

# **The Tragedy of the Enclosures: An Eco-feminist Perspective on Selling Oxygen and Prostitution in Costa Rica.**

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A working paper

## **Abstract**

This paper develops the premise that capitalism and patriarchy, which understand conservation in terms of enclosure, use it as another instrument of colonization of the Third World, women's work, and nature. This paper connects two aspects of this process: the first is the enclosure of the forest for as an oxygen generator/carbon sink; and the second is the enclosure of women's labour through prostitution. As biodiversity and women's non-wage labour comprise the support system that local communities use for survival, selling oxygen and prostitution have become a war on subsistence and, consequently, an expansion of poverty. The author concludes that Costa Rica's debt crisis provides grounds for restructuring accumulation in the industrial world by selling oxygen/carbon sink capacity as the technological solution to environmental destruction, and provides grounds for repairing masculine anxiety, or "masculation," by selling its women's and children's bodies as a result of the inequality crisis.

## **Introduction**

This paper looks at a case study of the interactive socio-economic-ecological-gender impact of land management on local communities in Costa Rica of selling oxygen/carbon sink capacity. Supposedly, forest vegetation stores carbon that otherwise might trap heat in the atmosphere, driving up temperatures and speeding up climate change. Since the Industrial Revolution humans have greatly increased the quantity of carbon dioxide found in the Earth's atmosphere and oceans. The major sources of these gases are being emitted by industrial processes, fossil fuel combustion and the modification in land use, such as deforestation. If emissions continue at the present rate current projections suggest that there will be a global increase of between, approximately, 1C to 5 C by 2100 (<http://www.physicalgeography.net/fundamentals/9r.html>) (<http://www.pewclimate.org/global-warming-basics>).

Selling oxygen from the rainforest to act as storage of carbon sink has become part of the sustainable development (SD) agenda in the Kyoto Protocol. Governments first agreed to tackle

climate change at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The Kyoto Protocol was the follow-up to the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which set a non-binding goal of stabilizing emissions at 1990 levels by 2000. This goal was not met overall ([http://www.forbes.com/home\\_europe/newswire/2003/12/09/rtr1175321.html](http://www.forbes.com/home_europe/newswire/2003/12/09/rtr1175321.html)).

The World Bank defines sustainable development as the management of the entire cycle of life (humankind and nature) with the intention of expanding 'wealth'. That one possible definition of sustainable development is the management of a nation's portfolio of assets. A nation's portfolio of assets includes built infrastructure, natural resources (minerals, energy, agricultural land, forests, etc.), human capital, and social capital. According to the World Bank (1997), many of the critically important ecological and life-support functions provided by natural systems are not measured yet as part of the wealth of nations. Among those not captured yet is the forest. The forest must be embedded in the economic system as natural capital to become sustainable development. This is very problematic for rainforest dwellers that are not embedded in the market economy.

The second aspect of contemporary enclosure this paper addresses is that of the commodification of rural women's labour. As forests become commodities for selling oxygen/carbon sink provision, it has also caused powerful effects on the sexual division of labour and women's oppression. Evicted from a forest, peasant families migrate toward cities to look for employment. Rural women and men need to find resources to assure subsistence and emotional support for themselves and the dispossessed family members. In the exchange logic, according to Genevieve Vaughan (2004), those who do not succeed in the market, are seen as 'defective', less human and therefore more exploitable (17). In this context, the pattern of gender relations is constituted by capitalism's patriarchy, in which peripheral women are socially constructed as cheap labour – cheap sex. In Costa Rica, patriarchal males find a place to practise their quest for domination. Their domination is expressed through their ego-oriented individual psychology, that Genevieve Vaughan has called *masculation*. *Masculation* expresses dominance of men over the body of women (Vaughan 2004). Some males need to confirm their superiority by sexual violence; this is done by degrading anyone in the position of other. In this paper, prostitution and sexual slavery are the enclosure of women's and children bodies, because they no longer have decision making power over their bodies.

