
[New WRM Information tools](#)

WRM has produced four new briefings intended to serve as tools for action. The briefing [“Ethanol from cellulose: A technology that could spell disaster”](#) refers to the emerging technology that intends to convert the cellulose contained in plants into different types of fuels among which liquid ethanol, that could be used in transport as an alternative to gasoline. The research looks at the actors involved including the pulp and paper industry as well as the main threats: more and intensified deforestation, further expansion of monoculture tree plantations, genetically engineered trees, more power to large corporations leading to larger scale and concentration.

Eucalyptus, oil palm, rubber and jatropha monoculture plantations are expanding onto local communities' lands and forests in the Mekong region's countries –Burma, Cambodia, China, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. [“Regional perspectives on plantations: An overview on the Mekong Basin”](#) depicts the severe social and environmental impacts of those plantations in a place whose people have seen rivers and forests as places to hunt, fish and gather and the land produces rice, a variety of crops and provides a home to local peoples. Now, eager investors are rushing into the area to exploit their land to make their own wealth to take back home. However, local peoples' resistance makes its way despite difficult political scenarios.

Timber plantations in southern Africa are concentrated in South Africa and Swaziland and also expanding in Mozambique. [“Regional perspectives on plantations: An overview on Southern Africa”](#) refers to the monoculture tree plantation industry in the region, dominated by two large South African pulp and paper companies -Mondi and Sappi- and provides a country by country overview of opposition to tree plantations.

Social and environmental impacts of oil palm and rubber plantations in tropical Africa are very similar in many respects including that both take over large areas of land which have hitherto been in the hands of indigenous or peasant populations and have provided for their livelihoods. [“Regional perspectives on plantations: An overview on Western and Central Africa”](#) looks into something that differentiates both plantations: while rubber is clearly an alien species brought in by the Colonial powers, oil palm is a native species in many West African countries and part of the culture of local communities. This makes it difficult for local people to understand why this species –when planted on an industrial scale- can result in negative impacts. However, there are many forms of “anonymous”, spontaneous and individual forms of resistance carried out by people living in the vicinity of these plantations.