REDD+ AND THE GLOBAL CLIMATE POLICY NEGOTIATING REGIMES: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFRICA

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Prior to developments in Copenhagen in 2009 and Cancun in 2010, global climate policy negotiations seldom culminated in concrete decisions concerning ways in which Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) could be linked to sustainable development and carbon markets in developing countries, such as those in some parts of Africa. That changed with the expansion of the REDD initiative, to REDD+. Key arguments in the discussions have concerned contested methodologies for measuring, reporting and verifying carbon stocks; ensuring adequate technology transfer; and rectifying the shortage of local experts to deal with REDD+. However, there has been no contestation on the fact that REDD+ creates financial value for carbon stored in forests, an aspect that would encourage developing countries to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation of forested lands and to invest in low-carbon growth paths. This article sheds light on how REDD+ has developed in global climate negotiations and how African governments have and should engage with REDD+. The conclusion is that since the Bali Action Plan of 2007, there has been significant progress in creating enabling global architecture with regard to REDD+, and African governments should now grasp the opportunities offered by REDD+ while advocating for a fair, legally binding and ethical arrangement to engage over the forests which are so key to many of their economies.

Keywords: REDD +; UNFCCC; climate change; Africa; carbon trading

Introduction

Around 17% of global greenhouse gas emissions result from deforestation *more than from all cars, trains and planes in the world put together . . . Without REDD_, the goal of limiting the rise in global temperatures to 2°C will be much harder, and substantially more expensive, to achieve.[1]

The United Nations initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) aims to create financial value in forests for developing countries, and at the same time maximise environmental benefits provided by forests as carbon sinks.[2] This implies that countries such as those in Africa with extensive forests would do well to reduce emissions from forested lands, often caused by deforestation processes, and invest in low-carbon growth paths. Furthermore, under REDD+, which goes beyond mitigation of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation to include conservation, sustainable forest management and enhanced forest carbon stocks, developing countries are given the opportunity to carbon stocks, developing countries are given the opportunity to find alternative development paths that include retention of their forests for future generations.

Globally, forests support the livelihoods of an estimated 1.2 billion of the world's poorest people, including 60 million indigenous people who look to the Forests for survival in the form of food, fodder, shelter and medicine,[3] as well as for fuel. However, these forests are under threat from activities such as logging, agriculture, urban development, ranching, and the conversion of natural forests to industrial tree plantations, rural development, oil and gas exploration and mining.[4]

A number of REDD+ issues have long been contested in the global climate negotiations, under the auspices of the 1992 UN Framework for Climate Change Convention (UNFCCC). Objections to REDD+ from the developed countries relate to methodologies and approaches; measuring, reporting and verifying (MRV) systems; technology transfer; and capacity building. Developing nations, on the other hand, have opposed restrictions on traditional uses of this key national resource, so essential for many in underdeveloped areas, without some form of assistance from the developed nations – even if the uses contribute to increased carbon emissions and thus to the very climate change that is a threat to these most vulnerable nations.

Key decisions regarding REDD+ have emerged since the Conference of the Parties (COP) in Copenhagen 2009, notably at COP16 in Cancun in 2010.[5] Based on the Cancun Agreements,[6] developing nations are called upon to contribute to mitigation actions in the forest sector as appropriate and in accordance with their capabilities and national circumstances. Specifically, Cancun requires that developing nations seek to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, develop initiatives in conserving and enhancing forest carbon stocks, and manage forests sustainably. Developing nations are also expected to develop national REDD+ strategies or action plans, set a national forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level, and establish robust and transparent national monitoring systems for monitoring and reporting on REDD+. Part of the $30 billion in 'Fast Start Climate Finance' is expected to flow to REDD+ projects in developing nations from the industrialised countries over the three year period ending in 2012 to support these activities.[7]

Thus REDD+ presents both opportunities and risks for Africa. In terms of opportunities, significant foreign direct investment (FDI) could be realised through REDD+ projects, and forest ecosystems will be protected, leading to a cleaner global environment and associated local benefits. However, there are potential risks. A possible REDD+ rush associated with a search for 'low-hanging fruit' projects by developed countries seeking emissions credits on the carbon market, and a concomitant violation of the rights of local and indigenous people in the execution of REDD+ projects, must be prevented. REDD+ related investment has the potential to be divisive across the continent, as investors may favour certain sub-regions and countries (possibly former national colonies) over others. Given the differentiated capacities and responsibilities of African countries, there is also the possibility that some countries will not be able to meet the requirements for REDD+ project

certification, especially in the MRV of carbon stocks and assets. Domestic political fallout from the diversion of forest resources away from traditional uses may also result in destabilised governments, as the margins for survival in the face of change are narrow, or non-existent, among many of these nations' populations.

The following article will first focus on deliberations on REDD+ within the context of the global climate negotiation agenda. The paper then discusses Africa in REDD+ negotiations, interrogating dynamics in the lead up to the 17th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP) due to take place in Durban in late 2011. Discussion then moves to opportunities presented by REDD+ for Africa, especially with regard to the financial value for carbon stored in forests, followed by consideration of the risks associated with Africa's engagement with REDD+. Finally, before concluding, the article elaborates on policy perspectives for African governments with regard to REDD+.

