

Balancing Interests: The Right to Development and the National REDD+ Strategy in Mozambique



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Abbreviations

CEAGRE	Centro de Estudos Agropecuários e Gestão de Recursos Naturais (Centre of Farming Studies and Natural Resources Management)
COP	Conference of the Parties
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Mechanism
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNR	Gilé National Park
MICOA	Ministério para a Coordenação e Acção Ambiental (Ministry of Coordination and Environmental Action)
MozDGM	Mozambique Dedicated Grant Mechanism
MozFIP	Mozambique Forest Investment Project
UNCHR	United Nations Commission on Human Rights

1 Introduction

Development and environmental protection in the developing countries, like Mozambique, is problematic considering the struggle with factors such as poverty and illiteracy. It is true that less developed countries can achieve sustainable development without harming the environment, by using their resources in a sustainable way, through good practices and, of course, an effectively applied policy and legislative base. As highlighted by Araújo, the relation between economic development and environment has not been faced in the same way by developing and developed countries. In fact, if the developed countries define the sustainable

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development of the economy as their socio-economic development strategy, the developing countries are reticent in adopting the same strategy, although in some, as in Mozambique, the sustainable development concept is largely widespread. This different approach was clearly evidenced in the 1972 Stockholm Conference,¹ although the arguments to explain the weak interest of developing countries on environmental issues are different from those presented in the 1970s. In recent times, the major argument centers on the high rates of illiteracy in the developing countries, which makes it difficult to implement the environmental education policies or, in some cases, very expensive.²

The interaction between development and environmental protection in the local communities is of great significance when the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation, Conservation and Increase of Reserves of Carbon (REDD+) initiative is involved. Considering the pressures of an anthropic nature that exist in developing countries—where Mozambique stands, REDD+ is configured as a legal tool of inestimable usefulness, as it proceeds with innovation through instruments that aim to contain deforestation. However, the REDD+ by itself is incapable of producing the results for which it was designed, except if each state put in practice several actions toward its effective implementation. Mozambique is not an alien to this mandate, and the Mozambican government designed and approved the 2016–2030 REDD+ Strategy and the Regulation for the Implementation of Projects related to the REDD+ Regulation.³

The formulation of a legislative base for the REDD+ is an important step, but the major concern is how it can be useful to guarantee the environmental protection through reduction of emissions, prevention of deforestation and forest degradation. On the other hand, concerns are related to the realisation of the right to development, especially of the local communities. The main object of this chapter is to assess whether the implementation of REDD+ allows for the development of the local communities in Mozambique. This is important as literature is scanty in this area of law and policy in Mozambique

2 Development and Environmental Protection Tension

From a historical perspective, the 1960s was the milestone in the sprouting of the right to development, particularly the context of national liberation movements. The context was characterised by the conflict, on the one hand, between socio-economic

¹UN General Assembly, *United Nations Conference on the Human Environment*, 15 December 1972, A/RES/2994; for an analysis see Araújo (2000), pp. 9–13.

²Machava (2012), p. 360.

³Decree (No. 23/2018) concerning the Regulation for the Implementation of Projects to Reduce Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, Conservation and Increased Carbon Reserves (REDD+ Regulation).

and cultural rights, and on the other, by civil and political rights.⁴ The right to development is inherent in several international human rights instruments such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;⁵ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;⁶ and the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Program of Actions.⁷ However, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) expressly referred to the right to development in 1977, which played a great role in the proclamation of the right to development.⁸ Two years after, the UNCHR confirmed the existence of the right to development and equal opportunity as a prerogative of both nations and individuals. However, the content of the right to development was vague.⁹ Later, in 1986, the General Assembly of the United Nations, adopted a resolution on the Declaration on the Right to Development,¹⁰ making this Declaration the first normative legal manifestation of development as a human right.^{11,12} According to the Declaration, the right to development is presented as ‘an inalienable human right by virtue of which all human beings and all peoples have the right to participate, contribute and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and freedoms fundamentals can be fully realized’.¹³ It implies the full realisation of the right of people to self-determination, which includes, without prejudice to the relevant provisions of both International Covenants on Human Rights, the exercise of their inalienable right to full sovereignty over all their wealth and natural resources.¹⁴ However, this right is also presented as a right-duty in the sense that paragraph 3 of Article 2 of the Declaration asserts that states have the right and the duty to formulate appropriate national development policies that aim at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals. This provision signifies that states are to take economic and social measures to offer equal opportunities to all to have access to basic resources, education, health services, food, housing, employment and

⁴See Ferraro and Peixinho (2008), p. 6959.

