

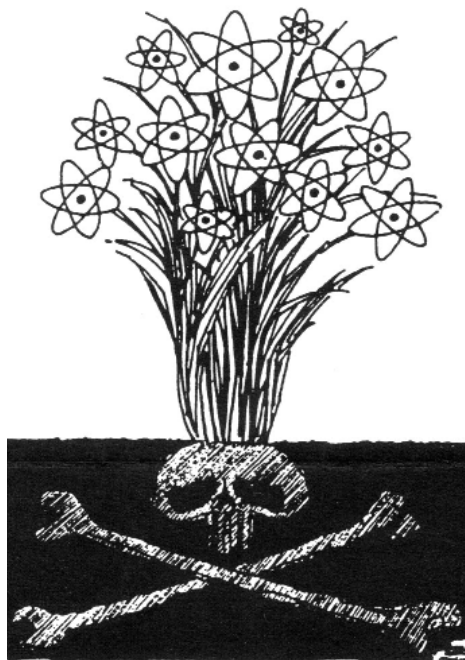


Beware "technology transfer"

"Technology transfer" You hear the term everywhere at the UN Climate Conference in Bali.

Southern delegations tell the North: "no deals on climate unless we get our hands on your green technological goodies. You want us to pay attention to emissions, you have to give us the where-withal."

Meanwhile, Northern exporters of expertise and technology – especially obso-



lete technologies like nuclear power and "clean" coal or dangerous technologies like genetic modification and nanotech – lick their lips in anticipation of new markets.

The World Bank's tongue also hangs out at the new powers it is likely to accumulate in the process. Even many non governmental organisations Indigenous Peoples' organisations fall into line, dutifully repeating this new version of the old tale that the

solution to the world's ills lies in Northern ingenuity and machines, applied through the well-meaning efforts of officials in both North and South. In Bali in 2007, the incantation "technology transfer" is being repeated as uncritically as the word "development" used to be bandied about in, say, 1962.

But whose interests does this chorus of support for more North-South "technology transfer" really serve?

On the surface, the call for "technology transfer" is a legitimate reflection of resistance to the way the North has plundered the best of Southern resources, technology and innovation to develop its own products, while citing "intellectual property rights" to justify its refusal to give much of anything back.

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What Bali's Trade Talks Tell Us

Bali has become one of the foremost battlegrounds for global justice, as the world's top economic policymakers enter the game to address climate change. Trade Ministers launched an informal process to grapple with the realization that, if indeed climate change is the global emergency we believe it to be, then its stabilization must become a new lens through which we view the rules of trade and finance.

Their involvement is both a dangerous threat and an historic opportunity. The threat is that the WTO's system of corporate rights becomes the legal framework for addressing climate. Opportunity lies in the fact that WTO's core principles of global

free trade are so antithetical to what is needed to avoid a crisis that climate becomes the greatest imperative ever to transform the rules of the global economy. However, there is no chance of re-prioritizing the values that guide global governance to recognize ecological limits and to agree on equitable ways to live within them without the full engagement of the climate justice movement.

Trade Ministers discussed how trade policy could contribute to climate protection, but larger issues surfaced. That's because many of the measures governments must take to tackle climate change can conflict with WTO rules. Though these issues

were buried in media hype of a US-EU proposal for free trade in climate friendly technologies (such as turbines, towers, tanks and tubes), their emergence reveals some of the systemic conflicts world trade rules must confront.

For example, when Brazil asserted that there already existed enough flexibilities in WTO rules protecting intellectual property to allow developing countries to acquire the climate friendly technologies they needed, the US responded with a different interpretation: the best way to transfer technology was by strengthening patent laws, not exempting them as some develop-

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Forest Carbon Partnership: Dancing With Dollars

Multi-million dollar pledges danced over the floor of the Grand Ballroom at the Grand Hyatt in Bali last Tuesday, where the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility of the World Bank was launched. The German government threw \$59 million into the pot, the UK threw in \$30 million, The Netherlands donated \$22 million and even an NGO, The Nature Conservancy, joint the party with a generous \$5 million grant to the World Bank.

The facility certainly presents a win-win-win option for the North. Northern donors can give generous grants to an institution they control while pretending they are green and helping developing countries.

