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OUR VIEWPOINT

- The World Cup of Football and the World Cup of Life

Much of the world's population –especially males– will spend the coming weeks glued to the TV as the FIFA World Cup unfolds. While many are fully aware that this is no longer a mere sporting event, but rather a massive globalized business in which the players are little more than disposable gladiators at the service of big corporations, they are still drawn to keep watching, celebrating the victories and suffering the defeats as if they were their own.

Perhaps this is because football is one of the very few domains in the world today that appears to offer equal opportunities to all, where 11 men from one country are pitted against 11 men from another, and the economic, political or military power of their respective nations off the field have no bearing. In a world dominated by the powerful –in the South as well as in the North– this sense of equality that characterizes football is almost unique, and perhaps what is most compelling about this international championship. After all, this is a contest in which the countries of the so-called Third World have emerged triumphant more often than the countries of the industrialized North: Brazil has won an unprecedented 5 World Cups, Argentina 2, Uruguay 2, Germany 3, Italy 3, England 1 and France 1. Final score: South 9 – North 8.

But while the fictional world of the World Cup moves forward, awakening hopes, joys and heartaches, the real world continues to develop on a playing field that is overwhelmingly uneven, where economic, political and

military power prevail and "fair play" is notoriously absent.

Take the case of Ecuador, one of the teams that sparked rising expectations after its first two games in Germany. In real life, Ecuador the country has been taking a thrashing for years. Of course, the referee – in this case, the government – has usually only red carded the representatives of the people, while national and international corporations are shown a yellow card at the very most. It has punished the people for non-existent fouls and offsides, but turned a blind eye to blatant penalty fouls by the business sector. The equivalent of FIFA in this case –the World Bank and International Monetary Fund– have permanently sanctioned Indigenous, Afroecuadorian and poor players, while obliging successive referees to impose rules that favour the business team. The results can be illustrated in scores like the following:

Oil companies 10 – Indigenous peoples of the Amazon 5
Forestry companies 8 – Forest peoples 3
Shrimp farming companies 5 – Afroecuadorians in mangrove regions 2
Oil palm companies 6 – Indigenous and Afroecuadorians 1
Tree planting companies 5 – Indigenous and Afroecuadorians 3

In every area, the Ecuadorian people are losing. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that the goals scored by the people – including a few stunning goals – have been relatively recent. In the meantime, the business sector has scored very few goals in recent years, and has been forced onto the defensive. The referee has even occasionally begun to hand out penalties to business players (as in the recent case of the Oxy oil company, whose contract in Ecuador was cancelled) or to overlook fouls committed by the people (like another recent case where local communities cut down eucalyptus trees on a plantation owned by the Japanese consortium Eucapacific). Even "FIFA" itself appears to be looking the other way.

It is also worth noting that the Ecuadorian team's fans slogan is "Yes we can!", and that the chant shouted by its fans is "Let's go Ecuadorians, tonight we have to win!" Interestingly enough, the same slogans and chants were used in the demonstrations to overthrow the president. On the final night of the demonstrations, protestors took to the streets shouting "Let's go Ecuadorians, tonight he has to fall!" And the president fell. Gooooaaaaa!

Ecuador has now been eliminated from the World Cup by England, but in the match for life, the people are moving in an increasingly organized formation towards their opponents' side of the field and scoring some remarkable goals. Playing from behind, the Ecuadorian people are gradually narrowing the score. A team of indigenous, mixed-race and Afroecuadorians, men and women, elders and children. Playing the game by their own rules. And most importantly of all, fuelled by their hopes in the possibility of victory. As they say: Yes we can!

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COMMUNITIES AND FORESTS

- Cambodia: World Bank Inspection Panel findings Slam Bank Forestry Project

A leaked World Bank Inspection Panel [1] report heavily criticises the Bank's own forest management project in Cambodia for breaking internal safeguards, ignoring local communities and failing to reduce poverty, says Global Witness, a non-partisan international non-governmental organisation --co-nominated for the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize for its work in uncovering how diamonds have funded civil wars across Africa-- focused on the links between the exploitation of natural resources and the funding of conflict and corruption.

Cambodia's forests covered 73 % of the country in 1971, but were decimated in the wake of the civil war by illegal and unsustainable logging. In the early 1990s the Cambodian government secretly awarded 32 logging concessions areas to private companies, many of them foreign-owned. Most of these firms went on to engage in illegal and unsustainable logging in pursuit of short-term profits. The rationale for the concession system was a steady source of revenue that could be used for Cambodia's development; yet between 1994 and 2000 the

government collected only \$92 million in timber royalties. Over the same period companies, politicians and the military made enormous profits through illegal logging.

An Asian Development Bank review in 2000 described this concession regime as 'a total system failure'. That same year however the World Bank launched a \$5 million Forest Concession Management and Control Pilot Project (FCMCPP) aimed at demonstrating that the concession system could work. The project focused on helping the concessionaires meet government requirements for new sustainable forest management plans (SFMPs) and environmental and social impact assessments (ESIAs) as a prerequisite for further logging. For the project to realise its objectives, the Bank needed the concession system and at least some of the companies to remain in place. It was in this context that the FCMCPP recommended the Cambodian government accept the SFMPs and ESIAs of six concessionaires in 2004. All six firms had broken the law or the terms of their contracts. Some were a front for the interests of relatives of senior officials.

Local communities lodged a complaint with the Bank's Inspection Panel in 2005, after it became clear the Bank's project was exacerbating, not improving the situation. These communities saw the project as promoting the interests of companies that had already damaged their livelihoods. In the event, the Panel's findings do not condemn the focus on the concession system per se, but do conclude that the project "did not seem to take on the key objective of using the potential of forests to reduce poverty".

The complaint to the Panel also claimed the project had several other serious flaws in its planning and implementation. According to Simon Taylor, Global Witness Director: "The findings of the Inspection Panel reveal the extent to which the Bank was prepared to break its own regulations in pursuit of project success."

In a damning report, the Panel finds the Bank overrode several of its own safeguard policies in several areas – its comments are quoted below.

- Consultation in development of management plans. The project allowed concession companies to take charge of consultations with communities over the future of forest use. "The idea that the concession holders would manage community consultations or resource assessments is a very serious flaw, especially given that the forest concessions were exploiting a resource which rural poor people...relied upon for an important part of their livelihoods."
- Environmental Assessments. The Bank misclassified areas of forest – allowing areas of high ecological value to be used for commercial logging. "There is no doubt that the Prey Long forest merits consideration as a forest of high ecological value, and this should have been obvious to Bank Staff during both the design and implementation stages of the Project."
- Indigenous People. Cambodia's indigenous people mainly live in the North and Northeastern parts of the country – the same areas which constitute the heart of Cambodia's logging concession system. Bank guidelines state for an investment project affecting Indigenous People, Indigenous Peoples Development Plans should be prepared to ensure they benefit from development investment. This never happened. "Had they been developed, many of the problems that have afflicted the Project would have been recognised and might have been corrected."
- Cultural and Spiritual Property. Bank guidelines clearly seek to conserve, not eliminate areas of cultural importance. Yet the project left the dubious concession companies to identify areas of cultural and spiritual importance within their cutting areas. In Cambodia, these included Spirit Forests and areas of archaeological importance. The Panel found this was "not consistent" with Bank safeguards.
- Social Impacts. The Panel found that the lack of social assessment specific to this project seriously denigrated the ability of the bank to comply with its own operational policies. For example, there was no acknowledgement from the Bank that resin tree harvesting by concession companies severely harmed the livelihoods of local populations. Resin tapped from various species of *dipterocarp* tree is an economically valuable commodity both within Cambodia and abroad. Recent studies estimate that at least 100,000 rural Cambodians derive part of their income from resin-tapping. The Panel noted Bank Management were frequently made aware of the issue from many sources, concluding: "it is

amply clear not only that the Bank should have been aware of the importance of resin tapping to forest dependent communities, and the harm that illegal cutting of resins was doing to those communities, but also that the Bank was aware of these issues.”

- Endorsement of sub-standard management plans for six concession companies. “The Panel considers that SFMPs and ESIA’s were deficient in almost all regards from process to content.”

