

**Minutes of the 8th Programme Executive Board Meeting
UN- REDD Programme, Myanmar**

Date:	11 December 2019
Venue:	Forest Department, Nay Pyi Taw
Time:	13:00 – 16:15
Objective of the meeting:	To update on progress in programme implementation and approve 2020 workplan and budgets
Co-Chairs:	Dr. Nyi Nyi Kyaw, Director General, Forest Department, MONREC Mr. Gordon Johnson, RR ai, UNDP
Participants:	
PEB members	U Soe Nang, Director, Environmental Conservation Department, MONREC Mr. Alexis Corblin, Regional Technical Advisor, UN Environment (by Skype) Daw Thinn Thitsar Kyaw, Programme Specialist, FAO Myanmar Saw Myo Ko Ko, Promotion of Indigenous and Nature Together (POINT) U Than Soe Oo, CEO, MERN
PEB Secretary	Dr. Thaug Naing Oo, Director, Forest Research Institute, Forest Department, and National Programme Director, UN-REDD Programme, Myanmar
Participating Agencies	Mr. Biplove Choudhary, Team Leader, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Programme, UNDP Myanmar Ms. Pem Wangi, Programme Specialist, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Programme, UNDP Myanmar Daw Phyu Phyu San, Programme Analyst, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Programme, UNDP Myanmar Mr. Ben Vickers, Regional Forest Officer (REDD+), FAORAP, Bangkok
UN- REDD Programme	Mr. Timothy Boyle, Chief Technical Advisor, UN-REDD PMU Mr. Franz Arnold, Chief Technical Advisor, FAO Daw Khin Hnin Myint, Programme Coordinator, UN-REDD PMU U Min Soe, Stakeholder Engagement Officer, UN-REDD PMU Daw Thit Thit Han, Communications Officer, UN-REDD PMU Daw Phyo Pa Pa Han, REDD+ Office Assistant, UN-REDD PMU Daw Sandar Min Wai, Programme Assistant, UN-REDD PMU

Opening

The meeting was opened with remarks by Forest Department Director General, Dr Nyi Nyi Kyaw and UNDP Resident Representative ai, Mr. Gordon Johnson.

In his opening, Dr. Nyi Nyi Kyaw observed:

In the six months since the last PEB meeting, there has been progress on both the NDC and the National REDD+ Strategy, yet these clear and ambitious targets remain unresolved. This is now a matter of some urgency to establish ambitious targets for emissions reductions from Myanmar's forests.

Ethnic organizations will have to play a significant role in reaching any ambitious REDD+ target. In this regard, I am happy to report that the Forest Department now has an active and far-reaching programme of work with the Karen National Union Forest Department and together we are planning a series of actions that I believe will greatly contribute to improved conservation and sustainable management of forests in southern Myanmar, thus also contributing to REDD+. Cooperation with the KFD is only the start – we hope and intend to build cooperation also with Forest Departments of other EAO's, and UN-REDD's work in building engagement with these organizations has been most important and helpful.

I am delighted to see that we shall be discussing this afternoon Norwegian funding for implementing REDD+ in mangrove ecosystems. Together with the Myanmar Reforestation and Rehabilitation Programme, this can be viewed as the first initiative to implement REDD+ in Myanmar. Therefore, we need to think about whether the current UN-REDD PEB needs to play a role in overseeing phase 2 activities of REDD+. In theory, that role needs to be played by the National REDD+ Taskforce, but the meetings of the Taskforce have been largely organized by the UN-REDD PMU, and the costs of its operations by the UN-REDD budget. So how will we ensure that the Taskforce and its Technical Working Groups continue to operate after the closure of UN-REDD/Myanmar?

In addition to ensuring clear and ambitious targets for the Strategy, and the importance of finding a way to work cooperatively with EAO's, I would also like to emphasize the importance of having an operational Safeguards Information System as soon as possible. There are two more priorities I would like to mention. We must prioritize the process to allow the measurement of forest degradation and the emissions that result from degradation. Finally, perhaps the biggest challenge of all, we need to develop mechanisms to ensure effective cooperation between the forest sector and other sectors whose activities affect forests, especially agriculture. A major reduction in deforestation can only be achieved if our colleagues in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation are able to see that such action will not undermine but will in fact support their mandate to increase agricultural productivity and profitability in Myanmar.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Gordon Johnson commented that he was sorry to have missed the first seven PEB meetings but was delighted to have the opportunity to attend the 8th. He offered five points:

