

UN-REDD
PROGRAMME



UN-REDD/VIET/EG2/2015/Report

Report

VIET NAM PHASE II
SECOND EXECUTIVE GROUP
MEETING

23 March 2015
Da Lat, Viet Nam

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I. Summary of Decisions

Session 1 – Opening and approval of agenda

1. The Executive Group adopts the agenda of the meeting with the amendment of canceling Session 2 due to time constraints.

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Session 3a – Overview of progress, results and challenges (including update on PIM)

2. EG approves the annual report and takes note of the funding framework, and requests the UN agencies and governments to move towards a joint report in content and process reflecting a shared understanding of progress and challenges. The EG requires that the next report includes information on the progress on activities related to forest land tenure.

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Session 4 – Findings and recommendations of the Annual Review

3. EG requests that a working group will be established to explore possibilities to streamline the decision making process within the existing governance structures to render them more effective.
- 4.a EG takes note of the annual review report, recognizes that some steps have already been taken, in particular in harmonizing operational procedures and enhancing coordination (as outlined in the information document 4b), and requests the finalization of the management response by April 20th 2015. The revised version (in one document) should be based on joint efforts and include detailed information on response actions, timelines and status of implementation, as well as a more thorough response on recommendation #5 related to the JCG and IMB.
- 4.b In order to perform its oversight function, the EG requests a progress update on status and effect of implementation measures by the end of June 2015. Based on this update, the EG will consider conducting a stocktaking meeting in the 3rd quarter of 2015.
5. The EG endorses the return of funds for National Implementation (1,299,200 USD) under UNEP to the MPTF, for the purpose of transferring and implementing those through the UNDP. The EG allocates these funds to UNDP.
6. The EG notes the need to revise the PIM. EG approval of the PIM can be sought through a no-objection decision by email latest by June 2015, whereupon it will be recommended as the overarching framework for programme implementation.

Session 5a – 2015 Workplan and budget

7. The EG approves the resource allocation as per the 2015 AWP and budget, and requests a revised workplan aligned with the new results framework including more ambitious annual

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targets and activities on outcome 6 as well as forest land tenure under outcome 2, by end of the 3rd quarter of 2015.

Session 5b – Proposal for extension

8. In the interest of maximizing the success of the programme and based on the risk analysis submitted, the EG supports a 3 year extension of the programme. The EG requests the PMU to provide an update results framework, targets and timelines that reflect the 3 year extension for approval of the EG by email by the end of April 2015. Based on this decision, the EG recommends the donor to extend the SAA until 31 December 2018.

Session 6 – Review of EG2 decisions and approval and closing remarks

9. Agrees on the decisions of the Second Executive Group Meeting.
10. EG expresses its appreciation and vote of thanks to the Government of Viet Nam for their hospitality and a fruitful meeting.

II. Introduction

The Viet Nam Phase II Programme was signed in July 2013, with a starting date for implementation of July 2013. Based on the Programme's governance arrangements, the Executive Group (EG) meets once a year or on further occasions as needed, as indicated in the Programme document. This constitutes the second face-to-face meeting of the EG since the Programme's inception. The present report aims to provide a record of the decisions and key discussions raised during the Second EG meeting.

The meeting was chaired by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). EG members comprised (i) a MARD representative; (ii) a representative of the Kingdom of Norway; (iii) a representative of the UN-REDD Programme's Strategy Group (on behalf of the three participating UN agencies FAO, UNDP, UNEP). In line with decision 11 of EG1, representatives of the CSOs and Ethnic Groups attended the meeting as observers. The UN-REDD Programme Secretariat provides secretariat services to the EG.

The meeting was held in Da Lat (Lam Dong Province) on 23 March 2015 and consisted of six different sessions that are presented succinctly below, together with a record of the discussions that ensued. Decisions are presented at the outset of the document and referred back to in the context of the sessions.

