

Draft (November 20, 2007)

**LAND USE, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE  
– KEY ISSUES FOR CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE AND ACTION**

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**Introduction**

Climate change is one of the most important challenges facing the world today. Consequently, the role played by forests, which are currently responsible for 20-25 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions through deforestation and degradation, has come under increased scrutiny. This attention is certainly warranted and welcome, particularly where the wider contribution that forests make to society at a variety of different levels is recognized and taken account of. There are legitimate linkages and trade-offs that can and *do* exist between land use, forests and climate, especially in the developing world.

Ideally, the various responses to climate change will develop in integration with each other and with recognition of past experience in the forest sector. If lessons from the past are overlooked, this may not only risk inadvertently undermining the very valuable contribution that the sector can otherwise make towards addressing the problem of climate change, but could also potentially risk reversing some (or all) of the hard-won gains that have been made so far in promoting a more people-centred, multifunctional, and pluralistic understanding of forests and sustainable forest management. Experience shows that if you practice sustainable forest management, there will be many benefits, including but not only carbon.

The current debate presents a major opportunity to build on some of the experience in the forest sector, and help develop a more integrated approach to climate change and forests. One of the very interesting and promising aspects of such an endeavour is that it could provide a place where different interests from governments, the private sector and civil society intersect and find common ground.

**The Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration**

The diverse membership in the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (GPFLR) and the interest already expressed by a number of its partners provide a good starting point for building a broader forest sector response and generating a more informed and constructive dialogue among a wider group.

*The Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration is a proactive network that unites governments, organisations, communities and individuals with a common goal.*

*We believe that ideas transform landscapes.*

*Through active engagement, collaboration and the sharing of ideas and information we promote an integrated approach that seeks to ensure that forests, trees and the functions that they provide are effectively restored, conserved and employed to help secure sustainable livelihoods and ecological integrity for the future.*

Forest landscape restoration offers a sound conceptual basis on which thinking on both forests and climate change can be practically operationalized in the field, including through appropriate management structures, and can shape decision-making nationally and internationally.

The basic principles of the Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) approach relate to:

- ✍ Restoration of a balanced and negotiated package of forest functions
- ✍ Participatory decision-making and collaborative implementation
- ✍ Scaling up to the landscape level
- ✍ Learning and adapting.

A study was carried out in August 2007, which reviewed the positions of the members of the GPFLR and identified key aspects of the climate change and forests issue that are of particular relevance to the GPFLR. These are:

1. Multifunctional role of forests
2. Landscape level implementation perspective
3. Pluralistic forest management and governance
4. Factoring of real protection costs in reducing deforestation
5. Adaptive management

- ☞ Multifunctional role of forests: Forests have widely been recognised and appreciated for the wide basket of ecosystem and livelihood goods and services that they provide to people who depend on them, especially the poor, be it in the form of timber, fuelwood, fodder, NTFPs, water regulation, carbon storage, or as habitats for wildlife and biodiversity. Hence, the utility and value of forests should not be viewed narrowly just in terms of carbon storage or substitution alone.
- ☞ Need for a landscape-level implementation perspective: A landscape-level approach considers forestland uses at a wider spatial scale. A 'mosaic' of different forest land uses should be ensured within an overall landscape – for example, through a negotiated combination of agriculture, pasture land, protected natural forests, biofuel crops, CDM plantations, etc. – that can together provide a balanced basket of forest goods and services that different segments of society need from the landscape. At this larger spatial scale it can be ensured that no one particular land-use dominates (or is diminished beyond a minimum acceptable level), and a balanced mix can be achieved while making allowances for legitimate trade-offs.
- ☞ Need for pluralistic forest management and governance: Good governance is a prerequisite to effective forest-related measures to combat climate change. It is important to actively include local communities, private land owners and other local stakeholders in forest land use decision making, and to provide them with an appropriate mix of rights, incentives and benefit-sharing mechanisms to encourage them to participate in activities contributing to sustainable forest management and addressing climate change. Otherwise new climate change-driven investments in forest sector, such as on biofuels development or through the proposed RED(D) initiative, are unlikely to secure the necessary ongoing support of those people whose land-use behaviour such investments seek to change. Furthermore, measures to support good governance, such as certification, legality verification and monitoring schemes, can contribute to effective carbon accounting.
- ☞ Factoring of real protection costs is critical for RED(D) success: Regardless of what shape or form a decision on RED(D) takes, it is worthwhile to bear in mind that unless payments/funds received by developing countries are large enough to cover *all* the actual costs incurred by them in reducing deforestation, including the current and future opportunity costs of keeping their standing forests intact, they may not have sufficient incentive, or indeed be able to afford, to deliver successful results.
- ☞ Need for adaptive management: Adaptive management approaches are critical to maintaining responsiveness to unforeseen issues, changing circumstances and to incorporate new learning. Past experience shows that transparent and participatory decision-making processes involving all relevant stakeholders, when integrated into project or policy design from the beginning, can enhance the probability of long-term success.

The GPFLR will continue to explore these points among its partners and with a broader group of interested people and invites participants in the climate change and forests decision-making arenas to keep these points in mind while framing their thoughts and positions .

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<sup>i</sup> The GPFLR currently includes IUCN, WWF, United Kingdom, United States, South Africa, Switzerland, Netherlands, Lebanon, Italy, Finland, Kenya, Japan, Ghana, El Salvador, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, PROFOR/World Bank, FAO, ITTO, UNCCD, IUFRO, ITTO, ICRAF, CIFOR, CARE, CBD Secretariat, Alliance for Religions and Conservation, Global Mechanism for the UNCCD, UNEP-WCMC, UNFF Secretariat