1. *Senior government officials including the Minister of MONREC have made statements over the past several months about Myanmar adopting a challenging and ambitious target for emissions reductions, at least in the forest sector. The Director General also referred to this in his opening remarks. These developments are to be applauded, and I urge the Director General to "stay the course".*
2. *Evolving strategies. The main threat to Myanmar's forests comes from agriculture. While the Agricultural Development Strategy (2016) emphasizes increases in yields and productivity over expansion of agricultural land, it is sometimes difficult to reconcile that aspiration with experience of the massive loss of forests to agriculture. There is tremendous potential to dramatically reduce emission due to deforestation caused by agricultural expansion while at the same time attracting enormous investment in improved yield and increased incomes for farmers. The Forest Department, MOALI and donors, including the UN, should organize a high-level round-table on this issue.*

The Forest Policy is 25 years old. When it was written, it must have been a model of modern natural resource management philosophy with its emphasis on sustainable management. But no policy, no matter how good it was when written, can remain valid and relevant after 25 years. Some donors (WB, France) have indicated a willingness to support the formulation of a new Forest Policy, and this is to be supported.

Rules and regulations. The process of developing Rules to support implementation of the Forest Law 2018 has highlighted that, for many stakeholders, there remain fundamental flaws in the Law in regard to the rights and roles of communities and other issues – these shortcomings need to be addressed.

3. *Donors favour support to Myanmar but are troubled by data availability; human rights and governance (corruption) issues. Dec. 9th was International Anti-Corruption Day; Dec. 10th was International Human Rights Day; last week Myanmar hosted a Development Effectiveness Roundtable. All these initiatives highlight the need for data sharing agreements and transparency. In this regard, the new spirit of cooperation between the FD and the Karen National Union (KNU) Forest Department (KFD) is an excellent development.*
4. *Norway appears ready to provide funding support for implementation of REDD+ in mangrove areas. This is a good example of the piloting that Outcome 5 of the UN-REDD/Myanmar Programme anticipated. However, the administrative arrangements for that funding remain unclear and it is consequently not clear whether there will be a role for the PEB in oversight of those activities versus the role of the Taskforce*

5. *Finally, this is the next-to-last PEB meeting – we need to give clear guidance and advice to programme as it moves towards its completion.*

Agenda item 2¹: Report from the Chair of the National REDD+ Taskforce

On behalf of U Kyaw Kyaw Lwin, Deputy Director General of the Forest Department, and Chair of the Taskforce, a report was provided by Dr. Thaug Naing Oo, Secretary to the Taskforce.

He reported that the Taskforce had met twice since the previous PEB meeting and presented the decisions reached at the two TF meetings and actions on these decisions.

Decisions reached at the 7th meeting of the Taskforce include:

- TF commented to distribute the draft strategy (both English and Myanmar version) to the participants ahead of the workshop [National Validation Workshop].
- TF recommended to set facilitators and do preparation ahead of the workshop.
- TF recommended to invite Private Sector to the REDD+ Strategy Validation Workshop as it is one of the important stakeholders for REDD+ implementation.
- TF asked UN-REDD Team to have discussion with CSO on its interest on SIS database hosting when it has meeting with CSO on 6th August 2019.
- TF recommended to invite CSO to take part as TF member as Myanmar REDD+ programme will have to collect various data for its implementation.
- TF decided that the decision for SIS hosting will be set for next TF meeting when CSO representation is there.
- TF recommended to invite RECOFTC to involve in the FPIC informal working group as it is providing training on FPIC.

Decisions reached at the 9th meeting of the Taskforce include:

- To decide the specific target of the REDD+ Strategy, TF asked UN-REDD to prepare the 4 different scenarios with very low to high ambitious target by highlighting the priority PaMs to reach to each scenario.
- FD will decide the target after reviewing the 4 different scenarios.
- TF decided CSO as a host institution for SIS database and requested Forest Department to do any necessary formal process for the decision.
- TF recommend UN-REDD to have further discussion with CSO for the development of SIS Operationalization Plan.
- In order to avoid financial gap, TF recommended to do follow up with Norway to get funding support before March/April 2020.

Session 1: Updates

Agenda item 3: State of advance UN-REDD Programme in Myanmar, development towards major targets for 2019

¹ The annotated agenda of the PEB meeting is included as Annex 1 to the minutes

Dr. Thaug Naing Oo, National Programme Director of UN-REDD, presented the progress and achievements of the programme implementation during the 2nd half year of the 2019, as well as results of indicators with 36-month targets in the UN-REDD M&E framework. He highlighted those outputs and activities where some delays or a major delay had been encountered. Only one activity is falling significantly behind 2019 deliverables, 5.2.2, Development of a REDD+ Investment Plan.

