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OUR VIEWPOINT

- REDD, Deforestation and its Causes

It is becoming increasingly evident that efforts by governments, NGOs, institutions and corporations to make REDD their principal strategy for reducing deforestation in countries with tropical rainforests are not working. Trees continue to come down at record rates in the name of “development projects” such as mining, industrial palm oil, soy and other crops, hydroelectric power plants and infrastructure for facilitating the displacement of raw materials. Even supposed “sustainable forest management” ends up causing more destruction.

There is also mounting evidence that the REDD projects being promoted in countries with tropical rainforests are creating diverse problems for local communities, as shown in several articles in this bulletin. This situation prompted WRM to write a guide for communities – also cited in this bulletin – called “10 Community Alerts about REDD” based on different countries’ experiences with the initiative. Communities report that one of the main issues they face are restrictions on their traditional use of forests and control over their territories.

It is important to remember that long before REDD came about, even those with just a minimal understanding of the problems related to tropical rainforests already knew that the best way to combat destruction of forests was to guarantee the territorial rights and usage of these forests to the people who inhabit and depend on them.

There are abundant examples throughout the world that prove that where these rights are ensured, there is better forest conservation.

Perhaps one of the few positive aspects of recent REDD negotiations at the UNO Convention on Climate Change – which is organizing a new round this month in Doha, Qatar – is the fact that it puts the discussion on the causes of deforestation on the table once again. Since the first discussions regarding REDD, one of the issues that has most harmed forest peoples is that their countries, in an effort to be “ready for REDD”, have insisted that these communities are the principal perpetrators of deforestation due to “practices” such as itinerant farming. It is equally outrageous that the “big development projects” mentioned before do not get the same treatment, but rather continue to be promoted as important actions toward “development” despite the destruction they cause.

Furthermore, with REDD and the growing efforts to also commercialize other environmental services, the big corporations involved in tropical rainforest destruction are weighing the opportunity to “compensate” for their destructive actions with REDD projects or other projects aimed at turning “environmental services” into a business.

Although REDD’s days may well be numbered internationally due to a lack of funding, large corporations’ eagerness to compensate for their destructive actions with “green” ones – to justify the unjustifiable – does not seem to abate. For these companies, which only continue to get bigger, this type of mechanism is of vital importance at present as the contradictions inherent in the destructive model of natural resource exploitation become starker and starker: the effects of climate change, environmental degradation and deforestation, to name a few.

We believe it will take great resistance and mobilization of the communities affected by mega “development” projects, along with the support of national and international solidarity, to ensure sufficient strength to make sure that governments adopt effective measures aimed at diminishing deforestation, and shift their focus onto those who are really causing the destruction.

And moreover, urgent measures must be taken against the underlying causes of deforestation – namely, the most industrialized countries’ completely unsustainable model of production and consumption must undergo a structural change. This cannot be achieved by changing individual attitudes, but rather requires bold action from governments to scale back the power of corporations and big money in general, and mainly that of finance capital. In addition to recognizing the rights of forest communities, this path is essential if we truly want to reduce deforestation.

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COMMUNITIES AND FORESTS THREATENED BY REDD

- To Communities: Alerts about REDD

The WRM has produced a new guide of “10 Community Alerts about REDD,” intended

to provide broad information about REDD. The guide sums up different communities' individual experiences with REDD projects throughout the world, recorded by WRM. The following is a summary of the contents of this new publication, written for a broad audience.

Nearly 300 million people worldwide depend on tropical forests to live. But large corporations –whether their business is about exploiting lumber, petroleum, gas and coal, mining, agroindustrial monocultures (trees or food crops), industrial ranching or huge hydroelectric dams – are pillaging and destroying these forests.

In response to deforestation, governments have promoted solutions such as natural reserves or protected areas that, rather than rectify the problem, have often further jeopardized the communities who depend on these forests by displacing them from their territories – the very people for whom deforestation has never been common practice, for whom destroying the forest would be tantamount to destroying their own home! Cutting down a few trees to cover their basic needs, or practicing itinerant agriculture in areas they later leave to regenerate, are in no way the causes of deforestation.

The advocates of REDD and REDD+ present these plans as a solution to climate change and deforestation. They argue that the carbon released when a tree is burned is similar to the carbon released when companies burn petroleum, which causes climate change. And thanks to REDD, they can continue to burn petroleum to the extent that they “buy” carbon – that is, the right to release carbon – from someone who is preserving it, e.g., someone who ensures that they will keep the carbon stored in forest trees intact.

This proposal, however, comes from outside and imposes restrictions and prohibitions on communities' ways of life and use of the forest: they are sometimes forbidden from cutting a single tree to make a canoe, or to hunt, fish or gather fruit, medicinal plants or forest foods. If anyone disobeys, they must face the police or private REDD guards, and run the risk of losing their freedom. The community as a whole loses in these conditions. Families feel more isolated with no work possibilities, and begin looking for alternative solutions outside the community, usually in cities; they end up leaving and the community weakens.

This implies the loss of ways of life, cultures and food sovereignty since foods can no longer be cultivated according to the traditional practice of itinerant farming. It is about control of territory, of the areas where the forest is still standing, which is where the proponents of REDD go in search of carbon; but it is also where these communities live, thus generating a conflict with them over their use of the forest.

In order to gain their support and compensate for the losses entailed in no longer being able to use the forest, REDD promoters come with promises of jobs, money and social programs for the community.

Communities often accept the REDD project thinking that their lives will improve. But they later run into an array of problems. One example is when members of the community are hired as forest guards in charge of ensuring that other members do not cut down trees, hunt, fish or farm in the forest; REDD creates confrontation

between community members in this way. Another problem can arise when money is offered to the community, whereby they must create a new resource-management organization with a pre-established structure. This can come into conflict with the community's traditional organizational hierarchy.

REDD projects do not have the entire community's well-being at heart and therefore end up benefitting just a few members, excluding or even harming others. The result is a divided community, which negatively affects their organizational capacity – something that is fundamental for them to be able to fight back against the project's negative impacts and to ensure or regain control of their territory.

The primary objective of REDD projects is “selling” carbon and making money, not resolving problems such as the lack of recognition of peoples' territorial rights or problems related healthcare services, education, transportation or commercialization of community products. In other words, the lack of adequate public policies shared by many of these communities. REDD will not solve these issues.

Nor will REDD solve the problem of deforestation. These projects are implemented on a limited area of forest; outside this space, destructive activities can continue unhindered.

And who finances REDD projects? In addition to some governments, industries that pollute and want to show that they are “compensating” in some way for the pollution they create in some other place. But the “compensation” brought by purchasing carbon does not solve either the future of forests or climate change, because the raw materials needed by these industries – minerals, petroleum, coal, huge supplies of hydroelectric power– often come from forest areas. These companies continue to pollute and deforest, while using REDD to dress themselves in “green” by arguing that they are investing in projects that reduce deforestation.

Other actors involved in REDD projects are big NGOs, government technicians and consultants who handle the coordination and technical aspects of the project.

In part, it is not difficult to understand what REDD is. But it is indeed nearly impossible to understand how an activity in one place can compensate for the pollution created in another thousands of miles away. And even more unfathomable is the notion that pollution could give rise to new businesses like the purchase and sale of carbon on the so-called carbon market.

The communities affected explain REDD as a problem of pollution elsewhere in the world that REDD advocates try to remedy on community territory, i.e., in their “home.” These communities therefore suggest that the best thing would be to solve the issue at its source, and not on their territory where REDD just generates even more problems. It is clear that a much more logical, simple and sensible solution is to stop the huge pollution-related problems at their source.

We also know that the best way to care for forests is to guarantee and support the territorial and land use rights of forest communities and others who depend on forests for their livelihoods, in addition to contributing with their own ways of conservation and territorial management. And it is essential to confront and prohibit

the direct causes of deforestation, including mining, petroleum exploitation, the construction of large dams, the expansion of monoculture crops and trees.... But above all the vast consumption of products and energy by a minority of humanity – particularly in the US and Europe – must change.

