



Bulletin Issue N° 207 – October 2014

## OUR VIEWPOINT



‘Sustainable Forest Management’: the ‘change’ that keeps destroying  
This year seems to have reached a new ‘record’ of international declarations in which the signatories commit to drastically reducing, or even halting, deforestation. It is noteworthy that all of them are supported by large transnational corporations linked to the tree plantations for pulp and paper industry and the oil palm plantations industrial processing. With the case of tropical wood extraction and the devastation it causes, the ‘Sustainable Forest Management’ rhetoric has opened up new market opportunities for this ‘new’ form of ‘sustainable’ production. Another false solution to the crisis of forest destruction is being imposed, once again, by the World Bank, FAO, transnational corporations, governments and some NGOs, affecting the communities that depend on the forests and benefiting a small group of companies and consultants.

## INDUSTRIAL LOGGING UNDER A GREEN COSTUME: ‘SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT’ DEVASTATES TROPICAL FORESTS AND FOREST PEOPLES



Forests Plunder: discourse of ‘sustainability’ hides destruction caused by logging

Industrial logging – the large-scale removal of trees - in tropical forests is a significant cause of forest loss. The on-going devastation of forests in Africa, Asia and South and Central America is directly connected to distant markets, largely in industrialised countries, demanding wood from few tropical hardwood species that sell for high prices. Contrary to what most governments and logging companies say, industrial logging does not translate into lasting improvement of local welfare. Impoverishment and social disintegration are regular consequences of industrial logging with corruption frequently at the core of their practices. Women are disproportionately affected since the forest products they traditionally use and manage disappear with the forest. Industrial logging often violates the territorial rights of Indigenous Peoples

and other traditional communities, who are the rightful owners of the forest. Potential local resistance in turn results in State repression for protecting the companies' legal 'rights'



#### Peru: Corporate logging devastates forests and local communities

Timber trade in the Amazon region is a multi-million dollar business, for a small number of people. Nearly 60 percent of Peru's territory is covered with tropical forests, and it is the world's ninth country with the largest forested area. The annual rate of deforestation, according to official figures, is around 110,000 hectares. The problem is largely attributed to so-called 'illegal logging,' that is, tree cutting outside officially recognized logging concessions. The illegal logging industry is worth about US\$150 million a year. It is a major contributor to money laundering, along with drug trafficking and illegal mining, according to the Financial Intelligence Unit of Peru. But what if illegal logging is actually facilitated by the legal framework for forest concessions?



#### Indonesia: forests are more than land

Deforestation in Indonesia is not only about the loss of forest areas, it is a much more serious matter. A whole living system that evolved into one of extraordinary wealth of biodiversity is threatened with destruction. For traditional communities, preserving the forest does not only mean to maintain their rights to land and territory but, fundamentally, to protect their civilization, upon which the essence of their culture depends. Communities' culture involves cross-generation adaptation processes that balance life and the sustainability of natural cycles.



#### REDD+ myth: Sustainable Forest Management

The UN climate negotiations included the concept of 'Sustainable Forest Management' (SFM) in the agreements of 2010 in Cancun, Mexico, under a concept called REDD+, "Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, the conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries". Under REDD+, SFM is promoted as a way of achieving emissions reductions. The reality is that SFM is the myth that allows destructive and often illegal logging to continue with impunity.



#### Brazil: The struggle of the tupinamba indigenous people to protect their territory and the conservation of forests

For over 500 years, the indigenous tupinambá people have been massacred and expelled from their territory in the southern part of the state of Bahia. But, since 2004, they succeeded in regaining control of part of their territory, covered by the rich Atlantic Forest (Mata Atlântica) which they call the dwelling of the 'enchanted ones'. The 'enchanted ones' guide the lives and struggles of these people. This is one of the tupinambá people's main motives to guard the forest, which for them is sacred, dwelling place of the gods and the source of all life. In this article, besides explaining how they preserve the forest, they make a strong criticism of 'sustainable forest

management' schemes that promote the 'selective' extraction of wood.