While Global Witness welcomes Panel findings showing the deeply flawed nature of the project, the question they are now asking is what is the Bank going to do about it?

Paul Wolfowitz has stated how important the Panel is for monitoring Bank performance and this latest report could be seen as a test-case. According to Director Simon Taylor: ‘If the Bank is serious it needs to ensure that those responsible for this debacle are held accountable and that other forestry projects in countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo are not recycling the same flawed approach. More broadly the Bank has to rethink the way it operates in highly corrupt environments such as Cambodia so that its efforts benefit the poor rather than local elites and dubious private companies.’

Since the launch of the Inspection Panel investigation the Bank has withdrawn its support of the logging concession system and its operators, advocating a range of alternative approaches to forest management with greater emphasis on the role of local communities.

“This belated u-turn on forest sector policy in Cambodia deserves to be welcomed, but we have yet to see these words turned into reality on the ground. We now need to see the Bank to put its political influence and in-house capacity behind a concerted drive to make sure that this more appropriate package of measures is fully implemented”, said Taylor.

The request for inspection of the FCMCPP was sent to the Inspection Panel in February 2005 by NGO Forum on Cambodia, whom the plaintiffs have nominated as their representative. This request document can be downloaded from the Inspection Panel’s website, along with the World Bank management’s response and the Inspection Panel’s assessment of the request and its recommendations:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTINSPECTIONPANEL/0,,contentMDK:20387088~pagePK:64129751~piPK:64128378~theSitePK:380794,00.html>. The briefing document by Global Witness which sets out in detail the case for investigating the FCMCPP was submitted to the Inspection Panel in February 2005 as part of the request for inspection. This document can be downloaded at <http://www.globalwitness.org/campaigns/forests/cambodia/briefing.php>.

[1] The World Bank’s Inspection Panel was created in 1993 to increase the accountability of World Bank lending and to provide local people with a forum of last resort to enforce their rights under Bank policies and loan conditions.

By Eleanor Nichol, Global Witness, e-mail: enichol@globalwitness.org

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- Central African forestry administrations: are they at the service of the peoples involved?

Since 1990, a lot of noise has been made about the forests of the Congo Basin, both good and bad. Now a new environmental wave is descending on the Democratic Republic of Congo, of a scope very similar to that of the “Zaire boom” in the seventies. However, the question is: are the Central African forestry administrations - generally subject to insidious sociological factors- aligned with the aspirations and needs regarding welfare of the region’s inhabitants?

First of all, for an African it is an act of bravery to restore to African people the visibility of their forestry

administrations and this for various reasons. Of these, the first two are that "those who objectify reality are not much appreciated" and that "foreign experts are still those who determine priority fields of intervention in forest ecosystems." Africans need to define for themselves the forestry administrations for their people, but this has not yet happened.

Two functions of forestry administrations in Central Africa

We are considering two of the main functions of forestry administrations in Central Africa: the production of timber and the conservation of biological diversity. In spite of the diversity of forms under which they are presented, these functions are not fulfilled in a satisfactory way. For instance all (or nearly all) the cities mainly consume waste from sawmills; many cities lack timber even though the countries export it; the construction of subregional or regional markets for legal forestry products is taking for ever, while protection of the European market is being strengthened.

For its part, biological diversity conservation sets problems, even when it stems from noble ambitions and even though experiments are being done in this field. Over a decade has gone by since the launching of the first participatory management programmes for protected areas executed under the auspices of international organizations for the conservation of nature. However most of them do not seem to contribute to the preservation of biological diversity or to improve the living conditions of the peoples directly involved. This is demonstrated in a recent analysis of the various projects for the management of protected areas in Central Africa (Ndinga, 2005). Not only do the neighbouring inhabitants of these areas continue to have food, health and educational problems, but they are also subject to restrictions that upset their interior vision of harmony between the elements and their surroundings without their participation in the protection of natural resources materializing, despite the loud announcements made by international organizations.

All this invites us to reflect. Historically it is a recognized fact that, to find answers to the problems of the forestry sector, we must resort to people who are capable of benefiting from what the various sciences have to offer, (law, political, economic, social, historical and geographical sciences, as well as natural science regarding the environment and in particular, forests). We consider that this is the point where forestry could favour the creation of conditions providing an opportunity for the adjustment of Central African forestry administrations to the needs and aspirations of the peoples directly involved. Only the capacity of the African people to reflect for themselves on the diversity of aspects involved in their forests will make it possible, in the first place to contribute to get forestry administrations to adjust to these needs and, secondly to end the dissemination of foreign ideas, traditions and approaches on biological diversity in their countries.

Models of decision-making processes in the forestry administrations of Central Africa

Another major problem that should be addressed jointly is the rationalization of decision-making processes in the forestry administrations of Central Africa.

On one side are the forestry administrations operating on the basis of a sort of "rationalized neo-patrimonialism." These resemble a set of more or less rival tribal and/or political entities and individuals, considered as so many other subsystems and structures surrounding the Head of State. Their main type of action consists in updating routines (traditional forestry operations), redistributing positions and forestry resources and seeking some kind of credibility in the eyes of capitalist partners and international NGOs. In this case, the central proposal for the decision to be taken is the result of presidential intervention.

At the other extreme are the forestry administrations that resort to extortion and violent and direct depredation of forestry resources. This refers to the cases of the most extreme and bloody political systems and to the "war lords." The forestry administration is then a set of tribal, military and/or political entities structured around the war lords; the main actions are then manifestations of violent impulses, updating of routines, extortion and direct depredation of forestry resources and the orchestration of fund providers and international NGOs. The decision is a result of war lord intervention.

Between these two extremes lies rational forestry administration. Even though the Head of State continues to be the main actor, forestry administration is structured around State institutions, the regulations governing

them and the nation's values: the dominant type of action is a search for a response to social demand for forestry products and environmental services. The decision is a calculated solution to a strategic national problem.

It should be remembered that these are only models. Evidently the universe of forestry administrations in Central Africa is heterogeneous. Very often it is a mixture of "rationalized neo-patrimonialists," "war lords" and rational actors and all have a dominating role to a greater or lesser degree. However, models enable us to better understand the sociology of forestry administrations in Central Africa and their internal decision processes. This basis enables us to reflect on the rationalization of such processes.

Internal factors influencing decisions

From this standpoint, it becomes evident that the significant factors influencing the decisions of Central African forestry administrations need to be visualized. "Neo-patrimonialism" privileges deviations from standards and conformism; this has been so abundantly demonstrated that it is possible to affirm for example that John Maynard Keynes would never have made himself a career in such administrations. On the other hand, the history and identity of Central African people, although notable in many aspects, were open for a long time to networks of more or less confessable activities. It is for this reason that many Central African people, whether or not they be men/women of State, allude to their will to put themselves at the service of their country but, in fact, continue to legitimise deviations, offering scant resistance and developing strategies to atomize forestry institutions and competing among themselves to obtain the rank of interlocutors with foreign experts, international organizations, or capitalist organizations.

Thus, contrary to what some may think, the significant internal factors to improve decision-making in the forestry administrations of Central Africa are not only quantitative (the amount of personnel and the importance of financial means) but also qualitative, referring to the quality of the people and the institutional context. For example the forestry administration in the Congolese Republic, which in 1960 did not include any professional foresters, now has over 200; its budget, insignificant in 1960 is to-day various millions of CFA francs. Nearly all the Central African countries have evolved similarly. However, forest management in these countries is presently much worse than in 1960 if one considers the generalization of corruption, forest degradation, the decrease in wildlife or violence within forestry administrations.

External factors affecting decision-making

In addition to the above-mentioned factors, globalization and the insertion of Central African countries in increasingly dense networks of international, friendly or shared interest links have positive but also coercive effects that weaken their commitment with the forest ecosystem cause. This is due to western hegemony and to the culture of international relations sociology in the western countries and to the African people's scant feelings of nationalism.

