

Climate Alliance Position Paper regarding REDD – for the Protection of Forests –

Adopted by the General Assembly on 23rd April 2009 in Brussels.



Climate Alliance

The importance of forest protection for climate protection formed an integral part of the Road Map for a Post-Kyoto Protocol that was agreed at the Bali climate conference in 2007. The mechanism devised is known as REDD: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation.

Although Climate Alliance is in favour of forest protection measures in principle, we recognise the danger posed by REDD of creating a new mechanism that will counteract efforts for a genuine reduction in emissions due to additional “cheap” certificates.

The participants of the General Assembly of Climate Alliance in Brussels have therefore determined the following:

- Commitment to an effective reduction in greenhouse gas emissions must remain the focus of all national and international climate protection measures. An effective reduction in greenhouse gases can only be achieved through energy saving measures, improved energy efficiency and an increase in renewable energies usage.
- Other tools such as the CDM (Clean Development Mechanism) and REDD should only be implemented within the scope of a highly-restricted, clearly-defined framework and complement existing reduction obligations. A further mechanism for the generation of certificates will not only undermine efforts to effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but also lead to the rainforests being destroyed at an even faster rate, as climate change will not be halted.
- Solutions for the economic and social causes of rainforest destruction are crucial for sustainable forest protection: conversion of rainforests to land for other uses (particularly animal husbandry and agriculture), non-sustainable exploitation of rainforest products (such as tropical wood and crude oil) in addition to social inequalities within the densely-forested countries lead to the destruction of vast swathes of forest.
- Forest protection means more than just the safeguarding of a CO₂ storage facility. Particularly the rights and interests of the Indigenous Peoples and local communities residing in the rainforests must be borne in mind. The Indigenous Peoples’ rights, as laid out in Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the ILO (International Labour Organisation) and in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples must be respected. The inclusion of representatives from indigenous organisations in international processes is fundamental to the drafting of international framework agreements.

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Background

Along with conservation of the global climate, protection of the tropical rainforests is one of Climate Alliance's central concerns. Our partnership with the Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon region induces us to combine conservation of the rainforests with protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

An immediate halt to all deforestation and the redevelopment of natural native forests are urgent and separate tasks that also aid climate protection. However, they should NOT be used to buy one's way out of the duty to reduce greenhouse gases.

Climate Alliance has been striving to promote integrated forest protection since it was first founded. It is essential that forest protection is not just exploited to compensate for CO₂ emissions, but remains an equally important, independent goal for whose attainment additional means are needed.

The basic concept of REDD is rooted in the function of forests as a CO₂ storage facility. By assigning an economic value to the CO₂ stored in forests, their preservation can be included in economic decision-making processes. Within the framework of a REDD system, emissions from tropical deforestation should be acknowledged and evaluated so that economic incentives for reductions in deforestation can be offered.

The scarcity of emissions rights must be retained. The slowly-consolidating markets for emissions rights should not be destabilised by the vast influx of new emissions certificates.

Indigenous Peoples and local communities have shaped the rainforests of the Amazon region and made sustainable use of its resources for countless generations. This represents an ecological as well as a cultural achievement of global value. Therefore, they must be included in political endeavours to reduce deforestation. These groups have fought for centuries for recognition of their traditional rights to territories of forest. Through REDD, the risk exists that acknowledgement of these rights may soften or they may be revoked.

Thus REDD still has countless challenges to overcome, such as clarification of the value of land and usage rights, the creation of a set of measures to quantify reductions in deforestation rates, "leakage" (whereby nature protection measures in one area lead to deforestation in another), and provision of sufficient incentives for countries with low deforestation as well as ensuring that it is the local people who benefit.



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