## PEOPLES IN ACTION



India: Struggles against POSCO's steel plant in Odisha are determined to continue until company withdraws



Malaysia: Asian Development Bank Urged to Shelve Loan For Power Grid in Sarawak



Anglo-American in Brazil: another case of public hearings legitimizing destructive corporate projects



Ecuador: Statement of Women's Meeting against Climate Change and Extractivism



India: Appeal to the government of India and to the UN on Development, Rights & Biodiversity in Forest Communities to protect indigenous rights

## RECOMMENDED



Small step from industrial logging to “the perfect crime”, explains Patrick Alley of NGO Global Witness



Two-years research into business links of the NGO WWF in all corners of the world uncover the true face of the panda



Peru: “The Laundering Machine: How fraud and corruption in Peru’s concession system are destroying the future of its forests”



The curse of palm oil in Cameroon: Pollution, expropriations and land grabbing

Indonesia: Wilmar continues to engage with suppliers that clear orangutan habitat, forested deep peatlands and high carbon stock forests



“A chance for change in the Congolese forests,” a video produced by the NGO FERN

## OUR VIEWPOINT

‘Sustainable Forest Management’: the ‘change’ that keeps destroying



This year, 2014, seems to have reached a new ‘record’ of international declarations in which the signatories commit to drastically reducing, or even halting, deforestation. It is noteworthy that all of them are supported by large transnational corporations linked to the tree plantations for pulp and paper industry and the oil palm plantations industrial processing, as well as institutions linked to financial capital. Besides, some NGOs are also always involved.

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is one of the most actively involved NGOs. Some 20 years ago, it led one of the first initiatives to “save the tropical forests” that touched on the issue of logging, one of the main causes of deforestation. The initiative is called the ‘Global Forest and Trade Network,’ a partnership with

logging companies “to promote the global trade in ‘legal and sustainable’ timber products by helping companies to produce and trade in ‘credibly certified’ wood products” (1). The Network promotes the certification by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), in other words, ‘Sustainable Forest Management’ (SFM), as the right way to go. WWF summarizes this approach as “using companies to drive responsible change” (2). The topic of ‘SFM’ will be particularly highlighted in this Bulletin.

However, when big capitalist companies commit to any ‘change’ that is not a core part of their corporate mission, they tend to do so only if they perceive that it poses no obstacle to their primary goal, which is to increase and expand their business to generate higher profits for their shareholders and investors. In fact, none of the declarations and voluntary initiatives on deforestation signed by these companies proposes that their business activities, a direct cause of deforestation, be reduced or curtailed. This is the first major contradiction in these declarations and initiatives. The article on Indonesia in this Bulletin shows how the wording of the declarations and forest conservation policies formulated by companies is very different from their actual practices, which result in continued forest destruction in the wake of their expansion plans.

Another feature of capitalist corporations is the constant search for new business opportunities and their immense ability to turn crises into opportunities. In the particular case of tropical wood extraction and the devastation it causes, the ‘SFM’ rhetoric – encouraged and supported by agents of capital like international financial institutions, the United Nations through FAO, and governments – has opened up new market opportunities for this ‘new’ form of ‘sustainable’ production. Billions of dollars have been made available for ‘SFM’, particularly by the World Bank.

According to the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), by 2011 some 131 million hectares of tropical forests were already under some form of ‘management plan’, with ‘SFM’ being practiced on 53 million hectares (3). This is a significant area, given that the total area of tropical forests worldwide is approximately 600 million hectares (4). But, are all these plans really capable of protecting tropical forests? Doubts are immediately raised by the simple fact that exports of tropical wood from the countries of the South amount to nearly US\$ 20 billion a year, according to ITTO (5) – by no means a negligible sum. Certainly, companies prefer to adapt to the new logging scenario with ‘plans’ for ‘legal’ and/or ‘sustainable’ extraction, rather than to abandon such a lucrative business where the raw materials, in addition to being ready and waiting to be logged and transported, are still quite plentiful, at least for the time being.

Defenders of ‘SFM’ argue that this would also be a source of revenue, combat poverty and protect the forests, all at the same time. To investigate these claims, we recently carried out a case study (6) in the Brazilian state of Acre, where the world’s first ‘Sustainable Forest Management’ project was initiated in 1989 with the backing of ITTO. At present, the Acre government continues to promote the ‘SFM’ model and FSC certification, with the added feature of ‘community’ management.