To this is added the fact that diplomacy has considerable influence on decision-making processes in Central African forestry administrations. Official western diplomacy, in spite of appearing to be of a "generous nature," has another aspect that should be made known, particularly in the field of forestry competitiveness. In fact, this diplomacy is usually at the service of the forces which, in the past, caused the weakening of the structures and impoverishment of the region; forces whose primary concern is personal interest but that orchestrate the power of their own State and international conventions; forces that, in the field of forest conservation develop transversal strategies in a struggle against other powers. So far Central African diplomacy has been absolutely disorderly and impotent and has left forest ecosystems (almost) entirely open to actors that influence the decisions of African forestry administrations towards bowing to their interests.

As a complement to official diplomacy we find "non-governmental diplomacies." These do not limit themselves to activities carried out through organizations of the same name. They have existed for centuries, have multiple dimensions and directions and have numerous and diverse actors. It should be noted that here "fluency of speech" and rhetoric contribute to achieve their objectives. Seduced by their nobility and the generous inspiration which they make a show of, Central African countries overlook the distortions they induce in forestry administration decisions. In fact there are many good souls who claim to be defending the forests of the Congo

Basin, but at the end of the day, what they are doing, in erudite language, is to orchestrate African people, promote corruption and cronyism or support dishonest politicians. For example an African official in an international NGO who fabricated a false mission report was “catapulted” to the post of auditor of this organization. Another African, this time a competent one, found that if he wanted to obtain a subregional post it was under the condition he aligned himself with the position of a Minister who, if our sources are true, was not exactly a referent in matters of good political and economic governance.

Conclusions

First of all, it would be advisable to strengthen the capacity of the African people to define for themselves the functions of their forestry administrations. Secondly, it should be made clear that the fact of reflecting on these administrations, analyzing the factors that affect them, including diplomacy, is not an intellectual or diplomatic heresy. Furthermore, this approach is not entirely new, it is a prolongation of the efforts made for decades now by numerous authors, mainly in the field of international relations sociology and it provides social visibility to factors that are frequently ignored but which explain to a great extent the reasons for the ineffectiveness of so many measures adopted at conferences, seminars and workshops.

This is a timely approach, considering that Central African forestry administrations are much more open than they were in 1960. In this context, the inclusion of African people's concerns in the functions of forestry administrations will be favoured, not because of the discretion of the actors but because of the support of public opinion and of companies. This implies that the rationalization of decision-making processes requires, at the forefront, public training on the sociology of these administrations and on international relations.

Furthermore, when actors in the so-called sustainable development only manage to provoke the rejection of the honest people they are attempting to help, it is hard to affirm that they are aiming, as their mission would suppose, at promoting an improvement in the living conditions in Central Africa. In this case, unless the international community makes an effort to remove them from African forests, it will be participating in poor forest governance and contributing to unsustainable development.

Finally, those who examine the function of the administrations studied in this analysis will agree that it is necessary to build national, subregional and regional markets for quality forest products. Such action will doubtlessly be insufficient to achieve that the forestry administrations arrange themselves in function of the needs and aspirations to welfare of the inhabitants of Central Africa. However these are important advances that should be strengthened in the future thanks to a better organization of the beneficiaries, to rational experience and, above all, to the justified support of public opinion.

By Assitou Ndinga, e-mail: ndinga_assitou@yahoo.fr. (Ndinga, A., *Gestion des forêts d'Afrique centrale. Avec ou Sans les concernés?* L'Harmattan, collection Études Africaines, Paris, 2005).

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- Costa Rica: Gringos landing at Tortuga Landing

A computer. That is what the US citizen Paul Lambert, representative of the Tortuga Landing company offered the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE) as compensation for having built a 105 metre long and 4 metres wide road and for having eliminated natural regeneration in a forest in the terrestrial maritime area of Quepos, a Central Pacific locality. This occurred during a “conciliation” hearing which took place on 17 February at the Environmental Administrative Tribunal (file No. 184-05-3-TAA).

Previously, and unaware of the road and the felling, on 16 May 2005, the Costa Rican Federation for the Conservation of the Environment (Federación Costarricense para la Conservación del Ambiente - FECON) had lodged a complaint against Paul Lambert (File No. 05-007294-647-PE) with the General Attorney of the Republic, requesting the collaboration of the authorities to investigate an apparent case of fraud involving the

sale of plots in the above mentioned forest, which is part of the State-owned national heritage and therefore inalienable and non-lapsing. That is to say: it is not private property.

The web site www.latitude9.com published an advertisement for Tortuga Landing, offering the paradisiacal forest on the shores of the tropical sea at Punta Quepos and showing a sketch of the urbanization project comprising fifteen exclusive plots, nine of which located in the terrestrial maritime area. The plots had the word SOLD written on them with the exception of one, valued at US\$ 450,000.

The text in English announced: "Last site up for sale at Tortuga Landing! Tortuga Landing is a *private* community located in an exuberant tropical forest on a *private* creek... The *private* sandy beach is one of the last Pre-Columbian points of arrival of marine turtles, preserved in a natural state... One of these plots, approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a hectare, is located on the southern side of the beach and surrounded by virgin forest. One of the last sea-front opportunities in the area!" (Following the complaint, the text and graphic illustrations of the advertisement were removed from the internet page and replaced by others.)

When I learnt about the complaint to the Environmental Tribunal I asked to be included as a part of it and thus I learnt of other revealing data:

- In 1998, Paul Lambert commissioned the preparation of the Regulatory Plan for Playa Para (a land planning project) that only covers part of the beach (700 metres) and that is tailor-made to fit the Tortuga Landing project. Presently this Regulatory Plan is being contested.

- Neither Tortuga Landing nor Paul Lambert have an approved concession in Playa Para.

- In order to approve the concession to Paul Lambert, the Municipality of Aguirre conditioned it to the building of a road.

- Prior to his appointment as President of the Environmental Tribunal, Lic. Carlos Briceño Obando carried out functions in the Presidency of the Republic and in the Municipality of Aguirre.

- To advise him on environmental matters, Paul Lambert relies on the services of the company "Alternativas de Gestión Ambiental Sociedad Anónima" - A.G.A.S.A. (Alternatives to Environmental Management Corporation), which includes members of the Costa Rican environmental organization Apreflofas.

I conclude with this reflection: In this increasingly polarized Costa Rica, it is not a coincidence that the three coastal provinces (Guanacaste, Puntarenas and Limón), the richest in biodiversity and where tourism brings in the most foreign currency, should paradoxically be the provinces showing the lowest rates of human development. In order to satisfy the needs of some under the pretext of "promoting ecotourism and attracting foreign investment," turtles and natural wealth in general are irresponsibly being replaced by gringos, dollars...and computers.

By Juan Figuerola, e-mail: juaneco@costarricense.cr

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- Gambia: Bee-keeping as a tool for forest protection and restoration

In the early 1900s Gambia was covered by dense and almost impenetrable forests. Today there are only some few remnants of primary forest left, with 78% of the remaining forest area classified as "degraded tree and shrub savannah vegetation." The main cause of this forest degradation process can be traced back to the introduction of groundnut (peanut), which became the main export-oriented cash crop, mostly aimed at supplying the French market with industrial and cooking oil.

In The Gambia, the easiest and cheapest way for preparing the land for cultivation is the use of fire, and at end of the dry season people are actively setting fire to small and large areas of land. In many cases, those fires spread to the nearby tree and shrub vegetation, thus further contributing to forest degradation. Fire prevention and control thus appear to be essential for the protection of the remaining forest areas.

In a recent visit to the country, the WRM interviewed Amadou Ceesay (CEO) and Ousman Joof (Production manager) from the National Beekeepers Association of The Gambia (NBAG), who explained the importance of their activity –coupled with community forest management- in the conservation and restoration of forests, particularly regarding fire prevention.

They explained that community forest management is a long term project and that people need to identify income generating activities within those forests. According to Ceesay, “one of the best identified activities is beekeeping. The moment they have their equipment, in only 2-3 months they can begin to receive earnings, and beekeeping provides more than the annual farming income.”

The result is that people are then interested in protecting the forest, because they need enough trees and flowers for their bees, so they sustain existing ones and plant more. With hives, community forests are well protected from forest fires, not only because beekeepers wish to maintain their source of pollen, but also because they need to protect the hives themselves -located inside the forest- from fires. Ousman Joof says: “We serve as forest guardians: no cutting, no burning, more planting. We need year-round flowers, so we plant different species.”