III. Session 1 – Opening and approval of agenda

Session 1a – Welcome and introduction, approval of agenda

Documents: UN-REDD/VIET/EG2/2015/I/1b – Provisional Agenda

Minister Cao Duc Phat of MARD, chair of the meeting and EG member, opened the meeting by welcoming participants and emphasizing the main purpose and outcomes expected from it. He highlighted the active involvement of local communities in the Phase II Programme; e.g. the launch of the Provincial REDD+ Action Plan (PRAP) for Lam Dong Province, and acknowledged that phase II progressed rather slowly since implementation started. The Minister encouraged the EG to take appropriate decisions in order to accelerate the implementation of the project for 2015 and beyond, which also includes an extension proposal for the UN-REDD Viet Nam Phase II Programme.

The EG Chair requested views on the meeting agenda, and the EG agreed that, in view of time constraints, Session 2 be canceled.

Decision 1 – The EG adopts the agenda of the meeting with the amendment of canceling Session 2 due to time constraints.

Session 1b – Opening remarks

The National Programme Director (NPD) of the Programme Management Unit (PMU) of the Viet Nam phase II programme, Mr Vũ Xuân Thôn, welcomed the EG members and gave them the floor for their opening remarks.

Mr Simon Rye, Deputy Director for Development Policy for Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI), highlighted the long-term partnership between Norway and Viet Nam and marked the cooperation as an important step for Viet Nam to further its activities towards climate change

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leadership. He welcomed the preparatory efforts being made by both the UN agencies and the Government of Viet Nam preceding the EG meeting, and thanked the EG for providing the opportunity to have an open discussion on the way forward, next steps of implementation, and to share experiences and lessons learnt.

Ms Tiina Vahanen, representing the UN-REDD Programme's Strategy Group (SG), thanked the Government of Viet Nam and Lam Dong Province for their hospitality. She recognized the importance of the programme in making progress and tangible advances that contribute to national development priorities and in keeping the political momentum and capital of REDD+ towards a global commitment in Paris at COP21. She reported that the three UN agencies had embarked on a thorough exercise to enhance UN internal coordination and harmonization, and reiterated full support on all aspects of the programme delivery - policy, normative and field level work. Ms Pratibha Mehta, United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC) in Viet Nam, added to the intervention that Viet Nam is a pioneer country that has helped to identify successes and milestones reached, as well as challenges and bottlenecks, which provide the UN-REDD Programme with a great roadmap to move forward and try to resolve the issues that have arisen.

IV. Session 2 – Update on implementation of decisions and latest PEB meeting decisions

Documents: UN-REDD/VIET/EG2/2015/II/2 – PEB meeting notes
UN-REDD/VIET/EG2/2015/II/2 – Progress PEB conclusions
UN-REDD/VIET/EG2/2015/II/2 – EG1 decision status
UN-REDD/VIET/EG2/2015/II/2 – EG2 list of documents

Due to time constraints, it was decided to cancel Session 2 to allow more time for discussion on the items presented in the other Sessions of the meeting. Background information, current challenges, and decisions from the Programme Executive Board (PEB) meetings, as well as documentation on the current status of implementation of the decisions made at the First Executive Group Meeting (EG1) in February 2014 were made available for all meeting participants.

V. Session 3 – Overview of progress and decisions for the approval of the annual report

Session 3a – Overview of progress and results

Documents: UN-REDD/VIET/EG2/2015/III/3a – Draft Annual Report 2014
UN-REDD/VIET/EG2/2015/III/3a – Programme Implementation Manual (PIM), Third Draft

NPD

The NPD presented an overview of the current implementation status of the UN-REDD Viet Nam Phase II Programme, indicating that its objective is to enhance Viet Nam's ability to benefit from future results-based payments for REDD+ and undertake transformational changes in the forestry sector. He updated participants on the annual work plan and budget for 2014, progress per outcome, and results achieved to date, and introduced planned programme activities for 2015. He also

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provided a summary of the key challenges and constraints faced in the last period of implementation, as the technical complexity of the programme, the governments institutional set up and decision-making process, and the complexity of separate financing streams by three UN agencies.