Some conclusions of our visit were:

- The project is subsidized by the Brazilian State with bank loans from national agencies like the National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES), and multilateral agencies like the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), benefiting mainly the timber companies;
- ‘Community SFM’, in which timber extraction is managed by local communities, is a top-down approach in which forest engineers are in charge of managing the communities’ territories and dictate what the communities can and cannot do on their own lands;
- The ‘community SFM’ proposal does not improve community earnings, which were previously based on non-wood forest products. While a community member receives approximately US\$25 per cubic metre of extracted lumber, companies that export the wood make approximately 100 times that amount at the port of export;

- 'SFM' generates relatively few jobs. Because of the complex nature of the business, management is increasingly controlled by companies that bring in personnel from outside;
- The 'SFM' proposal does not guarantee the conservation of the forests. The forest regeneration claimed by its supporters is called into question by the empirical observations of the communities and by scientists who have carried out studies with the communities;
- The incentive to exploit timber changes the ways communities live and their relationship with the forests. Previously, wood was only extracted for domestic use by local households.

A further advantage for logging companies that practice 'SFM' is the sale of the carbon stored in the so-called 'standing forest', through the mechanism of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+). REDD+ was created in 2010, including, among others, the 'SFM' scheme. In Acre we found consulting firms that are attempting to quantify the carbon stocks in the 'SFM' areas. There are even logging companies that claim that a forest where wood is extracted in a 'sustainable' manner might have greater carbon storage capacity than a forest where no extraction has occurred.

The carbon opportunity is mainly in the fact that for those who idealize the REDD+ mechanism expect it to work in the future through the carbon markets, that is, that the supply of forest carbon credits be able to attract investors from the financial capital markets. This further deepens the dominance of the financial markets over the productive economy; involving diverse investment funds that are already investing in lands controlled by companies, in the production extracted from those lands and in the future production sales. Nowadays, financial capital, through its different 'papers' -'assets'- moves at least five times more money than the productive capital. The intervention of financial capital in the carbon market and other 'ecosystem' services represents more speculation and profit opportunities for such capital, especially as forest resources become increasingly scarce. This is the current trend, as everything indicates that oil, mining, timber and other companies will continue advancing into the remaining tropical forests.

Saving the tropical forests depends fundamentally on reducing the pressure on the forests. To do this, only one kind of change can help: changing the current system of production, something that, as we verified, is not addressed in any of the vast number of declarations and commitments to reduce deforestation. If the United Nations reaches an agreement on REDD+, the result will be the creation of ever more areas where the communities will lose territorial control, for the benefit of the carbon business and the logging companies, in areas of so-called 'standing forests'.

It is worth noting that we often hear the assertion that 'SFM' is a demand that originates from consumers, who want tropical forests to be preserved. However, history teaches that the demands of the 'consumer society' are artificially created, mainly by companies interested in securing sales and increasing profits. This is even more so in the case of tropical hardwood products, which are not essential to society, have a high commercial value and are sold with high prices when transformed into luxury items for a small élite of privileged consumers in European, North American and Asian countries.

With the 'SFM', a false solution to the crisis of forest destruction is being imposed, once again, by the World Bank, FAO, transnational corporations, governments and some NGOs, affecting the communities that depend on the forests and benefiting a small group of companies and consultants. Communities still face a long, hard struggle – like the indigenous tupinamba, whose story is presented in this Bulletin, whom defend their territories to manage their forests in a collective and autonomous way. For a very long time these communities have cared for the forests with immense wisdom, knowledge and respect for what actually constitutes a forest, something that never appears in the 'sustainable forest management plans' because their aim is, above all, to generate profits.

Sources:

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INDUSTRIAL LOGGING UNDER A GREEN COSTUME:  
'SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT' DEVASTATES TROPICAL FORESTS AND  
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Forests Plunder: discourse of 'sustainability' hides destruction caused by logging



Industrial logging – the large-scale removal of trees - in tropical forests is a significant cause of forest loss. The on-going devastation of forests in Africa, Asia and South and Central America is directly connected to distant markets, largely in industrialised countries, demanding wood from few tropical hardwood species that sell for high prices (1). Contrary to what most governments and logging companies say, industrial logging does not translate into lasting improvement of local welfare. Impoverishment and social disintegration are regular consequences of industrial logging with corruption frequently at the core of their practices. Women are disproportionately affected since the forest products they traditionally use and manage disappear with the forest. Industrial logging often violates the territorial rights of Indigenous Peoples and other traditional communities, who are the rightful owners of the forest. Potential local resistance in turn results in State repression for protecting the companies' legal 'rights' (see [WRM Bulletin 53](#) and [WRM Bulletin 98](#)).