REDD, however, does not propose any of this. On the contrary, it enables companies to continue polluting and deforesting – somewhere else.

The good news is that worldwide resistance to REDD is growing. Communities are getting more and more organized to ensure and re-take control and collective use of their territories. An important step in that struggle is learning about other communities, about what has really happened with REDD. It is knowing that the struggle is shared by many communities, that by joining forces and getting organized, it is possible to stop this new form of destruction.

Summary of the publication “10 Community Alerts about REDD,” by WRM, available at <http://www.wrm.org.uy/publications/10AlertsREDD-eng.pdf>

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- BINGOs in Search of REDDemption

The threat of climate change has increased in tandem with the expansion of financial markets into every field of life, including climate change.

As the latest issue of the WRM Bulletin tries to show, REDD is a false solution to both deforestation and climate change; it is, however, useful for the carbon market – a highly debatable, sophisticated new financial market that trades carbon credits generally used by polluters to compensate for their carbon emissions. This year the carbon market doubled its value up to 237 million dollars, though the volume of transactions diminished by 22% compared to 2010. (1)

As another building block of the global financial architecture, the primary benefits of REDD will obviously go to the financial players. However, numerous institutions, big NGOs (BINGOs), corporations and governments promote REDD as beneficial for communities, who will eventually earn some spare change to “compensate” for the negative impacts they suffer from the project. Several articles in this bulletin deal with the harmful implications of REDD.

REDD marketing has achieved some degree of success because certain stakeholders have lent credibility to the proposal. Big NGOs like The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Forest Trends and Rainforest Alliance are involved and/or support many REDD projects in the global South.

Their rather “brown” partners – including Alcoa, Arcelor Mittal, Barrick Gold, BG Group, BHP Billiton, BP Foundation, Bunge, Cargill, Chevron, Coca-Cola, De Beers Group, Giti Tire, Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase&Co, Kimberly-Clark, Kraft Foods, McDonald’s, Medco Group, Monsanto, MPX Colombia, Newmont Mining Corporation, Northrop Grumman Corporation, Rio Tinto, Shell, The Walt Disney

Company, Toyota Motor Corporation, United Airlines, Walmart, Wilmar International – were in urgent need of some “green” wash. And they got it.

In March 2010, the US magazine The Nation published an article by Johann Hari, (2) who had investigated financial ties between environmental groups and environmentally unfriendly corporations, especially since the major conservation group The Nature Conservancy was found to have forged a long-convenient relationship with oil giant BP that green-washed the company’s image and helped TNC procure funding for its projects.

Hari wrote:

“Environmental groups used to be funded largely by their members and wealthy individual supporters. They had only one goal: to prevent environmental destruction. Their funds were small, but they played a crucial role in saving vast tracts of wilderness and in pushing into law strict rules forbidding air and water pollution. But Jay Hair - president of the National Wildlife Federation from 1981 to 1995 - was dissatisfied. He identified a huge new source of revenue: the worst polluters.

Hair found that the big oil and gas companies were happy to give money to conservation groups. Yes, they were destroying many of the world's pristine places. Yes, by the late 1980s it had become clear that they were dramatically destabilizing the climate - the very basis of life itself. But for Hair, that didn't make them the enemy; he said they sincerely wanted to right their wrongs and pay to preserve the environment. He began to suck millions from them, and in return his organization and others, like The Nature Conservancy (TNC), gave them awards for ‘environmental stewardship.’

Companies like Shell and British Petroleum (BP) were delighted. They saw it as valuable ‘reputation insurance’: every time they were criticized for their massive emissions of warming gases, or for being involved in the killing of dissidents who wanted oil funds to go to the local population, or an oil spill that had caused irreparable damage, they wheeled out their shiny green awards, purchased with “charitable” donations, to ward off the prospect of government regulation.”

Under the current pragmatism, most governments and several BINGOs enter into partnerships with the private sector, including big corporations that have been and still are drivers of forest destruction. This allows those polluters to graciously buy their redemption by engaging in REDD / REDD+ projects.

Most REDD/REDD+ projects are related to the carbon market and aim to put an economic value on forests and carbon.

Conservation International (CI) has announced that it is working “to encourage funding for REDD+ and market-based approaches to create a demand for forest carbon offsets” and is enthusiastic about carbon trade: “The emerging carbon market presents one of the greatest opportunities in the last fifty years to reverse the

destruction of the world's remaining tropical forests by matching buyers and sellers of carbon credits." Indeed, BINGOs are strong promoters of the carbon market for carbon compensation in general and REDD in particular.

CI has a presence in Africa, giving technical and financial support for REDD projects in DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar and Liberia. In Asia CI is behind forest carbon projects in China, Philippines, Indonesia, while in Latin America it participates in projects in Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Guatemala, Mexico and Colombia.

BINGOs BEHIND REDD PROJECTS IN AFRICA, ASIA, LATIN AMERICA

Conservation International (CI) has a presence in Africa, giving technical and financial support for the coordination of a national REDD strategy, as well as developing REDD pilot projects in two nature reserves (Tayna and Kisimba-Ikobo) in the North Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of Congo. (3) In Equatorial Guinea CI has pilot projects in Monte Alén National Park. In Madagascar, it works in the Makira Forest Project and the Mantadia Corridor Project, while in Liberia it participates in the Network of Protected Areas.

CI is also endorsing several forest carbon projects in Asia and Latin America: the Tengchong Forest Initiative in China, the Sierra Madre in the Philippines, the Mamberamo Basin in Indonesia, the Chocó-Manabí Corridor Initiative in Ecuador, the Alto Mayo Forest in Peru, the Northeast Atlantic Forest and the Muriqui Habitat Corridor Forest Carbon Initiative in Brazil, the Maya Biosphere Reserve Conservation Carbon Initiative in Guatemala, the La Cojolita Selva Lacandona Carbon Initiative in Mexico, and the Bogotá Conservation Corridor in Colombia.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is involved in the Rio Bravo REDD project in Belize, the Noel Kempff project in Bolivia, the Atlantic Forest project in Brazil (Guaraqueçaba) (see the article on Green Economy in Brazil in this bulletin), the Tengchong Forest project in Yunnan Province, China and the project in Berau District, Borneo, Indonesia. TNC also participates in REDD pilot projects in initial phase, such as in Northwestern Mato Grosso the São Félix do Xingu Pilot Project, in Pará, Brazil. TNC is the partner responsible for administering the resources generated from the sale of sequestered carbon in the Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use in Mbaracayú, a GEF project in Paraguay. It also advises on the development of financial mechanisms in

both the Program for Environmental Services through Carbon Sequestration in the Sierra de las Minas Biosphere Reserve and Avoided Deforestation in the Sierra del Lacandón National Park, Guatemala.

WWF Brazil along with the IUCN, is involved in the Acre State Carbon Project - Payment for Environmental Services in Brazil, and supports the Madre de Dios Amazon REDD Project in Peru.

The sheer concept of conservation is inappropriate here. As Hari said, "in an age of global warming, the old idea of conservation – that you preserve one rolling patch of land, alone and inviolate – makes no sense. If the biosphere is collapsing all around you, you can't ring-fence one lush stretch of greenery and protect it: it too will die."

Furthermore, carbon trading doesn't reduce emissions. On the contrary, it provides a dangerous distraction from the immediate task of really reducing greenhouse gas emissions from burning fossil fuels.

Regrettably, a lot of money and effort is devoted to promoting false solutions along the lines of market-based REDD/ REDD+. Their promoters should bear in mind that they are supremely responsible for diverting time and money away from, and thus deepening the current climate, biodiversity and social crises.