Northern consumers can continue to waste energy as it is very clear that the facility is targeted towards promoting carbon offsets. And the World Bank can make millions of dollars out of channeling all this money. The most important winner in this game showed its face at last Saturday's Forest Day conference, where hundreds of forestry consultants flocked to promote what will undoubtedly become a very profitable business for them. After all, it is this overwhelmingly male, white, anglo-saxon dominated forestry con-



Payment for environmental services' schemes are already having a very negative effect on both Indigenous land rights claims and land reform

sultancy sector that will be called upon to make developing countries "ready" for the carbon market, to develop monitoring systems and carbon accounting methodologies for them, and to design and implement the "pilot projects" the World Bank has been proposing. A rapid analysis of World Bank administered conservation projects like the failed Sundarbans Biodiversity Conservation project in Bangladesh shows that up to 53 per cent of the budget was spent on foreign consultants and an additional 19 per cent for local consultants and consultancy-related travel.

Meanwhile, the forest peoples who will be the guinea pigs in this "learning process" of implementing "pilot projects" will be on the lose-lose-lose side of the scales.

Firstly, they will lose their forests due to the land grabbing that has already started, now that (potential) large landholders are realizing they can apply a "pay-or-I-cut" approach to every hectare of forest land conquered from Indigenous Peoples and landless farmers. Payment for environmental services' schemes are already having a very neg-

ative effect on both Indigenous land rights claims and land reform, and such effects are not nullified by vague promises of consultation - since prior informed consent regarding is an entirely different matter to a prior informed consultation that has the capacity to change the shape of the Facility itself.

Secondly, these women and men will not benefit from any "pilot projects" as they do not have deforestation rates that they can reduce - most of them have successfully conserved their forests for centuries. Meanwhile, the facility and similar REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) proposals are clearly directed towards compensating the logging, soy and oil palm companies, and countries that have for years been financed by the World Bank and other banks to destroy the forests. All of these will now be compensated for a potential willingness not to do so.

Thirdly, these women and men will lose as they are at the frontline of the struggle against climate change. Carbon offsets through avoided or reduced deforestation will by definition compromise the tough but equitable and rights-based climate regime that is so desperately needed to deal with the greatest social and moral challenge the world community has ever faced.

Happily, there are alternatives: the Norwegian government has set the stage by announcing a generous \$545 million per year grant for the period 2008 - 2012 to help countries conserve forests, and this money will come on top of its emission cuts, not instead of them. Of course, we all hope that this money will be spent on initiatives and projects that have long proven to be successful, like large-scale recognition of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' land rights and promoting the hundreds of small-scale, often women-led forest conservation and restoration projects - which have already succeeded in saving millions of hectares of forests, long before Zoelleck could even spell the word "pilot".

Who We Are

Alter-ECO is published by a group of non-governmental organisations, Indigenous Peoples Organisations and social movements at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change COP-13, who have come together to make a unified call in support of real, relevant, effective and human rights-based solutions to climate change.

Organisations contributing to this issue: Global Justice Ecology Project, Global Forest Coalition, Carbon Trade Watch, Transnational Institute, FERN, CORE (Center for Organizational Research and Education), PIPEC, The Corner House, Biofuel Watch, World Rainforest Movement. Alter-ECO does not necessarily reflect the views of all of the participating organizations or contributors to Alter-ECO.

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Beware "Technology Transfer"

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Unfortunately, the term hides plenty of neo-colonialist power politics as well.

For example, the concept of North-South "technology transfer" is usually used in a way that obscures the overwhelmingly greater need for South-North transfers of wisdom. Falsely casting the North as the hero of technology, it hides the ongoing and historical contributions of Southern farmers and indigenous peoples in precisely those areas that are crucial for climate change "mitigation" and "adaptation" – ranging from low-carbon agriculture to medicine to the myriad techniques of making do with less that overconsuming societies in the North so badly need to learn or relearn.

Even more importantly, the term "technology transfer" as used in Bali conceals the unequal power relations that lie at the very root of global warming.

It implies a fictional dualism: technologies from a "technology-rich" zone benignly and smoothly implanted in grateful "technology-free" zones by benevolent governments. The reality is

different. Northern hydroelectric dam technology aggressively disrupts systems of irrigation that have provided life and livelihood to scores of generations of farmers – and never work as advertised. High-carbon, Green Revolution-style export cropping technologies have wrecked diverse, climate-friendly agricultural practices. Southern communities have become unwitting experimental animals for untried drugs or genetically-modified organisms.

"Technology sharing" which, by contrast, has generally been the norm where societies encountering and trading with each other are equal in power, has given way to a politics of illusion in which corporate profit-seekers have so much power that they no longer think they have to learn from the societies that they flatter themselves they are "benefiting".

"Technology transfer": it's a seemingly innocent phrase. But it reflects an ignorance that could yet prove fatal to global efforts to deal effectively with climate change.