Session 3b – Financial status

Documents: UN-REDD/VIET/EG2/2015/III/3b – Programme Fund Funding Framework

MPTF-O

The representative for the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF-O), Ms Mari Matsumoto, in a video presentation, provided an overview of the funding framework, deposits and transfers to date and - as Administrative Agent - confirmed the total funds received to be US\$ 16,945,017, and available balance of funds in the account to be US\$ 26,659.

Session 3c – Discussion

Norway

The representative for Norway thanked the UN-REDD Programme for the annual reporting covering 2014, and welcomed the progress made over the last few months. He furthermore noted with regret that the Phase II Programme's implementation is behind schedule in activities both at national and provincial levels.

He recognized the dual processes of reporting for the UN-REDD Programme and the Government of Viet Nam, and expressed concern about some discrepancies between the reports of the government and the UN agencies. The Government of Norway acknowledged the efforts made in the preparatory EG meetings towards more harmonization and consistency in the reporting process, and suggested next reports to present a shared understanding of progress and challenges.

UN-REDD SG

The UN-REDD Programme supported the observation made by the Norwegian government, and indicated that substantial efforts have been made towards the harmonization of procedures within the UN, which will resolve constraint 3 during the mission held the week before the EG meeting.

The UN-REDD Programme furthermore supported the recommendation made by Norway to streamline annual reporting so as to share a common understanding of constraints and progress. She noted that the Programme and Government of Viet Nam will continue to produce separate reports due to the different templates, but also assured consistency will be pursued in generating a common understanding of the issues and progress for the report in 2015. The PEB should act as the body for ensuring that the reports are coordinated and streamlined.

EG Chair

The chair recommended that the EG take note of the financial report and endorse the 2014 annual report, and takes into consideration the recommendations and requests of the EG for the next reporting cycle. He expressed his gratitude for the suggestions to the Ministry and indicated that all possible efforts would be made to address the issue internally and that the PEB will be authorized to

sort out constraints so as to avoid these inconsistencies in the future. As the annual report for 2014 has already been submitted, changes will be made starting in 2015.

Decision 2 – EG approves the annual report and takes note of the funding framework, and requests the UN agencies and governments to move towards a joint report in content and process reflecting a shared understanding of progress and challenges.

Decision 2 (amended following Session 5) - EG approves the annual report and takes note of the funding framework, and requests the UN agencies and governments to move towards a joint report in content and process reflecting a shared understanding of progress and challenges. The EG requires that the next report includes information on the progress on activities related to forest land tenure.

VI. Session 4 – Annual review report and decisions on the management response

This session covered the joint management response to the first annual review of the UN-REDD Viet Nam Phase II Programme that was presented for EG approval. The review was developed to assess the Phase II Programme's accomplishments so far, identify obstacles, and suggest an improved way forward.

Session 4a – Findings and recommendations of the first annual review and management response

Documents: UN-REDD/VIET/EG2/2015/IV/4a – Annual Review 2014, Final Draft
UN-REDD/VIET/EG2/2015/IV/4a – Management Response Draft
UN-REDD/VIET/EG2/2015/IV/4a – Information Document: UN action plan including next steps, responsibilities and timeline

PMU

Mme Nguyễn Thị Thu Thủy, National Programme Deputy-Director (dNPD) of the PMU, presented the independent annual review, and discussed the possible elements for the management response regarding the key constraints of the Phase II Programme on both operational and leadership levels. She furthermore updated participants on potential solutions and steps that need to be taken to resolve these issues in the future implementation of the Phase II Programme.