(1) Leveraging the Landscape: State of the Forest Carbon Markets 2012, by Ecosystem Marketplace

(2) <http://www.thenation.com/article/wrong-kind-green#>

(3) Democratic Republic of Congo. Conservation International REDD pilot project: a different kind of Disney production, by Belmond Tchoumba, WRM, 2011, http://wrm.org.uy/subjects/REDD/DRC_REDD_en.pdf

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- Indonesia: The Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership REDD project - little partnership, many problems

This article is based on a 4-days field visit and conversations with villagers in 5 of the 7 most affected communities by this project (Sei Ahas, Tumbang Mangkutub, Mantangai Hulu, Katundjan and Kalumpang). Villagers complained about the supposed benefits of the project, and also argued that forest destruction has not been halted inside the REDD project area, while continuous expansion of oil palm, logging and mining activities in the surrounding area undermines even further the aim of reducing emissions from deforestation.

Introduction

The KFCP (Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership) Project is a 4-years REDD project that started in 2009 with the aim to produce forests offsets by reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in an area of about 120,000

hectares in Central Kalimantan. The project is based on a bilateral agreement between the Australian and Indonesian government. The Australian government has funded the project until now with about US\$ 31 million. The forest to be protected in the project area is estimated by a community leader in about 60-70% of the area size, while also reforestation and rehabilitation are among the project activities, besides a so-called livelihood component.

Within the project area seven communities along the Kapuas river are directly affected by the project activities, about 2,600 families. The communities are mainly indigenous Dayak people. In terms of organization, every village has a state-appointed and -employed village chief, as well as village leaders elected by the communities, based on religion (Islamic, Christian and traditional beliefs). A local NGO called YPD works for community rights and supporting the livelihoods of the village people.

The KFCP project is one more project in a series of top-down interventions in the area over the past decades, starting during Suharto time when in the 1990s this area got included in the so-called mega-rice project through which the government aimed to contribute to Indonesia's rice self-sufficiency and stimulated transmigration to the region. The project started to drain the peat lands by setting up a huge canal system; however, it was a disaster because the rice did not grow well. What the project did result in was large scale logging, benefitting the Suharto clan, besides forest fires and forest destruction.

After the mega-rice project, other top-down projects with a conservationist character were implemented in the region, like the Orangutan protection project Bosmawas (Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation), and the central Kalimantan Peatland Project (CKPP). The CKPP intended to recover part of the peat lands and its forest vegetation by blocking canals from the mega-rice project. This has become also one of the rehabilitation activities in the KFCP project.

The CKPP project was an initiative of international NGOs like Wetlands International, WWF and CARE. These same NGOs got involved afterwards in the KFCP REDD project and community members mention that project staff of KFCP includes people that worked before in CKPP.

The “partnership”

Community members complain that the consent of the communities involved has never been given through their own leadership. What the KFCP considers as “consent” are agreements with each of the state-appointed chiefs of the villages in the project area.

The communities themselves got exposed to community surveys, trainings about fire control and also to so-called “socialization” workshops about REDD. One village member explained in detail that after the first workshop, still nobody understood what was REDD about, and the people asked for a second session in more simple language. But even after this session, the people still did not understand. However, they were ‘socialized’ about the REDD project, mainly because it also was said that it would deliver money and work for the communities.

Employment appears to be the main benefit that the project has been offering to the community, especially related to reforestation activities. Each family/participant should grow and plant about 400-575 seedlings/trees. However, the payment is very low, about US\$ 100, and paid in parcels, for example, 50% at the start and the other 50% at the end of the activities, and sometimes payments were paid with delay.

Moreover, in Sei Ahas village, people added that payments were also based on how much trees they actually planted, and other costs like setting up a small nursery and transport are the responsibility of each participant. And real poor people do not benefit from the project, because the money paid for reforestation is too little to survive on. Besides, for those employed the activities implied in considerable time and therefore they complained they now have less time to spend on their own livelihood activities. Also, in the Sei Ahas community the workers are mainly women, apparently a 'gender component' in the KFCP project.

Villagers also complain about lack of transparency and mistrust related to project management. For Sei Ahas village, for example, about US\$ 360,000 would be available for the reforestation activities, according to one villager, much more than paid all together to villagers participating in the reforestation work. So villagers ask: where is the money going to?

Although presented as "partnership", local people frequently complained that there is no "ownership" involved, they are only the labour. It is not their project, which explains they do not really care for the activities involved. One villager said: "people even planted dead tree seedlings", just to get their payment based on the number of "planted seedlings". Another community member, member of YPD, does not see real benefits. He adds that it is difficult for community members to raise their concerns and have these considered: "this is a government project and we have to follow".

According to a community leader in Sei Ahas, the KFCP project would have assured them that the carbon stored by the reforestation could in future be "sold" by the communities. But he questioned this by responding saying why not selling the carbon that the forest areas already conserve? But the KFCP person said that that was not possible, once KFCP is not able to calculate this carbon and they do not "buy" it.

Villagers also comment that KFCP helped to set up a village plan. But again a leader complains that although they organized meetings and let people speak out, they push for their own agenda by saying they will "improve" the plan proposed by the community. After doing that, they then ask the village chief to sign the "improved" plan. The villager telling this story said that for this reason he resigned to be a village secretary. He complains that the KFCP never presented the final map of the project area and the "improved" plan, and that their agenda is not based on the community demands, but rather on the ecological conditions of the area.

Summarized, villagers who we heard evaluate that the interest of the project to do meetings with the communities is mainly to obtain their signatures on the attendance list. Villagers tell a story that the KFCP, after many regular meetings, wanted to

organize something different for the communities and villagers suggested a presentation of traditional dances. However, the villagers complained that the show, organized by KFCP, was not traditional and moreover not appropriated for children. And even this event, according to the villagers, had an attendance list.

Less deforestation?

Villagers comment that the forest fires continue and KFCP is not doing anything to stop these. We visited one site with people from Mantangai Hulu, that had been burnt by outsiders to obtain a valuable tree to sell on the domestic market. The fire is used to burn the grass so that the valuable trees can be identified and extracted. Even though some people from the community participate in this, they benefit very little. The people from the outside that control this business are the ones who benefit most.

A traditional combat of forest fires

The Dayak people have a traditional fish pond system called 'beje', which is dugged in the area close to the Kapuas river in order to have fish when the water level goes down by the end of the rainy season. Besides the fish itself, the advantage of this traditional system is that it delivers water for irrigation and it also helps combating forest fires. One villager, now employed by the KFCP project, complained that he could make a better income from this system than the money he receives now as an employee of the project.

Regarding the reforestation – carried out in areas between 200-400ha per community - in Sei Ahas, for example, a community leader said only 40% of the planted seedlings survived. In Katundjun it is claimed that from the first 25 hectares reforested only 20% of seedlings survived. Besides, villagers complain that the reforestation is done in a 'rehabilitating' forest area which means that growing trees are being cut in order to plant tree seedlings, and the overall result in their view is more deforestation than reforestation. Also, there is a lack of maintenance; when trees die there is no substitution and also the forest fires have affected the reforestation areas. What is also mentioned is that the villagers are not consulted about the chosen species and claim that the KFCP is reforesting with the wrong species, those that are more adapted to the riverside than to the conditions at the reforestation location. But the communities are not involved in the choice of the species. Moreover, it is KFCP that blames them for the loss of seedlings.

Villagers also complain that KFCP is not challenging the expanding oil palm business, like PT RAS company, mentioned in Sei Ahas village, that could not be operating because it lost its license but this is not being reinforced by the authorities. This made the community organizing a protest, blocking the road. The case is now being handled by the National Forestry Council. Oil palm expansion is a main driver of deforestation in Kalimantan and goes hand-in-hand with logging activities. Communities complain about lack of action by the government, supposedly not interested in having trouble with these companies, however very interested in the

KFCP REDD project because this brings money in for the state budget. Another problem villagers denunciate are possible overlaps between oil palm concessions and the KFCP project area.

To summarize, a REDD project here goes hand-in-hand with forest destruction in and surrounding the project area. According to the environmental NGO WALHI, mining and oil palm plantations are among the main drivers of deforestation in Indonesia. Village leaders question why KFCP wants to plant only 400 ha of reforested area – of which only maybe 150 ha survives - while around the area so much forest destruction continues? Deforestation is a problem for the people, as 99% depend on the forest, as one leader in Sei Ahas observes.