“ Women all over the world are strongly rejecting nuclear energy use. Thus we are very concerned about Japan’s proposal to make nuclear energy eligible for the Clean Development Mechanism. This is a bad signal to the world. Nuclear power carries inherent injustice to the land of indigenous peoples and local communities on whose territories the uranium is mined. ”
- Women’s Caucus Letter on Nuclear Power ”

What Bali’s Trade Talks Tell Us

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ing nations want to do. This disagreement is already evident in the climate talks and is likely to erupt in the post-Bali process.

One encouraging sign was in WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy’s telling ministers that, "It is not in the WTO that a deal on climate change can be struck, but rather in the UNFCCC. Such an agreement must then send the WTO an appropriate signal on how its rules may best be put to the service of sustainable development." Some WTO critics were surprised to hear Lamy seemingly defer, in a way, to the UN’s climate process. WTO Member Nations do not necessarily share this view but it opens a strategic space for climate activists to assert as rights (vis-à-vis WTO’s corporate interests) all the measures needed for cli-

mate justice, from patent exemptions to energy-efficiency standards to strong quantitative and geographical restrictions on offsets in emissions trading.

The critical question is whether we ultimately empower trade policymakers or climate policymakers. The most important contribution trade policy can make to climate protection is not only to safeguard but to actively increase the policy space that climate negotiators need to act urgently. No decisions or positions taken in Bali or beyond should foreclose any policy options for climate protection. Trade Ministers should declare that whatever is agreed to at the Bali climate change conference will not be subject to challenge at the World Trade Organization.

Revolving Doors

The Climate Action Network (CAN) has "increasingly become a rest-stop for NGO-reps en route to climate market finance and consulting jobs," according to the Climate Justice blog (<http://climatejustice.blogspot.com>). The trajectory followed by two ex-CAN members exemplifies this tendency:

• Jennifer Morgan, former CAN board member, on two year leave from the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) Global Climate Change Programme, is spending her time as Director of Climate and Energy Security at the consulting and lobby-group E3G. Morgan is also Senior Advisor to Dr. John Schellnhuber, Chief Advisor to the German Chancellor, on issues related to the German Presidencies of the EU and G8. Morgan joined WWF in July 1998, and headed the WWF delegation to the Kyoto Protocol climate negotiations.

• Kate Hampton, former Friends of the Earth staffer and CAN member, is now Head of Policy for the carbon market finance operation Climate Change Capital. Kate wears two additional hats: Sherpa to the EU High Level Group on Competitiveness, Energy and Environment and staffer to the California EPA Market Advisory Committee.

These are not the only two ex-CAN members with ties to the climate market finance and consulting worlds. CAN members also go to government positions where climate policy is set.

The phenomena is not limited to CAN—it characterizes many non-profit organizations and non-governmental organizations globally. Strange bedfellows abound. In October, for example, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and Shell Oil signed a deal "to enhance biodiversity conservation performance by Shell and its Affiliates ...and to strengthen IUCN capacity for leadership in business and biodiversity."

It is unknown how these peculiar relationships shape or undermine civil society climate policy positions, or what conflicts of interest they generate. But the first step to bringing them under control is to shine a brighter light on them.

CAN members and their NGO peers should implement conflict of interest disclosure measures. Such data must be publicly available on the web. The disclosures must be sufficiently historical and detailed—and if members continue advisory roles, their new positions must be disclosed. Anything less marks an effort to obscure such ties.

Resistance is fertile



Non governmental organizations, indigenous groups and social movements mobilized here in Bali around the UNFCCC to demand more substantive action to address global warming. A series of actions were undertaken both inside the conference center and out to protest the dangers of the false solutions to climate change that are being advanced under the Kyoto Protocol.

Such actions included protests by Indonesian Civil Society including a march of thousands in Denpasar on 8 December, a protest on 6 December by Friends of the Earth and WALHI

against the destructive proposals included under the REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) outside the Convention Center, an impassioned press conference on 7 December by the International Alliance of Indigenous Peoples that was held directly outside the media tent in protest of the total exclusion of indigenous voices and perspectives at the climate talks, a protest on 11 December against the launch of the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility that threatens forests and forest dependent peoples by including them

under the Bank's carbon trading scheme, and a spontaneous protest against oil palm plantations as the UN delegates were arriving at the Convention Center on 12 December.

As the official negotiations slowly plod along, being regularly obstructed by big polluters, and with politics playing a greater role than climate science, it is clear that civil society is going to need to play an increasingly vocal role in forcing action that is politically unpopular but ecologically critical.