Discussion

Mr. Gordon Johnson asked for more information on why activity 5.2.2 had generated a “red light”. PMU responded that the issue related to data availability, an issue which would be further explained under agenda item 9.

Agenda item 5: Fulfilment of pending actions from meetings minutes of last PEB meeting in July 2019

Daw Khin Hnin Myint presented the actions and follow-up activities taken on the 7th PEB meeting decisions. Some decisions related to mangroves funding had been superseded by decisions taken by Norway and the UN-REDD Secretariat. For other decisions, action had been taken, although a back-to-back meeting of the Taskforce and Community Forest National Working Group had yet to be arranged.

Discussion

The Director General noted that, in relation to Decision 7/1, the Forest Department’s internal Community Forests Working Group meets monthly, CFNWG meets quarterly and organization of a back-to-back meeting with the Taskforce would be an opportunity to raise awareness about Community Forests with, for example, MOALI. He also noted that the meetings of the NE5C presented an opportunity to raise awareness on REDD+. The DG of the ECD is Secretary to the NE5C, and the DG offered to act as a contact person in securing an agenda item on REDD+ at a NE5C meeting.

Finally, the DG commented that, in relation to Decision 7/4, the NDC needs to be updated based on recent international decisions (e.g., the Climate Summit and COP25) – for example in committing to phase-out fossil fuels. Submitting outdated data is not good for country so a further meeting should be organized with DG/ECD and senior officials from other Ministries.

In response, PMU noted that there will be a meeting of the NE5C Working Group on Climate Mitigation and Adaptation of 19 Dec., and that a request would be sent to ECD to include an agenda item on REDD+.

Dr. Thaug Naing Oo commented that in order to meet the proposed March 2020 submission of a revised NDC, the text on LULUCF and an appropriate target still needs a lot of discussion. He requested ECD’s representative to update on progress of NDC revision. U Soe Naing, Director of ECD will inform to Climate Change Session of ECD who is managing the NDC revision as he is not the focal of that subject.

Mr. Ben Vickers observed that data consistency between the NDC (and SNC) and Myanmar's technically-assessed FREL is essential. Dr. Thaung Naing Oo added that a number of discussions have been held with ECD, but they still want to use the previous, incorrect data. Mr. Franz Arnold observed that it had become apparent in a meeting between ECD and FD in May that there were differences in interpretation of guidelines. Since the FREL had been technically assessed, it implied that the FD's interpretation was correct.

Saw Myo Ko Ko mentioned about Green Climate Fund which is one of the main funding windows for REDD+ Strategy Implementation.

Mr. Ben Vickers indicated that FAO is developing a GCF-funded project for the Chindwin watershed.

Session 2: Items for information and provision of advice

Agenda item 7: Administration of funding for mangroves

Mr. Tim Boyle presented an update of proposals developed by Norway and the UN-REDD Secretariat and Management Group for mangroves funding. It had been determined that Norway could not approve funding for activities that would go beyond the closure of the current Norway/UN-REDD agreement, and that therefore the proposal should cover only activities for 2020 and 2021. The understanding is that, subject to negotiation of a new Norway/UN-REDD agreement, further funding could be available.

Once the proposal has been approved (inter-sessionally) by the UN-REDD global Executive Board, Norway will deposit the funding in the existing MPTF-O "Technical Assistance" project. Thereafter, the three agencies will administer the funds differently:

- UNDP will transfer the funds to a new or an existing UNDP/Myanmar project
- FAO will issue Field Budget Allocations (FBAs) from HQ (the Budget Holder of the UN-REDD TA funds) to the FAOR Myanmar
- UNEP will manage the funds through the Regional A/P Office

The PEB needs to take one or more decisions related to whether it expects to play a role in oversight of mangroves activities, in which case amendments would be required to its current ToR, and possibly to its membership; or whether it recommended alternative oversight arrangements.

Discussion

The DG commented that he had met Norway government delegates during the Climate Summit in New York, and that they are very willing to support mangrove work, but also confused on how mangrove conservation fits within the National REDD+ Strategy. There needs to be an approach to the Norway embassy in Yangon on this issue.

Regarding plans for implementation, Dr. Thaug Naing Oo reported that it has long been agreed that REDD+ implementation should be supported by sub-national bodies, but the exact form of these has yet to be decided. For CFWG's, state/region and District WG's have TOR's which might be useful in guiding the development of REDD+ sub-national bodies.