The activity is promoted in partnership between the NBAG, the Forestry Department and the community forest committees. While the former takes care of training and marketing of the honey, the Forestry Department assists in the provision of equipment and transportation.

It is also important to note that beekeeping and honey consumption are not alien to Gambian culture. On the contrary, there is a long tradition in the use of wild honey and in most communities there is traditional beekeeping knowledge. The bees themselves are native to Africa, thus being very resistant to disease. According to the NBAG, “the idea of incorporating beekeeping into community forests came from the farmers themselves, and most of the honey produced is sold in Gambia, where it is also used in medication”, emphasizing that “every household has honey.” People are now thinking of planting trees to realize other incomes: wax, fruit, jams (with honey and mango), firewood.

In words of Amadou Ceesay, beekeeping “is the fastest and cheapest way of protecting forests, because local communities benefit from it.”

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- India: Joint Parliamentary Committee Report - A Victory for the Struggling Forest People

The National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers (NFFPFW) welcomes the report submitted by the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on the draft Forest Rights Bill and is hopeful that the Central Cabinet will approve it and will send it to the Parliament. NFFPFW further acknowledges the role played by the Chairman and members of the JPC, and contribution of all other social movements, struggle groups of forest people and movements in shaping this Bill through their suggestions, and submissions before the JPC.

The present United Progressive Alliance government led by the Congress Party introduced “The Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill, 2005” in the Parliament on 13 December 2005 promising to correct the injustice meted out to the tribals in the past. Though most of the civil society groups and struggle groups and movements welcomed the move by the Government, it was pointed out by many that the draft Bill was limited in scope and restricted rights over forest land to the scheduled tribes only thereby depriving and violating the rights of non-scheduled tribe forest dwellers. The draft Bill was also criticised for undermining the role of the gram sabha [village council], bringing in a spectra of large scale eviction in having 1980 as the cut of

date and keeping the option open for displacement of thousands from the National Park and Sanctuaries.

NFFPFW, fighting for rights of forest-dependent people since its inception in 1998 while welcoming the draft Bill, raised the demand for a more comprehensive legislation on forests, and was perhaps, one of the first groups in the country to publicly voice its concern on the limited scope of the Bill and demanded that non-scheduled tribe forest dwellers should be brought in to the ambit of the draft Bill.

The NFFPFW, along with its constituent groups and the North Eastern groups, also voiced the complex nature of the forests, its laws and relationship between the forest dependent and forests in the north eastern states that was not reflected in the draft. Since then, NFFPFW along with other struggle groups and movements, consistently echoed its concerns to policymakers, interacted with political parties and members of Parliament, and legislators. NFFPFW made a detailed presentation of its suggested amendments to the draft Bill before the Joint Parliamentary Committee.

This is certainly a moment of victory and reaffirms our faith on peoples' power. However, we at NFFPFW are aware about the new challenges it throws open now. The biggest challenge will be to force both the Houses of the Parliament to pass the Bill, and in the time of implementation of the Act at the ground level as there is bound to be conflicts and enough preparations need to be done to deal with such situations.

NFFPFW believes that this is a part of the larger issue of livelihood and ownership of forest resources and there are much larger challenges hovering around implications of climate change, usurping of common property rights, destruction of natural forests in favour of plantations, and commodification of forest for global trade. Increased interventions by International Financial Institutions in environment sector in the country is taking away the space of communities and facilitating a process of commodifying these sectors.

There is a need to strengthen the collective struggle and defeat all those efforts which are in conflict with the lives and livelihoods and dignity of the forest dwelling communities. NFFPFW pledges to carry forward that struggle for the rights of forest communities.

By Ashok Chowdhury, sent by Mamata Dash, National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers (NFFPFW), e-mail: mamata_dash@yahoo.com

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- From Mexico to Ecuador – twinned in history, memory and resistance

Many letters have been sent from abroad to the Government of Ecuador in the framework of the campaign to support Ecuadorian social and indigenous organizations that are endeavouring to avoid the adoption in that country of a legislation that will imply the expansion of large scale monoculture tree plantations (see the article on Ecuador in this bulletin). But we want to publish the full version of the letter sent by the Council of Traditional Indigenous Doctors and Midwives of Chiapas (the Compitch) because it reflects the feeling of many and is dictated by the heart of a Latin American people that at this time beats in unison with the Ecuadorian people.

“Dr. Ana Alban Mora, Minister of the Environment of Ecuador and... the others

We are grass-roots Mexicans, indigenous Mayas, inhabitants of the forests of Chiapas, all equally Latin American.

We are members of the largest (but not necessarily most important) organization of traditional doctors of Chiapas, a Mexican South-Eastern Federal State. We come from different political affiliations, from all religious creeds and all the indigenous tongues still spoken in this State.

There are not many of us, but believe it or not, in 2001, after two years of resistance, we got the IBCG United

States bio-prospecting project cancelled. One year ago, 24 hours after a lightening march, we also managed the cancellation of the State bill to define (corporatively) the biological wealth of the State. A few months ago we were able to neutralize the bill on a federal law for access to genetic resources. The reason for our nonconformity and mobilization has always been the same: the lack of consultation with the interested parties, in this case us, and others like us, the social majorities.

They tell us that the same is happening in Ecuador, that they are not convening the grass roots organizations to participate in a process of public discussion affecting their natural resources - in this case forests - but they do convene the business class, the moneyed class.

We will not make a formal, administrative petition, asking for the bill to be suspended or modified. But just take a mirror, look at it and look well at what it reflects, towards the past and towards the future, as we should always see in a mirror. If this mirror only reflects the present, that is to say, permanence of the same, then you loose and our grass-roots Ecuadorian companions win, because you know, our mirrors from the grass roots reflect memory and times to come, that is to say, where the face they are looking at comes from and what is waiting for it on the basis of the face that is looking at it. But they also win, we win because with us, the difference is, madam Minister, that nobody pays us to defend the wealth of our homelands that we safeguard for everyone's happiness and because, contrary to you, by doing this we multiply ourselves.

For IUCN, FAO, World Bank, Tropenbos International, Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, and annexes, we add some respectful prayers because, in view of their common track record, we conclude that the above reflection will not be enough..

From the faithful mirror of history with time, ours and that of your peoples:

The Board of Directors of the Council of Traditional Indigenous Doctors and Midwives of Chiapas (the Compitch).

President: Manuel Pérez Jiménez, Secretary: Domingo López Sántiz, Treasurer: Francisca Pérez Pérez

Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico, this 20th day of June, 2006"

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COMMUNITIES AND TREE MONOCULTURES

- Brazil: Indigenous representatives campaign in Europe to recover their land occupied by Aracruz Celulose

Paulo Henrique de Oliveira, a Tupinikim leader of Caieiras Velhas and Coordinator of the Articulação de Povos e Organizações Indígenas do Nordeste, Minas Gerais e Espírito Santo - APOINME (Articulation of Indigenous People and Organizations from the Northeast, Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo), and Antônio Carvalho, a Guarani chief, travelled to Europe in April/May 2006, to publicise their struggle to demarcate Tupinikim and Guarani lands in Espírito Santo (see WRM Bulletins N° 94, 96, 102, 103) . They spent three weeks travelling to Norway, Holland, Germany and Austria where they talked to various groups about the 11,009 hectares of their land currently in the possession of Aracruz Celulose --Brazil's giant pulp producer. The following is Paulo de Oliveira's account of the trip.

"We left Brazil on 25 April, aiming to show what is happening with indigenous people in Brazil, and more specifically in the State of Espírito Santo, where the indigenous territory is occupied by a multinational company, Aracruz Celulose S.A., in which some European countries, among other countries, hold shares.

In Norway, a country which invests 34 million Norwegian crowns (approximately 4.5 million Euros) in the company, we held a meeting with the Bank of Norway, with members of the Parliament and with the Council of

Ethics of the Government Pension Fund. We asked them to withdraw all the investments they hold in the company.