Session 4b – Discussion

UN-REDD SG

The UN-REDD Programme expressed thanks to the PMU for the detailed presentation of the annual review and acknowledged the need to address the issues described. The representative explained that during UN internal meetings preceding the EG meeting, the UN agencies reviewed solutions to streamline coordination and ensure harmonization of procedures. In this regard, she referred to an information document provided by the UN agencies to the EG that presents a detailed action plan, and invited Ms Louise Chamberlain, UNDP Country Director, to present key actions for both operational and accountability issues that the three UN agencies are going to implement to streamline coordination and to ensure harmonization of procedures. She furthermore announced that funds for National Implementation would be returned from UNEP to the MPTF, in order to transfer and implement those through UNDP.

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Norway

The representative for Norway welcomed the efforts made by the UN agencies on further harmonization, and noted the importance of the annual review, which has identified the Programme's key constraints. Identifying the problems has given the EG a platform to provide all parties involved with a better overview, and allowed for further discussions on how to solve these issues. Norway recognized that some steps have already been taken and is looking forward to seeing the implementation of more concrete steps in the future.

Norway also encouraged the Government of Viet Nam and the UN agencies to further specify the recommendations and provide a more detailed management response and action plan, which should include a timeline and current status of implementation, to be presented by the end of April 2015. He reminded participants that this should be done as a joint effort of the UN and government rather than parallel responses and perspectives. He further noted that the proposed recommendations will provide a better oversight of the overall Phase II Programme, and requested that the status and effect of implementation of measures be presented to the EG by the end of June 2015, suggesting that a potential stock-taking meeting in the third quarter of 2015 might be necessary to review the implementation steps further. This meeting should be aligned with the planning for the next EG meeting, which will tentatively take place in November 2015.

UN-REDD SG

The UN-REDD Programme expressed its support for the recommendations of the Government of Norway, and advised that further elaboration in regard to internal monitoring should be factored within outcome 5. Additionally, the updated PIM should be presented to the EG, which then will be able to approve it on a no-objection basis by email in June 2015 at the latest. The UN-REDD Programme recommended for the PIM to be the overarching framework for programme implementation. The UN-REDD Programme also noted that the current governance set-up for the Joint Coordination Group (JCG) as well as the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) might need to be revised.

EG Chair

The EG chair was pleased to see the efforts made by the UN, and is hopeful that the implementation steps of the programme can be further simplified. He assured the EG that the Government of Viet Nam is committed to revise the role of the JCG in the overall governance structure, as necessary.

Norway

The Government of Norway expressed concern regarding the current information flow between the PEB and the EG, stressing that sufficient information is needed for the EG to carry out its functions of oversight and decision-making. It was suggested that the governance structure be examined in more detail, especially with regard to the current functions and roles of both the PEB and the EG to avoid overlaps or further communication problems. It is not clear who has responsibility for what, and it therefore would be wise to revise the shared responsibilities and roles as part of streamlining and the decision-making process, which should further strengthen implementation of the programme in Viet Nam. The PEB did not meet within the first nine months of the past year, which is of concern. The representative of Norway further acknowledged that recommendation 7 of the review focuses on a clarified role on the EG delegation of authority to the PEB.

EG Chair

The EG chair announced that the PMU will be able to provide support to the UN in revising the current governance structures, and will make appropriate changes if necessary. He asked the UN and the Government of Norway to further explain what they expect from the ministry.

UN-REDD SG

The UN-REDD Programme welcomed the discussion, and confirmed they will be able to facilitate the working group tasked to explore possibilities to streamline the decision-making process within the existing governance structures to render them more effective.

Decision 3 – The EG requests that a working group will be established to explore possibilities to streamline the decision making process within the existing governance structures to render them more effective.

Decision 4.a – The EG takes note of the annual review report, recognizes that some steps have already been taken, in particular in harmonizing operational procedures and enhancing coordination (as outlined in the information document 4b), and requests the finalization of the management response by April 20th 2015. The revised version (in one document) should be based on joint efforts and include detailed information on response actions, timelines and status of implementation, as well as a more thorough response on recommendation #5 related to the JCG and IMB.