Selling oxygen/carbon sink capacities have been articulated by mainstream environmentalism. These environmentalists from the industrial world have adopted a political stance that sets them and the movement they profess above and beyond the class struggle, gender oppression, colonialism and imperialism. In doing that narrow environmentalism reinforced the dominant relations of power in global capitalism (Foster 1994). They are oblivious to exploitation, poverty, and the inequalities facing local communities, thus contributing to the displacement of communities on a global level through ill conceived alternative strategies. In their view, rainforest and its dwellers are seen spectators only (Hecht and Cockburn, 1990). As a result, sustainable development has defined the forest as “natural capital,” while rural women have been constituted as “cheap human capital.” Since capital has converted the sensuous world into an abstraction for the purpose of profit, the forest and women come to express alienated ways of being. The double enclosures of the forest and women’s labour have become another war on the subsistence against rainforest dwellers. This paper shows that in Costa Rica selling oxygen/carbon sink capacities and prostitution of women and children are connected.

### **CAPITALIST PATRIARCHY IN COSTA RICA**

Ecologists have provided evidence of the natural limits of the planet to industrial growth (Foster, 1994) and consumerism (Wackernagek and Rees, 1995), and rejected the belief in unlimited economic growth (Daly, 1996). The natural limit is already expressed in the destruction of resources and absorptive capacities for wastes (Alvater, 1994), and the irrefutable global warming. As economic growth continues to be central in sustainable development, two Earth Summits – one in Rio and the other in Johannesburg – to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, air pollution in the form of carbon dioxide, dust particles, and carbon monoxide have failed, making clear that the traditional environmental movements are inadequate, and even dangerous in their propositions.

Ecologists and feminists plea for the reorientation of economic development to the goals of maximal reduction of energy and material throughputs for local self-sufficiency as opposed to export-oriented trade competitions – and for consumption norms that recognize “enoughness” (Sacks 1992, Shiva 1989), “sufficiency” as a good life (Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies, 1999), subsistence economies (Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies, 1999), and gift economies (Vaughan

2004). Genevieve Vaughan argues that patriarchy fabricated an economy based on *private* property, in Latin *privare* = to rob. That patriarchy artificially created scarcity in order to erase the gift economy which makes us human, generation after generation, because most labour in the world is still Gift Giving, that is, with little or no payment. These gifts labour are women's household work; peasant and Indigenous People's labour; industrial workers' forced gifts (in Marx's theory, surplus value is an unpaid portion of the worker's labour, which is a gift); voluntary work; child labour; and nature.

Costa Rica has been built as an export-oriented economy, with no political or economical independence (Guha and Martinez Alier 1987). Through the debt crisis it is an example of export pressure on resources by the world system, resulting in great inequality. In terms of land ownership, the U.S. multinational corporation – United Fruit – enclosed the southern part of the country with banana plantations; the local business community enclosed the central valley for coffee plantations; foreigners and local businesses enclosed the northwest for cattle ranching. These land grabs by foreign and local businesses deeply divided Costa Rica in terms of land control and power. Excluding the owners of one hectare, 83.4 percent of the land owners with less than a 100 hectares control 1.12 percent of the national territory, while 0.71 percent of the owners with more than a 100 hectares own 70.3 percent of the country's territory (*El Estado de la Nacion*, 1996: 68).

Sustainable development aggravated this unequal access to resources by intensifying earlier enclosure of the land through the Conservation Area System created in 1989 by the then Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy, and Mines (MIRENEM, now MINAE). Through SINAC, the conservation area model was implemented to manage the country's wildlife and biodiversity. SINAC has divided the country into 11 conservation areas (CA) comprising wildlife, private lands, and human settlements under the current Ministry of Environment and Energy's (MINAE) supervision. In enclosing 24.8% of the national territory SINAC expanded the enclosure model. The expropriated land has been organized along the lines of national parks in North America from which people are excluded and denied any role in sustaining the ecosystems (Hecht and Cockburn, 1990). These expropriated lands are linked to transnational and political networks to

forge local and global “stakeholders” through categories of management such as Human Patrimony, national parks, wet land, biological reserves, protected zones, forest reserves, and wildlife refuges. At the same time internal boundaries are built, separating local people who share volcanoes, waterfalls, rivers, hot springs, congo-monkeys, and turtle-spawning havens. The separated lands become sites for mining (Isla 2002), research (Isla 2005), ecotourism (forthcoming) and selling oxygen.

