaders have also supported the process under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to arrive at a common understanding of the global goal to reduce emissions to pave the way for a new climate change agreement. In doing so, ASEAN Leaders have issued Joint Declarations and Statements in 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2014 and 2015¹. In their most recent Joint Declaration on Climate Change, ASEAN Leaders called upon Member States to work effectively and in good faith for an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention and submit Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) in advance of the 21st UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP-21) in Paris in December 2015.

In the INDCs, Parties to the Convention were requested to outline the steps they are taking or will undertake to reduce emissions at the national level; they may also address other issues, such as undertakings in adaptation. As the name suggests, INDCs are targets determined by the Parties based on their circumstances and priorities. Moreover, the Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States may submit information on strategies, plans and actions for low greenhouse gas emission development reflecting their special circumstances in the context of intended nationally determined contributions.

What are Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)?

In COP 19 and 20, Parties to UNFCCC committed to create a new climate agreement by 2015 in the COP 21 in Paris. They also agreed to determine their post-2020 climate actions or intended contributions in the context of their national priorities, circumstances and capabilities, and submit this to the UNFCCC before COP 21. It was further agreed that to facilitate clarity, transparency, and understanding, the information may include time frames and/or periods for implementation, scope and coverage, planning processes, assumptions and methodological approaches, and how the Country considers that its intended nationally determined contribution is fair and ambitious (UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.20 paragraph 14).

¹ ASEAN or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations consists of 10 countries, namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

ASEAN Member States' Intended Contributions and Actions Post-2020



All ten ASEAN Member States submitted their INDCs; majority laid down commitments to reduce greenhouse emissions across identified sectors (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam). A number of ASEAN Member States identified forestry and/ or land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) as potential source for their GHG reduction commitment (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines). Thailand submitted a proposed economy-wide reduction but reserved the inclusion of land use, land-use change and forestry later. Countries who mentioned REDD+ in their INDCs are Cambodia, Myanmar, Philippines and Vietnam. Cambodia committed to increasing forest cover to 60% of the total land area by 2030, and maintaining it after 2030. This will be from an estimate of 57% forest cover in 2010 and with actions such as the reclassification of forest areas to avoid deforestation by allocating 2 million hectares (Mha) of forest to Community Forestry. Cambodia is the only country in ASEAN that has concretely aligned its community forestry targets to its INDC.

Among the developing countries in ASEAN, the Philippines provided the most ambitious envisioned reduction target of up to 70% by 2030, but conditioned upon the extent of financial resources, technology development and transfer, and capacity building that will be made available. Singapore and Malaysia provided the highest ambition with unconditional reduction targets of 36% and 35 % by 2030, respectively, with Malaysia scaling up its commitment up to 45% if given adequate support.

Significantly, all ASEAN Member States have included adaptation strategies, plans and actions in their intended nationally determined contributions. The INDCs are milestones for ASEAN Member States especially for Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar, as this is their first time to lay down strategies, plans and actions for low greenhouse gas emission development.

Below is a summary of forestry-related actions in ASEAN INDCs. The submitted INDCs can be accessed at the UNFCCC INDC portal.²

Country (Date of Submission)	Base Year	Reduction Target	Inclusion of Forestry /LULUCF as part of mitigation
 Brunei Darussalam December 5, 2015		Reduction is primarily in the energy sector as the dominant sector with respect to GDP and GHG emissions generated, commitment for a 63% reduction in total energy consumption by 2035	Increase the total gazette forest reserves to 55% of total land area as compared to the current level of 41%.
 Cambodia September 30, 2015		27% conditional, taken from aggregate reductions from energy, transport, manufacturing and others and additional contribution from the LULUCF sector	Increase forest cover to 60% of the national land area by 2030 and maintaining it after 2030. Contribution to LULUCF are presented as a conditional contribution; a precise list of actions and the GHG impacts will be updated after finalization of the REDD+ Strategy
 Indonesia September 24, 2015	BAU starting 2010	Unconditional reduction of 26% by 2020 and 29% by 2030 This will be increased to 41% by 2030 if support is provided from international cooperation	The unconditional reduction commitment will be implemented through effective land use and spatial planning; sustainable forest management, which includes social forestry program and restoring degraded ecosystems, amongst others.
 Lao PDR October 1, 2015	2000	Policies and measures in multiple sectors, to be implemented by 2030	Committed to start revising the next set of action plans to maintain forest cover at 70% after the target date of 2020 Implementation of the Forestry Strategy until the year 2020 to increase forest cover to 70% of land area (i.e. to 16.58 million hectares) by 2020. Once the target is achieved, emission reductions will carry on beyond 2020.
 Malaysia January 18, 2016	2005	Intends to reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions intensity of GDP by 45% by 2030 relative to the emissions intensity of GDP in 2005. 35% on an unconditional basis and a further 10% upon receipt of climate finance, technology transfer and capacity building from developed countries	No specific forestry action identified but mentioned two major initiatives, the Central Forest Spine (CFS) and Heart of Borneo (HOB) to ensure sustainable forest management and use of natural resources.
 Myanmar September 28, 2015		Policies and measures in multiple sectors, to be implemented by 2030	Increase National Permanent Forest Estate Target, in particular: Reserved Forest (RF) and Protected Public Forest (PPF) to 30% of total national land area and Protected Area Systems (PAS) to 10% of total national land area Intended means of implementation is thru initiatives under UN REDD and FLEGT program