After being targeted by strong NGO campaigns, some logging corporations started to show willingness to improve their performance, or rather, their public image. Among other initiatives, the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) processes were established. The reasoning behind was that as long as forest legislation is complied with (e.g. respecting annual allowable cuts, concession boundaries and other legal requirements) and governments play their role adequately, the outcome will be positive to forests and the forestry sector will be considered as having 'good governance'. Despite legal changes acknowledging forest peoples' rights that such a process might bring, it also enables industrial scale timber trade to continue and



expand its business - under the banner of legality and with a clean image.

Logging corporations rely on the State to take out loans from 'development banks' like the World Bank to provide access to remote areas, grant subsidies, control and/or repress possible local resistance, etc. It is also governments that award logging concessions to corporations, allowing companies to claim to be operating 'within the law'. But often, industrial logging concessions create more harm than 'illegal' logging activities. How far are concessions granted to logging companies in Africa legitimate, where millions of hectares of forests are being exploited, very often undermining communities' territories and their right to have their own management? In tropical forests, the majority of tree species are scarce per hectare and generally few of them are used by the timber trade, so industrial logging in tropical forests is almost invariably 'selective'. Although this term might appear less harmful than 'clear-cutting', in fact, a larger area of the forest is affected. Legal or illegal, the reality is that industrial scale logging not only affects thousands of hectares of forests and the communities that are dependant on these forests, but also alters the water cycle, degrades the soil, increases surface temperature and releases the carbon dioxide in the trees to the atmosphere. Above all, it opens up previously unfragmented areas of forest to further industrial exploitation.

Selective logging affects 28% of tropical forests worldwide. According to a Greenpeace report (2), between 2.9 and 4.1 million hectares of primary forest in Papua New Guinea had already been selectively logged by 2002, and around half of its total forested land (16.3 million hectares) is under concessions and thus under threat as a result of logging. In Indonesia, 42 million hectares of forest are in logging concessions, while across Central Africa, logging concessions cover nearly 40 million hectares. Remote sensing found that selective logging in the Amazon doubled the area of forest degraded by human activities. Roads and related infrastructure constructed to provide access to and extract timber and other 'resources', increases rates of deforestation and forest degradation.

The remaining forests are also changed. With several of the forest's vital seed and crop trees cut, 'low-impact' logging leaves 20 to 50 percent of the canopy open, when, as a study from Bioscience points out (3), in tropical forests, "even small openings in the canopy (5-10 percent) can have significant impacts on the moisture content in the forest and increase risk of fire". The same study found that just three rounds of logging in tropical forests resulted in the near-extinction of target tree species in all major tropical forest zones - South and Central America, Central Africa, and Southeast Asia.

Most logging companies simply enter a forest, cut high-value tree species, and then leave the concession for cattle ranchers, agribusiness or monoculture tree plantation companies (such as pulp and paper, rubber, or palm oil) to move in. The same study revealed that logging companies generally move from one tropical forest area to the next, always looking for increasing profits. In Indonesia for example, after logging out most of the forests in Borneo, loggers moved into places like Sumatra. Now that forests on Sumatra have been looted - and many areas previously under logging concession turned into monoculture tree plantations - industrial logging companies move on to Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Tropical forests are vanishing worldwide.

The false promise of 'Sustainable Forest Management'

During the Earth Summit in Brazil in 1992, governments from industrialized countries, supported by corporations, put forward the concept of 'Sustainable Forest Management' (SFM) within the framework of 'sustainable development'. SFM was identified as a key strategy to achieve "positive social and economic benefits without compromising tropical forest ecosystem function". International partnerships among governments, conservation NGOs, multilateral banks and timber companies coalesced to advance SFM implementation. In practice, SFM turned into another top-down so-called 'solution' to deforestation, which allowed an inherently destructive activity to be presented as positive and 'sustainable' - this time, with the

additional promise of 'development'.