Decision 4.b – In order to perform its oversight function, the EG requests a progress update on status and effect of implementation measures by the end of June 2015. Based on this update, the EG will consider conducting a stocktaking meeting in the 3rd quarter of 2015.

Decision 5 – The EG endorses the return of funds for National Implementation (1,299,200 USD) under UNEP to the MPTF, for the purpose of transferring and implementing those through the UNDP. The EG allocates these funds to UNDP.

Decision 6 – The EG notes the need to revise the PIM. EG approval of the PIM can be sought through a no-objection decision by email latest by June 2015, whereupon it will be recommended as the overarching framework for programme implementation.

VII. Session 5 – Revised results framework, 2015 budget and workplan

The session included the presentation of the annual workplan (AWP) and budget for 2015, as well as the proposal for the Phase II Programme to be extended, including the revised results framework, for EG decision. During the session, both items were approved – the proposed workplan and budget allocation for 2015, and the extension of the UN-REDD Viet Nam Phase II Programme for three years.

Session 5a – 2015 Workplan and budget

Documents: UN-REDD/VIET/EG2/2015/V/5a – AWP 2015, First Draft
UN-REDD/VIET/EG2/2015/V/5a – Narrative AWP 2015

CTA

The Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) presented the approach for developing the 2015 workplan and highlighted key activities and milestones envisaged for the coming year for the following

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components: PRAP guidelines, Forest Reference Emission Levels (FRELs), the National Forest Monitoring Service (NFMS), safeguards, PRAPs and PRAP implementation at site level. The presentation concluded with a report of the component of the budget allocation per outcome and per agency. The investment and agency budget distribution of 2015 represents a grand total of US\$ 11,981,806 of which US\$ 7,770,373 is proposed to be transferred to the PMU as the Vietnamese implementing partner for implementation.

Session 5b – Extension of the VN National Programme

Documents: UN-REDD/VIET/EG2/2015/V/5b – Risk Analysis: two versus three year project extension scenario, First Draft

UN-REDD/VIET/EG2/2015/V/5b – Extension Proposal Draft

CTA

The CTA introduced the proposal of a possible no-cost extension for the UN-REDD Viet Nam Phase II Programme beyond 2015, and presented current strengths and weaknesses of the Phase II Programme, and justification and met preconditions for the extension. He furthermore described in detail, a risk analysis for both a two or three-year extension, and noted that the Phase II Programme is currently well positioned to have an impact on national implementation with activities set in place for different provinces of Viet Nam. The PEB originally made a recommendation for a two-year extension of the programme, but after revising the risks for such an extension, it became clear that a three-year extension would be more feasible.

Session 5c – Discussion

Norway

The representative of Norway thanked the CTA for presenting the AWP and budget for 2015, but also expressed his concern that both the work plan and the budget are based on the old version of the results framework rather than the proposed revised version, as there should be an alignment between the work plan and updated logframe. He requested that an updated work plan be presented to the EG by the end of April 2015. The revised work plan should further include some more ambitious targets and activities on outcome 6, which focuses on regional initiatives and cooperation. The Government of Norway is also concerned about the issue of land tenure, as it has been removed from the previously presented logframe when simplifying the outcomes. The new logframe needs to include reporting on this issue, which is now included under outcome 2. Land tenure is of importance for the programme, and has not been sufficiently recognized within the new logframe to date.

UN-REDD SG

The UN-REDD Programme acknowledged the concerns expressed by the Government of Norway, and agreed on the request for a revised work plan in line with the updated logframe. The UN-REDD Programme approved the fund allocations, but reminded the PMU to provide updated information. The next annual report should include a comprehensive description of the activities implemented to address the issue of forest land tenure. Regarding the potential extension of the programme in Viet Nam, the UN-REDD Programme recommended the three-year extension on the basis of a UN

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comprehensive risk analysis assessment that had been made available to EG members before the meeting. The extension has to be aligned with the revision of the results framework, which should be presented to the EG by the end of April 2015. The UN-REDD Programme furthermore requested the Government of Norway extend the Standard Administrative Agreement (SAA) to 31 December 2018.