### **ENCLOSURE OF THE RAINFOREST. Selling Oxygen/Generating Carbon Sinks**

In the sustainable development framework, forests have become natural capital. But the forest, in the rainforest, is an essential mechanism for flood control. In the forest, trees are connected directly to each other through the multitude of creatures that relate to them as food, shelter or nesting place; through their shared access to water, air and sunlight; and through an underground system of fungi that links all the trees as a super-organism. Rainforest people are also members of this super-organism.

The Kyoto Protocol, commits industrialized nations to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, principally carbon dioxide, by around 5.2% below their 1990 levels by 2007. In the Climate Change Convention held in Kyoto in 1997, industrial countries agreed to create mechanisms to reduce the emissions of gases responsible for the greenhouse effect. Among these is carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), largely discharged by the industrial world. However, reducing gas emission implies high costs for industries that the industrial world protects. Thus, it was easier to create a global air market in indebted countries. According to the scheme of the Climate Change Convention, countries or industries that manage to reduce emissions to levels below their limits will be able to sell their credit to other countries or industries that exceed their emission levels. Following the Convention, a Clean Development Fund evolved into Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

With the introduction of the Kyoto Protocol, the rainforest is valued economically through the securing of CO<sub>2</sub> strategies. Carbon emission become subject to trading in an open market. The use of the absorption of CO<sub>2</sub> by the forest to compensate for other countries’ emissions developed

easily in indebted Costa Rica<sup>1</sup>. Through international covenants, Costa Rica organized conservation, management of forests, and reforestation, and sells environmental services to Norway, Germany, Holland, Mexico, Canada, and Japan (El Estado de la Nacion 1996: 129). During Jose Figueres' administration (1994-1998), the Forestry Law ( 7575) and the decree DAJ-D-039-98 were signed to regulate the payments for environmental services. Certification for forest conservation is legislated by Forestry Law, Art. 22, which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE). Under the Forestry Incentive Programs (FIP), MINAE receives, evaluates, and approves the terms of the program and promotes and compensates owners of forestry plantations. The decree recognized the forest and forest plantation owners, small farmers (*finca* owners), and Conservation Areas (CA) as providers of environmental services eligible to receive payments for the environmental services they provide. MINAE also created a law of expropriation in which it outlined the limitations put on initiating any project on small and medium size farms.

Since the industrial world is not made responsible for mitigating its own level of emissions, this type of “solution” has allowed the industrial world to continue polluting by means of the purchase of carbon credits from the indebted rainforest, while energy-related emissions produced by the increase in the amounts of coal and oil burned mainly in the industrial world, the leading cause of climate change, proceed unimpeded.

Selling CO<sub>2</sub>, to mitigate carbon emissions, are colonial, class and gender biased that affect the nature of indebted countries, subsistence production, and women.

### **Paying the price of the Kyoto Protocol:**

#### **Crisis of Nature**

The selling of oxygen scheme is transforming the rainforest land. Forest farms have been established. Reforestation is particularly promoted among large-scale agricultural entrepreneurs in association with international capital, which also benefits from tax relief under Fiscal Forestry Incentives (FFI). FFI reforestation involves international capital, which uses foreign forest species of high yield and great market acceptance, such as *melina* (used by Stone Forestall, a United States corporation), and *teca* (used by Bosques Puerto Carrillo and Maderas). Big projects related to the

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<sup>1</sup> Costa Rica had a small debt, US\$ 4,000,000 - in 2000 - but it is one of the highest indebted country due to its reduced population.

planting of forests in general are also connected to the interests of big mining corporations. For instance, in Arenal-Huetar Norte Conservation Area, Industries Infinito S.A, a subsidiary of the Canadian company Vanessa Ventures, which obtained permits to operate Mining Crucitas over an area of 1000 hectares also has a reforestation project of 32 hectares in the same area where it planted 20,000 trees to profit from the Forestry Incentive Plan (FIP). The corporations are allowed to cut the trees after 10 years of growing and transform them into wood for floors and/or paper.

Between 1996 and 2001, around 121,000 to 147, 000 hectares of foreign trees were planted; 50% of the species are *melina* and teak (MINAE, 2001, Sage y Quirós, 2001, De Camino et al., 1999), and the rest are eucalyptus. The government had enthusiastically promoted converting forest ecosystem into sterile monocultures by planting homogeneous forests, despite the fact that *Melina, teak and eucalyptus* do not form part of Costa Rica's rain forest. In order to plant homogenous species, if the owners want to manage recurrence (return), the first action requires the cutting of all native trees and vegetation, which increases the extraction of nutrients, and with it the devastation of the productive capacity of the soil. Thus, chemical fertilizers are massively spread. This choice was clearly dictated by industry (floor wood and paper). This has negative effects on soil fertility, water retention and on biological diversity.