Industrial logging companies claim that they create jobs and essential infrastructure like schools, hospitals and roads to vulnerable communities through practising SFM. This discourse creates the impression of a logging industry respecting the rights of affected communities, and that future generations will be able to sustain their livelihood from the area being logged. The reality is, however, that the veil of SFM hides a rather devastating activity, which no PR campaign can make sustainable, and that certainly does not provide lasting benefit to local populations. In fact, most of the times communities lose more than they gain right from the moment the logging companies enter their territories.

The so-called private-public-partnerships between governments, corporations and conservation NGOs also developed market instruments based on certified wood and other forest products, such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification. FSC aims to supply the global market with as much certified wood as possible. The only way to move in that direction, however, is to certify as many large-scale operations as possible. Besides, FSC certification relies on the good will of consumers to help bring about changes in forest management, and not on actually reducing consumption (see the [WRM website for a selection](#) of the main critiques and problems with certification schemes).

Research on the forests of the Republic of Congo from the University of Michigan, US, (4) exposed that while concessions run by European companies had the highest rates of 'Sustainable Forest Management' compliance, they also had the highest rates of deforestation. European concession holders were also more likely to implement the government-approved Forest Management Plan (as required by the Congolese forestry law), and the only concessions to achieve FSC certification. Nonetheless, high rates of forest fragmentation were observed in those concessions associated to the construction of roads for highly selective logging. European markets demand timber from only a few target tree species, and dense road networks are necessary to find those species in sufficient numbers to generate the desired corporate profits. Asian and Congolese markets on the other side, accept a wider variety of 'lower value' species. As a result, the road network in concessions operated by Asian and Congolese corporations are less dense and forest fragmentation remains lower. The research in the Republic of Congo demonstrated a direct link between SFM compliance and increased deforestation.

The same research warns that over 400 million hectares of tropical forests are now under concession for timber production, and a growing proportion of the logging is labelled SFM. Researchers conclude that, "forest clearing and fragmentation of intact forests in Congo is driven by industrial logging made possible in large part by international capital investment". Adding that, "If, in fact, SFM policy and certified timber markets are associated with increased forest cover change [degradation and deforestation], this suggests that the growing global demand for legal and certified timber may have unexpected [negative] consequences for intact tropical forest ecosystems".

The on-going demand of tropical wood has fuelled the expansion of transnational corporations involved in every stage of the production process, from raw material extraction, through manufacturing, to marketing and distribution. The actors involved in industrial logging of tropical forests vary from country to country, but the main ones are usually transnational corporations. Irrespective of the country they operate in, however, what feeds the destruction is continued demand for more wood, in particular for consumption in industrialized countries. The US, for example, is the second largest importer of tropical timber, shelling out more than US\$5.4 billion annually for 21 million cubic meters of industrial roundwood, sawnwood, veneer, and plywood from the tropics (5). Moreover, the mayor players behind the certification schemes for labelling wood as 'sustainable' are corporate players with vested interests in continue business as usual (6).

Forest-dependent communities most affected

Industrial logging takes a major toll on the communities that live with and depend on forests. The damage is caused first and foremost by the fact that the logging is destructive, that its perpetrators are outsiders that 'loot and run' and that the logging is often linked to human rights abuses. Whether the devastation is considered legal or illegal is secondary for those left with their livelihood and way of life destroyed, as is the widespread corporate-government corruption and bribery that characterizes the industrial logging sector. Weak or absent recognition of land titles for forest peoples' territories and increasing areas access to these forests through roads and extractive projects like mining or oil exploration, make it easy for industrial logging companies to enter territories of Indigenous Peoples and traditional communities. This not only degrades and destroys the forests that communities need to survive. It also brings violence, threats and persecution to those who stand to defend the forested territories against this corrupt and greedy industry.

