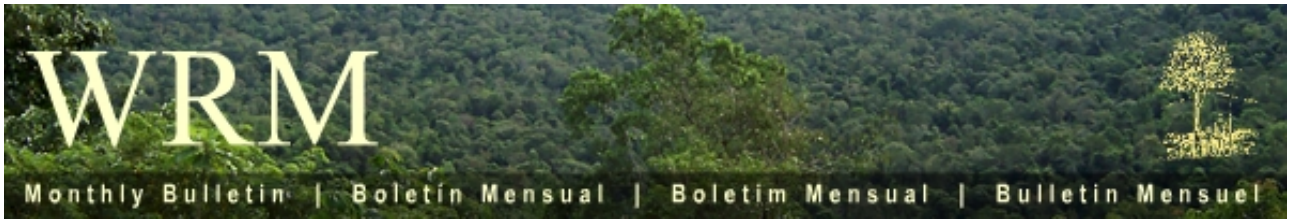


Issue 180 - July 2012

Printable version | For free subscription | Previous issues also available in **French**, **Portuguese** and **Spanish**

OUR VIEWPOINT

- **Rio+20 shows that corporate power is limitless**

BEYOND RIO+20

- **Continuing our struggles**

  The different processes taking place simultaneously during Rio+20 reflect the opposing interests of corporations and governments, on the one hand, and of social movements, civil society organizations and activist networks, on the other. The People's Summit represented an important step forward by serving as a space for analyzing, proposing and constructing, collectively, a common agenda for action beyond Rio+20.

FORESTS AND COMMUNITIES

- **Killings worldwide – the toll of land grabbing**

  A new report by Global Witness highlights the rising violence, human rights violations and killings that have come with the growing competition for land and forests.

- **Cambodia: First political risk insurance coverage for a REDD project**

  The world's first ever political risk insurance policy for a REDD project has been provided by the U.S. government's development finance agency OPIC. The political risk insurance is alleged to protect 64,318 hectares of forests but in fact protects foreign investors against the potential for Cambodia to regulate REDD projects.

- **El Salvador: Wide opposition to preparations for REDD+**

  The government of El Salvador has submitted a Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) to signal its willingness to participate in REDD+ financial incentive schemes. Social organizations, academics and indigenous peoples have all publicly expressed their rejection of the R-PP.

- **Malaysia: Baram Dam would flood indigenous communities to benefit mining in Borneo**

  Dozens of villages and longhouse communities would be flooded and a riverine ecosystem affected upon construction of the Baram Dam in Borneo for the benefit of Australian mining giant Rio Tinto.

- **Nigeria: Cocoa plantation project threatens pristine forest lands of the Etara and Ekuri-Eyeyeng**

  The forest reserve lands that are home to the Etara and Ekuri-Eyeyeng communities may be lost to the industrial plantation of cocoa by Southgate Cocoa Produce Limited, linked to UK-based Armajaro Trading Ltd.

MONOCULTURE TREE PLANTATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

- **Phillipines: Oil palm company A. Brown grabs Higaonon indigenous people's lands**

  An International Fact-Finding Mission (IFFM) has revealed that A. Brown Company, Inc. began planting oil palm on Higaonon land in the southern Philippines without a permit to operate. The IFFM called for an investigation of human rights violations against the Higaonon people, including the shooting and illegal arrest of farmers, burning of houses, uprooting of crops, harassment and death threats.

- **Gabon: Resisting Olam land grabbing for oil palm plantations**

  Civil society denounces the concession of large areas of ancestral lands to a transnational corporation for the establishment of industrial oil palm plantations.

- **Chile: Campaign against tree monoculture expansion**

  A new action by the forestry corporations seeks to double the more than 3 million hectares planted with monocultures of eucalyptus and pine trees, trying to annex the lands of Chilean farmers and Mapuche communities.

PEOPLES IN ACTION

- **Global Campaign to dismantle Corporate Power**
- **Looking ahead for agrarian reform and the defense of land and territory**
- **Campaign against palm oil giant FELDA**
- **Greenwash Gold winner 2012: Mining company Rio Tinto**

RECOMMENDED

- **"El lado oscuro de los acuerdos de inversión"**
- **"Rights of Nature: Planting the Seeds of Change"**

index

OUR VIEWPOINT

-Rio+20 shows that corporate power is limitless

During the Rio+20 summit, incidents related to the event itself, such as the expulsion of a Mozambican activist, and the daily reality faced by the local population, who suffer at the hands of the big corporations sponsoring the official conference,

demonstrated that corporate power has no limits.

Mozambican journalist Jeremias Vunjanhe arrived in Brazil on June 13 to participate in the People's Summit, an event organized by Brazilian and international civil society networks and social movements that took place before and after the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, better known as Rio+20. But he did not make it past the airport, where he was stopped from entering the country by the Brazilian federal police and deported to Mozambique.

Jeremias and his organization, Justiça Ambiental-Friends of the Earth Mozambique, have tirelessly supported Mozambican communities impacted by the activities of Vale, a transnational mining company based in Brazil and one of the world's largest. Jeremias had already been the target of threats and intimidation because of his work on numerous occasions in the past.

If we look closely at the Rio+20 conference we can see that global corporate power has lobbied very effectively to defend its interests, both within the UN and on an individual basis with the governments of many countries, through its proposal of a "green economy" that promotes the privatization and commodification of nature as the right path towards a "sustainable" future. Moreover, it would appear that a group of large transnational corporations have gained de facto control over the UN and national governments, as well as other national institutions such as the police force and judicial system, which they use to defend their current and future interests through the criminalization and persecution of local communities and activists that could represent obstacles to them.

To see this reality, it was enough to look a bit beyond the Rio+20 meeting facilities. Civil society organizations in Rio de Janeiro, for example, organized so-called Toxic Tours, which provided a look at the "B-side" of the city. These solidarity visits included a meeting with residents of the community of Santa Cruz, on the west side of the host city, who suffer the impacts of the massive TKCSA steel plant, a joint venture between Vale and the German transnational ThyssenKrupp. There were also visits to communities in the municipality of Magé and the region of Duque de Caxias, among others affected by the operations of Petrobras, the Brazilian state-owned oil and gas company.

Following the visits, representatives of the three communities met together to share their experiences of the Toxic Tours at an event during the People's Summit. The residents of Santa Cruz denounced the pollution of the air and water, declaring that "we no longer eat rice and beans, now we eat iron dust," and highlighted the health problems suffered by the population and the tactics used by the company to co-opt local communities. They also reported that making a living from fishing is now practically impossible. "They want to hear us say that we are no longer fishermen," declared one local fisherman, while another lamented, "I used to be a man of the sea, but now I don't know what I am anymore."