Restrictions and lack of recognition of community land rights

Villagers suffer from a number of restrictions. They complain that since the KFCP project started, about 30 small canals have been blocked, denying them access to areas they are used to go. Also, when people need timber now, they need to go outside their village area, once it is forbidden to cut trees in the KFCP project area.

The need to recognize land rights is a common and basic demand, and leaders in Katundjan added that losing access to their lands was their biggest fear now. They say the KFCP project wanted to classify their forest area as “community forest” but the Dayak communities want it to be called “indigenous people forest”, because of the decree signed by the governor of Kalimantan, recognizing the right of indigenous peoples to manage their forest; but KFCP disagrees arguing that the national government does not recognize indigenous peoples rights. It is therefore that the KFCP has not promoted land tenure rights of communities, according to villagers, although this is one of the basic demands of the communities. YPD has helped communities to do community mapping. Villagers in Sei Ahas people showed, for example, their community map with an area they consider as theirs and necessary for their cultural and physical survival, totaling 26 thousand ha.

The communities struggle for their rights

Over the past few years, communities are fighting a battle to get recognition for their demands, also referred to by them as their “concept”. This means recognition of their land rights in the first place, besides support to improve their livelihoods. An often mentioned livelihood proposal is the one to plant rubber, which is a tree villagers are familiar with and the product can be minimally processed by them inside the village, different from the much more corporate-controlled oil palm. While the oil palm harvest must be transported straight away to the processing mill, rubber can be stored. For Sei Ahas, a project for 400 rubber seedlings per family was approved by KFCP but the seedlings never arrived, according to the villagers. In Katundjan, a community leader says that their rubber planting project was rejected, but that the KFCP project wanted them to plant oil palm. He was offered a job by KFCP but he did not accept it.

The people are getting nervous, also because KFCP is blaming them for the problems. There was an incident in Kalumpang village, in June 2012, when a village meeting would take place but KFCP only invited few people. As a reaction, villagers

burnt the village hall. In Mantangai Hulu, a similar incident happened. When a meeting would take place about the budget of KFCP with few invited people, and about 300 villagers appeared, the village leader decided to cancel the meeting. As a reaction, some windows of the village hall were broken. The police is investigating this but since then, May 2012, KFCP emptied the office in this village and left, and is actually not welcome anymore in Mantangai Hai. One representative of this community says “we reject KFCP since the beginning because there is no transparency”, and “it is good KFCP has gone, since then we have no quarrel anymore”.

More recently, in August 2012, an open protest letter including several of the aforementioned issues was sent to the governor of the Province of Kalimantan, signed by community leaders from the 5 directly affected communities, YPD, a local community supporting organization, and also WALHI. Afterwards, a meeting took place to discuss the issues raised in the letter between community representatives, the state government and KFCP. The resulting agreement was that each community would carry out their evaluation of the project and present these together with their proposals of what should be done to a working group, coordinated by the government in order to give follow-up.

This recent attempt of dealing with the serious problems that the KFCP REDD project has caused in the communities involved is still ongoing; meanwhile, several community leaders classified this most recent attempt to solve problems as “the last chance” for the project.

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Based on a field visit and information contained in “In the REDD: Australia’s carbon offset project in central Kalimantan”, FOEI (<http://www.foei.org/en/what-we-do/climate-biodiversity-finance/latest-news-1/in-the-redd-australias-carbon-offset-project-in-central-kalimantan>) and “Controversy surrounding Australia’s Kalimantan Forest and Climate Partnership REDD project deepens”, REDD-Monitor (<http://www.redd-monitor.org/2012/09/11/controversy-surrounding-australias-kalimantan-forest-and-climate-partnership-redd-project-deepens/>)

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- Green Economics in Brazil: Women talk about the impact of the SPVS REDD project and a Boticário Foundation protected area

The survival of traditional groups in the coastal region of Paraná has become increasingly threatened by private initiatives to appropriate forested areas for various purposes. This article focuses particularly on two of them: One is the trading of carbon credits under the terms of the REDD program, with incentive from Brazilian NGO Sociedade de Pesquisa em Vida Selvagem e Educação Ambiental or SPVS (Environmental Education and Wildlife Research Association); the other is forest and biodiversity conservation in the Salto Morato Nature Reserve owned by the Boticário Foundation.

SPVS came to the region in the late 1990s and, in conjunction with the US-based NGO The Nature Conservancy (TNC), began buying large tracts from landowners. The area currently covers a total of 18,600 hectares in the localities of Antonina and Guaraqueçaba, and has the status of Natural Heritage Private Reserve (RPPN for its Portuguese initials). These are areas under private ownership aimed at preserving biodiversity and where hunting fishing and any other extractivist activities are prohibited.

The SPVS acquired the land through its association with TNC and with resources from US companies General Motors, American Electric Power and Chevron, whose primordial objective and particular interest is the carbon that is “stored” there. TNC purports that the investor companies “invested US\$18 million between 1999 and 2001 for planting, execution and maintenance of Brazilian projects for a period of 40 years.” This means that in 1999, years before the launching of the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) program, the first carbon project in the world’s forests had already begun.

The Salto Morato Nature Reserve was created by the Boticário Foundation, which belongs to the Boticário Group, a Brazilian beauty products company. The reserve has 2253 hectares and includes a 100-meter waterfall. The area was purchased in 1994 with support from TNC.

The Boticário Foundation is connected to other NGOs, such as SPVS and TNC, in the “Climate Observatory” initiative, whose introduction gives great importance to the so-called carbon market and is touted as the most robust initiative in the fight against climate change.

Persecution

The environmental police have always had a presence in the region, but according to inhabitants of communities neighboring the SPVS and Boticário areas, they never persecuted community-members in the way they have been since the arrival of these organizations.

Women are particularly affected since they are more exposed due to the domestic responsibilities that keep them at home while their husbands are usually out in search of work. There are numerous stories from women about the Fuerza Verde, or environmental police, who burst into their homes, armed and without proper judicial authorization.

One inhabitant of Antonina, next to the SPVS area, asserts “they don’t come here to conserve, they come here to bother,” and goes on to tell:

“They came to my house, I wasn’t here, I had gone out to deliver some invitations (...) so they came up to my house, my daughter was there having breakfast. They didn’t knock, just went directly to the window. My daughter was frightened. (...) When I got back, they had gone through practically my entire vegetable garden without permission (...) I didn’t know that they had already been in the house. With those little devices [GPS], they didn’t do it to me, they did it to my daughter (...)

they showed her and said: “your father has two rifles inside the house; where are they? Tell me where they are” (...) They really bothered me, they wanted to come into the house, it was outrageous really (...) And I was alone in my house. Just my kids and me, with no husband, he was out working. (...) just us and six men. And one of them said: If you don't give it to me [the rifle], we are going to nab your husband. So I went and got it and gave it to him.”

We hear many stories from women about how their husbands had been arrested. The woman quoted above says that her husband was once handcuffed at home by the Fuerza Verde, who said they were doing their “job”. Another time he was detained for 11 days for cutting down a tree to make a canoe. He had to pay bail to get out. When their husbands are arrested, there is greater insecurity and women are more and more fearful.

Inhabitants of the Morato community next to the Boticário Foundation area assert that the police are always in their community. One of them tells how they entered her 80-yr-old grandmother's house:

"My grandmother has high blood pressure and was feeling bad. She got nervous. She had pork and chicken on the stove. They came in just like that without asking, without anything, just rummaging around to see what they could find. She was in the kitchen like always. They scared her. She felt really bad. But if you say anything to them, they throw you in jail!"

Safety Issues

The ban on farming, hunting, fishing and practicing traditional medicine has generated a situation in which communities can no longer consume basic, healthy, agROTOXIN-free foods they used to have access to. Families must instead purchase most of their basic foods, which are often contaminated by agROTOXINS. According to women in the community, these changes in their basic diet explain the surge in new health problems.

