

WORLD RAINFOREST MOVEMENT



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OUR VIEWPOINT



[The multiple challenges for popular resistance and mobilization in defence of forests](#)

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THE DESTRUCTION OF FORESTS AND TERRITORIES IN FRONT OF PEOPLES'
RESISTANCES



[Stop All Mekong Basin Dams!](#)

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["Pulping" the Local-Food](#)



One of Indonesia's pulp and paper giants, Asia Pulp&Paper (APP), is planning to build a new pulp mill to supply not only pulp to paper companies within the APP Group, but also to have its own paper production. The destruction of the peat lands where several of the villages that would be affected by the construction and operations of such mill are located could result in floodings and the disruption of long-established agricultural systems. Moreover, the continuous expansion of industrial tree plantation concessions into South Sumatra's peat lands is already leading to increased air pollution, fires and increased social negative impacts.



[Discredited FSC label continues to legitimize industrial tree plantations](#)

The companies Forestal Mininco y Forestal Arauco account for the vast majority of tree plantation activities in Chile, with almost two million hectares of monoculture plantations of exotic tree species, mainly pine and eucalyptus. Despite the resistance, denunciations and harsh criticisms on the part of numerous Mapuche Indigenous organizations and communities, both companies have been certified with the FSC label through foreign consulting firms.



[Enclosing territories for financial profit](#)

Private and state enclosures of lands, forests and water are not new phenomena. Much of what grows on land, what is grown by humans on land, what flows on and under land, what forms landscapes and ecosystems, what is built on land, and what is extracted from under the land, have been commoditized. What is new is the array of means, mechanisms and instruments by which political and economic control over land and nature are exercised, and by which land and land-based wealth are becoming commodities in new markets. Already countries with large agrarian economies in the global South opened their borders to foreign direct investment, with many of these investments backed by complex financing arrangements and multiple sources of capital, including public, private and multilateral financiers. Many times, local populations affected by such deals lose their livelihoods, homes, cultures, identities and access to food; they are forcibly evicted or relocated, and often pushed into precarious, low-paying wage labor.



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[Papua-Wide meeting calls for 10 year Moratorium on Plantation and Forestry Industries](#)



[“This Land is for All of We”: A Rama community in Bangkukuk, Nicaragua, speaks out about the Grand Canal Project](#)



[Ecuador: Chevron-Texaco to pay for the devastation it caused in the Amazon](#)

RECOMMENDED



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The multiple challenges for popular resistance and mobilization in defence of forests

When a new year begins, it is quite common for people to express their wishes and hopes for a better world. Here at WRM, we are wishing for a year in which forests begin to be preserved and the communities who depend on them can live freely within their territories, as one step towards a more just world. However, when we take a look around at the world we are living in today, it is clear that enormous challenges lie ahead. For example, what can we do to strengthen popular resistance and mobilization in order to stop the destruction of forests?

This is an especially pertinent point if we consider the results of the last United Nations Climate Conference in Peru this past December. Summing up those results, we could say that the pace at which the oil, mining, oil palm plantations and logging industries are advancing into the Peruvian Amazon rainforest is much faster and stronger than the pace at which the governments who gathered in Lima are advancing towards reaching an agreement on climate change in Paris this year. This new agreement should include measures that are capable of confronting the extreme gravity of the global climate crisis. That means drastic and mandatory reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, in accordance with the historical responsibility of each country. Only this would be sufficient to ensure at least some possibility that the peoples of the world, and especially the most vulnerable, will not need to face uncontrollable climate change impacts in the near future.

The lack of will shown by the conference participants to reach an agreement was one of the main reasons for which thousands of people gathered on the streets of Lima to take part in the Global March in Defence of Mother Earth during the conference. Although we know that we make up the majority of the world, in terms of peoples affected by the current production model responsible for the climate crisis, working together in the organization, mobilization and resistance to this model continues to be a major challenge. Practically all of the governments around us, for different reasons, defend the continued expropriation and destruction of forests in order to feed this large-scale, globalized, extractivist and “developmentalist” model of production, dominated by financial capital and transnational corporations. Together, these actors do everything possible to prevent us from mobilizing. On the contrary, they want us to become obedient consumers of the multinationals’ products.

If the people of the world really had the possibility of going to Lima and other places where our governments discuss the major issues that affect humankind, the number of people participating in a March like the one mentioned above would be much greater. But for now, most of the mobilizations and protests in defence of forests and against the plunder of people’s territories take place within the territories of the communities affected. They happen in places where one or several communities suffer serious threats of losing their territory and, as a consequence, their source of sustenance and livelihood. Very often, these thousands of local mobilizations and actions take place with no visibility or support. But they are growing in number day by day, as large-scale projects expand into the forests and territories of local communities, including dams, industrial monoculture plantations (see the articles from Laos, Indonesia and Brazil in this bulletin), mining and oil drilling (see WRM Bulletin [167](#) and [196](#)), and also REDD+ projects (see “[Ten things communities should know about REDD](#)”), a new means of appropriating the territories of communities who depend on forests. Despite the repression and criminalization of protests, there are communities with incredible stories of victories, where unity and determination succeed in overcoming the political and repressive power of a transnational corporations and their web of influence (see the article on Suzano in Brazil in this bulletin). Nevertheless, the acts of repression, intimidation and cooptation by companies and governments speak much louder, and are often able to topple the resistance of communities.

In addition to the challenge of continuing to support local struggles in all of the countries with tropical forests in Asia, Africa and Latin America, particularly those with little or no support, there are perhaps two other major challenges that it is worth keeping in mind as this new year begins.

The first is to achieve greater interconnection among the thousands of local struggles, with the goal of strengthening them, forming networks, interlinkages, joint political awareness-raising activities in order to understand what is behind the destruction and expulsion of which we are all victims. These

interconnections, at all levels, are important because they create larger movements, capable of not only supporting local resistance but also of disturbing governments and corporations who merely want to maintain or continue imposing their destructive policies and projects on the peoples' territories. Experiences with these kinds of interconnections demonstrate how they enrich and stimulate those who participate in them and promote mutual solidarity by placing value on the struggle and participation of each community. Also important are the initiatives emerging in various places to build networks and larger resistance movements together with communities who have still not been affected by destructive projects and still have their forests, their territories, but run the risk of being expelled and criminalized.

The second challenge involves creating another kind of resistance that is almost non-existent today: that of beginning to say "no" to so many products, and to the corporations who are behind these products that lead to the expulsion of communities from their territories and the destruction of the forests, which in turn further intensifies the climate crisis. For example, products like tropical wood and minerals, paper and cosmetics, palm oil and soy oil, shrimp and fuels. There are so many products that result from destructive activities in some faraway country, like the extraction of minerals, oil and tropical timber, large-scale industrial monoculture plantations, and shrimp farming. "Green labels" like those granted to tree plantations by the FSC and RSPO (see the article on Guatemala in this bulletin and WRM Bulletin 201) have already been proven incapable of ending the destruction of forests or defending the territories of local communities. Instead, these labels serve as "passports" for companies to further consolidate their operations where they are already located and to expand their plantations into new regions or countries, as well as to tap into new consumer markets.