Norway

Based on this risk assessment presented to the EG, Norway argued that a three year extension offers the best chance to accomplish the important goals set out by the UN-REDD Viet Nam Phase II Programme. As such, Norway announced it followed the recommendations made by UN-REDD, and endorsed the annual work plan and budget for 2015, with the preview that the requested revision of the work plan will be made.

EG Chair

The EG chair noted that the Government of Viet Nam has not been able to adequately map forest land, and that it is therefore difficult to allocate land to the people and communities in the provinces. He acknowledged the importance of land tenure aligned with output 2.1 on the assessment of forestry and policy issues in the provinces, and agreed that it should be reflected in the next annual report. He furthermore expressed his concerns regarding outcome 6, as illegal logging and trafficking of wildlife are aspects of concern for the Government of Viet Nam and neighboring countries. He announced that the Government of Viet Nam is fully committed to working with those countries to further press the issue's importance. The Government of Viet Nam agreed with the three-year extension of the Phase II Programme. The chair noted the preference for implementation to happen within the next two years, but acknowledged that the three-year option is more realistic.

Norway

The representative of Norway acknowledged the complexities and high ambitions of the Phase II Programme, and reminded participants that it takes time and patience to set the right mechanisms in place to ensure successful implementation. The three UN agencies need to have staff on the ground to support implementation and provide technical quality assurance, and therefore ensure that the capacities needed are in place to deliver on the high ambitions from all parties involved. He furthermore suggested designating a UN focal point to liaise with the Government of Viet Nam on behalf of all three UN agencies. The Government of Norway welcomed the government's efforts to address illegal timber trading in the region and will provide full support to the Government of Viet Nam, as this is an important issue in such a forest-rich country, and the countries in the region should incorporate joint solutions.

EG Chair

The EG chair recognized the need for further detail on three key issues – (i) land tenure, (ii) capacity building, and (iii) regional cooperation regarding illegal logging and timber trading. A more concrete timeline is needed for actions focusing on solving these problems.

The **PPC** representative for Lam Dong Province added that the land in the province mainly belongs to forest companies and management boards, and potential allocation could cause a further destruction of forest land due to agriculture pressure. The provincial government will work in close

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cooperation with local communities using GPS devices in order to better monitor the forest and land changes. Such system is currently being tested.

Norway

The representative of Norway thanked the PPC representative for addressing this issue, as it has been of concern for the Government of Norway as well. Resources made available should include focusing on supporting land-mapping activities that are as crucial to the success of the Phase II Programme.

UN-REDD SG

The UN-REDD Programme acknowledged the importance to pay attention to land use conflicts and land tenure, and welcomed the efforts already made by Viet Nam to identify and address these obstacles. The Programme will continue to support these efforts, and a timeline for actions will be included in the framework.

EG Chair

The EG chair thanked the UN agencies and the Government of Norway for their offers, and asked for further support from FAO to look into potential solutions for the issues.

Decision 7 – The EG approves the resource allocation as per the 2015 AWP and budget, and requests a revised workplan aligned with the new results framework including more ambitious annual targets and activities on outcome 6 as well as forest land tenure under outcome 2, by the end of the 3rd quarter of 2015.

Decision 8 – In the interest of maximizing the success of the programme and based on the risk analysis submitted, the EG supports a three year extension of the programme. The EG requests the PMU to provide an updated results framework, targets and timelines that reflect a 3 year extension for approval of the EG by mail by the end of April 2015. Based on this decision, the EG recommends the donor to extend the SAA until 31 December 2018.

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Please also note that recommendations pertaining to the annual workplan are reflected in decision 2 of the annual workplan.