⁵International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966.

⁶International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Dec. 16, 1966, 9 U.N.T.S. 171.

⁷Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, UN doc.A/CONF.157/23, adopted at World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna 1993.

⁸United Nations Commission on Human Rights Resolution No. 4, XXXIII; also see Bunn (2000), p. 1433.

⁹See again Ferraro and Peixinho (2008), p. 6959.

¹⁰Read Resolution n° 41/128, of 4 December concerning the Declaration on the Right to Development.

¹¹See Marques et al. (2015), p. 3.

¹²Declaration on the Right to Development Resolution 41/128.

¹³See para 1, Article 1 of the Declaration on the Right to Development.

¹⁴Ibid., para 2.

equitable distribution of wealth, so that the development can benefit the recipients.¹⁵ In turn, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) guarantees the right to development. Article 22 of the ACHPR states that 'all peoples have the right to their economic, social and cultural development, in strict respect for their freedom and their identity, and to the equal enjoyment of the common heritage of humanity.' In such a way that the states part to this charter '(...) have the duty, separately or in cooperation, to ensure the exercise of the right to development'.

At the domestic level, under the Mozambican Constitution, one of the state's (fundamental) objectives is to promote balanced, economic, social and regional development.¹⁶ In the recent decades the notion of the right to development has undergone a profound expansion.¹⁷ With considerable innovations and discoveries in the scientific and technological field, there has been an exponential growth in the economic sphere, which has brought many benefits to society. Despite the prospects to attain economic growth in the normative content of the right to development,¹⁸ its realisation cannot be separated from the realisation of other fundamental rights, particularly the right to environment. It is impossible to focus on development without reflecting on the right to healthy environment because the latter entails the management of the environmental resources on which depends the realisation of the former.

It is in this context that Article 90 paragraph 2 of the Mozambican Constitution enjoins the state and local authorities, in collaboration with NGOs to adopt policies and develop programs to protect the environment and ensure the rational use of all natural resources. The REDD+ is part of the different actions the state had put in place to conciliate development and environmental protection. Adverse environmental impacts result from the exploitation of natural resources. Hence, the normative context of the existing law aims at preventing the degradation of the environment, which is an essential requirement for the promotion of sustainable development.¹⁹ In Mozambique, the legal framework on environmental protection includes several and dispersed legal instruments, among which can be highlighted the Environment Law,²⁰ the Regulation on Environmental Impact Assessment,²¹ the REDD+ Regulation,²² as well as the National Environment Policy,²³ which seeks to ensure the sustainable development in Mozambique, considering its specific conditions, through acceptable and realistic commitment between socio-economic development and environmental protection.

¹⁵Wolkmer and Wolkmer (2005).

¹⁶See Article 11, subparagraph d.

¹⁷See, among others, Dos Anjos Filho (2017); Trindade (1993), p. 521; Delgado (2001).

¹⁸See Sousa (2010), p. 72.

¹⁹See Lopes et al. (2015), p. 25.

²⁰See Law N 20/97, of 1 October on the Translation of Environmental law Approved 28/7/1997/ JAG.

²¹See Decree 54/2015.

²²See Decree (No. 23/2018).

²³Resolution of the Council of Minister No. 5/95 concerning the Approval of the National Policy on the Environment.