An elderly inhabitant claims “they used to live more peacefully.” The community produced its own food, whereas now families face the problem of producing their food due to the scarcity of land. She also adds that “there weren't the illnesses there are now, they didn't exist. The diseases were measles, whooping cough – the ones there always were – chicken pox, mumps. But diseases like diabetes, arthritis, arthrosis, thrombosis – none of that existed, nobody had any of that.”

Having enough money to be able to buy food becomes an additional pressure, whereby people have to leave their communities in search of work.

Forced to look elsewhere for work and un-kept promises

The persecution has caused a situation in which these communities feel like prisoners, as if they were cornered in their own houses, fenced in by a jungle that they can only look at but can't go into or share in its bounties. When asked if the

projects conserve the rainforest, the inhabitants respond that, when they had their crops close to their homes, there was more to hunt because the animals also fed off their crops. But now they cannot plant and the animals have gone.

They do not agree at all with the idea that their traditional use of the jungle was putting its future in jeopardy. For example, in the case of one of the most common and appreciated food items, palm hearts, one inhabitant says, “ Right here around my house there are lots of palms, the seeds fall to the ground; sometimes we throw them into the jungle, but then we can’t harvest them, we aren’t allowed to harvest them.”

For this reason many inhabitants – the men, but also the women – are forced to sell their labor to the regional landowners or seek work in the smaller cities of the region or in the capital.

Ensuring a salary by working for the SPVS is also not a relevant option for these communities. When they arrived, SPVS promised jobs that would last for nearly 40 years – the same timeframe expected for the carbon project. According to inhabitants, SPVS initially employed 47 members of the community, mostly as forest rangers, but today there are few left. Former employees say that most were fired and now there are only seven employees left. Furthermore, the salaries they paid were and continue to be quite low, just a bit above minimum wage. Only three of the initial 47 employees were women, who were paid less than the men. The case of the Boticário Foundation is not very different. According to residents of the Morato community, there are only six people working.

While the middle class of Curitiba, the state capital, have bought houses in the region to spend their weekends and holidays, many local families have chosen to stop living there, which has emptied out the communities. However, there are also cases of families who have returned to their communities after finding it difficult to adapt to the city. One resident who lived for a time in the city and then returned says: “(...) I prefer this place, it’s peaceful here. But (...) there’s not much else we can do.”

Communities resist and point to alternatives

Nevertheless, these communities continue to resist pressures from SPVS and the Boticário Foundation, whose goal appears to be to kick them out of this place. One community got organized in a unique way. At the turn of the past decade in Antonina, a landowner wanted to sell his lands to SPVS, which would have caused the expulsion of all the families who lived there. So they got organized and, with support from the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST), they occupied the land in 2003. There are currently 20 families there fighting for the squatter encampment located at the Rio Pequeno settlement, which carries the name of environmentalist José Lutzenberger, to be legalized as an agrarian reform settlement.

The community started small reforestation jobs and, opting in favor of agroecology, chose to work collectively with the agroforestry system to generate income for families in the future. In addition, each one of the families will have an individual plot of land for basic subsistence. One inhabitant, as she works with the agroforestry system on the recovery of one of the areas depleted by the landowner, says:

“I have been living here for four years and I like it. (...) I work here, have some land too, and we work collectively. (...) So everyone helps, it's very good, all really nice (...) In the future, further along, there's going to be a thicket that will grow into agroforestry (...) so my companions and I will be able to have income, I think this is for the future (...) And it's nice to come in here, see the trees, the plants. We don't work just for money, we work with life in mind as well. We work with a lot of pride, a lot of love. Because plants are a form of life just like us, they also get thirsty (...) I lived in the city (...) the city is horrible. (...) Not here, here you can leave houses open. (...) And for my kids, this place is paradise. (...) Here there's no violence at all.”

The reality of Paraná also shows that communities do resist. And they offer us a series of elements for re-thinking the perverse model of development that the green economy seeks to reinforce. For example, these families are the ones who practice the recovery of nature. They show that human beings are a part of and depend on nature, and that nature is a source of riches that makes it possible for people to live well, conserving and enjoying true wealth.

Summary of the article “Economía Verde no Brasil: a privatização da Mata Atlântica: Projetos de REDD e áreas protegidas e seus impactos sobre mulheres e homens em comunidades tradicionais no litoral do Paraná”, by Winfridus Overbeek, published in the magazine jointly with Amigos de la Tierra América Latina y el Caribe and with Grain/ Acción por la Biodiversidad sobre Economía Verde. To read the complete article in Portuguese, visit the Veja magazine site, and to access the complete publication in Spanish, go to:

http://www.wrm.org.uy/temas/Economia_Verde/asalto_final_a_los_bienes_comunes.pdf

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- Environmental Human Rights Advocates Challenge REDD+ in Chiapas and in California

With efforts to negotiate a new climate mitigation instrument within the UNFCCC on hold until 2020, focus on REDD+ has shifted from the global arena toward sub-national agreements such as those being advanced by the Governors Climate and Forests Task Force (GCF). One of the agreements at the forefront of the GCF agenda is that between the states of California, USA, and Chiapas, Mexico.

But critics at Friends of the Earth U.S., Otros Mundos (Amigos de la Tierra, Mexico), the Indigenous Environmental Network and allied groups hope to prevent a Chiapas-California REDD agreement from going forward, citing the potential for increased emissions in California on the one hand and landgrabs in Chiapas on the other.

When the GCF brought together government officials from six countries in San Cristóbal de las Casas, the old colonial capital of Chiapas, Mexico, this September, they may not have anticipated protests by local indigenous groups and civil society organizations. The goal of the Governors' Climate and Forests Task Force, after all,

is not to promote oil drilling, bio-prospecting, free trade, or any of the other activities that have long sparked protest and even open insurrection in Chiapas – but to promote forest conservation in order to absorb runaway climate pollution.

But one of the concerns about REDD often expressed by communities who oppose it is that, in fact, that distinction isn't as clear as REDD promoters would like it to be.

When indigenous peasant farmers from the Lacandon jungle get wind of rumors that they'll receive payment to stop growing traditional crops in favor of reforesting with African palm trees – a program the governor of Chiapas calls 'Productive Reconversion of Agriculture' – they see a familiar pattern at work. And when they receive word that that they may have to leave their jungle villages to allow the forest to recover from centuries of degradation – many villages in the Lacandon have been resettled already – they hear echoes of economic counter-insurgency and the ongoing theft of their lands by government and transnational forces.

Both projects – the planting of biofuel crops and the resettlement of forest communities – are linked to the local implementation of a project that the Chiapas state government refers to as REDD+, though as yet the project has no formal criteria or financial ties to California markets. And no one should be surprised by the eruption of protest – in Chiapas, land rights, rural development, and the struggle for indigenous autonomy generate constant tensions, and no region of the state is more conflictive than the Lacandon Jungle – precisely the area where the Chiapas government is engaged in what it calls REDD+.

"For 35 years, all the programs in the Lacandon have been imposed by the government," Florencio Cruz Gómez, a peasant farmer from the village of Frontera Corazal, told officials at the GCF meeting. "There has never been a process of consultation. This leads us to ask the government, when you abandoned your child 35 years ago, why do you want to take care of him now? What condition do you think he's in now, and why do you suppose he doesn't want anything to do with you?"

Cruz Gómez was one of a small minority of campesinos at the GCF meeting, and his frustration was evident. Acknowledging the tensions, William Boyd, Director of the GCF, said, "Any broad public policy is going to generate opposition. We understand that, and we see the need to do a better job at communicating our objectives."

But, in the case of Chiapas, poor communication appears to be accompanied by questionable objectives.

"We have launched a veritable green revolution in Chiapas," state governor Juan Sabines told the GCF plenary. "In Chiapas, like in many places around the world, our forests become subject to destruction as the rural people need to grow crops. In many cases this production doesn't even reach the market, because it is used by the people to feed themselves. This is a travesty."