Some of the factories that buy pulp from Aracruz are based in Germany. There we took part in meetings with some of these companies, with the Forest Stewardship Council (part of Aracruz's operations were certified by FSC as well managed), with the Ministry of Development, with members of the Parliament of the Green Party and with some NGOs. We talked about the disrespect shown by Aracruz Celulose for the indigenous people and for the Brazilian Constitution, which guarantees Indigenous Rights. We asked the various people and organisation that we met to put pressure on Aracruz so that it returns the lands, respects the decision of the Minister of Justice and that the Brazilian government demarcates the Tupinikim and Guarani lands as soon as possible and enforces the Brazilian Constitution.

During the trip, we were able to have many discussions with other NGOs, to strengthen our struggle and our organization, as well as to see that the Europeans are very sensitive towards the indigenous cause and that they make all efforts to help us. For example, the children of a school we visited willingly polished shoes to raise funds to help us in our struggle.

However, I hope that the politicians, the companies, the Ministry of Development, the FSC and the Bank we visited are able to fulfil their promises, and that Aracruz returns the lands. I hope that the government speeds up the process of demarcation and that we may continue our struggle, helping our brothers and sisters who fight for their lands, for their rights, for their dignity, because our struggle does not end here. This is just the beginning of a struggle for a better life and a better planet."

The struggle of the Tupinikin and Guarani peoples seems to bear fruit. Such has been the international discredit of Aracruz for its usurpation of indigenous land that the company itself has recently announced that it decided to "request the voluntary temporary withdrawal of FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification of the forests [eucalyptus plantations] pertaining to its Guaiba Unit located in the State of Rio Grande do Sul. This certification, which was obtained before the acquisition of this unit, had previously been revalidated three consecutive times and was to expire in December 2006."

What has this to do with the struggle in Espírito Santo? Aracruz itself acknowledges the link. In its press release (at <http://www.aracruz.com.br/web/en/imprensa/noticias/noticias178.htm>) it states that "some stakeholders had expressed concern to the FSC about the revalidation of the UG certificate — not related to forestry management in Rio Grande do Sul, but rather a land dispute between the company's Barra do Riacho Unit (more than 2,000 km away) and indigenous communities in the State of Espírito Santo". This is clearly a damage control operation. In this way, Aracruz is acknowledging the success of the indigenous peoples' campaign in generating international support to their struggle to recover their lands and is trying to avoid broadening opposition within the FSC certification arena.

While this issue is developing, Aracruz tries to conceal its real face with big money that can hire broadcasting spaces to capture huge global audiences. A new nationwide propaganda in the current World Football Cup shows national celebrities, like former football player Pelé, playing a ball to each other, while a voice says: "Aracruz: fazendo um papel bonito lá fora", meaning in English "Aracruz: playing a nice role out there" (there's a world play since in Portuguese the word "papel" has the double meaning of "role" and "paper", the end product of the cellulose produced by Aracruz).

Nothing more far from reality, and local communities know it well. On June 16, in Jacutinga, a community at Linhares, north of Espírito Santo, seven tractors of the company were put in motion to pull down part of the Brazilian Mata Atlântica forest. The action was carried out on a holiday, but was notwithstanding deterred by the firm resistance of peasants from the Movement of Small Peasants who have been protecting the area for more than twenty years (see report from the Alert against the Green Desert Movement at http://www.wrm.org.uy/countries/Brazil/Aracruz_World_Cup.doc).

Not certifiable, not reliable. Aracruz should not be viable.

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- Brazil: Impacts of eucalyptus plantations on women

The social and environmental impacts of monoculture eucalyptus plantations have been well documented in many countries. However, the gender dimension has usually been overlooked, thus hiding the differentiated impacts they have on women. The following quotes from a research carried out in Brazil on Aracruz Cellulose' plantations and pulp mill operation are therefore very useful to shed some light on the issue and to encourage other people to look further into these less well-known impacts.

"Indigenous women, Afrodescendants (Quilombolas) and peasants, who used to live with their families and communities in the places taken over by eucalyptus plantations, had their socioeconomic role well defined. As reported by Mr. Antônio dos Santos, from the Indian settlement of Pau Brasil, Indian women had specific tasks. They produced certain types of handicrafts such as sieves, for example, while the men made bowls and oars. Together with the men, they worked on the land planting and hoeing, and also fished. The Quilombola women, for example, produced bijú --a typical food of this population-- to feed their families and to be sold and to produce income.

With the arrival of the eucalyptus plantations, the women, like the other inhabitants of the region, experienced the changes in the organization of their territory and of their place in the community; in what they produced and how it was produced. Their socioeconomic role in the family and community underwent alterations and several of these women, after having lost their land, were forced to seek another place to live and work. They migrated with their children and relatives to urban regions, close to the place where they used to live, which is the case of many families that moved to the cities of São Mateus and Aracruz. Others sought the metropolitan region of the state, increasing the size of shanty towns, and to continue caring for their houses and families, exchanged rural activities for those of maids, cleaning women or washerwomen of urban middle and upper class families.

The women that still resist in the midst of eucalyptus also continue taking care of their homes and families, but at the same time, face more difficulties than before. For example, the rivers and streams that were used for washing clothing, and from where they used to take drinking water and fish in, are mostly contaminated. Accordingly, the members of the family, including the women, are forced to go to other places to obtain drinking water. Doralim Serafim dos Santos, a Quilombola, says that 'nobody here washes clothes in this stream, since the clothes become yellow and filthy. When I was growing up we used to clean fish in the stream and the water was crystal clear'.

Another problem is the lack of native forest, a source of the raw material necessary to create handicrafts. In addition, the contamination of the soil caused by the use of pesticides on plantations jeopardizes the planting of medicinal herbs by women. Medicinal herbs are used frequently by traditional populations to prevent and combat illnesses. The shortage of good and sufficient land also complicates the coordination of domestic tasks and agricultural production. Nowadays women have to cover long distances to work on third party plantations, in the coffee and sugar cane fields, for example. These women are more subject to occupational accidents. It is also worth adding that today, in the state of Espírito Santo, 26% of the families, i.e., 800,000 homes, have women as heads of the family. This means that Espírito Santo is one of the Brazilian states with the greatest number of homes headed by women in proportionate terms. This item of data indicates that paid work for women has ceased to be merely a form of boosting the family income and has become vital for the subsistence of women and of their families.

There is also the experience of indigenous women that, with the loss of their conditions of subsistence, sought alternative ways of contributing to the family financially. Some have become the maids of the bosses of the company Aracruz. However, in 1998, after the process of self-demarcation of indigenous lands, they were discharged in retaliation. They had to go after other types of work outside the Indian settlements. However, some of them were luckier and managed to get jobs as teachers and health agents in the actual settlements where they live. All this effort on the part of women to contribute towards the family income has produced changes in their traditional role, which has been affecting the entire community to a certain extent. On the other

hand, in spite of the ruin produced by Aracruz's large agro-industrial project, the company seeks to be close to this population at all times, organizing aid actions. One of the last alternatives that we have news of is the organization of professionalizing courses for these women, with the objective of making them into manicures, pedicures and waitresses, professions foreign to this population.

Another situation that merits emphasis is that of the reduced quantity of women from neighboring communities that work at the company Aracruz. It is not surprising that in the year 1998, only 6.8% of the company's employees were women, according to data from the time.

Nevertheless, most of the women that worked at Aracruz performed cleaning services, worked in the administrative sector of the plant, or in the nursery and in planting of seedlings, perhaps because women are supposed to be more qualified for this type of activity that requires careful manual work. However, nowadays this activity is already almost totally mechanized. The majority of these services are now outsourced.

In work on the land, women also suffered occupational accidents like men. One example of an accident occurred on July 14, 1986, when a former worker from Aracruz Celulose was descending a 'grota' with a box of 30 eucalyptus seedlings, weighing 45 kilos. She fell and broke her spine. After having been transferred to an office cleaning job, she was fired as she was unable to stand up any more. Now aged 51, she cannot even carry a chair and needs to control the pain in her spine with medication. She has never managed to get another job.