Therefore, the challenge is to create something different, a resistance that is in tune with the struggles in different territories, knowing that there will always be opposition from governments and corporations, as well as certain NGOs. For example, a call to organize a boycott on the markets with the largest consumption of forest products, including the corporations behind these products, is considered "unjust" because it would negatively affect the exporting country and its own population, or "unrealistic" unless consumers are offered an alternative. But we know that the profits from the export of raw materials from countries with tropical forests scarcely benefit the population of these countries, while the means of production and territories of these populations, which are fundamental for their way of life, are destroyed. We also know that the consumption of many globalized products, such as tropical wood, which is primarily used in luxury goods, is totally unnecessary and does not impact on the "well-being" of the population as a whole.

It is clear that the defence of forests or of "Mother Earth", as in the case of the Global March in Lima, is an urgent task that entails multiple challenges. There is a need for popular resistance and mobilization that is not limited to forest regions or to just a few protests, because otherwise, the forests are unlikely to survive. There is a need for creative ideas and bold proposals.

THE DESTRUCTION OF FORESTS AND TERRITORIES IN FRONT OF PEOPLES' RESISTANCES



Stop All Mekong Basin Dams!

On September 2014, fishing communities' networks from Cambodia and Thailand met with great solidarity and commitment to share and voice the impacts related to large-scale hydroelectric power dams being built along the Mekong mainstream and its tributaries. They warned that the future of the Mekong River, the mother of all Southeast Asian rivers, and the livelihoods and cultures of the people

that depend on it is under serious risks, as large-scale hydroelectric dams planned and being built rapidly progress (1).

Since mid-2006, Thai, Malaysian, Vietnamese and Chinese companies have been preparing detailed studies for a cascade of twelve large hydropower dams on the Mekong River's mainstream. Eight of the dam sites are in Laos, two are in Cambodia, and two are on the Thai-Lao border. Most of the power generated would be sent mostly to energy-hungry cities in Thailand, and some in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. In total, the dams would create over 600km of reservoir along the Mekong River that, according to official estimates, would require the resettlement of 88,000 people (2). In 2008, the "Save the Mekong coalition" was established and launched its campaign to protect the Mekong River from those Mekong mainstream dams. This coalition is a network of civil society groups, academics, journalists, artists, fishers, farmers, and ordinary people from within the Mekong countries, regionally and internationally that have been working together to protect the Mekong River, its resources and people's livelihoods (3).

Fishing communities in the region rely on the Mekong River and on Cambodia's great Tonle Sap Lake, which also depends directly on Mekong waters, especially for the spawning and migration of fish. The free-flowing rivers provide fish and nutrients to feed the soil in the forests and agricultural lands. The rivers and lake are the foundation of local cultures and livelihoods. Local economies, from fishing to agriculture and tourism are nourished by the rivers. The flooded forests along the Mekong, its tributaries, and the Tonle Sap also provide other means of livelihoods, including herbal medicines and food. The lower Mekong mainstream and Tonle Sap together produce 2,100,000 tons of freshwater fishes per year and feed the lives of at least 6 million people in the basin. Major Mekong tributaries, including Mun River in Thailand, Sesan River in Cambodia and Vietnam and Theun River in Laos, are all known as the richest areas in fishery resources. Tonle Sap, with nearly four million people living in its proximities, is also one of the very unique and most valuable fishing grounds, with the largest freshwater fishing area in South East Asia. Without maintaining the good health of the Mekong, the health of Tonle Sap will also be jeopardized.

Since China begun the construction of the first dam on the upper Mekong River, lower Mekong fishing communities have witnessed dramatic changes in water levels and a continual decrease in fish. Mekong tributaries face similar problems. While Pak Mun Dam on Mun River became the biggest case of an anti-dam movement in Thailand since more than two decades ago, the Yali Falls Dam on the Sesan River in Vietnam was known to be the first and suffered example of a dam construction that impacted fishing communities also in Cambodia; as well as the Nam Thuen 2 Dam on the Theun River in Lao People's Democratic Republic, a land-linked country bordering Myanmar, Cambodia, China, Thailand, and Vietnam. Serious concerns and struggles are raised not only within the Mekong region, but also among other South East Asian countries and shared by international groups. Yet, the problems remain unresolved.

The Don Sahong Dam

The government of Laos is planning to build the Don Sahong Dam – the second dam on the Lower Mekong mainstream after the Xayaburi Dam, which is currently being built. If built, the Don Sahong Dam will entirely block the Mekong's Hou Sahong Channel in southern Laos, endangering fish migration throughout the region, with far-reaching consequences for food and livelihood sovereignty in Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam. The planned site is also home to one of the last remaining populations of critically endangered Irrawaddy dolphins as well as the iconic Khone Phapheng waterfalls, and near internationally protected wetlands in downstream Cambodia (4).

Since September 2013, the Government of Laos has been working hard to push the Don Sahong Dam forward, and is already constructing some infrastructure. Moreover, the discussion on the resettlement of fishing communities began before any consultation was done with neighbouring governments, even though the impacts will be also directly affecting Thai, Cambodian and Vietnamese people. After several meetings, the governments of Cambodia and Vietnam have finally expressed concern about the potential impacts of the Don Sahong Dam. The government of Vietnam had already called for a 10-year moratorium on all dam building on the Mekong.

Local people have been receiving misleading and incomplete information about the likely negative impacts of the dam (5). The Assembly of the Poor on the Pak Mun Dam in Thailand, who have spent 26 years struggling the impacts of the dam and suffered the loss of their livelihoods and fisheries, plead last December to the Thai government to demand the government of Laos to halt the construction of the Don Sahong Dam. They also stressed the necessity to call for a Mekong River Commission (MRC) meeting - a regional river basin management organization directed by the governments of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam - before any further decision-making is made for clearly assessing the real impacts of the Don Sahong Dam (6).

The voices of the affected

Despite existing severe cross-border impacts and concerns raised by many local and international groups, most of the dams are still planned and proposed solely by the government who remains the only decision-maker. However, it is the people within the fishing communities, including those in the countries upstream and downstream of the dams, who are the ones to bear the impacts.

The unnatural fluctuation of Mekong River is a major serious shared concern. The continual

unprecedented rise and fall of Mekong River throughout the basin hurt fish species and reduce their population. Riverbank farming is damaged as unseasonal floods inundate crops and take away the shoreline.

The fishing communities' networks that met last September clearly reiterated that "any act to prevent the people in Mekong countries from knowing about the dams or prohibiting them from raising their voices against the projects is a complete violation of human rights and our basic rights. We believe the people of the Mekong Basin are the owner of the river and riverine resources. We believe the people of the Mekong Basin have the rights to protect our rivers and Tonle Sap from any act that may destroy them. We insist that any dam in the Mekong Basin that may grab or take away our resources will not be allowed by us the people. We, therefore, jointly declare that we oppose all large scale hydropower dams in the Mekong Basin."