REDD+ on the global climate negotiation agenda

Understanding REDD+ as it features in global climate negotiations requires an overview of the protocols associated with climate negotiations. Since the Bali Road Map that emerged during COP13 in 2007,[8] climate negotiations have followed two trajectories: the UNFCCC or 'convention' track, and the Kyoto Protocol track. Consequently, REDD+ could be considered differently in terms of each of these two tracks. The Kyoto Protocol binds 37 signatories, all industrialised nations (referred to as Annex 1 Parties in the Kyoto Protocol), to collectively reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by an average of 5.2% from 2008 to 2012.[9] In December 2010 there were 194 parties to the UNFCCC * a near universal membership.[10] By 2011, the Kyoto Protocol had been ratified by 192 of the UNFCCC parties.[11] Only the United States and Afghanistan, among UNFCCC parties, had not ratified.

Both tracks have the ultimate objective of stabilizing GHG emissions at levels that can be managed by the international community's resources, especially in poor and the most vulnerable developing countries. REDD+ has a long history in the global climate negotiation context, beginning as far back as the 1992 UNFCCC. Figure 1 presents REDD+ within the main thematic areas of global climate negotiations.

The UNFCCC and carbon sinks (1992)

The term 'sinks'[12] features 12 times in the 1992 UNFCCC document. Carbon is held in many different natural stocks including oceans, fossil fuel deposits, the terrestrial system and the atmosphere. Stocks absorbing carbon are referred to as 'sinks' and those releasing carbon are termed 'sources'. Forests absorb carbon and as such present a great opportunity to take up human-induced carbon as sinks. In the preamble, the parties to the UNFCCC make it clear that they are aware of the role and importance of terrestrial and marine ecosystems as sinks and reservoirs of GHGs. It is recommended that the parties take precautionary measures in order to anticipate, prevent or minimise the causes of climate change and mitigate its negative effects.[13] Policies and measures should take into consideration the various socio-economic contexts

and be comprehensive, covering all relevant sources, sinks and reservoirs of GHGs, and address the need for adaptation strategies. Article 4 is more precise with regard to the role of sinks in the mitigation of climate change:

All Parties, taking into account their common but differentiated responsibilities and their specific national and regional development priorities, objectives and circumstances, shall develop, periodically update, publish and make available to the Conference of the Parties, in accordance with Article 12, national inventories of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of all greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol,[14] using comparable methodologies to be agreed upon by the Conference of the Parties.[15]

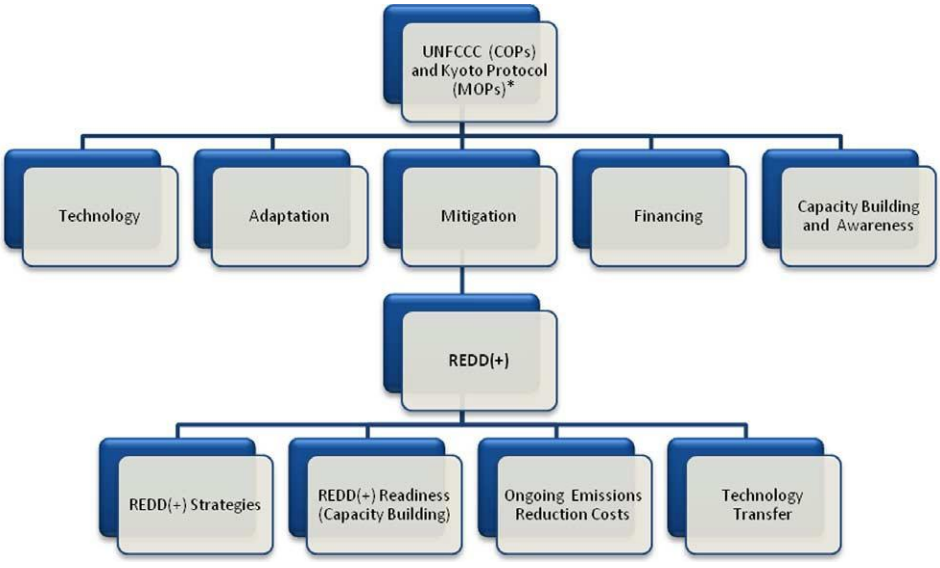

Figure 1. Climate change and REDD+ on the global agenda.
Source: Author's own conceptualisation from the UNFCCC documentation.
***MOPs stands for Meeting of the Parties.**

This article also provides for the formulation, implementation, publication and regular updating of national programs containing measures to mitigate climate change by 'reducing anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of all GHGs not controlled by the Montreal Protocol'.[16] Further, the article covers the 'promotion of sustainable management and cooperation in the conservation and enhancement (as appropriate) of sinks and reservoirs of all GHGs not controlled by the Montreal Protocol, including biomass, forests and oceans as well as other terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems.[17]

The Kyoto Protocol (1997)

The Kyoto Protocol makes several references to issues pertaining to forests.[18] Each party included in Annex 1 of the Kyoto Protocol shall: '(a) implement and/or further elaborate policies and measures in accordance with its national circumstances, such as: (ii) protection and enhancement of sinks, promotion of sustainable forest management practices, afforestation and reforestation, and (iii) promotion of sustainable forms of agriculture in light of climate change considerations.'[19] Further, the 'net changes in GHG emissions by sources and removals by sinks resulting from direct human-induced land-use change and forestry activities, limited to afforesta- tion, reforestation and deforestation since 1990, measured as verifiable changes in carbon stocks in each commitment period, shall be used to meet the commitments of Annex I parties.'[20] In addition, the GHG emissions by sources and removals by sinks associated with those activities are to be reported in a 'transparent and verifiable manner.'[21]