Often, however, women, in an invisible role, had to care for their husbands, sick and the victims of accidents caused by the work carried out on the plantations. Doralina says that 'there were days when he came home with his eyes hurting and was almost unable to get to sleep at night, then his eyes got really bad, he couldn't see properly, and did a few tests'. There are cases of widows of ex-workers from the company Aracruz and outsourced companies that need to maintain the house alone, without any support".

Excerpted from the research "Eucalyptus Plantations and Pulp Production. Promises of Jobs and Destruction of Work. The case of Aracruz Celulose in Brazil", by Alacir De Nadai, Winfridus Overbeek, and Luiz Alberto Soares, commissioned by WRM and The Network Alert against the Green Desert, May 2005, <http://www.wrm.org.uy/countries/Brazil/fase.html>

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- Colombia: Community challenges multinational company Smurfit Carton de Colombia

Colombia is involved in the same process taking place in several Latin American countries regarding the establishment of fast-growing monoculture tree plantations.

Recently the wrongly-called "General Forest Law" was adopted, or as the environmentalists have christened it, the three-lie law: it is not a law, it is not general, nor is it about forests. In order to be a law it ought to serve the interests of Colombian society as a whole and not those of the major forestry companies. In turn, it would be a general law if it were to cover other forest-related issues such as community use or ecosystem restoration –just to name a few examples– and not just forest exploitation. Finally, it is not a forest law but a law of an economic nature that enables and facilitates the entry of large timber companies to exploit forests which, in the framework of this law, are seen as mere merchandise.

At the same time, a complex network of actors, ranging from international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, together with various "cooperation" agencies from different countries –Japan, Germany, the Netherlands, USA, just to name a few– have appeared on the scene to prepare the ground just as they have done in various other Latin American countries.

The General Forest Law comes hand in hand with many evils for Colombian forests and the Colombian people, among them opening doors for the establishment of fast-growing tree plantations.

Presently Colombia has approximately 200,000 hectares of pine and eucalyptus plantations. The main company operating in the country is the transnational corporation Smurfit Carton de Colombia. This company owns large tracts of tree plantations --40,000 hectares—and a factory producing cardboard and paper. It also has a track record of violation of human rights, deforestation and contamination (see articles published in previous bulletins no. 77, 43).

The company owns areas planted with pine and eucalyptus trees in the Cauca Valley. Presently it is planning to increase their extension in the Valley area and for this purpose intends to enter the Municipality of Guacari, more precisely in the Vereda of Santa Rosa de Tapias, Alto Pomares sector.

However, the company had not reckoned with finding an organized community, unwilling to allow the company to enter its lands.

The area in question is an extremely rich high zone, where sources of water spring and serve 17 communities comprising 1,500 peasant families who inhabit this area. These peasant families are smallholders, owning an average of 4-5 "plazas" (1 plaza = 6400 metres of land). The predominant crop on their farms is coffee, but it is also combined with a great diversity of other crops, such as vegetables, fruit-trees, bamboo (which they use to build their houses). They also combine animal husbandry, breeding animals such as pigs, cattle and poultry. They obtain almost all the necessary elements for subsistence from their land and work.

Water –which the springs in the uplands provide– is a central element enabling them to produce food on their farms. They know that the entry of Smurfit in the uplands and the establishment of fast-growing tree plantations imply the depletion of a resource that is presently shared among the peasants and essential to maintain their food sovereignty.

Smurfit intends to enter these highlands by associating itself with one of the large landowners still remaining in the area. This family owns 320 hectares of land. A first step by the company to enter the zone will be to occupy these 320 hectares and then advance purchasing lands until the peasants who resist selling their properties are surrounded and finally obliged to abandon the land.

When the peasants found out about the company's plans they started to organize themselves, obtain information and lodge complaints with the various entities involved in an attempt to curb the company's progress. At various meetings they had strong confrontations with the company representatives, who threatened the peasants and told them that Smurfit "will enter come what may."

Smurfit invited the peasants to visit its "planted forests" and to show them the innumerable benefits they will bring. They visited the plantations in 4 wheel-drive vehicles, together with company technicians. They saw nobody in the 4,500 hectares visited, a situation strongly contrasting with the situation in the areas they presently inhabit. The silence of the plantations bewildered them. They saw no birds, not a single cricket, not a single house, the earth was no longer earth but stones... The company guided the tour and did not allow them to talk to the inhabitants of the area they visited. It was then that they decided to organize their own tour of the same zone with their own resources to see with their own eyes and not those of the company and to talk to the local communities on the impacts of the plantations. They corroborated what they already knew: Smurfit must be stopped!

Recently, neighbours from various Municipalities in the Cauca Valley affected by monoculture tree plantations, among which the neighbours of Guacari, have gathered to set up a Front for

Resistance to the Plantations.

The challenges are great and the powers that they must face are very strong. However, to unite, to inform themselves and to weave networks is the only way to checkmate Smurfit!

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- Ecuador: A strange "dialogue" for the promotion of tree monocultures

In May 2003, we said that "In nearly all countries, large-scale monoculture tree plantations have been imposed and implemented once the laws of each country have been changed in such a way as to enable national and foreign companies to obtain all kinds of benefits, such as direct and indirect subsidies, tax breaks and even soft loans and refunds for large-scale plantations." (See the article on Ecuador in WRM Bulletin N° 70.)

At that time, the World Rainforest Movement witnessed firsthand the pressures exerted on the government of Ecuador to adopt such measures. We participated in a seminar/workshop organized by the Ecuadorian Ministry of the Environment to formulate a "National Plan on Forestation and Reforestation". Because of the way the event was structured, however, it ended up being monopolized by forestry companies, which led the small number of Ecuadorian civil society, peasant and indigenous organizations in attendance to issue a declaration expressing their viewpoints. The declaration stressed, among other points, that for peasant and indigenous communities, large-scale commercial tree plantations, and especially monoculture plantations, are not a development alternative; on the contrary, they cause such problems as:

- * The deforestation of native forest areas to make way for the introduction of tree plantations, which has been a regular practice in "reforestation" projects.
- * The decrease in water resources as a result of the plantations already established, particularly in the páramo highland region.
- * Reduced soil fertility, as the result of the replacement of native species and biodiversity with monoculture plantations of alien tree species.
- * The appropriation of community lands through leases and mortgages, as in the case of the communities that have signed their lands over to forestry companies under mortgages with terms of up to 99 years.
- * The purchase of vast areas of land by transnational corporations, as in the case of Mitsubishi in Muisne.
- * The loss of biodiversity and changes in flora and fauna, a consequence seen in all tree plantation projects.
- * The increased risk of fire, as in the case of Sig Sig.
- * The reduction of conservation areas, as in the case of Cotopaxi National Park.

More than three years later, another twist of the screw is threatening to take Ecuador one step closer to the adoption of legislation to promote large-scale monoculture tree plantations. The Ministry of the Environment is conducting a process it calls a National Dialogue on the Forest Management System in Ecuador, which includes the organization of five regional workshops and a national workshop, and is aimed at implementing the new System as of this July. This process has been harshly criticized by numerous Ecuadorian social and indigenous organizations, who view it as a "dialogue" totally devoid of popular participation. These groups joined together to send a letter to the minister of the environment on June 9, in which they demand, among other things, the immediate suspension of this process. (The complete letter is available in Spanish at <http://www.wrm.org.uy/paises/Ecuador/CartaMAE.pdf>)

The organizations stress: "This process does not include important actors who are directly affected by the destruction of forests, their grassroots organizations and their national organizations. The regional dialogue, held in the city of Esmeraldas illustrates the lack of participation by citizens' and community groups. The sector most widely represented in these processes is the forestry industry. This is a serious cause for concern, because its representatives cannot serve as judges and parties in the discussion of an issue as sensitive for the country as the control of deforestation. This representation demonstrates that these meetings are aimed more at formulating a forestry policy, expanding the area devoted to tree plantations (deregulation) and increasing incentives for plantations. This blatantly benefits the forestry companies and does nothing to

address the fundamental aspect of the process: forest management control.”

“Adopting a forest management policy, in our view, should involve the following aspects:

“1. The active participation and consent of the communities affected, their grassroots organizations and their national organizations.