A few days after Rio+20, we got a clear picture of the scope of the violence faced by fisherfolk in the state of Rio de Janeiro when João Luis Telles Penetra and Almir Nogueira de Amorim of the Association of Men and Women of the Sea of Guanabara Bay (AHOMAR), an organization that defends artisanal fishing in the region, were

brutally murdered. AHOMAR fights against the social and environmental impacts of the major industrial activities in the region that affect fisherfolk, and in particular, against a petrochemical complex owned by Petrobras.

Also during Rio+20, 300 indigenous people and their supporters held an event called Xingu+23 to protest the construction of the Belo Monte hydroelectric dam in the state of Pará, in the Brazilian Amazon region. Promoted by Eletrobrás, another major Brazilian company in the energy sector, the dam will negatively impact thousands of people and destroy at least 50,000 hectares of Amazon rainforest. The police in Pará subsequently requested that the state justice system imprison 11 activists, including a priest who had celebrated mass and blessed the Xingu+23 meeting, and a local resident whose house had been destroyed by construction work on the dam. In the city of Rio de Janeiro, indigenous protestors briefly occupied the headquarters of the main source of financing for the dam, the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES), which is using the Brazilian people's money to fund this million-dollar project.

The power of big corporations doesn't only affect communities who oppose their projects. It would appear that it is even capable of bringing down presidents, if we look closely at what happened immediately after Rio+20 in Paraguay, where the democratically elected president, Fernando Lugo, was ousted from power. The involvement of the powerful agribusiness sector in this incident is undeniable. This sector dominates the Paraguayan economy as well as its political circles, and includes transnationals like Monsanto that earn millions of dollars by promoting the use of genetically modified seeds in the country.

In the face of this reality, the message of the People's Summit is clearer than ever: we must take action. And the organizations and activists participating in the event began to do so by protesting against the arbitrary deportation of their fellow activist, Jeremias. After many protests, both national and international, the Brazilian government was forced to reverse its decision and allow Jeremias to enter the country. He travelled from Mozambique to Brazil once again and arrived in Rio de Janeiro on June 19, six days after his deportation.

At the airport in Rio de Janeiro, Jeremias was able to clearly see the two faces of today's world. On the one hand, the face of the corporations in the glossy posters placed throughout the airport to welcome him and other participants in Rio+20, featuring as one of the sponsors of the event the Brazilian company Vale, with which Jeremias is all too familiar. But the other companies mentioned in this article – Petrobras and Eletrobras – were also among the official sponsors of the UN conference.

Luckily for Jeremias, however, he was also able to see the face of the people, united and in struggle, thanks to the dozens of activists who were there to welcome him with a joyous celebration of this victory in the fight for justice.

Finally, let no one be fooled by the many "green" faces that corporations put forward to hide their violations, their true practices. As Jeremias himself stressed, all of the solidarity shown towards him must also be shared with all of the communities who suffer from the arbitrary acts and violations perpetrated against them by corporations.

And we must continue to unite and step up our struggle against corporate power and in defence of life!

index

BEYOND RIO+20

-Continuing our struggles

Those who were in Rio de Janeiro between June 15 and 23 were able to observe three parallel and different but interconnected processes. The first process, a closed one, was the Conference on Sustainable Development better known as Rio+20, which took place in Riocentro, a conference centre far from the city centre and heavily protected by thousands of police officers and armed forces.

This process was sponsored by the United Nations (UN) and brought together representatives of 188 countries, who concentrated on the joint drafting of an outcome document on the future of the planet and humanity. The proposal included in this document, which was being debated long before the conference itself, provoked so much controversy that the Brazilian government replaced the draft text, a few days before the beginning of the official conference, with a new version. The text that was finally approved by the participating countries can be read at: http://www.uncsd2012.org/thefuturewewant.html

The document, called "The Future We Want", was described by Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff as the "possible consensus". However, little was added in this "new" draft to what had already been written in previous declarations and multilateral agreements on the environment and related issues. And what is even more serious is that this outcome document, while recognizing the gravity of the environmental crisis and the other crises currently facing humanity, does not oblige the signatory countries to adopt the urgent structural measures needed to confront them.

In the meantime, and specifically with regard to the section on forests, it could be considered a positive result that the document makes few explicit references to market mechanisms like REDD+ and trade in environmental services as means to combat deforestation. As for the subject of biodiversity, the document states, "We reaffirm the intrinsic value of biological diversity." This statement reflects a certain opposition to the proposal of a "green economy", which implies the need to place a price on biodiversity and other "environmental services". This positive result is due to the stance adopted by the countries of the South, and more specifically, the member countries of the G77, who presented a document in these terms prior to

Rio+20.

This does not mean, however, that there was no discussion in Rio de Janeiro of proposals for the commodification of nature through trade in “environmental services”. Indeed, this leads us to the second process that took place in the city during those days.

This second process was concentrated in luxury hotels and other plush meeting spaces outside the official UN conference. It comprised a series of side events such as seminars and meetings in which countries and states, national and multilateral banks including the World Bank, conservationist NGOs and corporations discussed initiatives which they labelled as “green” and “sustainable”.

One example was Acre Day, referring to a Brazilian state in the Amazon rainforest region. This was an event organized in the lovely Rio de Janeiro Botanical Gardens to celebrate Acre’s “success”, with the distribution of brochures entitled “Acre+20: A Land of Dreams, a World of Opportunities”. Or, in the words of senator Jorge Viana, brother of the current governor of the state, “an enormous reserve of carbon credits”. After passing legislation to create the “State System of Incentives for Environmental Services”, the state of Acre is ready to sell and market these “services” to buyers looking to offset their polluting activities, regardless of the outcomes of the official Rio+20 conference, as various speakers stressed. For example, the government of Italy, represented at the event, publicly expressed interest in signing an agreement with the government of Acre.

During the event, however, activists from Acre denounced the false image of the state as a role model for the “green economy” and presented a report called “The Acre That the Merchants of Nature Hide”, which exposes the environmental destruction and social repression resulting from these initiatives (see http://www.cimi.org.br/pub/Rio20/Dossie-ACRE.pdf). And this criticism leads us to the third process that took place in Rio de Janeiro that same week in June.

The third process was the People’s Summit held in Aterro do Flamengo, a park near the city centre. The preparations for this event began long before Rio+20 through the coordinated efforts of national and international networks and social movements. The People’s Summit brought together close to 50,000 people, many from Brazil and Latin America, but also from other continents. Everyone was free to participate in the hundreds of self-run activities that were organized to draw attention to specific and general issues, but also, above all, to revive hope in the struggle.