2 UNFCCC. INDC Portal. (Available online: <http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/indc/Submission%20Pages/submissions.aspx>.)

Country (Date of Submission)	Base Year	Reduction Target	Inclusion of Forestry /LULUCF as part of mitigation
 Philippines October 1, 2015	BAU	A 70 % reduction by 2030 conditioned on the extent of financial resources, including technology development and transfer, and capacity building	<p>No specific forestry actions identified.</p> <p>Mentioned ecosystem contribution from Philippine National REDD Plus Strategy and the pending Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas Systems where 97 protected areas are to be legislated as national parks</p>
 Singapore July 3, 2015	2005	Reduce its emissions intensity by 36% by 2030, and stabilize its emissions with the aim of peaking around 2030	<p>In terms of accounting removals and emissions in land sector, Singapore has begun a long-term program to monitor and report carbon storage and carbon fluxes related to land use change and forestry.</p> <p>There is no commercial forestry or plantations in Singapore, emissions and carbon storage from land use change and forestry is expected to be small.</p>
 Thailand October 1, 2015	BAU 2005	Reduce by 20 percent from BAU level by 2030, could increase up to 25 percent, subject to adequate and enhanced access to technology development and transfer, financial resources and capacity building support through a balanced and ambitious global agreement under the (UNFCCC).	<p>No mitigation reduction included but stated that inclusion of land use, land-use change and forestry will be decided later.</p> <p>Note that forestry actions are part of the prioritized adaptation efforts, not mitigation. This is the increase national forest cover to 40% through local community participation, including headwater and mangrove forests to enhance adaptive capacities of related ecosystems</p>
 Vietnam September 30, 2015	BAU 2010	An 8% unconditional contribution by 2030 could be increased to 25% if international support is received through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, as well as through the implementation of new mechanisms under the Global Climate Agreement, in which emission intensity per unit of GDP will be reduced by 30% compared to 2010 levels.	<p>Part of its unconditional contribution is to increase forest cover to the level of 45%.</p> <p>There is significant effort in forest protection, afforestation and reforestation and implementing REDD+</p>

From the INDC emission reduction targets submitted ahead of COP 21, now that a global agreement has been forged in Paris, countries agreed to submit their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) when they submit their respective instruments of ratification, accession, or approval of the Paris Agreement. However, the Agreement also allows countries that communicated an INDC prior to the Agreement an option to retain their INDC instead of communicating an NDC. Once a country opts to retain its INDC upon ratification of the Paris Agreement, their INDC will be considered as their NDC. Note that the NDCs are subject to a legally binding procedure with a 5-year cycle starting 2020 and a mid-term review in 2023 as outlined in the Agreement. The NDC should represent a progression of ambition over time, while recognizing the need for adequate support, but it will be non-legally binding.

Importance of ASEAN forests in achieving mitigation contributions under the Paris Agreement

Southeast Asia has a total land area of 434 Mha³. It has the third largest tropical forest in the world, with a forest cover at 46% of the total land area⁴. A total area of around 42 million hectares of forest is estimated to have been lost in Southeast Asia between 1990 and 2010 which is equivalent to 8 percent of the total land area. According to the 2 010 FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment, rates of forest loss in the region fell immediately after the turn of the millennium but have increased since 2005.

In the 1990s, the region had a net annual forest area loss of 2.4 Mha. This figure was curbed to 0.4 Mha in 2000 to 2005 and 1.0 Mha in 2005 to 2010⁵, mainly due to land use change and forestry sector.

Emissions from tropical forests are equivalent to up to a fifth of the global carbon emissions, hence, commitment to reduce emissions from tropical forests in this region will significantly contribute to needed reduction in green house gases to “hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial level while pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C”.⁶

Between 1990 to 2010, the region’s emissions from fossil fuels surged 227%, the highest and fastest in the world, compared with 181 percent in South Asia and 12 percent in North America. The envisioned ASEAN Economic Community, with the region opening up to more investments, increased trade, expanded infrastructure and greater connectivity within the region, will most likely happen with increased emissions across sectors under a business as usual (BAU) scenario. The forestry sector, as one of the largest contributors to emissions has great mitigation potential through REDD+, reforestation and afforestation and improved forest management. Potential emissions from a BAU will largely be decreased if ASEAN forests are sustainably managed.