The possibility of the existence of a conflict between development and environmental protection is nothing but a utopia. It is totally possible to align both realities as they are by no means mutually exclusive. It is fully possible to respect environmental integrity, thus ensuring the needs of future generations and, at the same time, providing the current generation with the benefits and advantages of full development. The REDD+ program is an example of the possibility of conciliation between the pursuit of development and preservation of environmental integrity. The idea that development and environmental protection can coexist peacefully, shows that it is necessary to invoke the principle of recognition and valuing of traditions and knowledge of local communities. Principle XXII of the Rio Declaration on the environment and development provides that:

Indigenous peoples and their local communities play a fundamental role in environmental ordering and development due to their traditional knowledge and practices. States should recognize and provide support because of their identity, culture and interests and look to those who will effectively participate in achieving sustainable development.

In the Mozambican legal system, this principle is sheltered in Section 4 (b) of the Environment Law, as one of the fundamental principles of the environment and supports the idea that environmental management must guarantee all citizens the right to live in an ecologically balanced environment, conducive to their health and physical and mental well-being.

3 REDD+ Initiative and Local Communities

The interaction between development and environmental protection in the local communities is of great significance in the REDD+ initiative. From an economic perspective, the forest and its respective resources are seen as a factor that contributes to the growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This is the 'traditional role of forests in the economy', given that 'for many years, the role of forests was limited to providing wood and non-wood products for direct consumption by rural and urban communities and generating income. Generally, these outputs are used as key macroeconomic indicators to assess sector performance and contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment.'²⁴ But the protection of forests is also necessary for: (1) the sustenance of biodiversity; (2) the conservation of water resources; (3) the fight against desertification. Above all, in the context of climate change, forests are a resource of such importance in capturing carbon dioxide (CO_2).²⁵ It is in the above perspective that Angelsen states that:

(...) recently, forests have become an asset to be protected, given the almost immeasurable value of sequestered carbon to humanity. Forests play an important role in mitigating the effect of climate change, especially in reducing the possible rise in temperature. Studies

²⁴See Nhantumbo (2012), p. 7.

²⁵Fundo do Ambiente (2015), p. 5.

show that an increase above 2°C could cause catastrophes such as the rise in sea level and the consequent flooding of low-lying areas, including some cities like the Mozambican City of Beira... which is below sea level. Droughts and floods can become more severe, change the cycle of agricultural crops, and may even generate food insecurity, due to the lack of crops adapted to the new hydrological regime.²⁶

The foregoing reality underscores the necessity for the introduction of REDD+ in climate change mitigation and adaptation discourse.²⁷ An essential aspect of REDD+ is based on the protector-receiver principle, according to which ‘the public or private agent that protects a natural asset for the benefit of the community must receive financial compensation as an incentive for the environmental protection service provided’.²⁸ REDD+ raises issues around the socio-environmental inclusion of marginalised population in the discussions and decision-making on the conservation of a set of plant and animal species that live in a particular region. In addition, REDD+ focuses on the preservation/conservation of native vegetation and other instruments are stripped of this characteristic.²⁹

Mozambique has a vast forest area with more than 50 million hectares; however, there is a significant pressure on such area to respond to the eminently economic and survival aspirations of local communities. It is in this perspective that studies reveal that Mozambique loses around 219 hectares of forests each year.³⁰ Agricultural activities of an eminently itinerant nature are identified as the main cause of deforestation in Mozambique. From 2000 to 2012 it was responsible for 65% of deforestation. Urban expansion also contributes to the main causes of deforestation, accounting for 12% of deforestation, the extraction of wood products, accounting for 8% of the aforementioned phenomenon, and the production of firewood and charcoal, on a scale of 7%.³¹ The situations vary from region to region, and from province to province. For instance, the CEAGRE and Winrock International assert that:

(...) the main causes vary by province, according to the economic, social and natural characteristics of each province. In southern Mozambique (Maputo, Gaza and Inhambane provinces), urban sprawl has a much greater impact on deforestation (23%) than in other regions of the country (7% in the North and 11% in the Center). In the northern provinces (Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Niassa), shifting agriculture has a greater impact on emissions (72%) than in the center (60%) or in the south (59%) of the country. an impact on the rate of deforestation. For example, Mopane forests are hardest hit by charcoal production, logging, and grazing, while Miombo forests are hardest hit by agriculture.³²

Also a 2012 report from the then MICOA (Ministry of Coordination and Environmental Action) predicts that Mozambique would be one of the countries in the

²⁶See *Apud* Nhantumbo (2012), p. 7.