"To address this problem, we have approved a law of climate change. An important part of the program is REDD+. In 2010 we made a pact with the indigenous owners of the jungle. The jungle was occupied by over 900 communities. Now we have cleared them from the jungle. The Reserves are being conserved and protected by their

legitimate owners, who will soon have access to the carbon markets.”

Among the communities slated for ‘clearing from the jungle’ is the village of Amador Hernández – 1500 Tseltal Mayan peasant farmers who have lived inside the protected Montes Azules Reserve since long before it was ‘protected’. On the first day of the GCF meeting, several campesinos from Amador Hernández entered the auditorium and requested a few minutes at the microphone. Chiapas State Minister of the Environment and Natural History Fernando Rosas denied their request, telling them that, if they wanted to consider joining the REDD+ program, he would be glad to meet with them at a later date.

Unsatisfied with this response, the campesinos raised a protest. They handed out flyers to GCF delegates declaring “The government is lying to you – they have neither informed us nor consulted us!” Eufemia Landa Sanchez, from the municipality of Marques de Comillas, a deeply deforested region on the edge of the Montes Azules Reserve, took the floor and read a long message to the plenary.

“Transnational businesses have had plans for the rural areas of Chiapas for some time now,” Sanchez said. “The natural wealth of biodiversity and water, of mines, of biofuels, and of course of petroleum, have led to the displacement of people, the poisoning of the earth, and have made the peasant farmer into a serf on his own land. And in every case they blame us and criminalize us. Our supposed crime today is that we are responsible for global warming.”

“With REDD+, businessmen and their government lackeys have one more business – the trading of carbon in its most polluting form – and peasant farmers have one more thing to fear: that the jungles and forests of Chiapas will be used for absorbing their CO2.”

“Why don’t they consult us?” she continued. “Why do the wealthy want to impose their will by force? The jungles are sacred, and they exist to serve the people, as God gave them to us. We do not go to your countries and tell you what to do with your lives and your lands. We ask that you respect our lives and our lands. Go back where you came from, merchants of life!” [Below you can read the full statement.]

The speech, and a concurrent protest in the street outside, made a strong impression among GCF delegates. Iwan Wibisono of the Indonesian National REDD+ Task Force remarked, “I think the demonstration outside is not unique to Chiapas, but is faced by us also in Indonesia and in other countries. And we can understand it, because these are very serious concerns.”

A month after the Chiapas GCF meeting, Friends of the Earth US collaborated with the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) and allied groups from Chiapas, Acre (Brazil), and Ecuador, to bring these concerns to legislators and the general public in California.

The delegation, which included IEN Director Tom Goldtooth, Jose Carmelio Alberto Nunes (Ninawa), President of the Huni Kui Federation of Acre, Brazil, Berenice Sanchez of the Global Alliance of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Against REDD and for Life, and Gloria Ushigua of the Association of Sapara women

(Ecuador), as well as representatives of California groups the Asia Pacific Environmental Network, the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment, and the California Environmental Justice Alliance, and allies from Greenpeace International, took its concerns to the capital of California, speaking with the California Air Resources Board (the body charged with implementing California's emission reduction legislation), California Environmental Protection Agency, and the state governor's office (see FOE news release at <http://www.foe.org/news/news-releases/2012-10-californias-global-warming-trading-scheme-could-endanger>).

Along with concerns about the lack of ecological integrity of the projected California REDD program, the activists also raised serious concerns about delegates' safety, as REDD-type projects are already resulting in deaths, violent evictions, forced relocation, imprisonment, and prohibitions to access and use land essential for the survival of Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities (see FOE news release at <http://www.foe.org/news/news-releases/2012-10-indigenous-leaders-rejecting-california-redd-hold-go>).

The REDD Offsets Working Group, a quasi-governmental body charged with developing REDD protocols, is expected to release its scoping report at any time; the California Air Resources Board will vote in 2013 about whether or not to pursue REDD credits as part of the state's mandated emissions reductions.

By Jeff Conant, Friends of the Earth/US, e-mail: jeff.otherworlds@gmail.com

Here follows the complete version of the message of Eufemia Landa Sanchez:

Greetings to all. We are representatives of the various indigenous and rural communities, regions, and municipalities of the State of Chiapas, and we have joined this Summit to make our voices heard, as the government has not granted us the means to do so.

Representing the Lacandona Jungle are community committees from the Amador Hernández region, which is in the very heart of the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve, as well as community groups from the municipality of Las Margaritas and the municipality of Marques de Comillas. Representing the Altos de Chiapas region are community groups from the municipalities of San Juan Cancuc, Oxchuc, and Chenalho.

We come before you here today to denounce the programs and projects aimed at stripping our territories and resources which bad governments have been trying to use against us for quite some time, but now with a new pretext: climate change and their project called REDD+.

Transnational business plans for the rural areas of Chiapas are nothing new. The natural resources of biodiversity and water, mining, biofuel, and earlier still for oil, have forced people to leave their homes, poisoned the earth, or turned the rural inhabitants into wage workers on their own land. And they

always cite some crime of ours as the cause. Now the crime is that global warming is our fault.

So they say that we must stop producing our own food and instead buy cornmeal with the money they pay us for the conservation of the forests and jungles, or with so-called productive restructuring which amounts to getting rid of the crops to plant fruit trees where birds and other animals can eat in large amounts so that biodiversity will also grow. And this biodiversity will create more food and medicine patent business, which governments call "biogenetics," a name that's foreign to us.

With REDD+, rich entrepreneurs and their servant governments get another business deal, the coal business in the form of polluting smoke, and the rural inhabitant gets another worry: that the jungles and forests of Chiapas will absorb that smoke, and the threat that if we don't retain the mountains, we will not only be responsible for the production of that coal which causes global warming, but also, as bad governments say to make us feel afraid, for making it impossible to reduce global warming.

We do not agree with REDD+, and it is untrue that reforestation of what are now our fields would cause world coal pollution to drop. It is also not part of our culture to put a price on the land, nor on its mountains or its rivers or on anything else that mother nature has given to the people in God's generosity, much less when payment of that price would make us accomplices to the one who pays it, so that he can continue to pollute and destroy the world.

In Montes Azules we will not allow you to pass the Brecha Lacandona, the land demarcation that the Caribes are trying to run through our lands by force so that large business owners, now under the protection of the REDD+ program and the pretext of climate change, can achieve legal certainty to come in and take advantage of the natural resources that belong to all Mexicans and that we indigenous peoples already know and use. We are not opposed to being neighbors with the Caribes, who received lands they neither asked for nor had ever seen from the government forty years ago, but we do not want this land, which has the greatest biodiversity and water reserves in Mexico, to be handed over to the control of powerful foreigners under the pretext of sustainable biodiversity use and now the mitigation of climate change.

We also want to use these humble words to demand that you not use us, deceitful governors of neoliberal governments. In your announcement of this event of yours, as if you wanted to show that even the most rebellious groups already agree with your project, you put a photograph taken in 1999 of rural Zapatistas protesting in the Amador Hernández farming cooperative. Here we are, lying governments; we have not given up, nor have we forgotten where the honest life of the poor treads. Why don't you choose the Caribes as the image for your event when they're the only ones who have accepted, and who always accept, selling land that did not belong to them? Or do your bosses no longer believe that they're the only ones living in the

Jungle and the only native people?

In Marqués de Comillas they cut down the jungles, the native jungles, to put in their African palms. They call these forests like the governor of Chiapas Juan Sabines used to call them, and when we get tired of the poor price or because we start to reflect on what we did and cut down those palms, they put us in jail because they say that the palms are also important for slowing climate change, although they never said that to the community members who planted them.

In San Juan Cancuc, supposedly to switch over to clean energy, they want to bribe us into installing a dam, and although [the office of the] Commons presented you with a document asking you to leave, you continue to bring in materials and make passes in helicopters over the canyon where you want to put the dam.