The consequences of planting teak has been explained by Sonia Torres (interview 2001), a forestry engineer, who explains how foreign trees produces erosion in flat lands. In the rain forest, biodiversity means a great number of leguminosae with different sizes of leaf, which lessen the impact of the rainfall and prevent erosion. She used the example of teak to illustrate the problem.

“Since the planting of these foreign species, I have observed that teak has a root system that grows deep into the soil, but in the rain forest the systems of nutrient and water absorption are at the surface. In general, nutrients and water are concentrated between 70 and 100 centimetres deep. As a result, teak trees are encircled by flaked soil. In addition, when it rains, the size of the leaf accumulates great amounts of water that then pours violently onto the soil. A drop of water, at a microscopic level, forms a crater; when water falls from 15 metres or more it forms holes. Water descending on soft soil destroys the soil. The far-reaching spread of the roots and the shade produced by the leaves obstruct the vegetative growth on the lower forest layer, which could prevent the soil damage from the violent cascades” (interview, July 2001).

Torres advocates the planting and protection of indigenous tree species that can also feed the indigenous population, animals, bacteria etc.

### **Crisis of rainforest dwellers**

The selling of oxygen scheme has also transformed functioning local communities. In Costa Rica, the state's project of selling CO<sub>2</sub> expropriated the small- and medium-sized landholders without compensation to the owners. This reality was exposed by the Ministry of Environment, in 2001,

A symbol of pride of Costa Ricans, the national parks constitute a unique model in the world, which offer innumerable benefits to society in particular and the planet in general, but they are in a critical situation due to the lack of resources to give them sustainability and cancel the debt to the former property owners whose lands were expropriated or frozen for the sake of protection." (Odio, 2001).

By August, 1999, the government owed US\$100 million to the evicted *campesinos/as*. Around that time, it offered to pay US\$6,703.45 per hectare to the removed families (Vizcaino, 1999). However, by 2001, 14,917 hectares of land were still not paid for. This represents approximately 745 families that have been made landless and impoverished by the conservation areas system, with no payment whatsoever.

Large projects related to the planting of forests in general are also connected to the interests of international mining, large environmental NGOs, and government institutions (MINAE in Costa Rica). For instance, in the Arenal Conservation Area (ACA), organized by the World Wildlife Fund-Canada, national parks such as Arenal Volcano and Tenorio Volcano National Park, and forestry reserves such as Cerro Chato, sell oxygen. But to put the oxygen on the market, in 1994, the Arenal Volcano was declared Arenal Volcano National Park. From 5 hectares, it was extended to 12,010 ha. As a result, entire communities were forcibly evicted. While the majority of the land around the volcano was not arable or adequate for cattle ranching, small farms had existed in the area. Peasants who had organized their lives by clearing land for agricultural production and pasture around the Arenal Basin were expelled by the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE). An injunction, brought to Costa Rica's Supreme Court (Division IV of the judicial system), reported heavy losses by *campesinas/os* who lived in the Basin area of the Arenal Conservation Area (ACA). They lost land, pasture, houses, dairies, and roads. Former property owners have become hut renters (*ranchos*) or slum inhabitants (*tugurios*). The personal effects of the *campesinas/os*, such as cars and small electrical appliances, were taken by the commercial banks when they could not afford to repay their

loans acquired for economic development (Monestel, 1999). When, in desperation, some of them returned to their land to plant yucca, beans, maize and other subsistence foods, they were declared to have broken the law and some of them were thrown in jail (Siete Dias de Teletica, 1999).