“2. Conserving the country's last surviving primary forests, fully prohibiting their exploitation, and enforcing compliance with the legislation that protects Ecuador's national forest heritage.

“3. Imposing a moratorium on the logging industry until its social, environmental and economic impacts on the country have been determined.

“4. Prohibiting the expansion of tree plantations, particularly eucalyptus, pine and oil palm plantations, which result in the loss of primary forests and agricultural land, as well as in serious impacts on water resources and the lives of local populations.”

The organizations that signed the letter maintain that “the forestry sector is attempting to establish a new forestry policy to suit its own purposes, while completely disregarding the need for an authentic forest management policy, which our country currently lacks.”

On these grounds, the organizations have withdrawn from the process and called on the authorities to “convene a dialogue with genuine participation, representation and consent, in which we can make decisions on the management of our resources, and which does not create the conditions for the usual power groups to continue destroying the country's natural heritage.”

It is still not too late for Ecuador. This is why an international action was organized to support Ecuadorian social and indigenous groups in their efforts to prevent the adoption of legislation that would promote the expansion of large-scale monoculture tree plantations (see at <http://www.wrm.org.uy/countries/Ecuador/ForestryLaw/index.html>). Around the world, those who understand that these plantations only benefit large companies, while offering the local population nothing but disastrous social, environmental and economic impacts, have shown their solidarity by sending letters in support of the Ecuadorian peoples' efforts to stop this legislation, before it really is too late.

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- Indonesia: A call to cancel plans to develop 3 million hectares of oil palm plantations

On April 12, 2006, the report “The Kalimantan Border Oil Palm Mega-project” was released to show the plans of the Indonesian government to develop up to 3 million hectares of oil palm plantations on the island of Borneo, of which 2 million hectares along the Kalimantan-Malaysia border and 1 million hectares elsewhere -- in areas still heavily forested and inhabited by indigenous communities--, to cater for international demand for cheap palm oil to meet the domestic and global demand for bio-fuel.

An earlier plan had been launched in Indonesia to develop the world's largest oil palm plantation --2 million hectares-- in a 5-10 kilometre band along the border of Kalimantan and Malaysia. The oil palm mega-project, presented under the banner of “bringing prosperity, security and environmental protection to the Kalimantan border area”, turned sour when a business plan developed by the Indonesian State Plantation Corporation (PTPN) began to circulate. This document contained a map that showed beyond doubt how the 1.8 million hectare oil palm project would trash the primary forests of three National Parks, cut through rugged slopes and mountains utterly unsuitable for oil palm cultivation and annihilate the customary rights land of the indigenous Dayak communities in the border area.

Those plans were met by several campaigns and lobby by the Indonesian civil society as well as international

protest which forced the Indonesian government to revise its stance and make changes acknowledging that there were conservation concerns to be taken into account. However, the new report reveals that the initial plans are not yet off the table and that oil palm expansion continues. Palm oil companies have already moved into the border area in many places, and plans to continue the expansion into the Kalimantan border area are still very much alive. The planners of the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) found a solution to the problem that the new expansion plans cannot be accommodated within the immediate border area, where the total area suitable for oil palm cultivation is negligible: they simply changed the definition of what comprises the border zone by extending its width from 5-10 km to 100 km.

The area deemed suitable for oil palm includes forests used by thousands of people who depend on them for their livelihoods and are inhabited by indigenous communities. In the new larger border zone, a special regulation (Presidential Decree No. 36/2005) would allow the government to take land away from communities that do not want oil palm plantations in the name of "public interest".

Within the immediate and extended border area, few indigenous communities are aware of the government's development plans. Statements issued by local communities and their village leaders indicate that of those who are familiar with the plans strongly, and univocally, oppose oil palm development in their areas. Of particular concern to the customary rights land is Presidential Regulation (Pepres Nr. 36/2005), which allows the government to force the release of land in view of the "public interest". Since the border project is justified by reasons of the public interest (security, prosperity and environmental protection) and involves the Indonesian Armed Forces, the government may opt to use this regulation to force oil palm plantations in the border area. Plans of the Ministry of Forestry and the Ministry of Agriculture to promote cash crops, other than palm oil (such as rubber, coffee, tea, cacao, pepper etc) in the border area could deliver benefits, but these plans will encounter resistance from local communities if the government intends to bring in large investors from outside to plant these crops on customary rights land.

Friends of the Earth Indonesia (WALHI) and the local organisation Sawit Watch ("Oilpalm Watch") are calling on the Indonesian government to officially cancel the border mega-plantation plan.

Article based on information from: "European Hunger for Palm Oil and Timber Triggers Expansion of Destructive Palm Oil Plantations on Kalimantan", from Friends of the Earth Netherlands, Sawit Watch, Friends of the Earth Indonesia (WALHI), Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland, http://www.eng.walhi.or.id/kampanye/hutan/konversi/060412_palmoilplantation_/; "The Kalimantan Border Oil Palm Mega-project", Eric Wakker, AIDEnvironment, Commissioned by Milieudedefensie – Friends of the Earth Netherlands and the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), www.milieudedefensie.nl/globalisering/publicaties/rapporten/KalimantanOilPalmMega-lowres.pdf

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- Mozambique: Paving the way for industrial tree plantations

In May 2006, the Mozambique Ministry of Agriculture submitted for discussion the document "National Reforestation Strategy" (the complete document in Portuguese can be found at http://www.wrm.org.uy/paises/Mozambique/Estrategia_Reflorestamento.doc). As stated in the document, the bases to promote the establishment of tree plantations in the country involving fast-growing species are set out.

Following the pattern present in all the other countries that have introduced large-scale monoculture tree plantations, the proposal comes with the promise of generating jobs and eradicating poverty, contributing to national development particularly in rural zones.

Similarly, it starts with what we could say is the "original sin" of this whole package, which so far FAO has transmitted in proposal after proposal: the identification of monoculture tree plantations with forests. And it is thus that the Mozambique project promises that the tree plantations will serve to: preserve soils and water (!),

restore fragile and degraded ecosystems and increase levels of productivity (!), improve environmental quality (!) and increase social awareness on the value of nature!

The World Rainforest Movement has extensively documented this issue and our world campaign against large-scale monoculture tree plantations is aimed at disseminating and alerting on their nefarious effects, precisely and especially on soils and water, but also on rural populations and the real economy of people.

The project announces that 7 million hectares have been identified as potentially fit for forestation in the provinces of Sofala, Manica, Zambezia, Nampula and Niassa. It proposes to establish at least 2 million hectares of tree plantations over the coming 20 years. It also announces that the zoning of close on 3 million hectares of land fit for forestation will be made and that "it should be available for potential investors for the development of industrial plantations."

In order to attract investors, the projects proposes that forestry legislation should provide incentives for industrial tree plantations and for exports to the emerging markets, particularly those of the Pacific and Indian Ocean, especially China, India and other Asian countries that are avid for raw material to produce pulp and paper to feed the needs of a wasteful consumer model.

Obviously and as affirmed by the document itself, the campaign for the promotion of industrial monoculture tree plantations in Mozambique is promoted and sponsored by the major forestry companies engaged in the production of pulp and paper. There is nothing new under the sun...

This process is just starting in the country. In their favour the Mozambique people have the experience gathered in countries that have been "invaded" for years now by these "green deserts" and that can testify that none of the promises have been fulfilled. On the contrary, tree plantations have caused devastation to water resources and to soils and a loss of biodiversity. And, with regard to the thousands of jobs, many people can tell how rural communities have become impoverished, as they no longer have the forest or grassland ecosystems that served – to at least some extent – to support them. No alternative has been left to these communities but to emigrate or to work as captives in the plantations on a seasonal basis, generally through outsourcing, in appalling conditions and often even in semi-slavery. Many Mozambicans who immigrated to South Africa in search of employment are well aware of this as they have suffered from it.

Everywhere it is the same discourse: that pulp or logs exported from the industrial tree plantations will bring development to the country, generating jobs and export earnings. However, the scenario is everywhere the same: export earnings reach the country, but the benefits go to the hands of the major plantation companies, while the people and the environment end up losing.