- (1) <http://www.flipsnack.com/A5AA9B6BDC9/stop-all-mekong-basin-dams.htm>
- (2) http://www.internationalrivers.org/files/attached-files/mekong_mainstream_aug09.pdf
- (3) <http://www.savethemekong.org/>
- (4) <https://www.rainforest-rescue.org/mailalert/979/the-mekong-river-means-life-stop-the-don-sahong-dam#>
- (5) http://www.internationalrivers.org/files/attached-files/don_sahong_briefing_sheet_2.7.14.pdf
- (6) http://www.terraper.org/mainpage/top_stories_detail_en.php?tid=243&langs=en



Brazil: The countless problems surrounding the Suzano corporation

In late 2013, the international organization Biofuelwatch, in conjunction with WRM and the Brazilian NGO CEPEDES, published a case study on the eucalyptus plantations of the Brazilian company "Suzano Papel e Celulose" in the northeastern Brazilian state of Maranhão for the export of wood pellets as a source of biomass energy (1). This article presents updated information on the context of this project, one of the first – not only in Brazil, but also in Latin America – to promote eucalyptus plantations specifically for biomass production. The European Union, in its search for energy alternatives to its high consumption of fossil fuels, will likely be the destination of Suzano's wood pellets.

The 2013 study on Suzano's eucalyptus plantations revealed, among other things, serious land conflicts between the company and traditional communities in the Baixo Parnaíba region, in the state of Maranhão. The study also showed that Suzano had practised deforestation in a transitional area between the Amazon rainforest and the Cerrado or Brazilian savannah, which is characterized by highly unique biodiversity and immeasurable importance for the survival of local traditional communities.

Since then, a particularly striking piece of news related to Suzano and its eucalyptus plantations was the company's request to the Brazilian authorities to authorize the planting, on a commercial scale, of genetically engineered (GE) eucalyptus trees, developed by the biotech firm FuturaGene, which is owned by Suzano. If approved, this will be the first authorization for the commercial planting of GE trees for the purpose of harvesting wood, not only in Brazil but in all of Latin America, and the second in the world after China (see more on the main problems with GE trees in [WRM Bulletin 206](#) and on the [WRM website](#)).

In September 2014, at a public hearing in Brasilia on Suzano's request, two letters opposing the authorization were submitted to the National Technical Commission on Biosecurity (CTNBio). The letters were signed by hundreds of Brazilian and international organizations and social movements (2). CTNBio is to adopt its final decision in 2015, after Suzano has completed its report on field trials. In the meantime, the global Campaign to Stop GE Trees has sent an open letter to the Forest Stewardship

Council (FSC), challenging once again the already highly criticized FSC label of certification. The letter calls on the FSC to apply one of the few criteria that do not favour industrial tree plantation companies – the prohibition of the use of genetically modified organisms, including trees – recalling that a large portion of Suzano's 350,000 hectares of plantations have already been certified by the FSC (3).

Suzano claims that the main objective of promoting the planting of GE trees is to increase productivity, that is, competitiveness. This makes sense within a context in which the growing demand for wood biomass (in the form of wood pellets) for energy production in Europe is still primarily supplied by companies in the southern US, where there are large available stocks of wood from tree plantations. The rest of the pellets come from countries like Canada and Russia. Between 2012 and 2013 alone, European wood pellet imports rose from 8.5 million to 11.3 million tons, while US exports to Europe grew by 50%, from 1.9 million to 2.9 million tons (4).

Another recently uncovered problem in relation to Suzano is the aerial spraying of agrotoxics. In the 2013 case study mentioned above, there were indications of the use of this method – highly uncommon until now – on the company's tree plantations. On that occasion, a plane was seen landing in one of Suzano's plantations, after working and apparently spraying products over the eucalyptus. More recently, a local newspaper in the state of Bahia reported the aerial spraying of agrotoxics by Suzano in the region of Mucuri, highlighting the risks that this poses for human health. The article cites a research study from a Brazilian federal university to demonstrate the serious impacts of this method, which companies consider "more efficient": the contamination of rivers, lakes and lagoons near the areas sprayed, the contamination of rainwater through the evaporation of the toxins, and the chronic poisoning of people who live in the region where the spraying takes place, resulting in various diseases, above all cancer (5).

Another noteworthy piece of news is the opening in March 2014 of the new Suzano pulp mill in Maranhão, with a production capacity of 1.5 million tons a year (6). To facilitate the export of this pulp production, as well as the future production of pellets through the biomass plantations project, Suzano sought to build its own port near the city of São Luís. However, as the port project began moving forward, it became evident that it would seriously affect the families of the community of Cajueiro, who have lived in the area for years, earning a livelihood from fishing and shellfish harvesting. Faced with the threat of expulsion, local residents mobilized to oppose the port and defend their rights, proposing the creation of a reserve area for local extraction which would permanently benefit local communities (7).

In October 2014, the State Ombudsman's Office successfully filed for a precautionary measure that blocked the environmental licensing of the port project. The Ombudsman's Office defined the removal of people by the private company responsible for the port's construction as a forced eviction, which is a violation of the law. Nevertheless, the company has continued to terrorize the members of the community, who denounce the constant threats they receive from armed militia in the attempt to get them to leave the area. Due to the resistance put up by the local residents, the Secretary of the Environment cancelled the public hearing on the licensing of the project, scheduled for October 2014 (8). In November, Suzano tried to distance itself from the conflict that had emerged around the port project, claiming that it had no connection whatsoever with the company carrying out the construction and that it had abandoned its plans for building a port. However, in 2011 the governor of the state had expropriated an area in the community of Cajueiro specifically for the benefit of Suzano. Meanwhile, the violence continues, and as of the end of December 2014, 16 houses had been demolished in the community (9).

New problems and conflicts involving Suzano continue to arise in Maranhão and other states in Brazil. With yet another pulp mill in operation, the company aims to keep growing, and as a consequence, to expand its plantations into territories inhabited and used by communities. The logic of business, with its insatiable "hunger" for land, will forever generate conflicts with local communities who depend on their territories for survival, while provoking deforestation, contamination and environmental degradation in the region.

But not all of the news related to Suzano's activities in the state of Maranhão is bad news. In late 2014, the Federal Institute for Agrarian Reform (INCRA) expropriated two areas in the municipality of Chapadinha, and the Land Institute of Maranhão (ITERMA) regularized two others in the municipalities of Santa Quitéria and Urbano Santos. All of these were areas that belong to traditional communities and were in Suzano's sights. It should be noted that these areas were the subject of land claims made by local communities that were supported by a global solidarity action, namely a petition launched on the occasion of September 21, 2013, the International Day of Struggle Against Tree Plantations. The petition was internationally coordinated by the WRM and its support network, and signed as well by the German organization "Rainforest Rescue" and its network, resulting in thousands of signatures in defence of the communities in Maranhão and their legitimate fight for the regularization of their territory.