Also through the Kyoto Protocol mechanisms to enable carbon trading were created. Carbon trading involves the selling and purchasing of emissions credits through a market or exchange, to enable countries producing in excess of stipulated carbon emission levels to purchase the spare credits from a country with lower-than- allowed carbon emissions, either directly through dedicated markets for the purpose, or by investing in an emission-reduction project in a developing country through the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). While controversial due to deferred carbon emission reductions on the part of the excess producer, the CDM had by late 2010 claims on reducing emission totals by more than 300 million tons of GHG per year.[22]

COP11 (2005)

The proposal on REDD was first mooted during the UNFCCC 11th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP11) that took place in Montreal, Canada in 2005.[23] REDD was mooted with the 'idea of creating an international framework to halt deforestation. In addition, the mechanism could help fight poverty while conserving biodiversity and sustaining vital ecosystem services.'[24] The proposal came from the governments of Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica.[25] At its 24th Session in Bonn in May 2006 the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) began considering REDD. The SBSTA noted the importance of reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries as part of climate mitigation efforts.[26] Since the first quarter of 2006, discussions regarding REDD under the UNFCCC have focused on 'the identification of drivers for deforestation; scientific, technical and methodological issues relating to estimating and monitoring emissions from deforestation; and costs and technical barriers for the implementation of activities to reduce deforestation.'[27]

COP13 and the Bali Action Plan (2007)

The Bali Action Plan covers four key thematic areas in terms of climate negotiations, namely mitigation (under which REDD falls), adaptation, technology and financing. Also to emerge from COP13 in Bali was the 'Bali Road Map',[28] which put in place a two-year process of climate negotiation to culminate in a legally-binding post-Kyoto Protocol deal in Copenhagen in 2009. The process was also to follow the two-track system discussed earlier, with REDD specifically under the convention track.[29] The COP invited the UNFCCC parties to further strengthen and support ongoing efforts relating to REDD on a voluntary basis. The parties with the capacity to do so were encouraged:

> *to support capacity-building, provide technical assistance, facilitate the transfer of technology to improve, inter alia, data collection, estimation of emissions from de- forestation and forest degradation, monitoring and reporting, and address the institutional needs of developing countries to estimate and reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.*[30]

Parties to the UNFCCC were to explore actions, identify options and undertake efforts to control the drivers of deforestation at national level, with a view to implementing what became known as REDD+, due to the expansion of the initiative to include conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhance- ment of forest carbon stocks.[31] Non-Annex 1[32] parties were encouraged to apply the Good Practice Guidance for Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry, published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC),[33] and the SBSTA was requested to undertake a program of work on methodological issues related to REDD+ in developing countries. All parties were invited to submit views by early the following year outlining how they planned to deal with, among other REDD issues, forest cover and associated carbon stocks and greenhouse gas emissions.[34] While funding for REDD+ initiatives in developing countries was agreed upon in principal, those funds were only to be made available subject to the availability of supplementary UNFCCC funding - which continues to beleaguer REDD+ and other climate change initiatives due to tardy or non-delivery from developed countries.[35] In addition, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) initiated a program of work to find improved methods for measuring forest degradation[36] - a first step informally linking development with REDD+ efforts.

COP15 and the Copenhagen Accord (2009)

In Copenhagen, REDD+ was deliberated upon at length. The signatories to the Copenhagen Accord acknowledged the important role of REDD+ and agreed on the necessity of positive incentives to encourage such actions.[37] In an effort to actually obtain commitments of funding to back this up, there was proposed a mechanism to mobilise financial resources from Annex 1 countries. The signatories agreed to provide additional as well as predictable, adequate and accessible funding to support enhanced mitigation endeavours, including REDD+. An estimated US$30 billion for the period 2010 to 2012 was pledged - the 'Fast Start' funds - with balanced allocations between

adaptation and mitigation measures.[38] Africa was, along with least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states, prioritised for funding. Annex 1 country signatories further committed to mobilising US$100 billion annually by 2020[39] to provide financial solutions to the climate change needs of these countries. Also at COP15, the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund was established through which these funds would largely flow to finance REDD+ and other initiatives in mitigation, adaptation, capacity building, and technology development and transfer.

REDD+ positions prior to Cancun 2010

Prior to COP16 in Cancun, a number of positions were drawn on REDD+ outside of the UN structures. The Friends of the Earth,[40] for instance, called for any agreement on forests to introduce mechanisms that would halt deforestation and degradation, in contrast to mechanisms that would simply reduce or defer emissions. In addition, REDD+ agreements were also to explicitly recognise and enforce the rights of indigenous peoples[41] and local communities, and not include commercial plantations. The REDD+ agreements were not to be based on forest carbon trading alone, but were to be inclusive of other benefits like eco-tourism and handmade crafts.[42]

As part of its recommendations for the Cancun talks, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF)[43] wished to see a REDD+ framework that included a 'clear commitment to equitable, adequate, predictable and sustainable financing' and 'safeguards for preserving natural forests, biodiversity and social benefits and the rights of indigenous peoples.' The WWF also wished to see a phased approach that would incentivise countries towards national REDD+ programs from Cancun 2010. There was a call for an agreement that would control or reduce the drivers of forest loss and degradation in both developed and developing countries. In an effort to promote private-public partnerships addressing climate change, the US-based Global Environment Facility (GEF), which pulls together 182 countries in partnership with international institutions, non-government organisations and the private sector, seeks to address global environmental issues while supporting national sustainable development initiatives.[44] These projects include those related to the sustainable management of forests. The GEF's Incentive Mechanism for Forests has initiated a new REDD+ Multilateral Finance Programme,[45] which is also to benefit Africa.