Nevertheless, within the Summit, there was a crucial central process in which a great many people participated: the plenary sessions aimed at promoting convergence around five previously defined key themes (*), which culminated in three assemblies on the structural causes of the various crises facing humanity and the false solutions put forward to deal with them; our own proposals to confront these crises; and our common agenda of struggles. The participants in the Summit also headed up a massive demonstration march in which more than 50,000 people took to the streets of downtown Rio de Janeiro. Various other mobilizations also took place during the days of the event, most of them to protest corporate power and show solidarity with local communities in Rio affected by the brutal process of the concentration of wealth

and privatization that the city is experiencing. An example of this is the situation of the community of Vila Autódromo, threatened with eviction to make way for works planned for the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

The final declaration of this process (see cupuladospovos.org.br) seeks to motivate us to keep up the struggle, in a more coordinated manner and with a clearer notion and analysis of the way that the different issues addressed by different movements and organizations are interconnected. While the appropriation and privatization of public land and resources, as in the case of forest regions with REDD projects, concessions for logging or monoculture tree plantations, etc., lead to the expulsion and division of the people, processes like the one that took place at the People's Summit promote ties of solidarity among different organizations, communities, social movements and activists from every corner of the planet.

These events need to be repeated and strengthened, and the common agenda of struggles must be put into practice through direct support for struggles in defence of the rights of communities and nature and against the destruction and commodification of nature; and through the construction of people's solutions – not the "green economy" imposed from the top down to serve the interests of big corporations and maintain a system of excessive and unequal production and consumption, but rather, on the contrary, a bottom-up economy based on collective rights and values.

The first two processes described here, which involved governments and corporations and took place during Rio+20, showed that corporations and their allies, such as the World Bank and other "development" banks, are fulfilling their agendas for the commodification and financialization of nature, the so-called "green economy", even if the governments participating in the UN conference did not endorse them in the terms sought by the corporations. But the third process, which involves the peoples, showed that we are capable, working together, of analyzing the current situation, proposing solutions and building a common agenda, in order to advance in the globalization of the struggle for a socially and environmentally just world.

Finally, we reaffirm the conclusion of the final declaration of the People's Summit (http://cupuladospovos.org.br/): "Social transformation demands the convergence of actions, coalitions and common agendas based on the necessary resistance struggles and propositions we are waging in every corner of the planet. The People's Summit at Rio+20 motivates us to continue our struggles."

(*) (1) Rights, for social and environmental justice, (2) Defence of the commons against commodification, (3) Food sovereignty, (4) Energy and extractive industries, and (5) Work: for another economy and new paradigms for society

index

FORESTS AND COMMUNITIES

-Killings worldwide – the toll of land grabbing

Land grabbing is characterized by the acquisition of vast areas of land in countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia for a variety of different uses, including large-scale monoculture plantations, mining, tourism, hydroelectric power plants and food production for export, among others, by companies, investment funds and financial markets in general (see WRM Bulletin Nº 177). This has wide implications on communities and their forests, livelihoods, traditional knowledge and indeed, on their present and their future.

One of the direct impacts of the corporate assault on life and nature is the death toll of people that are resisting it.

A new report from Global Witness highlights the intensification of violence against land, forest and mining activists around the world.

Global Witness has recently published a valuable report, "A Hidden Crisis? Increase in killings as tensions rise over land and forests", which highlights the rising violence and human rights violations that come with the growing competition for land and forests.

What follows is an edited excerpt from the briefing, which is available at http://www.globalwitness.org/sites/default/files/library/A_hidden_crisis-FINAL%20190612%20v2.pdf

Global Witness counted the numbers of people killed over the past decade (years 2002-2011 inclusive) defending their human rights or the human rights of others related to the environment, specifically land and forests. These rights include enjoyment of a healthy environment as well as the rights of indigenous peoples to their land and its resources, including forests; the right to life, livelihood and freedom of expression.

Across the world, Global Witness's research found 711 individuals reported as killed in the past decade – an average of more than one killing per week. Of these, 106 people were killed in 2011 – nearly twice the death toll in 2009. It includes those killed in targeted attacks and violent clashes as a result of protests, investigating or taking grievances against mining operations, logging operations, intensive agriculture including ranching, tree plantations, hydropower dams, urban development and poaching.

Killings took a variety of forms, including clashes between communities and state security forces, disappearances followed by confirmed deaths, deaths in custody, or one-off or multiple targeted assassinations.

The briefing shows that there is an alarming lack of systematic information on killings in many countries, and no specialized monitoring at the international level. These figures are therefore likely to be a gross underestimate of the number and extent of killings. The investigation also reveals that the countries with the highest reports of killings are Brazil, Peru, Colombia and the Philippines. In these and other countries (e.g., Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Indonesia) there are continuing concerns about domestic and foreign private sector involvement in these killings.

The survey did not find high levels of killings in Africa. The interpretation is that this could be due to lower levels of rights awareness and reporting activity in rural areas of the continent. It is also likely to be due to factors such as high levels of state ownership of land and forests. For example, in Africa the area of forest administered by governments is 98% of the total, whereas it is 66% in Asia and 33% in Latin America. Global Witness' report found that the predominance of state ownership of land and forests in Africa may have contributed to disempowering poor, rural populations who are then less likely to pursue grievances.

Another trend identified is that a culture of impunity, especially strong in many countries, contributes to low levels of convictions.

These trends are symptomatic of the increasingly fierce competition for resources, and the brutality and injustice that come with it.

The pressure on the finite assets of land and forests has already taken its toll – only 20% of the world's original forest remains intact and 25% of land has become increasingly degraded in the past 20 years. Yet global demand for land and forests (for food, fuel, fibre and other resources) is predicted to increase – pushing the frontiers of investment further into areas with inadequate governance, tenure rights and rule of law. As this competition intensifies, it is local rural populations and activists who find themselves in the firing line.

At the global level, it is well known that the main driver of demand for land is agribusiness, and global demand is increasing exponentially, with the World Bank reporting a fourfold increase in global large-scale farmland investments between 2001 and 2009. Africa has received the majority of such investment (62% of projects covering a total of 56.2 million hectares) followed by 17.1 million hectares in Asia and 7 million hectares in Latin America.

From Cambodia to Peru, rural communities face more extreme intimidation, violence, forced evictions and killings. Deals are often agreed in secret between government officials, elites and the private sector, while local communities who directly live off the land or forest, and often actually own it, are afforded no rights or meaningful say in the matter. Very often, these communities stand to gain little or nothing from the investment.