In 1996, *La Cuenca de Aguas Claras* was also declared a forestry reserve and changes in the area arrived. In 2001, I attended a public Town Hall meeting in La Cuenca de Aguas Claras at which more than 200 farmers, men and women, arrived ready to be interviewed. Since the number was too high, they chose Abel Fuentes and Luis Guimo to speak on their behalf. They declared themselves witnesses of the following account. According to Mr. Fuentes (interview, July 2001), MINAE says that “our survival way of life is producing deforestation and pollution, and reducing the water level of *La Cuenca de Aguas Claras*. MINAE exaggerated the level of deforestation to oust almost all the inhabitants because it is reforesting our land in order to sell the oxygen to other countries and get ‘donations’” (Luis Fuentes, interview). MINAE’s argument for expropriating their land was based on the claim of water reduction in the area. Water scarcity has been converted into a strategy to convince *campesinos* to let MINAE reforest while the owners of the land are evicted.

Mr. Fuentes had evidenced forced eviction of the rainforest dwellers. He stated that

“Until 1996, in *La Cuenca de Aguas Calientes*, 200 families lived and the land was organized as follows: 70% was pastureland, holding around 2000 cows; 10% primary forest; and 20% combined secondary forest, which was used for beans and pig production. By 2001, we were only 3 families; the majority were forced into exile. And the land has been re-organized as follows: 90% is primary and secondary forest; 10% is pastureland with less than 200 cows; and land to produce beans extinguished (Luis Fuentes interview).

Mr. Fuentes believes that his rights and his community’s rights have been violated with the law of expropriation of 1995. Further they were pushed around by the government. As soon as the law was published, some of them went to MINAE’s office to find out about the law. He declared that “the government denied our right to know the law. When we requested a copy of it, a representative of MINAE showed us a giant book, saying that he couldn’t give us a copy, because of the volume of the decree. However, later, one of our members found the legislation on the Internet and printed it on just one page.”

Mr Martin Guimo, another small holder, who still lives within the expropriated land, added

“When we ask MINAE officials for information, they decide when and where we can get it.

When we propose a meeting, they decide when and where we can meet, then they change the hour, the date, or they cancel the meeting without telling us. Many of us live far from the meeting place and sometimes we have to ride a horse for 3 hours to go to a meeting and it is disappointing to arrive and learn that the meeting has been cancelled” (Guimo, interview, July 2001).

The snatching of forest from local communities who use it to sustain themselves has become a death sentence for small and medium-size land holders. As a result, their needs are dismissed, and community members who used to live off the forest are declared enemies of the rain forest.

The eviction of the rainforest dwellers comes with the ideology that they will have employment in the cities. Rural community members know that the ideology of cities as having such rich opportunities for well-paying jobs and upward mobility in Costa Rica is a myth. They know that there is a surplus of people in cities whose basic human needs cannot be met and whose human rights are violated (Robinson 2001, Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies 1999). Mies argues that community members in the Third World dispossessed from their livelihood cannot expect to become dependent on wages. Peripheral landless women and men will not have the good fortune of their peers from the core countries to find a job and share the wealth extracted from colonies, because they themselves are the colonies.

### **Crises of Women and Children: Impoverishment and Prostitution**

The power of the industrial world to re-design the forest as oxygen producer exacerbates inequalities. As a new structure of accumulation emerges, the disintegration of the ecosystem that supported the means of survival of local communities has powerful effects on the sexual division of labour and women’s oppression. When families are violently disintegrated or displaced and impoverished, rural women are encouraged to migrate to San Jose and tourist areas in the hope of earning an income for themselves and their dispossessed families. Introduced into the cash base economy, impoverished women earn all or part of their living as prostitutes. Prostitutes in Costa Rica are women at work supporting children and family members. They are in the market not by

choice but out of necessity. Along with them, there are astonishing amount of children who are bought, sold and mistreated by society. By complying with the desires of the so-called developed men, these women contribute to the global production of the tourism industry, and to the wealth of businesses and states, as we will see.