The World Agroforestry Centre, of the International Institute for Sustainable Development in Canada, raised the importance of the definition of the term 'forest', as the implications of a simple definition of 'land cover' does not take into account instances where land is cleared of natural forests and replanted with commercial crops that will not necessarily absorb the same amount of carbon out of the atmosphere.[46]

The strongest objections to proposals for Cancun were regarding forest carbon credits. Greenpeace claimed that 'including forest protection measures in carbon markets would crash the price of carbon by up to 75% and derail global efforts to tackle global warming.'[47] Greenpeace does not oppose carbon markets in principle, but states on its website: 'Carbon markets must provide a strong and stable price of carbon to drive the development of clean and renewable technologies and should therefore remain focused on the more easily quantifiable and comparable fossil fuel emissions. A separate mechanism is needed to deal with the complexities and risks associated with REDD'.[48] Another analyst noted that 'there is clearly the fear that if you have one market, the forest funds would flood it and push prices so low that there wouldn't be an incentive to invest in technological change in industry and power generation.'[49] In a Huffington Post article at the start of Cancun, Greenpeace pointed out that 'a good REDD deal would benefit biodiversity, people, and the climate. A bad deal would allow corporations to use claims of forest protection to hide their refusal to cut their emissions to safe levels.'[50] Greenpeace concludes that 'World leaders must find a way to provide significant and reliable financing for REDD which is additional to deep emission reductions in industrialised countries and ambitious renewable energy and energy efficiency investments in developing countries. Among available financing options, the direct inclusion of forest offset credits in the carbon markets carries the greatest risks to both the climate and the forests.'[51]

COP16 and the Cancun Agreements (2010)

Issues relating to REDD+ in developing countries are documented at length under Part C of the outcomes of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the UNFCCC.[52] Bullet 68 encourages all parties to find effective ways to reduce human pressure on forests, as this leads to increased GHG emissions contributing to global warming and climate change.[53] The parties were also encouraged to take action to control or reduce drivers of deforestation. Developing country parties (bullet 70) were also encouraged to contribute to mitigation actions in the forest sector. This would be achieved through the introduction of measures and activities (as deemed appropriate by each party and in accordance with their respective capabilities and national circumstances) that include:[54] '(a) reducing emissions from deforestation; (b) reducing emissions from forest degradation; (c) conservation of forest carbon stocks; (d) sustainable management of forests; and (e) enhancement of forest carbon stocks' ** REDD+, in a nutshell.

The COP16 decisions on REDD+ also requested developing country parties aiming to undertake REDD+ activities (in the context of the provision of adequate and predictable support, including financial resources and technical and technolo- gical assistance) to develop (a) national REDD+ strategies or action plans and (b) national forest reference[55] emission levels and/or forest reference levels or, where appropriate, sub-national forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels as interim measures. Robust and transparent national forest monitoring systems for monitoring and reporting on REDD+ activities should also be introduced.[56]

During the monitoring of and reporting on REDD+ activities, issues of sovereignty would be respected. Issues of sovereignty featured prominently during the COP15 in Copenhagen, and almost derailed negotiations as developing countries felt MRV by external bodies would violate their sovereign rights. The developed countries, for instance, proposed stringent MRV to ensure robustness in accounting and transparency.[57] China (which also is part of the G77 + China negotiating group) strongly opposed this move on the basis that it violated national sovereignty.[58] Developing country parties committed to deal with drivers of deforestation and forest degradation (like commercial and illegal logging, population growth, poverty, urban growth, agricultural expansion, overgrazing, wild fires), land tenure, forest governance and gender consideration issues when developing and implementing national REDD+ strategies or action plans.[59] Full and effective participation of relevant key stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and local communities, must be ensured. Activities to be implemented by developing country parties should be phased in, starting with:

The development of national strategies or action plans, policies and measures, and capacity-building, followed by the implementation of national policies and measures and national strategies or action plans that could involve further capacity-building, technology development and transfer and results-based demonstration activities, and evolving into results-based actions that should be fully measured, reported and verified.[60] Bullet 76 urges parties, especially those from developed countries, to support the REDD+ related activities being discussed here through multilateral and bilateral channels. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention was requested to explore REDD+ related actions by developing country parties.[61] In the last bullet dealing with REDD+, bullet 79, relevant international organisations and stakeholders are invited to contribute to the proposed REDD+ activities. This move could be as a result of the hangover in terms of disagreements that emerged in Copenhagen as discussed earlier. Among international organisations that could facilitate quick movement are private sector representatives such as the World Business Council on sustainable Development, members of the donor community such as the World Bank, and international lobby groups such as WWF, GlobalCanopy.org and Greenpeace.

Notably, however, 'until a second commitment period to the Kyoto Protocol is agreed, or an alternative protocol evolves, REDD+ cannot be used to generate carbon credits to offset the commitments of developed countries.'[62] In brief, the Cancun Agreements maintained a political agreement on the need for REDD+,[63] and moved the process forward with regard to the issues of conservation, reforestation, and sustainable management of forests. The agreements also provided the basis for reaching agreement on the technical requirements for implementation that includes measurement, reporting and verification that were left to the work of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for

Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) leading to COP17.