Reports of killings carried out by men in uniforms, acting on behalf of private sector interests and/or governments, featured more commonly in Brazil, Cambodia, Colombia, Indonesia, Peru and the Philippines. In the Philippines where "involuntary disappearance" has only recently become a crime, 50 killings occurred in the past

decade, but not a single case has led to a prosecution.

Professor Bill Kovarik of Radford University, who has undertaken research on killings in Asia and Latin America, commented: “There is no question that we are seeing a statistically significant rise in the number of environmentally related murders being reported in the local Asian and Latin American media. It’s difficult to know whether that is because there are more murders or whether it has now become more difficult for these things to be ignored. That can only be discovered with further research. But we are, in any case, obliged to consider these human rights violations as part of an emerging and now visible pattern.”

The briefing provides more detailed accounts of the killings of Chut Wutty from Cambodia, Frédéric Moloma Tuka from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nísio Gomes from Brazil, and Eliezer “Boy” Billanes from the Philippines.

An article in The Guardian (http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/jun/19/environment-activist-deaths) tells the story of José Cláudio Ribeiro da Silva and Maria do Espirito Santo, murdered for their struggle against logging and agribusiness activities in Brazil.

All of them are no longer mere figures; they have become the faces of the many community leaders, indigenous people and activists who will be remembered not only for their deaths, but also, and especially, for their lives.

(photo by Global Witness)

index

-Cambodia: First political risk insurance coverage for a REDD project

The goal of the private investment firm Terra Global Capital is “to facilitate the market for land use carbon and other environmental credits (…) by providing technical expertise for the measurement and monetization of land use carbon credits and carbon finance through a dedicated investment fund.”

Terra Global has teamed up with Cambodia’s Forestry Administration and the international NGO Pact Cambodia to conduct the country’s first ever REDD project, in the deep woods of Oddar Meanchey province in northwest Cambodia. Oddar Meanchey suffers from one of the highest rates of deforestation in the country, caused by mining projects, agro-industrial crop plantations, military settlements in response to border disputes, illegal logging and other conflicts that afflict local

communities.

The project plans to obtain revenues from the international sale of forest carbon credits allegedly generated by the investment firm's guarantee that the carbon that was at risk of being released through deforestation will remain stored in the trees of the 64,318 hectares of forests – so-called "avoided carbon emissions" – for the 30 years the project would last.

These revenues, claims the company, will be used to "fund activities that reduce deforestation, including community forestry patrols and fire control, community-based water resource development projects, strengthening and clarifying land tenure, sustainable farming systems, agricultural intensification and fuel-efficient stoves."

In November 2011, a U.S. government agency, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), which provides financing and insurance for U.S. investors involved in projects in Southern countries, provided USD 900,000 in political risk insurance for Terra Global Capital.

Historically, OPIC support has consisted mainly of direct financing and insurance to private investors in projects in Southern countries, but since 1987 the agency has supported a growing number of private equity investment funds, many of which serve as financial intermediaries that in turn finance projects in the South. OPIC has now committed at least USD 3.6 billion to more than 50 private equity funds. Critics of REDD projects say, inter alia, that private equity funds often demand too high a profit to be suitable for development projects and often seek to liquidate investments in a few years, to the detriment of long-term sustainable development.

OPIC is shifting its energy portfolio away from large fossil fuel projects and towards so-called renewable energy projects, and now aggregates traditionally defined renewable energy projects into a larger category of projects that the agency calls "renewable resources", which includes REDD and agricultural projects. OPIC's "renewable resources" commitments grew from USD 10 million in 2008 to USD 1.1 billion in 2011.

The U.S. government now counts OPIC-financed and insured "renewable resources" projects towards U.S. international "climate finance" commitments, which refers to commitments from Northern countries to provide funding to help Southern countries respond to climate change. However, in the case of OPIC "renewable resources" support, financing and insurance are rather directed to OPIC's private sector clients, which typically include U.S. investors. In so doing, the U.S. pursues a climate and development path that is increasingly defined by, and for the benefit of, private interests.

OPIC is using political risk insurance, which is supposed to protect against wrongful political actions, to protect REDD investors against the implementation of regulations governing REDD activities at the national or provincial level that a country – in this case Cambodia – might impose in the future. Such regulations would potentially include the setting of national or provincial emissions reductions targets, accounting and monitoring systems, regulations on how ownership of credits and revenue sharing from credits is determined, and other rules for REDD projects. Those

requirements might change the way a REDD project sponsor conducts the project with potentially large financial implications for REDD project investors who are making investments ahead of these negotiations and are assuming a potentially different set of conditions governing their investments.

OPIC's support for the Oddar Meanchey REDD project in Cambodia sets a global precedent – including the first ever political risk insurance policy for a REDD project.

OPIC and the project developers claim that the Oddar Meanchey REDD project will have significant climate and local environmental and development benefits. But the viability of REDD projects rests largely on carbon markets, which are not reliable. Indeed, OPIC's political risk insurance protects project investors, and not necessarily local communities, in the event that the covered political risks manifest themselves. In fact, local communities residing around the forests seem to be the last in line for receiving project benefits, making decisions about the project, and protection against market and political risks.

Perversely, OPIC support for REDD and other renewable resources projects is counted toward the U.S. government's climate finance commitments to developing countries, even though this support is provided to private parties rather than to governments and may protect against actions that the Cambodian government may take to defend its own interests in the event that the project fails to deliver promised benefits.

Article based on edited excerpts from: "Precedent-Setting Insurance for REDD Project in Cambodia Raises Concerns", a paper by Pacific Environment, FERN and Focus on the Global South, sent by Shalmali Guttal, Focus on the Global South, s.guttal@focusweb.org

index

-El Salvador: Wide opposition to preparations for REDD+

The REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) mechanism and its subsequent expanded version, REDD+, which encompasses monoculture tree plantations, form part of the "market-based" strategies for confronting climate change that we consider to be false solutions, since they do not address the true causes of the problem. The basic concept behind REDD is that governments, or the owners or concession-holders (companies, big NGOs) of forests in the South, should be compensated for keeping the forests standing, instead of cutting the trees down. This mechanism, in addition to converting carbon

into a commodity, has a series of connotations with regard to the rights of indigenous peoples and other local communities over the forests, as well as their access to them.

In spite of this, REDD+ projects continue to move forwards, with a great deal of money involved. Part of the process for participating in REDD is the formulation of a Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP). This is a document in which countries outline the framework of actions (types of studies and preparations, their implementation, terms of reference or work) which will allow them to be "ready" to participate in REDD+ financial incentive schemes. The guidelines for R-PP documents were developed by the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), which is implemented by the World Bank to promote REDD+ projects. Once again, the World Bank is playing an active role in the growing commodification of nature, in this case the climate, by facilitating the mobilization of large sums of money and enabling financial investments and stock market transactions.

