Document PEB3/4: Myanmar side event for UNFCCC COP23

Background

The annual Conferences of the Parties (COPs) to the UNFCCC provide an opportunity to engage with the many thousands of delegates who attend. This can be useful in spreading positive information about work going on in a country, thereby potentially increasing engagement with donors which can, in turn, lead to increased political, technical, and/or financial support. This year, COP23, hosted by Fiji, is being held in Bonn, Germany, due to the logistical problems of travel to Fiji and hosting such a large number of delegates there.

Myanmar is now at a stage of its REDD+ readiness process (REDD+ Phase 1) where it has some positive messages to disseminate (draft strategy, draft FRL, emerging NFMS, broad stakeholder engagement). Looking ahead to Phase 2 of REDD+, involving implementation of the National REDD+ Strategy, a substantial amount of new funding will be required. For these reasons, the organization of a Myanmar side event at COP23 is proposed.

Constraints

While the presence of such large numbers of delegates provides an opportunity, the organization of a correspondingly high number of side events means that many events run in parallel, competing for delegate participation. Only a minority of delegates to the COP are interested directly in REDD+, so at previous COPs, REDD+ side events have, in many cases, ended up attracting very few participants. This has meant that the effort invested in organizing many of these side events has not yielded clear benefits.

Proposal

Two solutions are proposed to overcome the constraint described above.

1. Partnering with other countries. A Myanmar-only event would attract only delegates with a special interest in Myanmar. By partnering with a number of other countries, the event will attract delegates who may be primarily interested in one of the other countries, and who will thereby be exposed to the information presented by Myanmar, which would not otherwise have been the case. Since both PNG and Mongolia are interested in a REDD+ event, it is proposed to design a side event involving all three countries.

2. Associating the event with an organization’s pavilion. There is no incentive for delegates to visit the side-event venues unless planning to attend a specific side event. However, some countries and organizations have “pavilions”, which are usually prominently located, and which are open continuously. Delegates tend to visit these pavilions at any time. Therefore, by associating the side event with an organization’s pavilion, not only may more delegates be attracted to the side event, but display materials (publications, posters, videos, can be on permanent display, rather than only during the side event itself. It is proposed to associate with the UNDP pavilion.

Beyond these organizational issues, to attract a large number of participants – and to successfully engage them - it is also necessary to design an attractive event. This means two things: (i) identifying a subject matter that is attractive; and (ii) ensuring that the information is provided in a way that promotes engagement.
The subject matter should ideally link the three participating countries while providing a platform for each country to disseminate the information it considers most relevant. One option could be related to the “Role of REDD+ in achieving the SDGs in three contrasting Asia/Pacific countries”, but the views of PEB members only possible themes is sought.

To engage participants effectively, it is proposed to screen a brief video from each country as well as asking a senior official (Minister, or Permanent Secretary) to give a Powerpoint presentation. This could be followed by a professionally-moderated panel discussion.

To secure a side event associated with the UNDP pavilion, a proposal needs to be submitted to UNDP HQ by the end of July. The views of PEB members will be therefore be carefully noted during the PEB meeting since there will be no time after the meeting for further inputs to the proposal.