Africa in REDD+ negotiations: Dynamics and the lead to COP17

The earlier sections documented progress on REDD+ in the international global climate policy negotiation regime. This section discusses African positions emerging from some of the COPs including the lead up to COP17 in Durban 2011. Africa occupies a central role in REDD+ negotiations, bearing in mind that the continent is host to the second most significant tropical forest in the world after the Amazon ** the Congo Basin Forest.[64] Africa's key negotiation position in REDD+ is that its full commitment will be ensured if there are offers for viable alternatives to activities that result in deforestation or forest degradation, or if governments are offered fair compensation for conserving and preserving ecological systems.[65]

Mari-Lise du Preez[66] elaborates on forest negotiations in the context of the Congo Basin forest Partnership (CBFP), which was launched in 2002 during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in South Africa. From du Preez' perspectives, the North-South divide is visible in the manner in which the forests are viewed. Developed countries see forests as global heritage resources requiring multilaterally binding (Type I) agreements in the form of treaties or protocols, as opposed to voluntary agreements (including bilateral) that are of Type II agreements. The developing countries view forests as local resources upon which sovereignty is claimed and this set-up plays out in negotiations. Africa is not, of course, homogenous in its approach to the REDD+ negotiations. The Africa Group is also divided along informal but powerful negotiating groups **South Africa alone is a member of BASIC, (Brazil, South Africa, India and China), as well as the G20 and G8 + 5 who have made inputs at the various COPs. In addition, Africa is comprised of several different economic communities, representing different regions of the continent and their unique economic dynamics. The countries of Southern African Development Community (SADC), for instance, have different requisites than those of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Central Africa's tropical rain forest regions will have different perspectives on a number of REDD+ issues relative to the more arid, barren areas in the north. There are also the different priorities of the oil- producing nations, and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) who are most vulnerable of all to sea levels rising due to climate change.[67] In addition, Africa still suffers from colonial hangover, an aspect that has delayed regional integration.[68] These are groupings that make REDD+ negotiating positions complex and contested within the Africa group.

Despite differing views in terms of REDD+ and other climate negotiation related matters, the Africa Group has been working on strategies aimed at promoting common positions within the AU and the G77 + China, and has allied itself to other developing regions in the negotiations in order to gain traction. This is an element that was witnessed strongly during COP15 when the Africa Group supported the SIDS' proposal to limit global temperatures to 1.58C by the year 2050.[69] The Algiers and Nairobi Platforms of November 2008 and May 2009, respectively, and the first Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change held in Addis

Ababa in August 2009 in preparation for COP15, are efforts to shape a common African climate negotiating position, which includes REDD+.[70]

As the various global actors engage in the interplay of negotiations on REDD +, six key drivers of interests emerge:[71] economic benefits (mainly associated with developing, or southern, countries as indicated earlier), cost-efficiency (mainly associated with developed countries), environmental integrity (non-governmental organisations (NGOs)), national sovereignty (developing countries), fairness and social justice (NGOs) as well as political positioning and/or public relations (developed countries).[72] Where does the Africa Group fit in this matrix? Obviously, different African nations will at different time align themselves with different interests. However, as a whole it would seem that the continent would share interests with the countries of the developing countries of the global South.

After Copenhagen, where the need to follow proper processes in climate negotiations under the UNFCCC system became clearly evident, developing countries, including those of Africa, objected vociferously over the violation of the UNFCCC negotiating protocol. Many blamed this failure of process for the unfavourable, even chaotic, negotiations.[73] The Copenhagen Accord[74] was nego- tiated by a small elite, among them the United States and the BASIC countries.[75]
While the accord was endorsed by the parties of the COP, there was little sense of having achieved viable progress toward a post-Kyoto dispensation.

Africa's general climate negotiating position is governed by fundamentals that prioritise adaptation (coping with climate change),[76] yet the REDD+ agenda drives the mitigation (greenhouse gas reduction) agenda. In Copenhagen loopholes emerged concerning the so-called African consensus. For example, well known and respected Wangari Maathai from Green Belt Movement of Kenya favoured African solutions to the climate crisis rather than a North-South cooperative affair. In addition, she cited bad governance as the major cause of environmental decay in Africa.[77] Similar cracks of criticisms emerged when Africa Union spokesperson for COP15 Minister Meles Zenawi from Ethiopia and President Jacob Zuma of South Africa came under fire for their involvement in drawing up the architecture of and approving the Copenhagen Accord. Mithika Mwenda of the Pan Africa Climate Justice Alliance accused Meles Zenawi of selling out 'the lives and hopes of Africans for a pittance' as he did not represent Africa in the positions he proclaimed.[78] From Mithika Mwenda's point of view, Africa should have waited to see the developments after Copenhagen. Given the large attention to the tropical forest communities and the potential for substantive investments in light of REDD+, the Sahel countries are likely to be marginalised, with differences in economic and political advancement across African countries being another cause for concern over REDD+ negotiations.[79]