In El Salvador, the government has submitted a REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal to the FCPF, meeting opposition from Salvadoran social organizations and academics, who publicly outlined their arguments against the R-PP.

In a report entitled "Los esquemas de REDD-plus en El Salvador: Perfil bajo, disfraces benevolentes y mercantilización de ecosistemas y territorios" (REDD-plus schemes in El Salvador: Low profile, benevolent disguises and commodification of ecosystems and territories) (1), researchers Yvette Aguilar, Maritza Erazo and Francisco Soto – who have been monitoring the Salvadoran government's participation in the REDD+ mechanism – explain that this mechanism will enable "the buying and selling of carbon bonds directly on the carbon markets or through intermediary funds, such as the FCPF Carbon Fund, to offset emissions in developed countries. This approach is aimed at the commodification of nature through the commercialization of the carbon stored in ecosystems and territories on which indigenous, rural and peasant farmer communities depend for their survival."

The report states that the proposal contains serious conceptual errors and technical-scientific flaws that are unacceptable even under the lax criteria of the FCPF, as a result of which the REDD+ proposal would make the country even more vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

On May 15, a number of social organizations sent an open letter to the FCPF coordinator (2) in which they expressed their concern over and opposition to the R-PP, requesting that it not be approved, in view of the fact that El Salvador has established "neither a National Climate Change Strategy nor an open, transparent and participatory official process." They further denounce that the R-PP has serious conceptual and methodological flaws, and that if it were approved by the FCPF, it would have negative impacts on the Salvadoran population, increasing their vulnerability to and the frequency of natural disasters, while delaying the fulfilment of urgent national and international commitments to combat climate change.

The organizations also demanded "that any consultation process that takes place in our country around REDD must be organized and promoted so as to be transparent, informed and genuinely participatory, based on the best knowledge available and

any international commitments assumed." This demand responds to the fact that the process for the design and drafting of the R-PP was carried out by the authorities behind closed doors, with little transparency and without consulting "the relevant actors and sectors, some of which have already put forward proposals for policies and measures to confront climate change."

The Salvadoran civil society organizations signing the letter expressed their outright rejection of the R-PP and the process through which it was formulated, and stressed that it has "neither the scientific-technical backing nor the social legitimacy to guarantee its acceptance and successful implementation by the relevant actors, and particularly the populations most vulnerable to climate change and climate variability, among which indigenous communities, peasant farming communities, communities that depend on forest systems, economically disadvantaged women and marginalized rural and urban populations play a predominant role."

In addition, the 23 indigenous organizations and communities that make up the Salvadoran National Indigenous Coordinating Council (CCNIS) also sent an open letter to the FCPF (3) to express their support for the civil society organizations and their shared opposition to the government's proposal. The letter states that the R-PP "does not consider or incorporate the concerns or needs of the indigenous peoples of El Salvador in terms of climate change impacts and adaptation, and the process for its drafting lacked the prior, free and informed consultation with these peoples required by international law on indigenous rights. Although the R-PP submitted by the MARN (Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources) includes a section on the indigenous peoples of El Salvador, its content disregards the progress made in international law on indigenous rights and the commitments that this entails for national governments."

The CCNIS further warns that "the negative impacts of climate change in El Salvador are increasing and causing damages and losses in our indigenous communities, whose homes, crops and means of livelihood have been reduced, deteriorated or destroyed, and negative effects on health, food security and income can already be observed. Climate change is even further limiting their rights in terms of access and use of the land in the territories where they live and carry out their livelihood, spiritual and cultural activities. The R-PP proposal does not consider these negative impacts in any way, nor does it consider the proposals that we as indigenous peoples can contribute to the country for the formulation of a National Climate Change Strategy and Plan and a National Adaptation Plan."

The CCNIS letter stresses that "many of the policies and measures adopted for the mitigation of the causes of climate change constitute threats to indigenous peoples and could increase their vulnerability and lessen their possibilities for adaptation. Like biofuels, REDD-plus schemes have been seriously questioned by our indigenous peoples, because of the serious negative impacts they could have on us, particularly by increasing restrictions on access to the land and its resources, and facilitating the large-scale plunder of our indigenous territories. In order to prevent these impacts, indigenous peoples have fought for the incorporation of specific safeguards in all policies, programmes, regulations and agreements that affect us, so as to ensure respect for our specific rights."

The government of El Salvador has not ratified Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization, which is for now the only international legal instrument that grants indigenous peoples the internationally validated right to their own territory, culture and language. Even so, it could receive funding to implement a REDD project which would involve forest communities so directly that it would clearly expose the lack of guarantees for the respect of their rights in these transactions.

For more information see http://wrm.org.uy/countries/ElSalvador.html#info

This article is based on:

(1) "Los esquemas de REDD-plus en El Salvador: Perfil bajo, disfraces benevolentes y mercantilización de ecosistemas y territorios", Yvette Aguilar, email: yvette.a@gmail.com, Maritza Erazo, email: mlerazo@yahoo.com, Francisco Soto, email: francisco.soto.monterrosa@gmail.com, San Salvador, El Salvador, July 17, 2012, sent by Francisco Soto.

(2) Letter from Salvadoran civil society organizations to the World Bank FCPF, available at: http://www.wrm.org.uy/paises/ElSalvador/Carta_FCPF-RPP-SLV-15May2012.pdf
(3) Letter from the Salvadoran National Indigenous Coordinating Council (CCNIS) to the World Bank FCPF, available at: http://www.wrm.org.uy/paises/ElSalvador/Carta_FCPF-RPP-SLV_CCNIS-24May2012.pdf

(photo: http://climatevoices.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/no-redd_poster-cartel.jpeg)

index

-Malaysia: Baram Dam would flood indigenous communities to benefit mining in Borneo

The current government of Sarawak, a Malaysian state on the island of Borneo, is planning to build 12 hydroelectric dams which would displace tens of thousands of people and flood large tracts of tropical rainforest. Billed as clean energy, hydroelectric dams in tropical countries have devastating impacts on our climate because of the greenhouse gases released from the mass of rotting vegetation that comes with flooding such huge swaths of rainforest.

Officials claim the power generated from the dams will be used locally, but these are barefaced lies. Just the one dam already completed produces twice as much energy as the entire state uses at peak times! In reality, the power will mostly like go

towards running polluting industries, like an aluminium smelter owned by Australian mining giant Rio Tinto – further degrading the environment and funnelling money out of the country.