Now it is up to the people of Mozambique to stop the looming disaster.

By Raquel Núñez, World Rainforest Movement, e-mail: raquelnu@worm.org.uy, based on documentation sent by Vera Ribeiro, Coordinator of GeaSphere in Mozambique, e-mail: veruribeiro@gmail.com

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THE BROADER SCENARIO

- Gender, Militarism and Climate Change

As evidence of climate change becomes ever more compelling, the battle over who gets to frame its causes, effects and solutions will intensify. In popular as well as policy venues, whose voices get heard and whose don't will become a key political issue of our time. Today, at the international policy level, gender is conspicuous by its absence in climate change debates. In fact, the words "women" and "gender" are missing in the two main international global warming agreements, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and

the Kyoto Protocol. Recent feminist scholarship and advocacy challenge this invisibility of gender, pointing in particular to the importance of gendering the analysis of vulnerability and adaptation to global warming.

Feminist work on vulnerability draws on previous research regarding what makes certain populations more at risk in natural disasters such as floods and droughts, extreme weather events that could become more prevalent as the result of global warming. For example, in places where women have less access to food and health care than men, they start off at a disadvantage when facing natural disasters and environmental stress. Since they are often the primary caregivers for children and the elderly, they may also have less mobility. Cultural restrictions on women's mobility can compound the problem. During the 1991 cyclone in Bangladesh many more women died than men because early warnings were displayed in public spaces where women were prohibited and women delayed leaving their homes because of fears of impropriety.

Rather than relying on broad generalizations, feminist scholars and practitioners have developed gender-sensitive risk mapping in which women map their own vulnerabilities in terms of what crops they cultivate, what resources they do or do not control, their access to irrigation, markets, information, etc. In this sense, gender analysis is a tool to explore diverse contexts and come up with locally effective solutions rather than a one-size-fits-all understanding of vulnerability.

So far, much of the literature on gender and vulnerability to climate change has focused on rural women in the global South though in a few decades the majority of the world's people will live in cities. As hurricane Katrina illustrated, the global North is not immune to extreme climate events either, and the degree of vulnerability people in New Orleans experienced was closely correlated with gender, poverty, race, age and class, and the intersections between them. Given the likelihood that risks associated with climate change will increase in the years to come, gender-sensitive risk mapping and data collection would be useful tools for communities, rural and urban, all over the world.

Much also remains to be done to make early warning systems more attentive to gender issues. According to Maureen Fordham of the Gender and Disaster Network, mostly male experts dominate this field, and the traditional emphasis is on ('hard') scientific and technical approaches to the identification of hazards and the solution of problems with little attention given to the role of women's networks and other citizens' groups in developing informal warning systems. The field of disaster management is similarly dominated by men, and women's needs for information and services are often neglected in disaster response.

Given the wholesale neglect of gender issues in international climate change agreements, it is not surprising that little attention has been paid to how those agreements themselves may have gendered outcomes. In a critique of the Kyoto Protocol's approach to carbon trading, Larry Lohmann of the U.K.-based Corner House points to how the resulting carbon accounting systems marginalize non-corporate, non-state and non-expert contributions toward climatic stability and are creating new exclusionary forms of property rights. They favor large-scale carbon sequestration projects in the South that can have both negative social and environmental consequences. For example, in Minas Gerais, Brazil, the Plantar S.A. Corporation has asked for carbon finance for its expanding monoculture eucalyptus plantations. These plantations not only occupy public lands that by law should go to poor peasants, they draw down the water supply and greatly reduce biodiversity.

Such plantation schemes are likely to have a number of gendered effects. For example, women will not have access to them for domestic fuelwood collection, and the few jobs they generate for forest guards, etc. will go largely to men. Since women in many places rely on wild plants both for food and seed domestication, loss of biodiversity could reduce their livelihood resilience. Nor are such plantations likely to contribute to solving the longer-term energy needs of poor women. According to Margaret Skutsch of the Gender and Climate Change Network, the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism has effectively shut the door on small-scale, non-corporate solutions such as systems that encourage local control of existing forests and improvements in their ability to sequester carbon and produce sustainable fuelwood supplies.

In general, little effort has gone into analyzing how gender relations affect the drivers of climate change. For example, in the global North, which is disproportionately responsible for global warming, the transport sector is a primary source of greenhouse gases. Perhaps with the exception of the U.S., women in the global North are less likely to own cars and more likely to use public transport. Moreover, in Europe the cars women drive tend

to be smaller and more fuel-efficient because they are not viewed as status symbols. This latter point underscores the need to look at gendered dimensions of consumer desires as they affect energy use. Advertising is highly gendered - the typical SUV or pick-up driver portrayed in automobile ads in the U.S., for example, is a male, either alone or with his mates, out to conquer the rugged wilderness. If there are women in the picture, they are usually sleek and beautiful, adding an element of sex appeal. Thus notions of masculinity and femininity are strategically deployed to create and sustain a wasteful, gas-guzzling culture, from promotion of ATVs as 'toys for boys' to the military-civilian Hummer crossover as a potent symbol of American manhood.

Gendering climate change also requires keeping a close eye on fine line between justifiable concerns about the threats posed by global warming and the strategic deployment of alarmist discourses to build support for the Kyoto protocol as well as to serve other more problematic objectives. Here one has to closely monitor implicit and explicit gendered narratives that reinforce negative views of women and poor people.

A case in point is the framing of women in terms of the population threat. Apocalyptic predictions of population growth overshooting the carrying capacity of the planet have long been popular in Northern environmental circles, particularly in the U.S. where there has been a long relationship between the population lobby and the mainstream environmental movement. Those seeking to shift the blame for global warming from Northern consumption and production patterns to poor people in the South often make use of alarmist population arguments.

For example, Professor Chris Rapley, director of the British Antarctic Survey, recently made headlines in the British press when he argued that without significant population reduction, there was little hope for effectively coping with climate change. The implicit message is that women's fertility must be controlled. In the past, such reasoning has contributed to the implementation of draconian population policies deeply harmful to women's health and rights.

Population alarmism also figures in images of starving waves of global warming refugees washing up on our shores, as illustrated in a 2003 Pentagon-commissioned abrupt climate change scenario where reductions of carrying capacity in overpopulated areas cause increasing wars, disease, starvation and ultimately migration to the North. This kind of threat narrative incorporates women into an overall menacing portrait of the Third World poor and reinforces the authority of national security agencies over civilian initiatives to tackle climate change.

One way to challenge such military maneuvers is to focus on how militaries themselves play a significant but neglected role in global warming. The Department of Defense is the largest single consumer of fuel in the U.S., accounting for 1.8% of the nation's total transportation fuel. This is no mean contribution to global warming, given that the U.S. is the largest emitter of greenhouse gases. Militaries elsewhere also disproportionately consume energy supplies; according to one estimate, worldwide militaries collectively use the same amount of petroleum products as Japan, one of the world's largest economies. In the case of the U.S., the irony is that the military is presently using vast amounts of oil to fuel a war in Iraq fought at least in part to ensure future American control of oil supplies.

Casting a gendered eye on both militarism and climate change raises a number of inter-related questions. What are the gendered politics of setting strategic and budgetary priorities? How do ideologies of masculinity and networks of powerful men shape defense policies, shield the military from the need to reduce fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions, and determine that spending on conventional defense is a much higher priority than investing in clean energy sources and technologies?

How does male military culture impact consumer choice via products like the Hummer and sustain wasteful energy-intensive lifestyles?

How does a state of war undermine democratic freedoms, push women out of the public arena and reduce the space for inclusive debate on how to address global warming?

How does militarism multiply and/or intensify women's vulnerabilities to climate change? In the case of global warming-induced natural disasters, for example, will the risk of sexual violence increase if governments rely on military institutions to supply relief and maintain order?

On the more positive side, how can women's movements for peace and the environment contribute to a broader vision of climate justice and more practicable solutions that reduce emissions while increasing the incomes and power of poor women and men?

These are but a few of the questions we need to be asking to mount an effective feminist and social justice challenge to business as usual in the climate change arena.

By Betsy Hartmann, ZNet Commentary, April 10, 2006

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