During COP16 the Africa Group advocated to have agriculture included under the REDD+ mechanism.[80] This resulted in a compromise that witnessed agriculture being removed from REDD+ and included under a work program to be administered by the UNFCCC system. Benefits for developing countries under REDD+ mechanisms are now supposed to be determined within the UNFCCC system and this is an agenda item leading up to COP17. Since COP15, the issues pertaining to REDD+ financing are still red hot and these were discussed during the COP17 preparatory meeting in Bonn in June 2011. Ideas emerging from the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Commitment Action (AWG-LCA) suggest that financing should be sourced from national and public funds, market mechanisms and possible levies from international aviation and maritime transport.[81] The appointment of the World Bank as Trustee for the Green Climate Fund during COP16 was not well received by the Africa Group who preferred the Global Environment Facility type of governance mechanism. The World Bank mechanisms of loans and concessions is criticised for delaying the release of funds as normal screening protocols are applied.[82] Against all the contestations and contradictions, reports from selected African countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) show that significant progress in REDD+ implementation is being made. For example, the country reported that it had formed a multi-stakeholder REDD national committee.[83] The DRC is one country that has been realising the flow of REDD+ investment given its central role in the Congo Basin forest.

Opportunities offered by REDD+ for Africa

REDD+ funding mechanisms and initiatives offer enormous opportunities for Africa. Engagement with REDD+ presents an opportunity to have the continent directly contribute to climate mitigation. This contribution will be tremendously significant, given that very few African countries contribute significant GHG emissions to the global carbon store. There are willing donors available, and financial mobilisation is ongoing. REDD+ also presents opportunities in terms of building African capacity to adapt and mitigate climate change. In addition, if handled well, REDD+ offers opportunities for the demonstration, development, diffusion and final deployment of environmentally sound technology (EST). The transfer of ESTs has been at the centre of controversy in the climate negotiations and will continue to feature prominently during such negotiations for a long time.

A number of initiatives relating to REDD+ have emerged, in addition to the UNFCCC efforts, such as Climate Finance Options, Fast Start Finance, the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), the Forest Investment Program (FIP), UN- REDD, the GEF, the Amazon Fund, the Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF) and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNFPII).[84] A summary of the amounts involved in the funds is given in Table 1. Details regarding the governance structures, terms and conditions for fund disbursements and the various African countries already benefiting or to benefit from the funds fall outside the scope of this article, and readers are encouraged to visit the websites of the respective funds. REDD+ also stands out as an opportunity (if managed well) for livelihoods improvement.

As REDD+ projects are implemented, co-benefits like reduction in conflict over forest resources could be managed resulting in direct benefits to poor local communities.[85] One example is Kenya's Rukinga and Kasigau Wildlife Sanctuary Corridor REDD+ Project, the first of its kind in Africa. The project was initiated in 1997 by Wildlife Works Inc (WWI).[86] The Rukinga Wildlife Corridor covers 30 000 hectares, while the Kasigau Wildlife Corridor consists of approximately 200 000 hectares of dry land forest and savannah grassland.[87] Both habitats serve as an important wildlife corridor between the Tsavo East and Tsavo West national parks. Before the institution of the project, the local communities engaged in subsistence farming, grazing, logging for firewood, charcoal and hunting.[88] In terms of the project, WWI proposed to protect the entire corridor, avoid deforestation and support reforestation, thereby safeguarding wildlife movement in the area. The REDD+ project under WWI implemented a wide range of sustainable development initiatives to provide alternative income sources and incentives for 'trees up' vs. 'trees down' activities, including an organic clothing factory that employs young women from the community, training in horticulture and game management, and the construction of a local school providing educational opportunities.[89] Other examples from Africa include the Clinton Climate Initiative's project in Tanzania working with 13 villages to put together a REDD+ project in sustainable timber harvesting,[90] and in the DRC an effort by the Forest People's Programme and a local partner to identify and develop viable benefit-sharing mechanisms for impoverished rural communities, in response to government plans to seek REDD+ pilot funding.[91] In 2009, Nedbank[92] signed a multi-million dollar[93] carbon offset agreement with WWI to acquire the carbon credits for the group's carbon offset for resale to other interested entities, particularly in South Africa.[94] The WWI REDD project qualified for an estimated 130 000 annual carbon credits, starting in 2006 for a period of 20 years[95] ending in 2026. The 130 000 carbon credits exclude a buffer of 40 000 credits and an estimated 2.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent will be realised until 2026. The project was validated by an independent verifier, Scientific Certification systems (SCS). The project conformed to the 14 required criteria and met two additional optional criteria, resulting in the project qualifying for gold level status.[96]

Table 1. REDD+ funding opportunities in Africa.

Fund	Amount pledged	Administered by- name and link	Areas of focus	Date operational
GEF (1-5)	US$14.98bn	GEF	Six thematic areas including REDD+ covered under land degradation theme	1991
Congo Basin Forest Fund	US$165mn	African Development Bank	Mitigation-REDD	2008
Fast Start Climate Finance (as part of the Green Climate Fund from Copenhagen)	US$30bn	World Bank or Bilaterally	REDD+	2009
Forest Carbon Partnership Facility	US$221.27 mn	World Bank	Mitigation-REDD	2008
Global Climate Change Alliance	US$204.15mn	European Commission	Mitigation- general, adaptation Mitigation-REDD	2008
International Climate Initiative	US$519mn	Government of Germany	Mitigation- general, adaptation Mitigation-REDD	2008
UN-REDD Programme	US$87.1mn	UNDP	Mitigation- REDD	2008
Forest Investment Program	US$512.6mn	World Bank	World Bank	2009

Source: Author's compilation based on Climate Fund Update, Fast Start Climate Finance, accessed 12May 2011, http://www.climatefundsupdate.org/fast-start-finance>.