The Baram Dam is one of 12 dams that the authorities in Sarawak are planning to build following the completion of the Bakun Dam. The 162-metre high Baram Dam would flood a rainforest area of 412 km2 (41,200 hectares) and at least 26 indigenous villages, causing the displacement of up to 20,000 Sarawak natives.

The proposed dam would cause havoc for the Kenyah, Kayan and Penan peoples in the upper reaches of the Baram River, one of Borneo's great rainforest streams. Many of their villages would be submerged and would literally cease to exist. Traditional longhouse communities in the dam's downstream areas would also face drastic changes and pollution of the riverine ecosystem, affecting river transport, fishing, irrigation and access to drinking water.

The Baram Dam and the other dams planned for construction also fail to fulfil at least six out of seven of the requirements of the World Commission on Dams (WCD): gaining public acceptance; comprehensive options assessment; addressing existing dams; sustaining rivers and livelihoods; recognizing entitlements and sharing benefits; ensuring compliance; and sharing rivers for peace, development and security.

Construction has already begun on the Murum Dam, and the Baram Dam and the others are coming soon. Indigenous people are being displaced, with the lies of "development" and "free utilities" being used as justification. Many displaced Batang Ai and Bakun dwellers have not received their promises from the government, and their human rights are being denied.

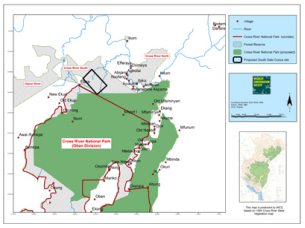
A campaign to build up international pressure against the Sarawak dams has been initiated with a petition asking the Malaysian authorities to put a stop to the project immediately, since these dams would have drastic social and environmental consequences.

You can sign the petition at
http://www.avaaz.org/en/petition/STOP_BARAM_DAM_SAVE_SARAWAK_FOREST_AND_RIVER/?foSoedb&pv=7

Based on information sent by Cecelia Agnes Ling, e-mail: cecelia_ai@yahoo.com

index

-Nigeria: Cocoa plantation project threatens pristine forest lands of the Etara and Ekuri-Eyeyeng



The tropical moist forest area of Cross River state has the largest area of tropical forest in the country. Approximately 8,500 square kilometres are mostly undisturbed virgin forest, partially under community ownership. 5,140 square kilometres of the tropical high forest land are designated as protected areas, comprising the Cross River National Park, which occupies 3,330 square kilometres of high forest, and the Forest Reserves occupying 1,810 square kilometres of forest land where the Etara and Ekuri-Eyeyeng communities have their customary lands.

The lands of the Etara and Ekuri-Eyeyeng are being held in trust by the Government of Cross River State of Nigeria, on behalf of those indigenous communities for whom the forest is the most important source of livelihood. It is in the forest where they find fertile farmlands and timber resources used for local construction, and where they collect most of the non-timber forest products used for food, income, local crafts and medicine. The forest also protects streams and rivers from drought cycles, delivers clean water, and is considered by the community as a sacred place where their ancestors are buried.

Now, the integrity of the forest and thus the livelihood of the communities are under threat. A company known as Southgate Cocoa Produce Limited is planning to acquire a parcel of land comprising 72.41 square kilometres of pristine rainforest that lies completely within the immediate contiguous forest buffer zone of the Cross River National Park in Etara and Ekuri-Eyeyeng community forest lands, in order to establish industrial cocoa plantations.

The Nigerian organization Rainforest Resource & Development Centre (RRDC) has been denouncing the project on the grounds that it is “contrary to the interests of the indigenous communities.” Furthermore, while the use of the forest reserve for the plantation of cocoa would be in violation of the law, no Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out. RRDC warns that “the Cross River South Forest Reserve is a pristine and intact rainforest ecosystem, and therefore this project is a serious threat to the ecological integrity of the ecosystem and to the adjoining Oban Division of the Cross River National Park.”

RRDC also points out that Southgate has contacts with large global interest groups. One of these groups is Armajaro Trading Limited, a subsidiary of Armajaro Holding, based in London. It engages in the sourcing and delivery of cocoa, and supplies chocolate manufacturers in Asia, South America, North America, and elsewhere internationally.

A campaign calling for rapid response has been launched by RRDC to inform Armajaro and/or any other foreign parties or partners that, contrary to the information that is being propagated by Southgate and its agents, the land in question lies completely within the immediate contiguous forest buffer zone of the Oban Division of the Cross River National Park and the forest land in question is a pristine tropical

rainforest and not a “degraded reserve” as they allege.

Appeals can be sent to the governor of Cross River State of Nigeria, Governor Liyel Imoke, e-mail: limoke@crossriverstate.gov.ng and imokeliyel@yahoo.com , l.imoke@yahoo.com and to Armajaro outfits worldwide, including: Richard.Ryan@Armajaro.com and Vince.McAleer@Armajaro.com

Article based on information sent by Odey Oyama, Rainforest Resource & Development Centre (RRDC), e-mail: rainforestcentre@yahoo.co.uk, odeyoyama@hotmail.com

index

-Phillipines: Oil palm company A. Brown grabs Higaonon indigenous people’s lands

The Philippine A. Brown Company, Inc. is engaged in the business of oil palm plantation development and milling. In 2010, the company started planting oil palm on 520 hectares of public land claimed by the Higaonon indigenous people.

The Higaonon people of the barangays (villages) of Bagocboc and Tingalan in the municipality of Opol, in the southern Philippine province of Misamis Oriental, claim that they have been occupying these lands since before the Spanish colonial era. Their ancestors hunted animals, gathered honey and kept small portions of land for agriculture, maintaining their unique culture. Although the Higaonon were displaced in the 1950s to make way for the logging and livestock grazing ventures of landlords, they kept coming back to their lands, making them productive.

A. Brown entered the Higaonon people’s land to establish an oil palm plantation without obtaining their free, prior and informed consent. This land grab has involved numerous human rights violations, including the shooting and illegal arrest of farmers, burning of houses, uprooting of crops, harassment and death threats.

All of this was revealed by an International Fact-Finding Mission (IFFM) that began last May 6 and was conducted by the Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific (PAN AP), the Peasant Movement of the Philippines (KMP), the Asian Peasant Coalition (APC), Sentro Kitanglad, Kalumbay Regional Lumad Organization and other organizations based in Opol.

The IFFM discovered that A. Brown does not yet have a permit to operate in the said area. Officials from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said that the government agency has not issued any permit for these operations, which means the company is violating existing forestry and environmental laws.

The findings of the IFFM were presented in a public forum at the University of the Philippines-Diliman, where demands were reiterated for the pull-out of A. Brown from Opol and the immediate return of the indigenous peoples to their ancestral land. They also called for the investigation of human rights violations against the Higaonon (see the IFFM findings at http://www.panap.net/en/fs/post/food-sovereignty-resistance-land-grabbing/1069).