In Las Margaritas, as you can't deal with the farming cooperative assemblies, you also want to impose your community land division projects with your farming certification programs, the FANAR, or Procede as it used to be called, so that you can negotiate individually without asking the community for its collective opinion.

Why don't you ask us? Why do you want to force the will of the rich upon us? The jungles are sacred and they exist to serve the people, to provide generous service because God gave them to us, also; we do not go into your countries to tell you what to do with your lives and your lands. Respect ours, go back to where you came from, businessmen who deal in life.

San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico, September 26th, 2012

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- REDD and the Indigenous Peoples of Costa Rica

Costa Rica is currently known throughout the world for its efforts in forest conservation. This “success” is mainly attributable to its Payment for Environmental Services (or PSA for its initials in Spanish), a forerunner to the REDD program in Costa Rica.

PSA is a system of financial incentives provided by the National Fund for Forest Financing (FONAFIFO), a department of the Ministry of Environment and Energy. The program pays landowners and holders of forests and tree plantations for the so-called “environmental services” their forests or plantations provide, including: mitigation of green house gas emissions; water protection for urban, rural and hydroelectric use; protection of biodiversity for purposes of conservation and sustainable, scientific and pharmaceutical use in research and genetic improvement; protection of ecosystems, life forms and natural scenic beauty for science and tourism purposes.

This system, however, has serious weaknesses in that it focuses solely on the supposed environmental services, while ignoring the cultural, spiritual and social values of the forest and its biodiversity and the respective impacts of these omissions on local communities and indigenous groups. Nor does it question the causes of environmental degradation or predatory consumerism. And since it offers just one payment for a set time period, it does not provide a solution to issues such as reducing poverty.

Moreover, this method has not kept the forests from the threat of activities like large-scale tourism or monoculture pineapple and African palm plantations. What it has done is provide favorable conditions for big corporations to produce lumber as a business concept by concentrating incentives – like the PSA – for monoculture plantations, thus paving the way for the exploitation of forest lumber and other ecosystems according to strict profit and market criteria.

In the specific case of indigenous territories, the PSA negotiates contracts with the Comprehensive Development Associations (ADIs in Spanish) attached to the National Indigenous Council (Conai), an official agency in charge of managing both indigenous issues as well as their relations with public institutions. The government deems the distribution of somewhat more than nine million dollars among all the indigenous territories in the country to be a PSA achievement. Although there have been successful cases where use of resources has been well-planned and/or evenly distributed, in many territories these funds have created tension because some groups have appropriated and managed them very subjectively, showing favor to families closest to them. In territories belonging to the Ngöbe ethnic group, for example, several million PSA funds have been distributed over the past five years. However, there is not a single known case in which these funds have gone towards consolidating their territories, given that a vast quantity of land is still in the hands of non-indigenous people. This point is of vital importance since there are Ngöbe territories where more than sixty percent of the land is held by non-indigenous farmers who cause deforestation.

As mentioned before, the PSA is a forerunner to REDD in Costa Rica, and according to the strategy being implemented by the Costa Rican government published at the end of 2010, some of the key factors in this process are the indigenous territories, mainly because those areas are home to a significant part of the country's forests. With the implementation of REDD, the government plans to consolidate at least 600 thousand hectares currently under the PSA system and add another 750 thousand hectares, in addition to recovering forest cover on 12% of national territory that is currently being used for something other than forestry. It also intends to maintain the National System of Protected Areas.

Any policy or mechanism related to indigenous groups in Costa Rica must first go through a consultation process aimed at preserving their autonomy. This is why FONAFIFO has contacted indigenous groups from different territories for them to participate in the official process. One of these groups is the Bribri Indigenous Network and Cabecar (or RIBCA, for its initials in Spanish), composed of representatives from 8 indigenous territories from the Costa Rican Atlantic coast. This group has participated in drafting a national consulting plan for REDD+ among

indigenous peoples, with financial support from GIZ (German Cooperation Agency). According to RIBCA, the Consulting Plan was drafted with representatives from the four regional blocks where the 24 indigenous territories of Costa Rica are located. The proposal was presented at a meeting last January with indigenous representatives, who approved the general framework for the plan. It establishes, among other things, the REDD+ organizational structure and dialogue system with indigenous groups; while FONAFIFO and GIZ are familiar with this system, the indigenous groups are not.

For this reason, last September representatives from the Indigenous Development Associations (ADIs) and national, regional and community indigenous organizations went to the FONAFIFO coordinator, as well as World Bank officials in charge of the matter, with a series of irregularities and potential biases that the REDD+ initiative would mean for indigenous groups.

According to the National Indigenous Board of Costa Rica Bulletin, the ADI representatives proposed that, before implementing a REDD strategy, certain issues must be overcome first: 1) Approval of Law 14.352 on the Autonomous Development of Indigenous Peoples; 2) Territorial security: recovery of land, territory, natural resources and biodiversity; 3) Reach a consensus on a national development plan for Indigenous Peoples; and 4) Reach a consensus on public policies and programs specifically regarding Indigenous Peoples. They highlighted, furthermore, that the government has already acknowledged, accepted and applied mechanisms for REDD+ consulting in the draft version of the Autonomous Development of Indigenous Peoples Law. Moreover, they stressed that a decision on an initiative like REDD+ cannot be left to just one ADI group.

They likewise assert that the government is trying to impose its political agenda in spite of the indigenous peoples' own agenda, and that the Costa Rican government has never been concerned with recovering indigenous lands even though the Indigenous Law has existed since 1977. According to Pablo Nájera, an indigenous representative from Terraba, "REDD+ simply tries to take advantage of indigenous people to justify the process. The indigenous people in these communities know nothing about REDD+. How much of an indigenous role was there in defining the strategy? Which processes should be initiated and why now? Will REDD+ be part of indigenous policy? Who will be the buyers? Who finances? Why?"

Antonio Nájera, from the same territory, also reports that his family has been running a farm devoted to educational purposes and scientific research for 30 years, but has never received any support from FONAFIFO. He says that fact that he is just now learning about what they plan to do with REDD+ indicates that communities have not been given the slightest bit of information previously.

Although it is true that there is still no agreement on REDD in Costa Rica, the Bribri people – located on the south Atlantic coast – have already suffered its impact.

Members of the Alto Durigna community within the Bribri territory have denounced the implementation of REDD on its territories. This indigenous community is alarmed by FONAFIFO's intentions to apply REDD on some 1000 hectares of forest within its territory, where two sites considered sacred in the Bribri culture are located.

Filidencio Cubillo, a Bribri, asserts “the forests in this area are not merely forests, they are sacred sites for our people. One of them, the Surayo, is the origin of creation, of the seed. They were designated by Sibú to give life to his seed. It is the same case for Namasol hill. This is why the outside world does not understand our way of seeing, feeling and expressing our spirituality. The outside world only sees in terms of money; everything is merchandise to them. We therefore reject this project that purports to “conserve” part of these forests. They say that it’s a thousand hectares, but we don’t know how much it will be. We defend these forests. It is our own community who are protesting and not people who have come from outside to get us riled up.”

If the interests of local communities and indigenous groups are truly at the heart of this, the solution should be to advocate comprehensive public policies that promote community control over their territory and Nature’s assets. This should be done by reinforcing initiatives already in place, such as community governance of the forest and its biodiversity, thus safeguarding the conditions for them to truly exercise their historic and collective rights of autonomy and control over their lands and territory according to their worldview.

By Mariana Porras Rozas, COECOceiba-AT, Costa Rica, mariana@coecoceiba.org

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- Disputed territory: new video on the green economy versus community-based economies in southern Brazil

In the state of Paraná, Brazil, a vast expanse of the Atlantic Forest, which covered the country's entire coastline 500 years ago and currently is seriously endangered, still survives. Traditional Caiçara, Quilombola and indigenous Guarani communities inhabit the area, and their ways of life are closely tied to the Atlantic Forest.

Fifty years ago, ranchers began moving into the area, clearing the forest and taking over the land to raise water buffalo.