Risks for Africa associated with REDD +

In as much as REDD+ presents opportunities, there are also risks associated with it. Given the diverging views emerging from multilateral global climate negotiations, more and more players from the donor communities and multilateral development banks such as the World Bank and African Development Bank (AfDB) are moving towards bilateral engagement with African and other countries in order to initiate REDD+ projects. Some of the key players do this as intermediaries for the corporate world, especially companies resident in the global North. Intermediaries are also becoming extensively involved in order to broker deals for both the compliance and voluntary carbon markets leading to trade in REDD+ carbon assets. As discussed earlier, the Africa Group does not share an uncontested position on REDD+.

A REDD+ rush cannot be ruled out, as many players becoming involved in the process will compete for 'low-hanging fruit' REDD+ projects - those that investors such as the World Bank and private investors would chose for profit maximisation ahead of those that require significant investments before realising the profits. This will not only introduce competition among African countries seeking FDI attracted through REDD+ projects, but will also have the potential to divide the negotiating strength of the continent. African governments and sub-regions must therefore be aware of this and introduce the necessary policy frameworks to safeguard against such competition under REDD+. The involvement and consultation of indigenous peoples and local communities in REDD+ activities remains a huge challenge.[97] To this end, the FCPF and UN-REDD+ program developed guidelines to facilitate the involvement of these key stakeholders. Both indigenous peoples and local communities are often legal and/or customary right holders to forests, yet they are often excluded from public decision- making processes.[98] The indigenous peoples and local communities also have a wealth of indigenous and local knowledge, as a result of which they have forged a special relationship with the forest.[99] In the FCPF and UN-REDD program guidelines for the consultation of indigenous and local communities are enshrined annexes that draw from the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and Free, Prior and Informed Consent as well as the World Bank summary of Operational Policy 4.10 on Indigenous People.[100]

Although the Copenhagen Accord and associated financial pledges to raise US$30 billion by 2012 and US$100 billion by 2020 annually and thereafter stands out as a hopeful initiative, Africa's capacity to manage Overseas Development Aid (ODA) pledged to Africa has always been a major barrier to effective development implementation.[101] It is difficult to see how REDD+ would be an exception to this rule. Although issues of state sovereignty clog climate and REDD+ negotiations, given the lack of capacity in many African countries this is likely to be a barrier in monitoring REDD+ activities in Africa. Countries characterised by instability like the DRC and lately South Sudan lack the capacity to monitor deforestation, for instance, and would need significant outside intervention, not just to monitor, but also enforce plans to prevent deforestation. This can have disastrous effects in areas such as the Ituri rainforest in the DRC, where rapid deforestation is a symptom of the displacement of people due to continuing conflict.[102]

Policy perspectives for African governments

If they are to fully realise the benefits of REDD+, African governments must play their part. Dutschke and Wertz-Kanounikoff[103] advise that every country should invest in the establishment of MRV systems before participating in any REDD+ mechanism. A roadmap for developing an MRV system must satisfy international requirements for MRV, especially drawing on the principles and procedures for estimating and reporting carbon emissions and removals at the national level as set out in the IPCC Good Practice Guidelines and Guidance for reporting at the international level, prepared by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of 2003 and 2006. At the national level, the gap between existing national forest monitoring

systems and the requirements of a REDD+ MRV system must be assessed. Issues relating to land tenure and carbon rights arising from REDD+ projects must be resolved immediately. There are many stakeholders, all with different understandings and objectives relating to their involvement with REDD+. Land tenure is a thorny issue in Africa, where land tenure systems include freehold, leasehold, and communal and government user rights. Figure 2 provides a summary of key stakeholders entitled to claim REDD+ carbon credits. Carbon rights in REDD+ could be even more complex if the project is transnational and transboundary (transboundary projects are those that cut across boundaries, be these village, municipal, state or provincial). Complex and highly contested land tenure issues, too, could arise from transnational and transboundary REDD+ initiatives. Proper ratios should be developed in advance and those involved in REDD+ readiness financing by default claim the largest share, unless a donor is willing to take the risk without laying any claim to the carbon credits. One therefore encourages the corporate world to finance REDD+ readiness as part of their corporate social responsibility. Issues of governance cannot be ignored either. African governments must resolve issues pertaining to the rule of law. Political stability, anti-corruption drives, and transparency in policymaking would all lend themselves to attract the interest, and

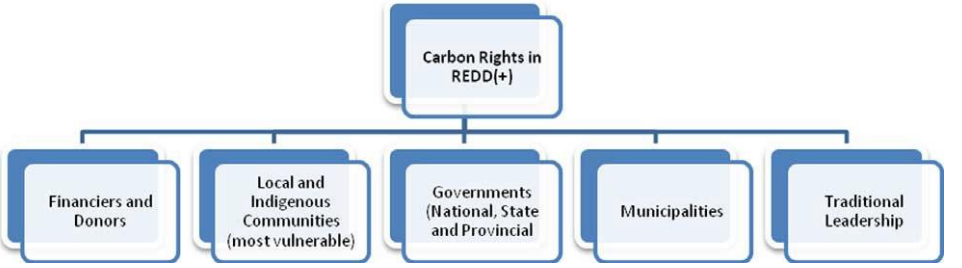

Figure 2. Key stakeholders with carbon rights in REDD+.