Pressured by the global institutions (the IMF and the WB), indebted Costa Rica has become the premier eco-tourism and tourism destination since the early 1990s. Eco-tourism promotion linked conservation areas with tourism, and promises a world of leisure, freedom, taste, and safe risk; while tourism portrays an image of women and children as exotic and erotic. This image of the country entangles the economic relations of domination between creditors (the industrial world) and debtors (the indebted periphery) and the psychological relations of hypermasculinity or “masculation” of fragile male egos that the exchange system develops. As Costa Rica becomes impoverished by the debt crisis (purposive organized by the U.S and England in 1982) we can see the marks of those changing international power relations on the bodies of Costa Rica children and women, as Pettman (1997) will argue. White rich men move across borders for racialized sex tourism. Male sex tourists, in their 40s and 50s, come mainly from the creditor countries, such as the U.S, Europe, and Canada. In Costa Rica, most pimps that profit from sex-tourism are men from the patriarchal industrial world – U.S, Canada, Spain and others. They bring with them the political economy and culture, material relations and representations (Pettman 1997:96). On the Internet, there are more than 70 web-sites selling Costa Rican women. One pimp is a U.S citizen Alan Seaman, who advertises seductive women to wealthy U.S males. In his advertisement, Costa Rican women are constructed as a ‘body-for-others’, as body object of desire, or bodies for men’s use (Pettman 1997). Seaman organizes prostitution tours from the web site called Adult Vacations. His webmail advertisement reads :

“Dream Getaway is waiting for you as you step from your plane into our Paradise here in Costa Rica. If you are coming on one of our Adult Vacation Packages, we introduce you to your sexy companion, and escort you to your resort...or around the area to get you acquainted with Dream Getaway Territory in Costa Rica. After that, we are available for you 24/7. We price our packages by the day, so you can sample more-than-one of the joys in Paradise. You will not be herded around Costa Rica like cattle, but given the personal attention you deserve for your precious time traveling to our erotic, exotic tropical paradise... the companions set their own prices, varying from \$ 200 to \$ 600 per day. If that is not what you want, we can offer a City Tour (in a nice casino hotel) and a Private Beach Club where you can stay in safety and pick your own girls by the hour or day. The

cost is \$100/day.” (Fantasy Resort Adult Vacation Packages <http://1dreamgetaway.com/packages.htm>)

As Costa Rica is also indebted to Canada, from 1992 until 1996, 313,525 Canadians visited Costa Rica. In 1997 alone, 36,032 Canadians (ITC, 1999) visited Costa Rica, while by 2002 this number has grown to 50,000 (CBC, 2004). In a report conducted by Victor Malarek (CBC, 2004) it made clear that Canadian males engage in sex-tourism. That these males see Costa Rican women as a body available for purchase. According to his report, they stay around hotel “El Rey”, in San Jose, where secret videos for sex and teenagers are waiting to be bought. In San Jose, women are sold for 10 or 20 dollars (CBC, 2004). Prostitution in Costa Rica has become spread, in San Jose alone 2,000 girls are involved (Casa Alianza 2001). Another growing developing problem is trafficking. Many of these teenagers being sold into the sex industry in Costa Rica are victims of trafficking, from Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras. Traffickers threaten to kill their parents, and siblings if these criminals are identified. The ‘wealth’ generated by those women goes back to the IMF and the WB as interest payment on Costa Rica’s outstanding foreign debt.

As the country slides into a more subordinated position, the entire country has become a paradise for paedophilia. Gay male tourists and the so-called straight male tourists who want to have experiences with men and boys come to engage in sex with or take pornographic pictures of children. Child pornography is an established industry in Costa Rica (EFE News, 10 of April, 2003) “More than a million tourists go to Costa Rica every year, and at least 5,000 are pedophiles (PANI – Patronato Nacional de Infancia, 2001). Women and children involved in sex work commonly contract sexually transmitted diseases or die of AIDS-related illness (Casa Alianza 2001).

By 2001, international groups put Costa Rica’s government under intense scrutiny for its lack of action against the sexual abusers of children, most of them tourists. In an economy increasingly based on enclosure of the Commons, complicit Costa Rican governments do not want to stop the sex trade industry because they know that this is the only way they left to women and children to earn a living. As a result, the government’s attitude is of general indifference to recognize and report the criminal activity. Ex-president of Costa Rica, Miguel

Angel Rodriguez, on ABC's 20/20 report in 2001, stated that there were only "20 or 30" children being sexually exploited in Costa Rica, even though the US Department of State estimated 3,000 children as victims of commercial sexual exploitation in Costa Rica (Casa Alianza, 2001c). Further, the government also protects the sex industries because it generates hundreds of millions of dollars per year for the state to pay its debt or for organized crime groups and corrupt politicians.