²⁷See Neto (2017), para 1.

²⁸Ribeiro (2005), para 2.

²⁹United Nations Decision 2009/4/CP.15, FCCC/CP/L.7.

³⁰Nhantumbo (2012), p. 8.

³¹Ministério da Terra Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Rural (2018a), p. 16.

³²See again Ministério da Terra Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Rural (2018a), p. 17.

world to be affected by climate change. The prediction pointed at (1) a recrudescence of temperature between 1.5 °C and 3 °C in 2050 compared to the pattern of the beginning of the century; (2) increase in the ocean level; (3) ecosystem allocation; (4) reduced precipitation with more irregular patterns; (5) increased frequency of extreme winds (droughts, floods and cyclones), among many others. Consequently, climate change will bring negative impacts with greater incidence to the Mozambican economic sphere, especially in the agricultural and forestry sectors.³³

Considering the negative impacts that could and can still result from climate change, the Government of Mozambique took care to proceed with the approval of an important instrument that became known as the National Strategy for Adaptation and Mitigation of Climate Change 2013–2025.³⁴ The goal of the instrument is to ‘reduce vulnerability to climate change and improve the living conditions of Mozambicans through the implementation of concrete adaptation and mitigation measures, with the active participation of all social, environmental and economic sectors.’ The instrument also sees forests as one of the strategic areas of action with the recommended action of ‘promoting mechanisms for planting trees and establishing forests for local use’, with the aim of fighting deforestation and forest degradation.³⁵

The implementation of the 2016–2030 REDD+ Strategy in Mozambique represents a further commitment of the government to address climate change without undermining development. It clarifies the state’s ‘Strategy for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, Forest Conservation, Sustainable Management and Increase of Carbon Reserves through Planted Forests’.³⁶ The strategy aims to promote within Mozambican society the appreciation of natural capital and the recognition of the contribution of environmental services to the socio-economic and environmental welfare of present and future generations at three essential levels, namely: local, regional and global. It is from this perspective that the strategy in reference here presents as a general strategic objective to promote integrated multi-sector interventions with a view of reducing carbon emission related to the use and changes in land use and coverage through adherence to the principles of sustainable administration of forest ecosystems—both natural and artificial—contributing to global efforts of mitigating and adjusting to climate change and integrated and sustainable rural development.³⁷

As a matter of coherence, the vision and general strategic objective of the REDD+ Strategy must maintain a complementary relationship with its mission, therefore, it is configured as that strategy’s mission to promote the reduction of emissions from

³³Fundo do Ambiente (2015), p. 9.

³⁴Approved by the Council of Ministers on 13 November 2012.

³⁵See National Strategy for Adaptation and Mitigation of Climate Change 2013–2025.

³⁶See Ministério da Terra Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Rural (2016), p. 1.

³⁷Ministério da Terra Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Rural (2016), p. 17.

deforestation and forest degradation, to improve the preservation of forest ecosystems and increase the forest carbon reserves, thus limiting the emission of '170MTCO₂/year' till 2030.³⁸ The initiative of the Forest Carbon Partnership Mechanism (FCPF) of the World Bank allowed Mozambique to participate in REDD+, in such a way that the Government of Mozambique had the onus of proceeding with the approval of the REDD+ Proposal Preparation. It was in this context that the Mozambican government, in 2013, received a grant corresponding to US \$3.8 million, and an additional grant of US \$5 million in 2016, in order to establish a legal and institutional basis for effective implementation of REDD+.³⁹ Several factors contributed to the selection of Mozambique for its participation in REDD+, however, two factors are worth mentioning: (1) Mozambique has a vast territorial area of forest and other types of vegetation: (a) 51% of forest area, with about 40.6 million hectares; and 19% of other vegetation types; (2) High annual rate of deforestation and deforestation, with approximately 0.58%, 219,000 hectares.⁴⁰