This good news motivates us to continue supporting the struggle for the lands and livelihoods of local communities. In 2015, we hope that other communities will also successfully claim their territorial rights, in order to continue to use and protect their territories forever, instead of seeing them degraded by industrial plantations of GE trees that are merely aimed at profit-seeking and threaten the survival of local communities and biodiversity.

- (1) http://wrm.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Plantacoes_de_eucalipto_para_energia_O_Caso_da_Suzano.pdf
 - (2) <http://wrm.org.uy/pt/acoes-e-campanhas/organizacoes-do-brasil-america-latina-e-de-outros-continentes-entregam-hoje-cartas-a-comissao-tecnica-nacional-de-bioseguranca-do-brasil/>
 - (3) <http://wrm.org.uy/pt/artigos-do-boletim-do-wrm/secao2/a-campanha-parem-as-arvores-transgenicas-exige-que-o-fsc-mantenha-as-arvores-transgenicas-fora/>
 - (4) <http://faostat3.fao.org>
 - (5) <http://www.noticia10.com.br/?p=14215>
 - (6) <http://www.suzano.com.br/portal/suzano-papel-e-celulose/suzano-na-imprensa-detallhes-216.htm>
 - (7) <http://territorioslivresdobaixoparnaiba.blogspot.com.br/2014/10/defensoria-pede-suspensao-de.html>
 - (8) <http://territorioslivresdobaixoparnaiba.blogspot.com.br/2014/10/sema-cancela-audiencia-do-porto-da.html>
 - (9) <http://territorioslivresdobaixoparnaiba.blogspot.com.br/2014/12/a-milicia-da-wpr-contra-comunidade-do.html>
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Guatemala: Grassroots organizations criticise palm oil roundtable consultation

Several grassroots organizations in Guatemala released a statement criticizing the public consultation process of the corporate social responsibility principles and criteria of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). The signatories reported that they had joined together to consider, analyze and discuss the principles and criteria in order to contribute their opinion to the Public Consultation on the RSPO National Interpretation Document, which concluded on 7 December 2014. The statement declares:

“We place importance on any consultation effort that fosters a more respectful relationship between oil palm plantation companies and affected local communities and the different civil society organizations that defend human rights in our country, and that is distanced from the prevailing practice of criminalization of social struggle aimed at ensuring the respect, protection and guarantee of human rights for all Guatemalan citizens.

“The purpose of the public consultation on the RSPO Principles and Criteria National Interpretation Document is to establish the procedures for the certification of oil palm plantation companies operating in Guatemala as ‘sustainable’, in order to facilitate the sale of their products on the international market, in accordance with the standards adopted by palm oil purchasing countries. In this regard, we believe that the certification promoted by the RSPO is a limited and biased framework for the evaluation of oil palm companies, and that both the RSPO and the companies themselves should take clear and determined steps towards framing their actions within a human rights-based approach, as well as the implementation of and full compliance with the ‘Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework’, endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in June 2011.

“With regard to the principles and criteria of the RSPO National Interpretation Document which is being reviewed and will serve as the basis for the certification of oil palm plantations already established in our country, we state the following:

"1. The public consultation process has followed a methodology that has not fostered real participation by and consultation of the affected and interested communities. Only four national meetings were held, in Guatemala City, Cobán, Sayaxché and Escuintla; in Sayaxché and Cobán, the meetings were convened by the oil palm plantation companies themselves and were essentially informative rather than consultative; the criticisms voiced by community members at these meetings were not addressed, and in some cases, the community members in attendance were asked to sign blank sheets of paper, which they refused to do.

"2. The direct participation of representatives of the oil palm plantation companies in the National Interpretation process as well as in the RSPO evaluation and certification mechanism results in unbalanced involvement of the companies, making them both judge and jury, which is contradictory to the promotion of a transparent process for the evaluation of their practices in terms of universally accepted principles. As such, we believe that this process and subsequent evaluations should be carried out by independent actors.

"3. The RSPO National Interpretation Document should include the agreements ratified by the state of Guatemala that promote and seek to guarantee the rights of all Guatemalans, and particularly the rights of Indigenous peoples. Therefore, it is especially important to explicitly include ILO Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the Law on Access to Public Information (Decree 57-2008) and the Peace Agreements signed by the Guatemalan government and the URNG in 1996, enshrined in national legislation through the Framework Law on the Peace Agreements (Decree 52-2005).

"4. We maintain that the interested parties – the affected communities and interested social organizations – have the right to decide whether or not they want the establishment of new oil palm plantations and/or the expansion of existing plantations in their territories. As such, the RSPO National Interpretation Document should explicitly provide the communities with the option of saying 'no', rather than considering the only alternatives in the event of disagreements between the companies and the communities affected to be negotiation mechanisms, the establishment of 'mitigation plans' and 'management plans', or the renunciation of rights on the part of the communities and compensation for the rights of the company.

"5. We further maintain that no certification process is legitimate if it does not take into account the serious denunciations made by the communities affected regarding the theft of lands, the contamination of water sources and waterways, the destruction of ecosystems and the proliferation of pests, as well as the violation of labour rights. It is important for the certification process promoted by the RSPO to incorporate and use as baseline references the denunciations made by the communities affected, as well as the studies conducted by social organizations and academic institutions on the various social, economic and environmental impacts of oil palm plantations.

"6. Finally, we considerate as inadmissible the inclusion of Principle 7 concerning the conditions under which new oil palm plantations could be established in our country. We maintain that no new oil palms plantations should be established in our country, nor should already existing plantations be expanded, give the demonstrated and proven negative impacts in terms of food security and sovereignty, and the environmental, economic and social impacts."

Comité de Unidad Campesina (CUC)
Consejo Nacional de Desplazados de Guatemala (CONDEG)
Consejo de Instituciones de Desarrollo (COINDE)
Alianza para el Desarrollo Rural Integral (ADRI)
Asociación de Servicios Comunitarios de Salud (ASECSA)
Asociación de Forestería Comunitaria de Guatemala Utz Che'
Asociación Organización Maya para la Paz y el Desarrollo de Sayaxché (MAYAPAZ)
Asociación Civil No Lucrativa para la Defensa y Promoción de los Intereses Relacionados con el Desarrollo Campesino de Occidente (ADECO)
Centro Internacional para Investigaciones en Derechos Humanos (CIIDH)
Colectivo de Estudios Rurales Ixim (CER-Ixim)
Coordinación de ONG's y Cooperativas (CONGCOOP)
Fundación Guillermo Toriello (FGT)
Federación de Estudiantes de Agronomía de Guatemala (FEAG)
Action Aid Guatemala
OXFAM in Guatemala
TROCAIRE
VSF Justicia Alimentaria Global

Guatemala, 11 December 2014

<http://www.albedrio.org/htm/otrosdocs/comunicados/variasorganizaciones-137.html>



“Pulping” the Local-Food

One of Indonesia’s pulp and paper giants, Asia Pulp&Paper (APP), is planning to build a new pulp mill to supply not only pulp to paper companies within the APP Group, but also to have its own paper production. The destruction of the peat lands where several of the villages that would be affected by the construction and operations of such mill are located could result in floodings and the disruption of long-established agricultural systems. Moreover, the continuous expansion of industrial tree plantation concessions into South Sumatra’s peat lands is already leading to increased air pollution, fires and increased social negative impacts.

