

Forum:	United Nations Development Programme
Issue:	Implementing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+)
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Introduction

Ratified in 1992, The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international treaty aimed at addressing the issue of climate change. Implemented in 1994 with the signatures of 166 nations, the UNFCCC now represents near universal global involvement with 196 nations involved. Serving as the basis for landmark treaties such as the Kyoto Protocol as well as the more recent Paris Agreement, the UNFCCC has been at the forefront of international attention related to the problem of climate change. The UNFCCC's main objectives include those of reducing emissions causing emissions, and tackling its causes such as those from deforestation and forest degradation.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations estimates forest degradation to be happening at a rate of around 30 million hectares per year as of 2016. Forest degradation and deforestation occur mainly as a result of human agriculture such as agriculture, which involves cutting down hectare upon hectare of forests and trees to make room for large farms which are necessary for feeding a growing global population. So far, the pace of tree cover loss and forest degradation is only rising with the current number of 30 million hectares per year being more than twice that of the rate in 2005, which was around 13 million hectares per year according to the FAO.

Forest degradation and deforestation result in the release of CO₂, CH₄ and other harmful chemicals into the atmosphere which impair efforts to prevent climate change and only elevate its effects. Thus, the prevention of forest degradation and deforestation plays a key role in helping the UNFCCC to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Definition of Key Terms

Joint Implementation

Joint implementation is a mechanism outlined in the Kyoto Protocol allowing Annex I countries to invest in the emission reduction systems of other countries, allowing them to invest money in places where this may be less costly and earn ERUs (Emission Reduction Units) that count to their obligations as outlined in the Kyoto Protocol.

Conference of the Parties (CoP)

The Conference of the Parties is an annual meeting held by the nations of the UNFCCC to assess the progress from measures taken by nations towards achieving climate action goals.

Non-Annex I Parties

Non-Annex I parties are nations comprised mainly of Least Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs). These nations are determined by the UNFCCC as being especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, and investment for long-term resilience is emphasized for these nations.

Annex I Parties

Annex I parties are Industrialized countries that were part of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1992, as well as countries with economies in transition (EIT) including former members of the Soviet bloc.

Annex II Parties

Annex II parties are the group of OECD countries from Annex I, but not the EIT parties. They are required to provide financial resources to help developing nations such as Non-Annex I parties undertake emission reduction goals, and promote the development and transfer of environmentally friendly technologies to EIT and LEDC countries.

Mitigation

Mitigation is to reduce the severity, magnitude and impact from a certain event and its effects.

Resilience

Resilience is the ability to be able to recover quickly after problems including natural disasters, sudden environmental changes, etc.

Forest Degradation

Forest degradation is the decline in the ability of a forest to produce healthy ecosystem products and services such as the provision of natural resources like timber, and its ability to sustain wildlife.

Background Information

International Action on Addressing the Issue of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation

Since global awareness on the issue of climate change and REDD+ grew rapidly during the late 20th century, several large-scale international efforts to mitigate their impacts have been implemented. These large-scale international efforts focus on focusing on a wide variety of issues surrounding this topic, from addressing agricultural methods to figuring out how these international efforts to resolve these issues would be feasible for developing nations which may not have the resources of developed nations.



United Nations Climate Change Carbon Mechanisms

The United Nations Framework on Climate Change Logo

The Kyoto Protocol

As the first international treaty concerning climate change and environmental pollution addressed by the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol is a treaty representing near-universal commitment by the international committee with 192 parties to it. The Kyoto protocol aimed to control and track greenhouse gas emissions while making up for differences between the nations which would become signatories. The Kyoto protocol has also served as the basis for several other international treaties regarding climate change and REDD+ such as the Marrakesh Accords and the Paris Agreement.

The Noel Kempff Mercado Climate Action Project

The Noel Kempff Mercado Climate Action Project, located in Northeast Bolivia, is regarded as the first REDD project, and is the result of a partnership between the Bolivian government, Friends of Nature Foundation (FAN), The Nature Conservancy, American Electric Power, BP Amoco and PacifiCorp. This project was created in 1997 to protect nearly 4 million

acres of threatened rainforests in Bolivia. Measures taken to resolve this issue included reducing slash and burn agriculture and developing alternative income programs.

The Bali Road Plan

Adopted at the 3rd Meeting of the Parties in December 2007, the Bali Road Plan is a draft on the process to enable full, sustained implementation of the UNFCCC through cooperation. The Bali Road map is divided into five categories: shared vision (long-term goals for climate change), mitigation, adaptation, technology, and financing. The Bali Road Plan is an ambitious plan to fully implement the main goals of the convention, and despite being criticized for being overly-optimistic on global relations, has served as the basis for the Cancun Agreements in 2010 and helped to produce the Copenhagen Accord.

