
[GenderCC urges to really stop deforestation, not promote carbon offsetting](#)

The June 2009 Climate Talks in Bonn served as the scenario where the new push to include forest preservation within climate change negotiations was expressed.

On the one hand, controversial proposals enthusiastically support economic incentives to protect the forests. On the other hand, strong arguments are warning about setting market-based mechanisms that would allow continuing doing “business as usual” instead of really stopping deforestation which is a major cause of carbon emission.

Gender CC, the global network of women and gender activists, has been fully involved in the UNFCCC process. In Bonn, the group issued a statement highlighting that support of the UN climate change negotiations to “the protection and restoration of forests and supportive ecosystems” should encompass several dimensions including human rights.

That means that any measure regarding forest protection must respect and strengthen “all rights of indigenous and forest dwelling communities who have so far conserved them with special support to women’s traditional rights and knowledge systems”. Traditional custodians must be incorporated “at the centre of decision making and planning from the ground to the highest levels”.

Consistent with human rights standards is also the need to preserve and restore forests “for their biodiversity value and for the livelihood of forest and forest-dependent communities” – forests provide a home and livelihood for about 300 million people worldwide.

There is the peril that proposals and projects for reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation (RED/D) may become market-based mechanisms that would allow carbon offsetting: “Some of the proposed REDD schemes and the related biochar initiative would serve to maintain high-carbon economies by enabling offsetting of high emissions technologies and economies. The projected ‘saving’ by REDD would, therefore allow and promote the retention and expansion of high carbon economies perhaps further offsetting these against industrial tree plantations. This is not acceptable”, stated GenderCC who also warned about the fact that “Tree plantations are disguised as forests under REDD and other CDM, are accessing legal protections of forests, and are already creating massive human rights violations and ecosystem damage including exacerbating climate change.”

The group’s statement exposed the peril that “large amounts of money being transferred through REDD schemes” might bring about swift changes in traditional societies’ production, consumption and cultural patterns. In a cash-economy “women would be the most excluded, doing away with their ancestral rights as indigenous women, compromising their livelihoods and disrupting their knowledge systems”.

As GenderCC strongly urges: “The issue is reduction of emissions”. Offsetting and carbon trade schemes would just imply to divert it.

(The full declaration is available at

<http://www.gendercc.net/policy/conferences/road-to-copenhagen.html>)