Mr. Ben Vickers highlighted the need to enhance role of the REDD+ Taskforce, which requires increasing the capacity of Taskforce to carry out its responsibilities of oversight of phase 2 initiatives. He proposed that mangroves can be used as a pilot, and committed FAO embrace this vision with respect to the GCF-funded Chindwin project.

Mr. Gordon Johnson concluded that the PEB will cease to exist when NP closes. Since post-2020 activities require oversight, there is a need to enhance stature and functioning of Taskforce – for mangroves and other activities. However, if mangrove activities begin in January 2020, enhancement of the capacity of the Taskforce must be achieved within a very short time. Consideration also needs to be given to how to make the Taskforce sustainable, since its operations have been supported to date by the UN-REDD PMU, and meeting costs covered from UN-REDD budget.

There was general agreement that the structure, function and role of the Taskforce needs to be institutionalized, and that this may require development of a legislative framework for climate change.

Agenda item 9: Update on the National REDD+ Strategy and Investment Plan

Mr. Timothy Boyle provided an update on the status of the National REDD+ Strategy and Investment Plan.

The National Validation Workshop was held in mid-September. About 200 comments were received before, during and after the workshop. Once these have been addressed, the Strategy can be submitted for approval, via the Taskforce, Minister's Office, and NE5C. Almost all of the comments are minor, with the exception of a request from the Forest Department to revisit the target of the Strategy. The Taskforce, in considering this issue, asked UN-REDD to formulate four scenarios, representing high to low ambition and to analyze the implications of each in terms of required PAM's. One meeting has been held to consider the scenarios. Following attempts to quantify the costs and benefits, a further meeting will be organized, chaired by DG/FD, and the matter will then be raised for consideration by the NE5C.

In order to broaden "ownership" of the Strategy, informal discussions were held with NCA-S EAO's during the National Validation Workshop. While all EAO's are supportive of the goals of REDD+, politically they feel unable to endorse/approve a government Strategy document. It was therefore proposed that a NCA-S EAO Action Plan be prepared which is consistent with the Strategy, but which might contain different PAMs and have different targets.

The REDD+ Investment Plan represents a plan to operationalize implementation of the Strategy. A seven-step process has been developed to prepare the plan, but the process is currently blocked at Step 1 due to an inability of the PMU to access required data. Nevertheless, the target remains to complete the Investment Plan by Q3/2020.

Discussion

Mr. Gordon Johnson asked who has been involved in discussions on the development of a NCA-S EAO Actin Plan. Dr. Thaung Naing Oo explained that very extensive consultation had been held, reflecting the Forest Departments commitment to stakeholder consultation. Given the large number of ethnic groups in Myanmar, it is impossible to secure agreement from each group. The Director General added that although EAO's tend to reject all government proposals when first tabled, discussions usually lead to them embracing the proposals. Trust building is an essential part of this process, and it can be very slow to develop. The first meeting between the FD and KFD did not discuss any substantive issues, and the second meeting considered only conservation. However, the trust built through these initial meetings should permit more substance to be addressed in future meetings, including REDD+

On the Investment plan, Dr. Thaung Naing Oo commented that the biggest challenge is to match proposals to donor priorities. He suggested and was supported by Mr. Ben Vickers, that consideration should be given to a process of prioritization of localities for REDD+ implementation that does not require detailed data.

Agenda item 11: AWP/2020

Daw Khin Hnin Myint presented the proposed AWP for 2020, representing the final AWP of the programme, and therefore requiring that all remaining financial resources be programmed.

Discussion

Dr. Thaung Naing Oo asked whether the remaining budget was sufficient to maintain the PMU through to the date of closure of the programme (6 November 2020). PMU responded that there was not sufficient budget, but that mangrove funding could help to fill the gap.

A proposal was made that a final workshop should be held to review achievements, and the DG suggested that, if possible, participants from other countries in the region should be invited to attend. It was proposed that the budget for the final evaluation was sufficient to cover costs of such a workshop.

Agenda item 13: Planning for next PEB meeting

It was proposed by Mr. Ben Vickers that the next (final) meeting of the PEB be held somewhat earlier than would otherwise be expected, in order to review ToR for the final evaluation. It was proposed that the next meeting be held in late May 2020.