Back in 2012, Asia Pulp&Paper (APP), one of Indonesia’s pulp and paper giants, announced their plan to build a new pulp mill with an installed capacity of 2 million tons annually. The mill, called “PT OKI Pulp&Paper”, was to be situated in South Sumatra Province, to be precise in Air Sugihan, Ogan Komering Ilir (OKI) District. The aim was not only to supply pulp to paper companies within the APP Group, but also to build its own paper mill. PT OKI was reportedly to become the largest pulp and paper mill in Asia.

The estimated investment needed for the pulp mill amounted to US\$2.6 billion. As the new company would further build a US\$500 million tissue paper mill, the total investment would stand at more than US\$3 billion. Part of the funds would come from a credit investment from China Development Bank (CDB), amounting to US\$1.8 billion. The credit agreement was signed by then-President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Chinese President Xi Jin Ping in Jakarta during the Indonesia-China business luncheon on 3 October 2013 (1). The balance (US\$839 million) to build the pulp mill would be obtained from PT OKI’s shareholders.

According to the Letter on Investment Principles Permit from Indonesia’s Investment Coordination Board (Badan Koordinasi Penanaman Modal, BKPM) Number 361/1/IP/I/PMA/2012, dated 5 June 2012, all the needed capital would come from foreign sources, namely PT Muba Green Indonesia (99%) and Green Unity Holding Pte, Ltd (1%); both based in Singapore. The total investment of IDR23 trillion would come from its own capital (IDR250 billion) and a loan (IDR22.75 trillion). The mill was estimated to employ 2,200 workers, 200 of which were female.

The BKPM’s Letter also notes that PT OKI must provide its own electricity as well as avoid sulphite/chlorine bleaching and obtain raw materials from imports or the existing industrial tree plantation concessions, (e.g. the Timber Supply Cooperation Agreement between PT OKI Pulp&Paper Mills and PT Bumi Mekar Hijau, which has held a Timber Use Permit since 2004).

In South Sumatra Province, the Sinar Mas Group, one of the largest conglomerates in Indonesia that has APP as a subsidiary, has 8 industrial tree plantation concessions, managed by its local subsidiaries, namely PT Rimba Hutani Mas (67,100 Ha), PT Sumber Hijau Permai (30,400 Ha), PT Bumi Persada Permai (60,433 Ha & 24,050 Ha), PT Tripupa Jaya (21,995 Ha), PT Sebangun Bumi Andalas (142,355 Ha), PT Bumi Mekar Hijau (250,370 Ha) and PT Bumi Andalas Permai (192,700 Ha).

According to the public information available for the shareholders of PT Pabrik Kertas Tjiwi Kimia Tbk – the underwriter of PT OKI – the composition of shareholding of PT OKI Pulp&Paper is as follows: PT Muba Green Indonesia (29.42%), Perseroan (35.29%) and PT Pindo Deli Pulp and Paper Mills (35.29%). PT Pindo Deli Pulp and Paper Mills is the parent company of PT Lontar Papyrus Pulp & Paper Industry – a pulp and paper mill operating in the Jambi Province (2). The largest shareholder of PT Pindo Deli Pulp and Paper Mills, PT Purinusa Ekapersada (97.73%), is also the largest shareholder of PT Tjiwi Kimia Tbk (60%). So, it was a business deal within one business group – a low-risk and tightly controlled business model that provides guarantee and support for each other.

What needs to be scrutinized is the form and scheme of the funding. For example, the credit agreement

with China Development Bank (CDB) involved two presidents – what was the status of the then-President Susilo Bambang Yudoyono or Indonesia as a country in this regard? Indonesia was once severely struck by economic crises as a result of the enormous amount of foreign loans taken on by the private sector, in which the State has to bear all the consequences. The CDB itself is a Chinese government-owned bank and hence it is fully controlled by the Chinese State Council.

The province of South Sumatra, where PT OKI was to be built, has initiated a program called “South Sumatra: a National Food Barn”. The master plan has been developed. It sets out the mid-term planning of the provincial government, ambitiously aiming at achieving certain production targets of some important commodities: rice (2 million tons), corn (200 thousand tons), rubber (800 thousand tons), Crude Palm Oil (1.8 million tons), coffee (150 thousand tons), copra (70 thousand tons), cattle (623,740 heads), shrimp (35 thousand tons), farmed fish (28 thousand tons) and timber for pulp (10.3 million cubic meters) (3).

The inclusion of Crude Palm Oil and pulp in the master plan reflects dependency on large-scale monocrop models aimed at supplying export-oriented industrial giants. On the other hand, the environmentally and socially destructive natures of these monocrop commodities, which have no direct correlation with local food cultivation system, are not taken into consideration.

Several villages in Air Sugihan Subdistrict, OKI District, are potentially affected by the construction and operation of PT OKI, namely Suka Maju, Tirta Mulya, Sri Jaya Baru, Mukti Jaya, Bandar Jaya, Banyu Biru and Jadi Mulya. Most of the villages are situated on peat lands and grow rice, a local staple crop in Indonesia.

Let's take the Jadi Mulya village as an example, which is located in Parit 23 Block D, Air Sugihan. The villagers practice rain-fed rice cultivation and they built an integrated settlement that suits the characteristics of peat lands (i.e. building canals to regulate water circulation and provide water transportation). The villagers said that PT OKI would be built on peat land that, if not managed well, would flood the village, disrupting the long-established agricultural system.

In addition, PT OKI would border the protected area home to crocodiles and several other endemic species. Another concern is the waste management – where would the company dispose of the waste? Dumping the waste into the river will greatly affect the local agricultural system.

A critical note from Friends of the Earth / WALHI - South Sumatra reveals that the expansion of industrial tree plantation concessions into South Sumatra's peat lands, including those in the OKI District, has led to increased air pollution. More than 500 fires were identified within the Sinar Mas Group's concession during August and September 2014 (4). A national daily newspaper also reported that the OKI District was among the most polluted in the province (5).

On 5 February 2013, Asia Pulp&Paper (APP), the parent company of the Sinar Mas Group, launched its Forest Conservation Policy (FCP), which is committed to low emission, which surely relates to land fire control. It is important for APP to publicly provide information on the impacts of the expansion of its industrial tree plantations (e.g. on the numerous land fires and increasing air pollution).