REDD+ in Mozambique involves five fundamental activities: (1) reducing emissions from deforestation; (2) reduce emissions from forest degradation; (3) conservation of forest carbon stocks; (4) forest management; and (5) increase in carbon stocks. Certainly, these activities do not dispense the afforestation process for their implementation—a process through which non-forest lands are converted to forest, including new forest plantations, as well as the regeneration of native forests in agricultural areas or old grasslands. Furthermore, combating forest degradation⁴¹ will also be crucial for those activities to be successful. With a view to implementing REDD+, the government further approved Decree 23/2018, it is the Regulation for Programs and Projects inherent to the Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, Conservation and Increase of Carbon Reserves (REDD+ Regulation).

The effect of REDD+ on local communities is not disputed. A large percentage of the population, especially those located in rural areas in Mozambique depends on natural resources for their livelihood. This scenario is closely linked to the high rate of poverty in the country, with a higher incidence in the provinces of Niassa, Nampula and Zambézia.⁴² The practice of agricultural activity—essentially subsistence agriculture—has been the main source of livelihood and income for local communities. The agricultural surplus, when it exists, is used for the practice of commercial activity. Food preparation and water heating are based on firewood

³⁸Ministério da Terra Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Rural (2017a), p. ix.

³⁹Ministério da Terra Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Rural (2017b), p. xv; Fundo do Ambiente (2015), p. vii.

⁴⁰See Fundo do Ambiente (2015), p. 9.

⁴¹In the Mozambican legal system, the definition of forest degradation is presented in paragraph 9 of the glossary of the Regulation for Programs and Projects related to Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and Increasing Carbon Reserves (REDD+) and should be understood as change of a forest area from a high carbon reserve forest category to another low carbon reserve forest category.

⁴²Ministério da Terra Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Rural (2017a), p. 33.

collected in the forest or on the basis of charcoal produced, so that the consumption of this type of energy in the country corresponds to 85%. The forest area has been a potential source of collection of various products for subsistence, without leaving out wood and non-wood resources.⁴³ The forest, in addition to being used as a source of fuel wood and charcoal—or, on the other hand, as a source of energy is used as a source of construction material. In most rural areas, local communities use resources such as wood, stakes to secure the structure of houses and grass for the roof. Furthermore, it is a source of raw material for the manifestation of artistic values through the production of wooden sculptures and to produce household items for sale.⁴⁴ This shows the significance of natural resources for the economic development of local communities in Mozambique.

The exploitation of the forest is not limited to the search for timber resources; it means that there are many other non-timber resources that can be extracted from the forest. For instance, the practice of beekeeping is closely linked to forests as it allows the extraction of the resources. This is an important activity of local communities which advances commercial and medicinal interests. In the context of honey production, two types of hives are used: (1) beehives with an eminently traditional nature, made from tree bark, and which in some way contribute to forest degradation; and (2) modernised beehives, made based on the financial support that local communities receive from some public programs like the REDD+, based on the protector-receiver principle. Such a reality is likely to produce positive impacts on local communities, as it can provide well-being and food security, and above all the sustainable development of local communities.⁴⁵

Forests are also fundamental to cultural development and traditional values of local populations. For example, it has been highlighted that:

Certain Forest formations have special value for local communities. There are several cultural assets along the Coastal Forests. The Chirindezene and Licuati sacred groves in the south are some of the well-protected sacred groves by local custom and used for ceremonies and celebrations. In Catuane the forest inventory for a local community identified four cultural areas in the forest, normally used for meeting (Banjas) and other community activities. These cultural site assets are equally important compared with sacred groves. Many local cemeteries are also found in the Coastal Forests and communities treat them as cultural and spiritual values.