In 2000, land use and forestry was the biggest source of GHG emissions in Southeast Asia at 75%, followed by energy at 15% and the agricultural sector at 8%.⁷ With 42% of the ASEAN’s land area and 40% of its population⁸, Indonesia contributed the most to the region’s GHG emissions. Indonesia also ranks fifth among the world’s sources of GHG emissions. A 2010 report from the National Council on Climate Change, states that 85% of Indonesia’s GHG emissions stem from land use activities; with 37% due to deforestation and 27% due to peat fires⁹. Indeed, Indonesia has a vital role in reducing the region’s GHG emissions and in delivering on mitigation commitments under the Paris Agreement.

3 RECOFTC. Forest and Social Forestry Infographic. 2015. (Available online at <http://www.asfnsec.org/>)

4. Ibid.

5 FAO. Southeast Asian Forest and Forestry to 2020. Sub-Regional Report of the Second Asia Pacific Forestry Outlook. 2011. Available online at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1964e/i1964e00.pdf>.

6 UNFCCC Decision 1/CP 21. Article 2, paragraph 1a. Adoption of the Paris Agreement. Available online: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/l09r01.pdf>.

7 Asian Development Bank. The Economics of Climate Change in Southeast Asia: A Regional Review. April 2009. p. 191

8 Asian Development Bank. The Economics of Climate Change in Southeast Asia: A Regional Review. April 2009. p. 191

9 REDD+ in Indonesia. The REDD Desk. Available online: <http://theredddesk.org/countries/indonesia>

Role of ASEAN in the implementation of nationally determined contribution in forestry

ASEAN has long recognized the important role that forest conservation and sustainable management of forests throughout the region can play in helping to mitigate global climate change and provide sustainable economic livelihood opportunities for local communities. There are existing frameworks and platforms for achieving this role thru strategic actions mainstreamed under the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint 2025¹⁰, ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Framework on Climate Change and Food Security (ASFCC)¹¹ and the Vision and Strategic Plan for ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry (2016-2025)¹². One of the goals of the ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry is increasing resilience and contributing to mitigation and adaptation of climate change and achieving SFM. These regional frameworks and strategies can enable greater ambition among ASEAN Member States and facilitate more effective implementation of mitigation actions in forestry and LULUCF. They can also be enhanced by the following measures:

1. Ensure that implementation of INDCs and processes for the formulation of NDCs are participatory and inclusive across relevant sectors, and encourage international partners to provide necessary resources to support these processes.
2. Develop ASEAN Member States' competencies, particularly in the following areas: mainstreaming mitigation actions within existing plans; adopting common methodologies for GHG monitoring reporting and verification; strengthening policy and regulatory frameworks; and mainstreaming climate change law into forest management strategies.
3. Ensure procedural equity in land use decision-making in INDC implementation or NDC formulation through the establishment of transparent platforms for multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder participation and planning processes and mechanisms at different levels.
4. Ensure that over-all implementation of the mitigation actions in INDCs employ safeguards to empower and protect indigenous peoples, communities and smallholder agriculture/forestry from marginalization.
5. Encourage the inclusion of Social Forestry strategies and approaches as part of ASEAN Member States' commitment to reduce GHG emissions.
6. Proactively engage the ASEAN Cooperation in Social Forestry mechanism to provide enhanced platforms for generating and exchanging information on INDC implementation and NDC formulation at the national and regional levels.

10 ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint 2025. Available at <http://asean.org/storage/2016/01/ASCC-Blueprint-2025.pdf> Accessed on June 5, 2016

11 What is ASFCC? (Available online: <http://www.recoftc.org/project/asean-swiss-partnership-social-forestry-and-climate-change/basic-page/what-asfn-asfcc>)

12 Vision and Strategic Plan for ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry (2016-2025) Endorsed by the 37th ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF). 10 September 2015, Philippines

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ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN) is a government-initiated network that aims to strengthen social forestry in Southeast Asia through the sharing of information and knowledge. ASFN was established by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Senior Officials on Forestry (ASOF) in August 2005, linking government forestry policy makers directly with civil society organizations, research organizations, academia, private sector, and all who share a vision of promoting social forestry policy and practices in ASEAN.

The **ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC)** is a Partnership Programme of the ASEAN that aims to contribute to the ASEAN Mandate and Policy Framework through support for the ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN) and the ASEAN Multi sectoral Framework on Climate Change towards Food Security (AFCC).