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(1) APP dapat Pinjaman US\$ 1,8 Untuk Bangun Pabrik Pulp Terbesar di RI, Okezone.com

(2) Annual Report 2009 PT Lontar Papyrus Pulp & Paper Industry

(3) Master Plan Lumbung Pangan Sumatera Selatan, 2005

(4) www.walhi-sumsel.blogspot.com

(5) <http://news.metrotvnews.com/read/2014/11/03/313616/oki-tolak-dianggap-penghasil-asap-di-sumsel>



Chile: Discredited FSC label continues to legitimize industrial tree plantations

The companies Forestal Mininco y Forestal Arauco account for the vast majority of tree plantation activities in Chile, with almost two million hectares of monoculture plantations of exotic tree species, mainly pine and eucalyptus. Despite the resistance, denunciations and harsh criticisms on the part of numerous Mapuche Indigenous organizations and communities, both companies have been certified with the FSC label through foreign consulting firms.

The aim of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is to promote “environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable” management of forests worldwide. The FSC certifies wood, paper and other forest products in order to, theoretically, guarantee “sustainable” forest management. In order to receive FSC certification, forestry operators and suppliers must adhere to 10 principles and associated criteria, which include respect for the rights of indigenous peoples. The certification process is carried out by external consultants. In many cases, such as in Chile, these consulting firms have granted the FSC label to companies that have been harshly criticized for their social and environmental impacts.

In recent years, FSC certification has become a standard for the international wood and forest products market. While certification is voluntary, it is practically a requirement for export. For example, the fact that the countries of the European Union demand the FSC label has obliged Chilean forestry companies to comply with its procedures.

Certification that ignores communities and forests: Forestal Mininco and Forestal Arauco

Industrial tree plantations owned by the companies Forestal Mininco and Forestal Arauco are expanding in central-southern Chile, along with numerous pulp mills for paper production. Complaints have been lodged against all of these companies’ pulp mills for severe pollution. The plantations have also generated many social and environmental impacts, particularly impacts on water sources, conflicts with Mapuche Indigenous communities who claim ancestral rights to land under the control of these companies, and the destruction of sacred sites.

In January 2011, the Mapuche Territorial Alliance (Alianza Territorial Mapuche), together with numerous communities, denounced the fact that Forestal Mininco’s FSC-certified area largely overlapped with Mapuche traditional territory. The Alliance stressed that the company does not respect the communities or their territories, and provided evidence of a series of acts of violence and conflicts caused by the company. Meanwhile, in September 2011, the Working Group for Collective Rights (Grupo de Trabajo por Derechos Colectivos) presented evidence of the bad practices of both companies to the FSC-accredited certification bodies SmartWood Program/Rainforest Alliance and Woodmark, urging them not to be complicit in the human rights violations and the serious social, environmental and economic damages and conflicts provoked by the companies. For its part, Forestal Arauco initiated the certification process in 2009, with Woodmark as the certification body. The Association of Engineers for Native Forests (Agrupación de Ingenieros por el Bosque Nativo) declared that, based on the evidence gathered, Forestal Arauco had not complied with the FSC’s principles and criteria.

Nevertheless, both companies were certified. The Rainforest Alliance granted certification for Forestal Mininco’s pine and eucalyptus plantations in 2012, ignoring the long list of land conflicts with Mapuche communities, the numerous denunciations of acts of violence, and even the loss of the Mapuche people’s sacred sites – despite the fact that the Rainforest Alliance had registered some of these sites. Woodmark, meanwhile, had initially rejected Forestal Arauco’s request for certification in 2013, but ended up certifying it in September of the same year.

In January 2014, numerous civil society organizations, residents associations and peasant and

indigenous communities filed a challenge to overturn the FSC certification granted to Forestal Arauco. In August of the same year, the Mapuche community Eugenio Araya Huilñir de Renaico filed for an injunction against Forestal Mininco to halt the work that the company was carrying out in territories currently being reclaimed as ancestral lands. In December, the Mapuche community of Juan Bautista Jineo denounced damages caused by the company to the community's lands, as a result of plantation activities on the bordering property. That same month, Forestal Arauco was denounced by Mapuche authorities and cultural researchers for the serious impacts of its operations on areas considered sacred and of spiritual importance to the Mapuche people.

Both companies have lobbied the public pillars to militarize and criminalize communities, as well as the application of the anti-terrorism law.

The impacts of industrial plantations and questioning of certification bodies

The FSC is contributing to the expansion of industrial monoculture tree plantations around the world. Numerous different communities and organizations have insistently denounced their many impacts. These include the displacement of native forests; the loss of surface and groundwater resources; the indiscriminate use of pesticides and resulting pollution; the fencing in of rural communities by plantations; the destruction of rural roads and pollution caused by logging trucks and heavy machinery, particularly at harvesting time; the loss of food sovereignty due to the replacement of livestock grazing and agricultural land by tree plantations; the desecration of sacred sites; and rising poverty.

The certification of industrial tree plantations is unacceptable. The FSC presents itself to the world as the most trustworthy and respected label for wood products, particularly since its members include a number of NGOs. Criticism once again points at the fundamental problem of excessive patterns of consumption. If the consumption of paper and paper products is not curbed, it will be difficult to stop the expansion of tree plantations. In Chile, the FSC label continues to spread. It is crucial to expose the contradictions and lies behind the certification process, as well as the objectives of the labels themselves, because they are complicit in the violations of human rights and destructive social and environmental impacts generated by industrial tree plantations.

Article extracted from "El desacreditado sello FSC en Chile a causa de las certificaciones a empresas forestales" by Alfredo Seguel, editor of the Mapuche news agency Mapuexpress, <http://www.mapuexpress.org/2014/12/30/el-desacreditado-sello-fsc-en-chile-a-causa-de-las-certificaciones-a-empresas-forestales#sthash.OtGD9Kkj.lqzykeIA.dpuf>



Enclosing territories for financial profit

Private and state enclosures of lands, forests and water are not new phenomena. Much of what grows on land, what is grown by humans on land, what flows on and under land, what forms landscapes and eco-systems, what is built on land, and what is extracted from under the land, have been commoditized. What is new is the array of means, mechanisms and instruments by which political and economic control over land and nature are exercised, and by which land and land-based wealth are becoming commodities in new markets. Already countries with large agrarian economies in the global South opened their borders to foreign direct investment, with many of these investments backed by complex financing arrangements and multiple sources of capital, including public, private and multilateral financiers. Many times, local populations affected by such deals lose their livelihoods, homes, cultures, identities and access to food; they are forcibly evicted or relocated, and often pushed into precarious, low-paying wage labor.