There are at least two types of sacred coastal forests in southern Mozambique: the *gwendzelo* and *phahlelo* (ceremony act/place). The *gwendzelo* is made on places or sites where the graves of the ancestors (“régulo”) are located. The local communities use these forests for sacrifice ceremonies. The *phahlelo* are the ceremonies made at the household level for the wellbeing of a restricted family. The family headmen or a traditional medicine practitioner performs the ceremonies. The *phahlelo* can also be undertaken under a sacred tree. The most common sacred trees in the coastal areas of southern Mozambique includes *Sclerocarya*

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ministério da Terra Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Rural (2018b), p. 40.

⁴⁵ Ministério da Terra Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Rural (2017a), p. 34. See also, Kaechele and Olojoba (2021).

birrea, *Garcinia livingstonei* and *Manilkara discolor*. In northern Mozambique, local communities use *baobab* (*Adansonia digitata*) tree for the ceremonies.⁴⁶

In view of the above, it is hardly possible that the sustainability of forests will be effective without the direct and active participation of communities, valuing and using their traditions and experiences. In a way, this presupposes a substantial deviation from the traditional concept of legal personality provided for in civil law.⁴⁷ Consequently, the REDD+ Regulation embodies principles that guarantee the rights of peoples and local communities,⁴⁸ including the valuing and respecting the knowledge, rights and ways of life of local communities.⁴⁹

It is precisely because they hold the aforementioned rights that local communities involved in REDD+ must be consulted and informed in time about REDD+ activities to ensure their active participation.⁵⁰ It is in this perspective that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples establishes that ‘(. . .) peoples have the right to self-determination and to free, prior and informed consent’. This is not, however, always followed in the implementation of REDD+.⁵¹

The implementation of REDD+ must avert the risk that local communities will lose access to their lands. The strategy on the implementation of REDD+ considers that this is a possibility and provides for key measures to be taken. It calls upon stakeholders for the following interventions:

(i) updating inventories of land and forests resources; (ii) delimitating and zoning the areas for different interventions including specifying what is permitted and what is not, where, how, when and by whom, etc.; (iii) land titling to provide security over land to all actors and particularly to the communities; (iv) capacity building and empowerment including development of a stronger sense of ownership, especially at community level and among men and women and the youth. Women and the youth are identified as having a strong role to play in reversing negative trends. This will be followed by (i) agreements between the various actors including between communities/government and MSMEs; (ii) activities design, screening encompassing compliance with the environment and social requirements; (iii) approval, implementation and monitoring of each activity under this program.⁵²

Local communities are likely to be subjected to the risk of losing access or assets except if these measures are respected.⁵³ However, proper implementation of REDD+ can bring positive impacts, as is the case of encouraging private investment in forests and in the agriculture sector and other various sectors, especially in the tourism sector, with greater incidence in the interior and surroundings of the conservation area. This can contribute to the empowerment of local populations if

⁴⁶Ministério da Terra Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Rural (2017a), p. 34.

⁴⁷Cunha and Serra (2004), p. 68.

⁴⁸See Section 4, para. 1(e) of REDD+ Regulation.

⁴⁹Section 4, para. 1(g) of REDD+ Regulation.

⁵⁰Read Section 4, para. 1(i) of REDD+ Regulation.

⁵¹See Bofante et al. (2010).

⁵²Ministério da Terra Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Rural (2017a), p. 99.

⁵³Ibid., p. 123.

the resources are properly channeled and there is better management of natural resources and land administration, with the inclusion of land tenure systems.⁵⁴

4 REDD+ Initiative as a Window to Development

The 2016–2030 REDD+ Strategy recognises the principles enshrined in the Forestry Law, such as ‘principles of sustainable forest management’. This is of paramount importance to guarantee the right to development in local communities. The REDD+ Strategy is a true reflection of added value and is likely to be a potential source of opportunities aimed at financing and promoting processes classified as being crucial for integrated development of local populations. It is known that local communities mostly practise itinerant agriculture, simultaneously with the collection of seafood, fishing and small-scale trade, and in most cases the practice of such activities has contributed to the deforestation and forest degradation and therefore no guarantee of sustainable development. However, the REDD+ Strategy brings with it opportunities that ensure sustainable development among local communities, including ‘(...) promotion of conservation agriculture, use of tree crops, orientation of commercial agriculture to areas with low coverage forestry, promotion of tree planting for energy purposes, production and efficient use of energy from biomass, sustainable management of the forest concession system (...)’, as well as ‘to promote sustainable alternative practices to shifting agriculture, which ensure increased productivity of subsistence and cash crops’.⁵⁵