VIII. Session 6 – Approval of decisions and closing of the meeting

Ms Jessica Holterhof of the UN-REDD Programme Secretariat summarized the decisions from the Second EG meeting and all members formally approved them for implementation.

Decision 9 – EG tentatively agrees on the decisions of the Second Executive Group Meeting.

In closing, the EG provided general feedback and closing remarks to the NPD, thanked the government of Viet Nam and made observations of general order in relation to the progress of REDD+.

Decision 10 – EG expresses its appreciation and vote of thanks to the Government of Viet Nam for their hospitality and a fruitful meeting.

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EG Chair

The EG chair invited the CSO and IP observers to comment on the progress the Phase II Programme has been made in the country.

CSO and IP Representatives

The IP representative noted that they request involvement of the IPs with regard to land tenure issues, as they are able to help accelerate and promote land allocations in the provinces and remind the Government of Viet Nam to respect their collective rights. Concerning outcome 5, the IPs are concerned that there is currently no mention of the maintenance of traditional knowledge and they expect the programme to recommend some regulations and related customary laws that will address the issue in the future. The UN-REDD Programme should support the representative of the IP participation to ensure the appropriate linkages with the IPs in the country.

The CSO representative furthermore mentioned that illegal logging is an important issue that needs to be addressed. It was added that within the past two years of the UN-REDD Programme in Viet Nam, the CSOs were able to put a network in place that deals with illegal logging and timber trading issues, which should be further involved in the programme implementation. Regarding safeguards, the current focus of the CSOs lies at community level, where indicators have already been identified. She also mentioned the CSO's involvement in land tenure issues. Some 45 members across the country are working on this issue and can therefore support the government with land tenure decisions, she noted. Forest allocated by the community does not have titles or official acknowledgement, she reminded EG participants, noting that the community therefore feels insecure, particularly where they are entitled to the benefits of the forests perceived to be theirs. The CSO network is currently preparing a set of documents to be presented to the UN-REDD Viet Nam Phase II Programme, and is asking for support to introduce the network to the PMU, as well as financial support from the programme.

Closing remarks

UN-REDD SG

The UN representative expressed thanks to the Chair, the Government of Viet Nam and Lam Dong Province, to the PMU and to the other partners in conducting and holding a meeting that is a significant turning point for the implementation of the Phase II Programme. She further recognized that the programme is of great importance to Viet Nam as well as UN-REDD, as it helps meeting Viet Nam's commitment to its people, to the UNFCCC provisions, the New York Declaration on Forests and to other international processes. She closed the meeting by extending an invitation to Viet Nam to participate in the UN-REDD Programme Policy Board meeting in May 2015 so as to actively contribute to the discussion on deforestation drivers and regional cooperation.

Norway

The representative of Norway delivered his closing remarks, and extended a special thank you to the CSOs, noting that their involvement further justifies the expanding work in the existing and new provinces, adding that he is looking forward to hearing more about the lessons learnt. The representative expressed his gratitude to the Government of Viet Nam for hosting the meeting, which he highlighted as an important step in strengthening implementation with concrete actions

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that address current issues, which are of relevant importance to the programme. He underlined the significance of the review as well as of the management response as a useful tool to make decisions that will have a positive impact on the progress. He once again acknowledged once the government's leadership, as it had recognized that many challenges were faced and encouraged innovative and daring solutions to those. He furthermore supports the work of Viet Nam in reaching out to neighboring countries to not only share experiences but also strengthen regional cooperation with regards to illegal logging and timber trading.

EG Chair

The EG chair expressed his sincere thanks for the support of the Government of Norway, and acknowledged the efforts made by the UN agencies in resolving some constraints within the Programme. He added that numerous issues concerns remain regarding the impacts of climate change in the country, and noted that a lot can be done in regard to climate change when reforming the forest sector. The programme is therefore not only to pilot activities in the provinces but also has the potential to lead to a reform of forest governance in Viet Nam.

The meeting was adjourned with congratulations to all and sincere thanks to the support teams.