The spread of neoliberalism in much of the world since the 1980s provided new impetus to the corporate capture of agriculture and food systems. Financial deregulation allowed commodity markets to expand rapidly and into new areas through new financial instruments, and also allowed new actors to enter the land-agricultural-food investment arenas. Banks created new types of financial instruments that amalgamated agricultural commodities, lands, minerals and energy futures (2), and directed floods of unregulated investment capital towards land and nature. Many agricultural financial instruments transformed risk itself into a new assets class, thus increasing the volatility of commodity prices and economic uncertainty for small-scale agricultural producers who had no protection against these new market risks.

Over the past 10 years, financial actors and instruments, such as sovereign wealth funds, private equity firms, insurance companies, pension and hedge funds, investment banks and other finance corporations, have become implicated in land, forest, mineral and water deals. The recent collapse of the financial market prompted a shift of investment capital into speculative ventures in land, food and agrofuels. While land itself is immovable, financialization enables the wealth that springs from it to move across the world as exchangeable financial instruments that can be traded in distant markets. One place can then be subjected to several financialization schemes, for example, with Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), forest carbon trading and a fast-growing tree plantation (see WRM Bulletins [175](#) and [181](#)).

The subversion of rights, regulation and governance

Land and land-based wealth grabbing are human rights violations that have far reaching negative impacts on environmental quality, biodiversity, society, culture, employment, livelihoods and health. Promises made by investors to affected communities of providing employment, schools, health and other social services rarely materialize; jobs are poorly paid, precarious, often with unsafe work conditions, and distress out-migration is common. Local populations are robbed of their agency to make decisions about how to use, manage and govern their lands and territories, and - as migrants - of their ability to participate in political processes. Those who resist the incursions on their lands and territories face violent threats, intimidation, arbitrary arrests and incarceration, extra-judicial killings and disappearances.

States enable these enclosures by enacting policies, laws and regulations that favor markets and by using their legal and security apparatus to suppress and punish those who resist. International financial institutions like the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank, multilateral agencies like the UN, international policy institutions, transnational corporations and even some civil society organisations have sought to re-frame and re-present land, water and resource grabbing as 'win-win' investments. The realm of the 'public,' too, is being oriented toward privatization through public-private partnerships in which public funds are used to underwrite private sector operations in infrastructure development, the provision of essential goods and services, transportation, etc. States, corporations and international institutions are colluding in the financialization of land, crops, water, carbon, soil, minerals, metals, coal, oil and energy, allowing financial markets to penetrate deeper into the real economy.

The World Bank has played a central role in promoting land markets in the global South by financing land tenure administration reforms that established private property regimes, eased land transactions and enabled wealthy and powerful individuals to use land for financial and speculative gain. The 'Green Economy', elaborated by the UN Environment Programme, further advances financialisation by proposing a system whereby ecosystems and biodiversity are valued in monetary terms rather than the varieties of life they sustain, allowing new ways for investors and finance capital to extract revenue streams from nature. The 'Green Economy' treats nature and its functions and capacities as 'natural capital,' and aims to attach monetary values to the capturing and storing of carbon, the creation of water catchments and stability of water cycles, soil fertility, etc. These monetary values are packaged and envisaged to be traded in international markets to attract investment and development finance.

To satisfy such ecosystem markets, the rights of local communities and populations to make decisions about the use, management and governance of lands and its functions that sustain them are wrested away and replaced by regulatory regimes that enable commodification and financialization (3). These regimes provide conditions by which outside investors can acquire land and associated resources with veneers of responsibility, transparency, democracy and participation. Thus, the increasing power of markets and finance capital is shaping land and natural resource governance in dangerous ways.

Rethinking governance

For most policymakers, the governance of land and natural resources are technical-administrative exercises of mapping, defining, classifying, zoning, quantifying and valuing that enable the state to control, allocate and earn revenue from access, tenure and property rights through records, cadastres, titles, rental contracts, taxes, etc. Neutral as they may appear, such actions are exercises of power and authority which carry the potential to entrench or transform the power structures of societies.

For those whose lives, livelihoods, cultures, societies and identities are turned upside down by destructive investments, land and resource grabbing cannot be regulated; they must be unconditionally stopped. The recognition of the rights of peasants, farmers, forest dwellers, fisher-folk, pastoralists, indigenous peoples and other local communities to self-determination, their legitimate claims to lands and ecosystems, and their rootedness in and respect for nature, are necessary preconditions to

constructing democratic and just land governance systems.

Based on Shalmali Guttal's articles: "[Challenging Financial Sector Backing to Land Enclosures](#)" and "[Redifining Governance: Challenging Markets](#)".

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(1) www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03066150.2011.559008#.VKoqp2SUdhq

(2) A futures contract is a contract between two parties to buy or sell an asset for a price agreed upon today (the futures price) with delivery and payment occurring at a future point, the delivery date. Because it is a function of an underlying asset, futures contracts are considered a derivative product. Contracts are negotiated at futures exchanges, which act as a marketplace between buyer and seller.

(3) www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03066150.2012.691879#.VLfcNicqo7D

PEOPLES IN ACTION



Nigeria: Tales of Grabland

A documentary from "Land Justice for West Africa" shows how Ogoni communities, already affected severely by the oil industry in the Niger delta, are now losing their territories for a banana plantation. Despite opposition from thousands of small farmers, the Rivers State Government plans to appropriate over 2,000 hectares of ancestral farmlands of Ogoni communities to hand over to a private company registered in Mexico for the development of a commercial banana plantation. This is a prominent example of property speculation via so-called public-private partnerships (PPP), leading to displacement of populations. Social and economic hardship, human rights abuses, including killings by state agents, and a general condition of insecurity have been consequences of the forced eviction. Affected communities fear that land grabs will have adverse impacts on local food production and livelihoods. See full documentary at: <http://landjustice4wa.org/tales-of-grabland/#more-1572>



Papua-Wide meeting calls for 10 year Moratorium on Plantation and Forestry Industries

Representatives of indigenous communities, environmentalists and human rights defenders from all over West Papua met in Jayapura (4th-7th November 2014) to discuss problems linked to the forestry and large-scale plantation industries, which in recent years have been expanding rapidly throughout the island. Participants shared experiences about long-term injustices connected with plantations in Jayapura, Keerom and Boven Digoel. Participants from Papua's deep south told of how they have been marginalised by plantations connected to the agribusiness development. Others from Sorong, Nabire and Mimika told of the many problems that started to unfold as the companies moved in. Delegates from Bintuni and Wondama Bays explained how the effects of the timber industry on communities are no less destructive. In many of these examples, the same problems emerge: intimidation from military and police, loss of livelihoods as the forest is destroyed, companies' broken promises of bringing development to communities, environmental problems such as pollution, flooding and loss of water sources. Taking all this into account, the participants agreed to call for, among others, a 10-year moratorium on large-scale plantation and forestry investment. See full note here: <https://awasmiffee.potager.org/?p=1092>



“This Land is for All of We”: A Rama community in Bangkukuk, Nicaragua, speaks out about the Grand Canal Project