Decisions and Action points

Decision PEB 8/1: The PEB approves the AWP/2020

Decision PEB 8/2: The PEB will cease to exist at the closure of the UN-REDD National Programme

Decision PEB 8/3: The REDD+ Taskforce should provide oversight of Norwegian funding for mangroves – this serving as a pilot for Taskforce oversight of other phase 2 initiatives

Decision PEB 8/4: Capacity building and reform of Taskforce (and TWG’s) is therefore of highest urgency, so the PMU is instructed to develop a plan to achieve this result

Decision PEB 8/5: Back-to-back meetings of the Taskforce and CFNWG are again encouraged, and in reform of the Taskforce, consideration should be given to the form and function of sub-national structures, possibly using the ToR of sub-national Community Forestry bodies as a guide for REDD+ (including the possibility to merge the bodies)

Decision PEB 8/6: Presentation of REDD+ to the NE5C, including a process to agree on an appropriate target for the National REDD+ Strategy is of high urgency; the PMU is instructed to work with DG/ECD to ensure a REDD+ agenda item on the next meeting of the NE5C

Decision PEB 8/7: The PMU is instructed to renew efforts to ensure consistency of data and targets in the NDC with the FREL and National REDD+ Strategy.

Decision PEB 8/8: The National Programme Director is instructed to work with the PMU and involve UN-REDD Regional Technical Advisors in revising the methodology for development of the investment plan to account for the absence of data

Decision PEB 8/9: The PEB endorses the proposal to develop a NCA-S EAO REDD+ Action Plan in support of the National REDD+ Strategy


Decision PEB 8/10: The next meeting of the PEB will be in May 2020, when it will (*inter alia*) reviews the ToR for the final evaluation, and plans for a wrap-up-workshop

Attachments

- Agenda of the meeting

Minutes approved by


Dr. Nyi Nyi Kyaw
Director General, Forest Department
Co-Chair of PEB


Mr. Gordon Johnson
UNDP RR ai
Co-Chair of PEB

Annex 1: UN-REDD Programme, Myanmar 8th Programme Executive Board Meeting: Annotated Agenda

No.	Time	Items	
1	13:00 – 13:10	Opening remarks by DG of the Forest Department and UNDP Country Director	Co-chairs (FD, UNDP)
2	13:10 – 13:20	Invitation to the Chair of the National REDD+ Taskforce to brief the PEB about the activities of, and progress by the Taskforce Decision PEB 3/5 invited the Chair of the National REDD+ Taskforce to attend future PEB meetings in order to share information about Taskforce activities. The Taskforce met on July and Oct 2019, and the Chair of the Taskforce will provide a verbal report to the PEB on activities undertaken and decisions made by the Taskforce	Chair of National REDD+ Taskforce
Session 1: Updates			
3	13:20 – 13:45	State of advance UN-REDD Programme in Myanmar, development towards major targets for 2019 (Documents PEB 8/2 and 8/6) The PEB may want to comment on measures to rectify any shortcomings highlighted in the presentation	Dr. Thaug Naing Oo, NPD
4	13:45 – 13:55	Discussion, questions and answers	All PEB
5	13:55 – 14:10	Fulfilment of pending actions from meetings minutes of last PEB meeting in December 2018 (Document PEB 8/3) The PEB may want to comment on measures to address items not fully implemented	Daw Khin Hnin Myint, NPC
6	14:10 – 14:25	Discussion, questions and answers	All PEB
Session 2: Items for Information and Provision of Advice			
7	14:25 – 14:40	Administration of Norwegian funds for mangrove implementation (Document PEB 8/4) Norway has technically cleared the UN-REDD Programme submission to address REDD+ in mangroves. The role of the PEB in overseeing these activities needs to be decided	Tim Boyle, CTA
8	14:40 – 14:55	Discussion, questions and answers	All PEB
9	14:55 - 15:05	Update on REDD+ Strategy and Investment Plan (Document PEB 8/5) The status of approval of the National REDD+ Strategy, NCA-S EAO Action Plan, and Investment Plan will be presented	Tim Boyle, CTA
10	15:05 - 15:20	Discussion, questions and answers	All PEB
Session 3: Items for Decisions			

11	15:20 – 15:35	Annual Work Plan 2020 (Document PEB 8/7) The Plan summarizes expenditures to date and includes a request for a modification to the AWP for approval.	Daw Khin Hnin Myint, NPC
12	15:35 – 15:55	Discussion and decisions	All PEB
13	15:55 – 16:00	Planning for next PEB meeting (dates and topics)	All PEB
14	16:00 – 16:15	Closing remarks	Co-chairs