From a general perspective, it must be stated that the spread of agricultural activity and the consequent production in the Mozambican territory is based on the resurgence of cultivated areas, essentially resulting from deforestation and degradation. It is in this context that the proposal presented by the REDD+ Strategy seeks to change the model of the eminently itinerant agricultural activity developed by local communities through actions aimed at making land a potentially beneficial production factor without losing fertility using existing technological know-how, and without jeopardising the forests. As a result, one may agree that the effective implementation of the REDD+ Strategy has the potential to reduce rural poverty and promote the improvement of living conditions for local communities, as it may bring the following results:⁵⁶

- Increased agricultural productivity and the production of tree crops can generally improve food security and provide surpluses for marketing, increasing family income;

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 108.

⁵⁵Mozambican REDD+ Strategy.

⁵⁶Ministério da Terra Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Rural (2017a), p. 108.

- Efficient use of biomass energy as well as the use of alternative energy has the potential to reduce energy (coal) costs for urban households while reducing the incidence of lung diseases associated with the use of charcoal;
- Promoting the timber industry, harnessing non-timber forest products, and nature conservation have the potential to create employment opportunities and increase income generation for the rural economy and increase the sector's contribution to national revenue and development.

The results predicted above are of socio-economic nature. However, results of an environmental nature may also be achieved, which consist of the preservation of the environment and biodiversity, protection against soil erosion, hydrological cycle erosion, among several other results. REDD+ may provide a solution to different environmental problems that plague local communities and that jeopardise their sustainable development.

The right to development would be inefficient in an environment plagued by different environmental problems, namely: (1) pollution, which is reflected in the contamination of air, land and water by harmful substances capable of endangering public health, without excluding other living beings, therefore, from all biodiversity in general; (2) erosion, which consists in the detachment of the soil surface by the natural action of wind or water, intensified by human practices (*'construction in inappropriate places, interruption of water courses, among other inappropriate practices'*) of removal of vegetation; (3) uncontrolled fires; (4) forest degradation resulting from the immoderate felling of trees in order to obtain wood resources, firewood and charcoal; (5) irrational exploitation of resources that result in the extinction of species, and which is characterised by the depletion or shortage of different terrestrial and aquatic species, which are extremely important for the substance of local communities.⁵⁷

Consequently, for a successful implementation of the REDD+ Strategy to ensure the right to development of local communities, they (local communities) must be made aware of their role in protecting the environment. This understanding is based mostly on the reasoning that environmental problems may undermine development. Formal and informal environmental education, that is, promoting education and exchange of experiences between local communities is necessary to forge this understanding of mutual relationship between REDD+ and development. Also, local communities' participation is reflected in its strategic pillars, especially the Fifth Pillar of the REDD+ National Strategy. The Strategy seeks to promote the system of forest concessions, community management and strengthening forest governance,⁵⁸ and it was later established as the guiding principle for the application of the REDD+ Regulation.⁵⁹

⁵⁷See Alfredo and Berta (2020), p. 8.

⁵⁸Mozambique REDD+ National Strategy 2016–2030.

⁵⁹Section 4, para 1 (f) and (i) of the REDD+ Regulation.