For instance, carbon accounting is becoming increasingly important within MRV systems. With most institutions of higher learning offering accounting and environmental courses that do not include carbon accounting, responsible ministries and institutions of higher learning urgently need to rectify this shortcoming. As an interim measure, intensive in-house training in carbon accounting and MRV in REDD+ should be offered. Similarly, climate negotiation capacity must be fostered. African governments must continue building the climate policy negotiation capacity of experts participating in COPs and Meeting of the Parties (MOPs).

As stated earlier, a possible REDD+ rush to take advantage of 'low-hanging fruit' project opportunities through REDD+ is a real possibility, once the funding and structures are in place. African governments, through the African Union, should therefore introduce mechanisms to manage this potential. Carefully calibrated REDD+ procurement policies could be instituted to encourage interest in countries that may not attract REDD+ investments. A proposal by the African governments during the COP16 in Cancun to institute an Africa Green Fund should be followed up, with a special REDD+ fund linked to the proposal for the Africa Green

Fund.[104] The special REDD+ fund could then be utilised for the preferential procurement of REDD+ mechanisms in countries that are viewed as less likely to attract other international public and private funds, due to lack of capacity or less obvious benefits on offer. Examples would include most African countries falling outside the equatorial regions where there are less dense forests. As one considers the future of REDD+ initiatives on the African continent, it is worthwhile to reflect on five questions raised during a meeting of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme in September 2010.[105] These five questions are:

- How can Africa better access new REDD+ funds to help resolve environment and climate change issues? As the new REDD+ funds become operational, with separate criteria and access requirements and fiduciary and reporting burdens, they could make an area that is already quite confusing even more complex. Lessons can be learnt from official development assistance (ODA) procedures and processes.
- How can REDD+ funding arrangements under the GEF-5 be enhanced to better satisfy the needs of African countries?
- How will the increasing emphasis on operation by the World Bank and other multilateral development banks (MDBs) affect the disbursement of REDD+ funds?
- How well are Africa's needs dealt with in the North-South discussion of the levels of investment required?
- How can more effective linkages be achieved between African environment and
- finance ministries in relation to new sources of REDD+ and other finance for the environment and climate change?[106]

Although this paper does not respond fully to the questions raised here, an attempt is made to answer some aspects. If REDD+ regimes are going to be effective in Africa, then roles and responsibilities between state, regional and local actors should be clarified.[107] In addition, there is need for proper regulatory regimes that are effectively enforced. Other initiatives include recognising and fusing customary laws and the rights of indigenous peoples as well as equitable sharing of REDD+ benefits. A review of legal and policy framework for tree and forest carbon in Ghana, for instance, revealed a gap in terms of policies and understanding between the state on one side and local people and farmers on the other.[108] It emerged that laws in place indicated that, rather than facilitating conservation and sustainable forest management, government was prioritising economic exploitation of forests to the benefit of the state. Yet farmers and communities drawing their livelihoods from the forests had few legal, economic or customary incentives to conserve the forests.

If African governments wish to have a significant role in REDD+, the roles and responsibilities of traditional leadership should be revisited. In as much as many African governments acknowledge traditional leadership, much of the power has been taken away and diffused into modern political leadership during the colonial periods. Since then, very few African governments have put in place genuine regulatory frameworks to share power with their traditional counterparts. The interface of traditional

and modern political leadership in REDD+ should be defined through clear regulatory frameworks that draw up matrices of roles and responsibilities, especially at the national level. The matrices should also include the role of education and awareness raising in REDD+, with a strict focus on educating local communities in REDD+ contract arrangements. Royalty programs in the South African, Namibia and Botswana mining sectors have worked[109] and lessons for REDD+ could be drawn from these initiatives. Ultimately, the local and indigenous communities must be recognised as the true beneficiaries of REDD+ programs.

Conclusion

This paper, after tracing the key negotiations which led to the development of REDD+ through the UNFCCC, discussed the challenges and risks for Africa in efforts to reduce emissions through deforestation and forest degradation. With the expanded objectives of REDD+ now including conservation, reforestation and sustainable forest management, there are many more issues that will affect the vulnerable indigenous peoples of Africa who depend upon forests for their survival. If handled well, REDD+ could attract much needed funding, both private and multilateral, to Africa, and encourage both retention of forests and investment in low-carbon growth paths. However, REDD+ has the potential to divide Africa, as funds will not, in all probability, be distributed evenly across the continent due to the tendency of donors to seek 'low-hanging fruit' projects in areas where carbon emissions reduction will be more dramatic, and therefore yield more credits, or where the capacity to absorb REDD+ funding and to manage REDD+ projects is more readily available. The paper thus recommends that African governments should introduce measures to encourage and promote equitable investment across the continent. Looking ahead, the paper revealed that there is likely to be significant movement in certain aspects of climate negotiations that have a bearing on REDD+ during COP17, particularly technical input on issues of MRV, matters of financing and progress on governance mechanisms for the Green Climate Fund. However, without a fair, legally binding and ambitious post-Kyoto Protocol deal, the full potential for REDD+ in Africa, and internationally, will not be realised. Hence climate change watchers look for a breakthrough in terms of a new global climate deal at COP17, to take place in December 2011 in Durban, South Africa.

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Note on contributor

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