In the 1990s, arrived projects that form part of the so-called Green Economy: the Boticário Foundation, run by the major Brazilian cosmetics company Boticário Group, purchased an area of forest to create the “Salto Morato Nature Reserve”, which spans more than 2,000 hectares.

Then came the Society for Wildlife Research and Environmental Education (SPVS) together with The Nature Conservancy, a big U.S.-based NGO. SPVS bought more than 18,000 hectares of forest and turned them into natural reserves for the purpose of carbon storage. SPVS received 18 million U.S. dollars in financing from three U.S. corporations: Chevron, General Motors and American Electric Power. These are corporations that pollute the environment and claim that by storing carbon in the forest, they are offsetting the pollution they cause.

These projects have had a great impact on the life of the traditional communities, most of whom do not have legal title to the land they occupy or the forests they use.

Now, they no longer have the freedom to work the land as they used to, they can't plant any more, they can't raise animals any more.

Thirty or forty years ago the population in Guaraqueçaba was double or more what it is now, because everybody worked, there were many families that were able to work freely and feed themselves. But now, when everything became prohibited, most people went to the city, they went far away.

This is what local people told to the WRM team who went this year to visit the Caiçara, Quilombola and Guarani communities in order to get their own answers to the question: What do they think about this kind of Green Economy projects? What happens when communities organize and regain control of their land? as it happened in the case of the Rio Pequeno community, which with the help of the Rural Landless Workers Movement (MST), occupied an area that a rancher was planning to sell to SPVS. The families organized, established a camp and began to build a new tomorrow for their children.

Their testimonies are part of a documentary that shows that peoples like the Caiçaras, the Quilombolas and the Guarani have been the real protectors of the forest. As they say: "it wasn't the supposed ecologists who preserved it. No, it was us, we took care of it in the past and we still take care of it today. We never destroyed anything, we never harmed the environment. On the contrary, we have always lived here, and all of the beauty here was preserved by us. Not by anyone from outside."

The video "Disputed Territory. The green economy versus community-based economies. A story of the peoples of the Atlantic Forest in southern Brazil" can be watched in English at http://wrm.org.uy/Videos/Disputed_Territory_intro.html

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PEOPLES IN ACTION

- Brazil: Mundukuru indigenous people cancel REDD project

The Mundukuru indigenous community in the Brazilian Amazon state of Para decided to cancel a contract that would have allowed the Irish company "Celestial Green Ventures" to sell carbon credits from forests in their territory. The agreement was signed earlier this year giving the Irish company the right over the carbon in forests inside the indigenous territory.

"We are going to cancel the deal. Many in the tribe didn't want it, so to avoid problems we decided to stop it," said Candido Waru, leader of a local association of the Munduruku people.

This agreement was being investigated by the Federal Prosecution Service in Brazil, which estimates that about 30 of this type of agreement already have been signed in the country. <http://www.pointcarbon.com/news/1.2049556>

- Via Campesina: Agroecology is the corner stone of food sovereignty

La Via Campesina International met in Surin, Thailand for the First Global Encounter on Agroecology and Seeds to share experience and construct a strategy and vision on agroecology and seeds.

In Thailand there is a growing shift made by small-scale farmers to move from the green revolution based model of industrial farming into agroecology which La Via Campesina thinks is the corner stone of food sovereignty.

“We cannot achieve food sovereignty if agriculture is dependent of inputs controlled by corporations, if the impact of technology destroys Mother Earth, if we do not challenge the commodification and speculation of food and land, and if we do not make better livelihoods for those who make available healthy and accessible food to our communities” says the Surin Declaration.

Agroecology is an instrument to confront transnational agribusiness and the predominant agri-export model, an essential part of the construction of social justice in a new equal social system, not dominated by capital.

La Via Campesina defines that “agroecological farming will feed the people. It's time to produce.”

The full Surin declaration can be read at <http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/main-issues-mainmenu-27/sustainable-peasants-agriculture-mainmenu-42/1334-surin-declaration-first-global-encounter-on-agroecology-and-peasant-seeds>

- Indonesia: Warning to financial institutions: Don't Fund Forest Destruction of APP and other pulp and paper manufacturers

Several banks and other financial institutions around the world have been warned on last 6 November to avoid investments in pulp and paper mills associated with deforestation and human rights abuses in Indonesia.

Sixty environmental and social non-governmental organisations, including a dozen Indonesian civil society groups, have sent letters asking for assurances that the financial institutions will not invest in increased pulp milling capacity by Asia Pulp and Paper (APP) or other companies associated with the Sinar Mas Group until reforms have been achieved.

Three representatives from Indonesian social and environmental NGOs that are signatories to the letter will meet with investors, governments, NGOs and media in eight European countries. They will present information on the social and environmental impacts of APP and other Indonesian pulp and paper manufacturers.

The open letter is published on the European Environmental Paper Network (EEPN)'s website: [http://www.environmentalpaper.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Bank letter on pulp investment.pdf](http://www.environmentalpaper.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Bank_letter_on_pulp_investment.pdf)

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- Brazil: Indigenous Group Blocks VALE Railway

The Pindaré Caru indigenous movement, composed of the Guajajara and Awá people, blocked the VALE multinational mining railway this past Oct. 3 in the town of Alto Alegre do Pindaré, State of Maranhão.

The blockade was mounted in protest to the loosening of Brazilian legislation on indigenous rights (measures such as PEC 215 and Resolution 303/2012 by the State Attorney General). The aim of this loosening is to make it easier for multinational companies like VALE to appropriate indigenous territories and thus benefit even further from the exploitation of these riches.

VALE, the second-largest mining outfit worldwide, with a presence in more than 30 countries, received the Public Eye Award early this year for being the worst company in the world. Nevertheless, VALE continues to insistently claim to be a socially and environmentally responsible business.

VALE currently promotes palm oil monoculture plantations in Amazonia, causing increasing impact on local populations (see www.wrm.org.uy/boletim/182/opiniao.html). In 2011 it also formed the group of companies in charge of building the Belo Monte hydroelectric dam, which will destroy at least 50,000 hectares of Amazon rainforest, in addition to inflicting numerous adverse effects on the peoples of Amazonia. <http://www.brasildefato.com.br/node/10827>

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RECOMMENDED

- Video: “Exposing REDD. The False Climate Solution.” The news source Mending News checks in with IEN (Indigenous Environmental Network) Executive Director, Tom Goldtooth, to get the download on the real story of REDD, the deceptive climate 'solution' proposed by the UN. It sounds good on paper "Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries" but the reality is that REDD enforces the global colonization of mother earth and a stolen future. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7OzB-WBuwgk>

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- Report: “REDD-plus schemes in El Salvador: Low profile, friendly fancy dresses and commodification of ecosystems and territories” Announced in WRM Bulletin 180, the report by researchers Yvette Aguilar, Maritza Erazo and Francisco Soto is a

summary of the issues raised by REDD schemes in El Salvador. The report is now available in English at

http://unfccc.int/files/methods_science/redd/application/pdf/redd-plus_schemes_in_el_salvador_-_aguilar_erazo_soto_2012.pdf

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- **Report: “Recognising Sacred Natural Sites and Territories in Kenya: An Analysis of how the Kenyan Constitution, National and International Laws can Support the Recognition of Sacred Natural Sites and their Community Governance Systems”**, by Adam Hussein Adam. Published by: Institute for Culture and Ecology (Kenya), African Biodiversity Network & the Gaia Foundation

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- **New newsletter: How REDD and environmental services threaten the Lives of Forest People in Acre.** A joint newsletter of the Workers Trade Union of Xapuri and the indigenous federation FEPHAC, explaining the real problems of forest people in Acre and why REDD and environmental services are not a solution for these problems, on the contrary, the newsletter lists a number of concerns with these mechanisms. See http://wrm.org.uy/subjects/REDD/REDD_Acre.pdf

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- **Video: Call to Action from Sarayaku Indigenous Leaders** against oil extraction in the Amazon forest in southern Ecuador: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=58cC0RppBe0

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