By law prostitution is prohibited in Costa Rica; however, there is no enforcement to stop the oppression of the bodies of poor members of society who are considered disposable. To endure their misery of sexual activity with 5 or 6 men daily, many of the enslaved women and children turn to drugs and alcohol. In 2001, three young street girls went missing and were eventually found dead, cut into pieces and strewn around San Jose (Casa Alianza (2001c) with seeming impunity. By 2001, there were only five people in jail (four U.S citizens and one Costa Rican) awaiting trial for the sexual exploitation of children, despite of the 230 criminal complaints that Casa Alianza presented to the Costa Rican authorities (Casa Alianza, 2001a). In addition, the police are part of the problem. On August 10, 1999, the Costa Rican Special Prosecutor Against Sex Crimes received a judge's order to raid "The Green Door," a private club operated by a U.S citizen that offered female "escorts" and minors for sex to businessmen and foreign residents in Costa Rica. Helped by the Minister of Public Security, Rogelio Ramos, the U.S criminal escaped (Casa Alianza, 2001b). Further, when young girls are arrested, the victims are punished by police who ask for oral sex (CBC, 2004)

In Costa Rica, sex tourism also includes young men's bodies. Rich U.S, Canadian, and European women sex tourist, with patriarchal masculated minds, take advantage of their superior class and race status to lure young boys. There are reports that young boys and men engage in 'romance tourism' with these women, usually well-off, single, professional women who travel to resort areas and provide a willing male with drinks, dinners, shopping sprees, jewellery and other luxury goods in exchange for sex and companionship. In this criminal environment, women can be as exploitative as men (Sanchez Taylor 2001, Jeffreys 2003), but women can also be endangered by

their “romantic companions”.

### **Resisting Narrow Environmentalism**

The definition of forest as oxygen generator actually destroys sustainable ways of living, thus creating real material poverty, or misery, by expropriating or diminishing the capacities of the forest to their dwellers. *Campesinos* know that their Human Rights have been also violated by MINAE and other organizations they have called environmentalist. Referring to them, Mr Guimo said

“They used to come to us for information, and we provided it. I personally boarded people and allowed them to use my horses to move about comfortably. Things are changing, we cannot collaborate anymore. MINAE told me that I have to sell my *finca* to the state and at the price the state decides. We are not leaving. They have to kill us if they want our land.” (Guimo, interview, July 2001).

Further, the creditors’ power relations, which encourage selling oxygen, are written in the bodies of the forest, the women and the children of indebted Costa Rica. As dwellers are evicted from their land, dispossessed and vulnerable women and children turn into the sexual tourism industry. Forcing them into a new a new form of slavery in the 21th Century – massive sexual slavery. First world white males, with the complicity of local governments, go to exploit the economic hardships of the inequality crisis created by global capitalism.

The messages of power from the industrial world, the rich, and the masculated male are that Costa Rican’ women and children, and nature are inferior. Consequently, enclosing the forest, for capital accumulation, are condemning Costa Rica’s rural women and children to death or prostitution. Further, the situation of Costa Rica as country is the same as the situation of its prostitutes – both of them are kept in financial debt by their pims – the IMF, the WB, commercial banks and powerful countries in the first case and brothel owners in the second. They live in debt bondage, where the arrangements are such that neither the country nor the sexual slave can ever earn enough to pay off their debts or become autonomous being.

Costa Rican women and men, with the support of local municipalities, are no longer silent. They are defending their rights to a secure livelihood. In their battle against loosing livelihoods, men

and women have uncovered the class, gender and colonial relations of sustainable development in the alliances between their 'national' government and international capital. At the same time, women and children battered bodies have shown that the Kyoto Protocol that uses the rainforest as carbon sink is not separated from their subsistence and everyday life.

By pressuring investors around the world and by exposing the fallacy of 'sustainable development' without class, gender, and imperialism women from all over the world can join their Costa Rica sisters in their struggle for a just and healthy world. No blank check to the Kyoto Protocol! The women's movement needs to support the Kyoto Protocol only if it is committed to reduce green house gas emissions by imposing limits on the gases produced by the factories of the world. It cannot be endorsed if it will continue with the expropriation of the rain forest that represents the basis of the survival economy of its dwellers.

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*Indicators of Environmentally Sustainable Development.* Environmentally Sustainable Development Studies and Monographs Series No. 17. Pp 19-39.

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