For centuries, the Rama people have lived on the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua. In June of 2013, the Nicaraguan government signed an exclusive contract with a Hong Kong based development company to build an immense canal across Nicaragua with a 100-year concession. The proposed route will cut through almost a million acres of rainforest and wetlands, and will displace hundreds of villages, including the Rama village of Bangkukuk. In violation of national law and international conventions, the Rama people were never consulted. On 22 December 2014, the construction work of the canal began. A video from “PreetyGoodProductions” highlights the voices of opposition and worrisome of the Rama people. See full video in English here: <http://news.mongabay.com/2014/1211-hance-bangkukuk.html>



Ecuador: Chevron-Texaco to pay for the devastation it caused in the Amazon

The Union for Those Affected by Texaco Operations (UDAPT) has been fighting for more than 20 years to force Chevron-Texaco to pay for the ravaging contamination it caused in the Ecuadorian Amazon and to take responsibility for their actions. The different initiatives launched by the UDAPT in different countries are on the verge of reaching their goal. To get there they need additional funding. UDAPT asks people to tweet the message: “RT! Crowdfunding for those affected by Chevron in Ecuador! Please join the cause and donate!” [@Chevron_Toxico](http://ow.ly/FZQTd). To help UDAPT to prepare the environmental, social and cultural roadmaps for the remediation of the contaminated lands, donations can be made at (website in English): www.indiegogo.com/projects/the-battle-for-the-remediation-of-the-amazon. You can also vote against Chevron in the Public Eye Award which distinguishes the most irresponsible company of the world: (in English) <http://publiceye.ch/case/chevron> and (in Spanish): <http://www.opsur.org.ar/blog/2014/11/20/chevron-es-nominada-como-la-empresa-que-mayores-problemas-causa-a-la-humanidad/>

RECOMMENDED



Ideas for the political thought of La Via Campesina in the Amazon

The coordinating team of La Via Campesina in the state of Pará, Brazil, has compiled in a book the political struggles waged over time in the Amazon and the initiatives organized. In addition to a systematized introduction with a focus on ideas about peasant communities and their reincorporation in debates of historical concepts, there is a duel of perspectives with environmental ecological imperialism. These formulations are not merely relevant to the current situation, but form part of the challenges facing the working class in the Amazon region. Over the past decade, all of the possibilities of the neo-developmental front have been implemented in the Amazon. The reprimarization of the economy has heightened the contradictions in the region, transforming it into a sacrifice zone. This book redeems the Amazon as a region of struggle, transformed into countless conflicts against capital, as well as disputes of knowledge and power. The book is available in Portuguese here:

http://www.reformaagrariaemdados.org.br/sites/default/files/Ideias%20via%20campesina_dez2014.pdf



Greed and Resistance in Sarawak's Rainforest

The recently released book "Money Logging" documents the local politics, international complicity and dedicated resistance in the struggle against the turning of Sarawak's rainforests into a monoculture of oil palms and hydropower reservoirs. Author Lukas Straumann singles out Abdul Taib Mahmud, former governor of the Malaysian state of Sarawak, as the kingpin of this Asian timber mafia, while he shows that Taib's family—with the complicity of global financial institutions—have profited to the tune of US\$15 billion. Moreover, a series of 12 large-scale dams, two of which have already been built, would inundate 1,600 square kilometres of rainforest and displace 235 indigenous communities. Taib's companies also supply cement and cables for hydropower stations and build resettlement camps. Indigenous communities and activist organizations are still resisting these destructive expansions. See more in English here: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/peter-bosshard/greed-and-resistance-in-s_b_6350036.html



Planting poverty: The forestry business in Chile

This documentary produced by "Periódico Resumen" addresses the origins and consequences of the expansion of the tree plantation industry in central-southern Chile. Plantations have been expanding in Chile at a phenomenal rate and now occupy a total of some three million hectares, seriously affecting not only the environment but also local communities. The droughts generated by monoculture plantations have also been provoking forest fires. Many communities have now been able to disassociate themselves from the plantation companies and implement local management and use of the forests. See the video in Spanish at:

http://www.resumen.cl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10694:documental-plantar-pobreza-el-negocio-forestal-en-chile&catid=8:nacional&Itemid=52



African local livelihoods under threat as palm oil producers capture more lands

Booming global demand for palm oil and limited room for the industry's expansion in Asia have led large palm oil producers to look towards Africa. Companies are also betting on an explosion in demand from the European Union for palm oil as a 'sustainable' fuel, and Africa is the closest palm oil-producing region. Swaths of land have been allocated to foreign companies for oil palm plantations. Plantations are causing large-scale deforestation and affecting the water supplies, which are also being contaminated by pesticides used on the plantations. By transferring lands to the exclusive propagation of oil palm, people are losing the ability to grow food for themselves. See full article here:

http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2015/jan/15/palm-oil-risk-to-africa-forest?CMP=share_btn_tw



Washing out Diversity: The impacts of oil palm plantations in Palawan, Philippines

Oil palm plantations in Palawan, as elsewhere in the Philippines, are portrayed as a key solution to lower greenhouse gas emissions and as a tool for poverty eradication. However, reality shows a different picture. A report from "Ancestral Land/Domain Watch" (ALDAW) explains the many reasons why oil palm development should be stopped. Among others, this monoculture takes over cropland and coconut groves which sustain local self-sufficiency. It also meant the clearing of significant areas of old and secondary forests which are used by local inhabitants for the collection of non-timber forest products. Oil palm plantations exponentially increase the presence of pests, erode soils and pollute important sources of water. Working conditions are poor and generally

exploitative. Ambiguous strategies for taking control of indigenous lands through fuzzy rent agreements and illicit sale deeds are common. Indigenous people have leased their land to oil palm enterprises for as little as PHP 500 (around 10 euros) per year per hectare. Overall, the report concludes, oil palm expansion is at the expense of local economies and of existing diverse vegetation types. Essential resources (non-timber forest products, medicinal plants, game animals, wild honey, etc.), which are pivotal for daily household survival, have been completely depleted. See full report at:

<http://www.regenwald.org/files/en/ALDAW%20NTFP%20OIL%20PALM%202014%20REPORT.pdf>



Documentary: "Banking Nature"

What is nature worth? How much profit can it report? At a time when biodiversity is critically threatened, this documentary reveals how banks and private investors are increasingly converting natural resources into objects of financial speculation. "Nature, le nouvel eldorado de la finance" ("Banking Nature") shines a spotlight on the mechanisms of a nascent system that could end up as a manifestation of global hypocrisy. Through interviews with financiers, economic experts and academics, the film contrasts opposing points of view and presents numerous concrete examples of communities and natural environments threatened by these new practices. It reveals the vast panorama of interests at stake and lobby groups at work in the "new" field of natural capital, and questions the values defended by those who put a price on nature. It also warns that speculation and the crash of these new markets could provoke a new financial crisis. "Banking Nature" can be viewed online on February 3 at 20:50 (France) on the Arte France website: www.arte.tv. The 88-minute documentary will be freely available online for a week.



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