The Paris Agreement

Created at CoP 21 in Paris, December 2015, the Paris Agreement aims to set strategic goals concerning climate change into the future by aiming to keep climate change levels well below 2 degrees celsius above pre-industrial levels. The agreement also aims to increase the ability of countries to deal with and respond to the impacts of climate change through providing new technology and financial resources.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a United Nations body addressing the sciences involved in addressing climate change. The goal of the IPCC is to develop technology which allows nations to implement climate policies, and currently has 195 member nations involved.

Food and Agriculture Organization

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is an agency of the United Nations leading efforts to defeat world hunger. The main goal of the FAO is to make sure people have access to high-quality food for the betterment of their lives. With over 194 member states, the FAO is active in over 130 nations worldwide.

United Nations Environment Programme

Founded in 1972, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is an agency of the United Nations which coordinates the UN's environmental goals and activities. The UNEP has worked

on solving issues including that of the atmosphere, maintaining ecosystems, and maintaining a green economy. The UNEP is also active in funding and implementing environmental projects across the world, and has also aided the formulation of guidelines and treaties related to the environment.

Greenpeace

Greenpeace is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) founded in 1971 to protest against U.S. nuclear testing off the coast of Alaska. With over 2.8 million members worldwide, greenpeace is one of the world's largest environmental NGOs, and actively fight against issues such as global warming, nuclear power, and genetic engineering.

Coalition for Rainforest Nations

Established in 2005 by forested tropical nations, the Rainforest Coalition is a group of nations aiming to incentivize conservation of rainforests and responsibly manage rainforests in nations to create and maintain sustainable rainforests.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
March 21st, 1994	The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Enters into Force
March 28th, 1995	The first Conference of the Parties (CoP) is held in Berlin, Germany
December 11th, 1997	Kyoto Protocol Adopted
November 10th, 2001	Marrakesh Accords adopted after Seventh Conference of the Parties (CoP)
February 16th, 2005	Kyoto Protocol Enters into Force
May 10th, 2005	The Coalition for Rainforest Nations is formed
January 22nd, 2008	Joint Implementation Mechanism Starts

December 8th, 2012 The Kyoto Protocol is extended to 2020 during a conference in Doha, Qatar

December 12th, 2015 Paris Agreement Adopted

Relevant UN Resolutions and Treaties

- The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, 3 March 1973
- Kyoto Protocol, 11 December 1997
- Conservation and sustainable development of Central African forest ecosystems, 1 February 2000 (**A/RES/54/214**)
- Paris Agreement, 12 December 2015
- Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind, 21 December 2016 (**A/RES/71/228**)
- United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017 - 2030, 27 April 2017 (**A/RES/71/285**)
- United Nations forest instrument, 27 April 2017 (**A/RES/71/286**)

Possible Solutions

Transparency in exchange for monetary support in nations undertaking climate action projects would be one solution to make all nations able to contribute to mitigating greenhouse gas emissions. A major issue plaguing cooperation between countries related to funding for large projects is the lack of transparency and trust. National commitment, as well as other forms of action, are key to reducing emissions. Therefore, tracking these commitments is a necessary step to building trust & transparency so that nations can rely on each other doing a fair share in helping to reduce emissions. One way to do this would be to implement incentives in the form of monetary support & advisors in return for increased transparency of actions and reports from Non-Annex I countries. This would encourage participation from countries who see the lack of financial incentives discouraging, ensure the prevention of embezzlement of funds, and also help determine the needs of different nations, and the priorities needed to deal & coordinate appropriately in response to these reports. However, this solution

would not be possible without increased trust between nations, as well as funding from other parties such as MEDCs and other organizations.

Working with organizations to decrease government liabilities in other areas may help nations with funds for projects to reduce emissions. Many nations also believe that they do not have the funds to partake in activities concerning reducing emissions, as it is less cost-effective as compared to other more traditional alternatives which would help boost economies. However, cooperation with organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) could help to prove useful with advisors who work on implementing efficient agricultural & health systems in these nations to concentrate efforts on climate action. This would allow nations to reduce liabilities in other areas to obtain funds for reducing emissions and preventing deforestation. However, nations may view this as a violation of their own national sovereignty, and the funds for researching & developing these efficient systems may outweigh the benefits that they give, due to the fact that major restructuring of a nation's infrastructure may be needed to implement new, efficient systems.

Mitigating the effects of climate change is implementing measures to remove carbon from the atmosphere through methods such as large-scale afforestation, which is already practiced in nations like China and the United States which have practiced this measure. This would help to counter increasing carbon emissions, and reduce the need for countries to invest money into new, renewable systems which are often costlier than the benefits they present. However, at the same time, there also have been researches and studies showing that it is ultimately unfeasible, and large-scale deployment would involve unacceptable social and ecological impacts. Funding on a large project like large-scale afforestation would also be huge, and these funds may also be used for other, more efficient prevention measures.

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