

Ministry of Environment and Forest

National REDD+ Secretariat

Minutes of the REDD+ Strategy Task Force Meeting

Date: October 02/2014

Time: 9:00 - 12:20 a.m.

Place: MEF Premises

Participants list: (See annex 1)

Agenda:

- 1) Endorsing previous minutes
- 2) On the progress of draft REDD+ Strategy preparation
- 3) On proposed forest definition

1) Endorsing previous minutes

Dr Yitebitu Moges ((National REDD+ Coordinator) welcomed all participants and briefed them of the agenda for the meeting. He then requested the participants to take some time and go through the minutes of the previous meeting and provide their comments (if any) before approving it. The participants approved the minutes of the previous meeting with no comment. It was noted that minutes should be sent to participants well ahead of the next meeting so that everyone will have time to comment on it.

2) On the progress of draft REDD+ Strategy preparation

The chairman then invited the core team member (Ato Tsegaye Tadesse) to present the process of draft REDD+ strategy preparation. Ato Tsegaye briefed the TF members on the assignment given to the core team (developing an outline for the draft, work schedule and facilitating the process) and the progress made in that respect. In his presentation, Ato Tsegaye highlighted the following

→ The outline of the draft REDD+ strategy and the salient issues that should be addressed in each chapter of the draft REDD+ strategy

→ The process of developing a ToR for the core team, the allocation of individual chapters in the outline to experts and the progress made in the compilation of these chapters.

→ The deadline for the draft REDD+ strategy (November 31/2014) and the need to work out an action plan extracted from targets in the draft strategy as in put for GTP II

At the end of his presentation, the participants forwarded the following comments and questions.

Comment: the chapter on consultation and participation should go with benefit sharing and the chapter on communication coordination should stand as a separate chapter.

Comment: MRV and safeguards should be separate chapters in the draft strategy .

Question: Do we have any section in the strategy where we can discuss the validity of current strategic options, the dynamics in drivers of D & FD?

Comment: the findings from Oromia REDD+ program technical study should inform the national draft REDD+ strategy.

Comment: all important information from oromia technical studies, ongoing CIFOR REDD+ Global Comparative Study (GCS) and that from the R-PP should be considered.

Comment: In relation to the sustainable REDD+ funding, we should not fully depend on foreign finance and the strategy should look into alternative sources of in-country funding. As a long-term option, we should always depend on our own resources and the Oromia Forest and Wilde life Enterprise and the Amhara Forest Enterprise are practical examples. We should always explore options to generate income sources.

Comment: Experience from existing forest carbon projects should be part of the legal issues of the strategy. Issues related to carbon tenure and NRM law should be addressed in the Forest Law under revision.

Comment: There must be a legal framework on how to involve the private sector. we need to work hard to raise awareness to engage the private sector in REDD+ activities. The issue of building internal capacity is crucial. We have to look for ways on how to engage companies like Ethiopian Airlines in afforestation activities and arrangements where companies are obliged to pay royalty fees. Let's work on differentiating the role of the state, the community and the private sector.

Comments: One option in improving the draft REDD+ strategy is a face-to-face discussion with chapters writers possibly in a form of workshops.

Comments: The draft REDD+ strategy should consider the GTP II activities of key sectors.

The core team accepted the comments forwarded by participants and will do its best to consider in the draft REDD+ strategy preparations.

3) On proposed forest definition

Dr. Yitebitu invited Dr. Solomon Zewdie to present a proposed forest Definition. Dr Solomon provided the background information on the initiation of a team responsible for compiling a forest definition and the relevant reviews the team made. He then discussed the following points

→ What a forest definition mean?

→ Why a forest definition is needed?

→ A review of Ethiopia's (previous) forest definitions and international contexts in formulating forest definitions.

→ What to consider in adopting a given forest definition (advantages and disadvantages of a given forest definition)?

→ The proposed forest definition for Ethiopia

It was noted that the ad-hoc team looked into the diversity of options on formulating forest definitions and came up with a proposed definition where a forest is

" a land spanning more than **0.1 ha** covered by trees (including bamboo) (with a minimum width of 20m or not more than two-thirds of its length) attaining a height of more than **5m** and a canopy cover of **more than 10%** or trees with the potential to reach these thresholds *in situ* in due course."

Following the presentation, the participants acknowledged the efforts made by the ad-hoc team in evaluating different options of forest definitions. The following comments and questions were forwarded

Question: How do you define forest land, agroforests and land use plans? as these are closely related to the definition of a forest

Answer: The ad-hoc team was responsible to come up with a definition of forest only. The definition of a forest land, an agroforest and land use plans is believed to be covered in the revised Forest Law.

Comment: We should bear in mind that a forest definition should always be considered useful from the political advantage it provides to our country.

Question: Who owns areas with vegetation covers that neither fall into an agricultural land nor as a forest land (as per the definition)?

Answer: The formulation of a forest definition did not consider the issue of legal ownership of those vegetation groups that do not fall within the definition of a forest. In fact, there is always a possibility that a country can adopt legal and technical definitions of forests.

Comment: the forest definition should give a demarcation of the forestland and need to show that the forest cover of Ethiopia is far below that of the average forest cover of east Africa.

Comment: In addition to the parameters like area, tree height and canopy cover, forest definition should consider slope, distance from river banks and the spatial resolution.

Comment: The proposed forest definition considers a height of 5m and this height would exclude lowland forests as the ecological conditions in these areas (area enclosures in the north) is stressful for tree growth. A height >2m should be considered for the parameter tree height.

Comment: The forest definition should consider should contribute to a better land use plan and be based on inventory and should have an international acceptance.

Comment: The tree height in the definition should be > 2m and it should take into consideration the C stock/ha and its implication on deforestation rate.

Comment: Additional criteria other than tree height, area and canopy cover should be considered and any forest definition should go along with the definition in the Forest Proclamation.

Comment: Relevant stakeholder institutions should be consulted in the process of formulating a forest definition.

Following the comments, Dr. Solomon acknowledged that the proposed forest definition has its own limitations and the proposal was presented in a couple of fora. He promised that the comments forwarded by participants are valuable and will be compiled and considered in formulating the final version of forest definition. It was noted that the following points should be given attention

→ Tree height >2m

→The definition should clearly specify the inclusion of riparian forests

→ The definition should be related to land use

→ The definition should also include the slope

It was agreed that the core team for the formulation of a draft REDD+ strategy should finalize the first draft sometime in November and present it to the task force.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20a.m.

Annex 1 (Participants List)

Dr. Yitebitu Moges

Ato Tsegaye Tadesse

Ato Ababu Anage

Dr. Solomon Zewdie

W/o Kibebework Getachew

Ato Gedefa Negera

Ato Shimelis sima

Ato Tesfaye Chekol

Ato Lulu Likassa

Ato Sahle Tesfaye

Ato Fikre Sahle

Ato Yidnekachew Hable

Ato Tesfaye Gonfa

Dr. Habtemariam Kassa

Dr. Getachew Eshete