The Mozambique Forest Investment Project,⁶⁰ and the Mozambique Dedicated Grant Mechanism for local communities,⁶¹ are the two main projects under the REDD+ Initiative that directly represent the effectiveness of local communities' participation in REDD+ projects in Mozambique.⁶² Thus far, it is evident in the implementation of Gilé National Reserve REDD+ Project which will end by 2031. In various communities around the Gilé National Reserve (GNR), some local committees for the management of natural resources in the Reserve and in the buffer zone were created, and they are involved in decision-making dealing with the implementation of the Reserve management plan.⁶³ This is in line with the REDD+ National Strategy regarding the institutional arrangements for REDD+ implementation in Mozambique, according to which there will be an area of multi-stakeholder landscape forum, a consultative body on the sustainable development process at the province level, formed by civil society organisations, public and private institutions, academies and local communities. The forum plays an important role in bringing together stakeholders around relevant issues in the landscape, including land-use trade-offs, Natural Resources Management, and agriculture management, and fostering cooperation and coordination across actors.⁶⁴

The GNR REDD Project has a strong social component as it seeks to increase the participation of stakeholders in order to reduce poverty around the GNR. It was coherent with the strategic goals of the Forest Policy and Strategy (2016–2020), particularly for its objectives of ensuring (1) social participation and equitable benefit sharing mechanisms; (2) environmental sustainability on the use of forest resources and (3) increase of the economic contribution of forests to the country's development.⁶⁵ Local communities' participation in the implementation of GNR REDD+ Project has been reported to help in promoting alternative activities, such as conservation agriculture or the development of cashew nut value chains, to reduce deforestation in the area, caused by the slash and burn agriculture also interlinked with charcoal production.⁶⁶ In so doing, one may argue that it has helped in realising the local community's right to development.

A similar approach has been applied in another REDD+ Project within the Quirimbas National Park.⁶⁷ The local communities were directly involved in the reforestation by planting trees and taking good care of trees. This is aimed at reducing deforestation and degradation in the area, as proper management of bush fires is one of the key things that would help to reduce not only the environmental but

⁶⁰MozFIP P160033, effective in August (2017).

⁶¹See MozDGM P161241, effective in February (2018).

⁶²For detailed information about the two projects, see <https://www.fnds.gov.mz/index.php/pt/documentos/salvaguadas-artigos>, last accessed on 17 December 2022.

⁶³Etc Terra (2017), p. 15.

⁶⁴Ministério da Terra Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Rural (2017a), p. 71.

⁶⁵See Etc Terra (2017), p. 30.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 29.

⁶⁷See Ministério da Terra Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Rural (2017b), p. 109.

also social problems they face as a community.⁶⁸ In sum, reports show that local communities' participation in the implementation of REDD+ National Strategy and in REDD+ Projects in Mozambique may help in the realisation of the right to development.⁶⁹ In addition to increasing land and resource tenure rights, the expected impacts will be: improved food security, reducing the risk of hunger, improving nutrition and increased protein intake, and the creation of new and development of forests and agricultural employment (reduction of unemployment and the exodus of young people), the creation of local employment opportunities, improved living conditions'.⁷⁰

5 Conclusion

The experience of Mozambique in implementing REDD+ shows that effective concrete policies and strategies may be useful in ensuring that REDD+ delivers development in the local communities, where it is most needed. High levels of poverty and illiteracy make environmental consciousness in Mozambique not a common reality among the population, and this is even much worse in the rural areas. This scenario makes pro-environmental protection measures and choices a bit challenging. Yet, the REDD+ projects are of great importance to the realisation of general environmental consciousness. The protector-receiver principle promoted by the REDD+ Initiative allows us to believe that this program, more than promoting the protection of the environment through reduction of deforestation, degradation and promotion of carbon enrichment, is an important tool to promote development, mainly in the rural areas. In other words, the REDD+ Initiative plays a significant role in the promotion of the right to development in the local communities. By developing the REDD+ Strategy, the Mozambican government has moved forward towards the realisation of the objectives behind the REDD+ Initiative because it is believed that concrete actions will be developed and, therefore, promote the protection of the environment and the realisation of the right to development of the local communities, since it is also designed to increase the income and quality of life of rural populations. If effectively implemented the REDD+ Strategy will help in mediating the tension between environmental protection and the right to development in Mozambique.

⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 107–109.

⁶⁹For more details, see Fundo Nacional de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (2020), pp. 23 ff.

⁷⁰See Ministério da Terra Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Rural (2017b), p. 127.

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