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- (3) Experts: sustainable logging in the rainforest impossible, <http://news.mongabay.com/2012/0718-hance-sustainable-logging.html>
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Peru: Corporate logging devastates forests and local communities



Timber trade in the Amazon region is a multi-million dollar business, for a small number of people. Nearly 60 percent of Peru's territory is covered with tropical forests, and it is the world's ninth country with the largest

forested area. The annual rate of deforestation, according to official figures, is around 110,000 hectares. The problem is largely attributed to so-called ‘illegal logging,’ that is, tree cutting outside officially recognized logging concessions. The illegal logging industry is worth about US\$150 million a year. It is a major contributor to money laundering, along with drug trafficking and illegal mining, according to the Financial Intelligence Unit of Peru (1). But what if illegal logging is actually facilitated by the legal framework for forest concessions?

Large-scale logging itself is responsible for enormous environmental destruction and social fragmentation in tropical forests around the world (see article “Forests Plunder” in this Bulletin). Industrial logging, whether legal or illegal, degrades vast areas of forests and is responsible for threats and violence against the communities that depend on them. This wood, which is mostly ‘selectively’ extracted, ends up in the leading world markets, like the ones in the United States, Europe and China. However, there are key issues to be raised about illegal logging. It also brings the near-extinction of highly vulnerable species whose logging is prohibited —like cedar and mahogany— in indigenous territories and protected areas, as well as exploitation, forced labour and subjugation of indigenous peoples, with complete impunity. The vast majority of indigenous territories are important sources of tree species with high market value, and they have therefore become the target of the logging industry.

One of the pillars of Peru’s forestry policy since 2000 is the Forestry and Wildlife Law (No. 27308), which in its first article states that its main goal is to provide a framework for “the sustainable use and conservation of forest resources.” The law established the present system of forestry concessions. It was later reinforced by the signing of the Peru-United States Free Trade Agreement that came into effect in 2009. The Agreement includes an Annex designed to promote wood produced by ‘Sustainable Forest Management’ (2). In July 2011, a new Forestry and Wildlife Law was approved but has not yet been adopted due to delays in finalizing the regulations necessary for its implementation. The new law, however, maintains the same concession system for timber extraction and the presented draft regulations indicate that it will promote forestry investment with clear ‘sustainable management’ rules (3).

Big export-oriented lumber conglomerates in Peru obtain 35% to 45% of their wood from unauthorized sources, according to a 2012 study by the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) (4). The study tracked 112 shipments of illegal cedar and mahogany from Peru, imported by companies in the United States. Seventy of the 112 tracked shipments were made by Maderera Bozovich, a Peruvian company belonging to the U.S. business group Bozovich Timber Products. According to the records of the Peruvian National Institute of Natural Resources, in 2006 Maderera Bokovich handled 34% of cedar exports, destined for the United States, Mexico and Puerto Rico, in that order. A comparative table in the EIA study, based on more recent data, identifies companies that exported timber between 2008 and 2010 while failing to comply with legal requirements. Bozovich heads the list again. Moreover, in 2005, three fake licenses were discovered for a total of 492 cubic metres of sawn cedar, made out to Maderera Bokovich (5).

It is becoming increasingly clear that in spite of amendments to laws, regulations and treaties, logging in the Amazon region - with or without management plans, with or without legal papers - is far from ‘sustainable’ for the forests and forest communities. A study published in Scientific Reports (6), analyzing official government information, showed that 68.3% of all concessions supervised by the authorities were suspected of serious offences against the law. The nature of these offences indicates that the permits granted to legal concessions are being used to cut down trees in unauthorized areas, thus posing a further threat to more areas of tropical forests, including indigenous peoples’ territories and protected natural areas. Many of the offences also involve the illegal extraction of vulnerable species such as cedar and mahogany.

The logger, however, is not the problem. In Peru, the worst forms of forced labour involve exploitation of indigenous people in the Amazon engaged in illegal logging. A large number of logging companies still recruit workers through advances of money, goods or other inducements to join their extractive labour force, trapping

them into an artificial debt that they cannot repay. Sadly, this way of workers recruitment leads to a system of debt servitude. A report by the International Labour Organization, including a series of interviews with indigenous leaders, priests, workers, representatives of state institutions and members of different local NGOs, concludes that this system is “one of the worst forms of exploitation and loss of freedom... Furthermore, it is usually associated with non-payment of wages, payment with goods, prostitution of women in the logging camps and truly subhuman working conditions” (7). The unsettled debt can be used to “keep a grip on native labourers for decades or generations” (8).