The establishment of large-scale oil palm plantations also undermines the Higaonon people's food sovereignty. "With our lands being taken away, our families left to starve, and our rights violated, we have no choice but to fight. As indigenous peoples, we have the right to land, yet this has continuously been denied to us," said Rubenson Batuto, whose family has lived in Tingalan since the pre-Spanish colonization era.

Agrochemicals applied in the company's industrial oil palm plantations, including carbofuran and glyphosate, are gradually affecting the health of the Higaonon; residents of Opol have reported an increase in the incidence of coughs and colds, skin diseases, diarrhea and other illnesses since the plantation started spraying pesticides. In addition, their coconut and banana trees – their only source of livelihood – have been slowly dying since the plantation's entry.

Erwin Navarro of PAN AP warned of the social, cultural, health and environmental impacts of large-scale oil palm plantations, which have expanded in other Asian countries, bulldozing forests and displacing numerous indigenous peoples. Now, industrial oil palm plantations are entering the Philippines to become a major export crop, as is also the case in the municipalities of Española, Quezon and Brooke's Point in Palawan, denounced by the Philippines-based advocacy campaign network of indigenous peoples ALDAW and reported this year in WRM Bulletin Nº 174.

A campaign is being carried out to gather signatures for a petition calling on the Philippine government to oust A. Brown immediately from Opol; to stop human rights violations, as well as punish the perpetrators and indemnify the victims; and to stop the desecration of sacred sites. The petition also demands that A. Brown, together with all concerned units and agencies of the Philippine government, clean up and rehabilitate the contaminated areas, provide immediate economic relief to the farmers, and follow the free, prior and informed consent process.

You are invited to support the farmers and indigenous peoples of Opol in reclaiming their lands by signing the petition letter at http://www.panap.net/en/fs/page/food-sovereignty/1130

Globally, the expansion of oil palm has been made possible through land grabbing, land use conversion, and rapid deforestation. Displaced farmers and indigenous peoples have been forced to become agricultural workers in oil palm plantations. Oil palm expansion has in general brought about increased hunger and poverty while benefitting only a few private interests.

Article based on information from: "Palm oil plantation in Misamis Oriental has no right to occupy indigenous lands, IFFM says", Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific (PAN AP), http://www.panap.net/en/fs/post/food-sovereignty-resistance-land-

---

-Gabon: Resisting Olam land grabbing for oil palm plantations

Oil palm has traditionally been part of the culture of West and Central African communities, who have planted it on their own lands or collected its fruits, leaves or sap from the forest. The native crop has been locally processed to obtain palm oil for domestic use or sold in the local markets to produce palm wine (see the WRM briefing "Oil palm in Africa: Past, present and future scenarios", http://wrm.org.uy/countries/Africa/Oil_Palm_in_Africa.html).

But the international demand for palm oil – and more recently agrofuels – has brought land-hungry capital to Africa seeking to plant vast areas of land with large-scale industrial oil palm plantations. African governments are opening the doors to the corporations, and a result, local communities are losing their rights over their territories.

In Gabon, the organization Brainforest has sounded the alert that the new Gabonese authorities are granting large areas of land under concession to the Singapore-based company Olam. Ancestral lands are being sold off in violation of peoples' rights in order to plant vast areas of monoculture oil palm plantations, one of the business lines of this global integrated supply-chain agribusiness corporation which trades 20 agricultural products and food ingredients.

Brainforest has launched a campaign to collect signatures to stop Olam's industrial oil palm plantations, at http://www.brainforestgabon.org/news_fiche.php?id=16#.UAbg4aDs3KT

Another Gabonese organization, Attac Gabon, issued a press release (1) on June 5 denouncing that the failure of international negotiations on climate change and the commodification of the climate crisis through false solutions like the concept of a "green economy" will eventually destroy the socio-cultural fabric of communities and undermine national sovereignties.

According to the press release, "In Gabon, the phenomenon takes on dizzying proportions when you consider that over 300,000 hectares of land are already being turned over to multinationals. A general mobilization is needed to enforce the rights of communities over their land."

Meanwhile, FERN (2) has reported that on June 8, some 40 civil society activists

including Marc Ona Essangui, director of Brainforest and winner of the Goldman Prize (a sort of "Green Nobel Prize"), were arrested in Gabon for organizing a demonstration they called the "Counter-Forum". The demonstration – forbidden by the Gabonese authorities – aimed to highlight the pervasive corruption and lack of democracy and accountability in the oil-rich Central African country during the New York Forum Africa, held in Gabon June 8-10. At issue are land tenure problems, the expulsion of local communities in the province of Woleu Ntem, and land grabs by palm oil companies.

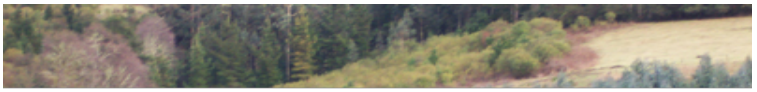
Under international pressure, the government offered to release Ona the same day, but he refused to leave until they released all who had been arrested. All of the arrested protestors were later released.

(1) Notre terre, leur Business!, Attac Gabon, Press release, 5 June 2012, http://www.facebook.com/notes/attac-gabon/notre-terre-leur-business-communiqu%C3%A9-de-presse-dattac-gabon/10150840486325069

(2) EU Forest Watch Issue 172, June 2012, FERN, http://www.fern.org/sites/fern.org/files/FW%20172%20june%202012%20for%20website.pdf

index

-Chile: Campaign against tree monoculture expansion



In Chile, the onslaught of big forestry business groups backed by the state means more than 3 million hectares covered with industrial monocultures of pines and eucalyptus.

Industrial plantations have reported multimillion profits to groups such as Matte, owner of Forestal Mininco CMPC, or Angelini, owner of Forestal Arauco. This has been at the expense of having usurped Mapuche lands and caused havoc with the aforementioned exotic species that have reduced the water of streams and groundwater by increasing the incidence of drought, have eroded the soils and replaced farmland and forests. The result is that, given the lack of arable land and water loss, much of the rural population migrates to cities, often collapsing due to lack of employment and real opportunities.

The regions where there are more areas occupied by tree plantations are the ones that concentrate the highest rates of migration and impoverishment of the population. In particular, the south-central region of Chile has been the scenario for plantations

expansion, mainly over the ancestral territory of the Mapuche, who have defended their land rights resisting the advance of forest plantations, facing repression, prison and death.

There is now a new offensive of the forestry sector, which is seeking to double the area of plantations in the short-term. For such a purpose they seek to annex the lands of "smallholders," meaning land of peasants and Mapuche communities.

Organizations throughout Chile have denounced these intentions through a public letter (1) in which they call on peasants and Mapuche communities to be alert to the attempts by forestry companies and government agents and not allowing the introduction of pine and eucalyptus plantations over their territory.

Mapuexpress and Adkimvn Communications have adhered to the call by organizing an information campaign for which they have prepared audiovisual and audio spots (2) to contribute to the generation of information and raise alarm and awareness for the protection of life and livelihoods, inviting to disseminate and replicate these materials.

Mapuexpress warn that in "these days, representatives from the forestry corporations and government agents will visit rural families homes praising the supposed benefits that pine and eucalyptus would bring and offering plants FOR FREE! They would even offer money bonuses. We need to be on the alert and defend our territories and our traditional practices ... the Earth". As Mapuexpress says: "Allowing the introduction of pine and eucalyptus is in any case short-term gain, long term pain. And allowing tree monocultures is allowing the pulp industry that always comes along with plantation and is one of the most polluting industries on earth".

So as the organizations say in the public letter, "to say no to the introduction of pine and eucalyptus is about defending life, agricultural land, food sovereignty; diversity and equality, culture, dignity for the people ... "

(1) Public letter from Chilean organizations, available in Spanish at http://www.mapuexpress.net/content/news/print.php?id=8073 (Organizaciones de todo Chile hacen un llamado a Sectores Campesinos y Comunidades Mapuche a No introducir más Pinos y Eucaliptus en los territorios)

(2) The campaign video spots are available in Spanish at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPC-gfRloas , http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lH8WMKNXNNw , http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0u349Xv1FDI&feature=youtu.be

index

-Global Campaign to dismantle Corporate Power

As part of the People's Summit during Rio +20 a Global Campaign Against Transnationals was launched, under the slogan “Dismantle Corporate Power and put an end to impunity”. The campaign aims to unite hundreds of campaigns, networks

and social movements and organizations that are fighting against the impacts of transnational corporations on human rights, nature and the planet.

Driven by their quest for profit, transnational corporations (TNCs) are systematically violating human rights and committing economic and ecological crimes, including killings, persecutions and threats against trade union, social and community leaders around the world. In the context of the global crisis and with the complicity of States through their role in the creation of an architecture of impunity, these actions have intensified. TNCs are controlling the debate on the crisis, putting forward proposals that allow them to grab land and guarantee natural resources extraction and energy production at the lowest possible cost.

The Call to International Action states that "to confront corporate power and the system that protects and benefits TNCs, it is urgent and necessary to give a systematic response. We must unite our experiences and our struggles, learn collectively from our victories and our failures and share our analysis and strategies to put an end to the impunity of transnationals. The struggles of our communities against a transnational corporation could be even more victorious if we are able to unite them with the efforts of other people in other countries, regions or continents".

The full text of the Call to International Action is available at http://www.stopcorporateimpunity.org/?page_id=710

For further information about the campaign: http://www.stopcorporateimpunity.org/

index

-Looking ahead for agrarian reform and the defense of land and territory

Allies from 26 countries in Asia, Africa, America and Europe have met in West Sumatra, Indonesia, from July 10 to 15, 2012,convened by La Via Campesina and the Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform under the issue "Agrarian Reform and the Defense of Land and Territory in the 21st Century: The Challenge and the Future".

In the midst of a global emergency caused by the multiple crises of food, climate, finance, poverty and unemployment, they evaluated strategies and lessons learned during two decades of struggles for agrarian reform, urged by the recent worldwide avalanche of land grabbing.

The result was the Bukit Tinggi Declaration, which begun to outline some key elements of a new vision of agrarian reform and the sovereignty of peoples over their territories.

The full declaration can be read at http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1316:-bukit-tinggi-declaration-on-agrarian-reform-in-the-21st-century&catid=23:agrarian-reform&Itemid=36

index

-Campaign against palm oil giant FELDA

Rainforest Rescue has started a campaign to demand Deutsche Bank to dissociate itself from the Malaysian palm oil giant FELDA Global Ventures Holding, which wants to raise three billion dollars on the stock market to establish new oil palm plantations in Indonesia and Africa. Rainforest areas are going to be bought, destroyed and turned into huge monocultures.

The Deutsche Bank, one of Germany's largest banks, which pretends to be ecologically and socially harmless, is helping FELDA to search for investors.

The campaign invites to sign a letter asking the Deutsche Bank to dissociate itself from FELDA and to refrain from any more financing that leads to land grabbing or logging.

To participate go to https://www.rainforest-rescue.org/mailalert/878/deutsche-bank-boosts-rainforest-logging

index

-Greenwash Gold winner 2012: Mining company Rio Tinto

Some of the world's most disreputable corporations – like Rio Tinto, Dow and BP – are providing sponsorship to the Olympics Games, using it as a smokescreen for environmental and human rights abuses the world over.

Sponsored by Bhopal Medical Appeal, London Mining Network and UK Tar Sands Network, a new campaign to stop Dow, BP and Rio Tinto from 'winning' at the 2012 Olympics was launched in April, to vote which of those three "dodgy company most deserves the Greenwash Gold medal in 2012", "who is covering up the most environmental destruction and devastating the most communities while pretending to be a good corporate citizen by sponsoring the Olympic games?"

And the gold was for...Rio Tinto, a massive British mining company that has provided the metal for the London Olympic medals and is associated with human rights abuses, pollution, violation of Indigenous treaty rights, appalling labour relations.

You can watch three short animations on BP, Dow and Rio Tinto. BP at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vPRu1bR5fc&feature=player_embedded , Dow at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wu1f6Ibcik0&feature=player_embedded , and Rio Tinto at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=li7wACA2TFI&feature=player_embedded#t=0s

index

RECOMMENDED

-"El lado oscuro de los acuerdos de inversión" (The dark side of investment agreements) is a new video by TNI that explains how such agreements bind governments to the power of Transnational corporations leaving them no room for defensive measures against human rights abuses, environmental damage, or breach of commitments made by companies. Watch at http://www.tni.org/es/multimedia/video-el-lado-oscuro

index

-"Rights of Nature: Planting the Seeds of Change" - Rather than shifting course, the so-called Green Economy strategy unveiled at the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development drives nature further into the global marketplace by defining an economic value on what the Earth "does" for humans, detachedly called "ecosystem services." Proponents of this scheme of "commoditizing" soil, forests, and fresh water profess that by putting a price on the natural world, it can be 'saved'. The report from Global Exchange can be read at http://www.globalexchange.org/sites/default/files/RONPlantingSeeds.pdf

index