To make matters worse, in June 2014, President Ollanta Humala launched an appalling ‘environmental package’ of reforms, comprised in Law No. 30230. The package directly affects indigenous lands. Among other shortcomings, it allows the State to use ‘special procedures’ to grant lands for investment projects in whatever amounts and locations they require, disregarding the property rights of the legitimate owners (9). In other words, a series of biddings will be granted to large-scale projects, including agro-industrial monocultures, logging, mining, and oil and gas.

### Logging companies set their sights on indigenous territories

‘Selective’ extraction of high market value timber species mostly occurs within indigenous territories (usually among the most traditional communities), or in areas inhabited by indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation or in recent contact. This invasion has had disastrous impacts, not only by degrading the forests that these communities depend on for their livelihoods, but also by causing violence and subjugation. The payment received by the loggers in the Amazon region per board foot is approximately 2,660-fold lower than the price fetched by worked wood in the United States (10). This way, some distinguished stores in the United States, the United Kingdom or China are able to sell ‘fine’ hardwood flooring. Meanwhile, in the Peruvian Amazon, indigenous communities face threats and violence for defending their territories from logging companies and the corporate and governmental mafias behind them.

The community of Alto Tamaya-Saweto, in the low rainforests of Ucayali, had their lands officially recognized by the Peruvian State in 2003, but they have still not obtained the respective titles to the territory. In contrast, the State has granted two forestry concessions overlapping the community’s land, and has classified all the communal territory as permanent production forests, that is, forest destined for lumber production (11). In September 2014, four leaders of the Asháninka indigenous people were murdered by timber mafias. This happened despite numerous denunciations made to the authorities by these leaders about the threats they received for defending their territory. One of the leaders, Edwin Chota, was an internationally renowned activist for his fight against logging in indigenous lands. David Salisbury, a professor at the University of Richmond in the United States, had known Edwin for more than ten years and had been advising his community in their struggle to obtain title to their land. In an interview with the BBC, Salisbury stated that “there is still a community there surrounded by loggers; people are fearful, they are prisoners in their own community, because the loggers are talking on the radio and saying they want to finish off the community on the logging frontier, once and for all” (12).

On 23 October 2014, the Shipibo indigenous community of Korin Bari, located near Saweto, filed a lawsuit against the Peruvian Government alleging that it had endangered the lives of those who resist the invasion of their lands, by failing to title indigenous territories. In 2011, houses of the Shipibo community were demolished by logging operators who were building an illegal road across their territory to provide access to timber species of high market value. The cases of Saweto and Korin Bari are not isolated cases. At least 594 communities in the Peruvian Amazon have not been granted legal titles, amounting to about 20 million hectares of forests (13).

Another modality used by loggers to invade indigenous lands is undertaking the title procurement process for a community in exchange for the wealth of their forests. By helping to obtain the titles, loggers take hold of the

forest use permits granted to the communities in areas where there are no concessions. A local newspaper denounced in May 2014 the case of the community of Nueva Esperanza, located on the so-called ‘Triple Border’ between Peru, Brazil and Colombia. After experiencing numerous extractive invasions, Nueva Esperanza started the title procurement process in 2009, claiming an area of 204,493 hectares. The process was being managed by a logger who lived in the vicinity of the community. At this strategic point of the ‘Triple Border’ there are 8 mills with state-of-the-art machinery buying timber for export. After approving the titles, its Overall Forestry Management Plan and Annual Operation Plan were almost immediately accepted, authorizing Nueva Esperanza – or rather, the logger, the extraction of 2,345 trees of 22 different species. Of these, 178 are cedar trees. How much wood is really being taken out of this area? It is not known. What is known is that the indigenous peoples are indebted up to the hilt as they have to pay for the title procurement process of their community and for products like motors, chain-saws and batteries, sold to them by the logger at very high prices in return for wood (14).

Whether or not the timber extraction is legal or not, the reality is that the global economic system stimulates timber companies to intervene in any territory where timber species can be found for lining their pockets. Because it is a multi-million dollar business, major private and public powers seek to profit by it. This means that, whether by legal means or not and under ‘sustainable’ management plans or not, the Amazon forests — including indigenous territories, reserves for indigenous people living in voluntary isolation, and protected natural areas— are being increasingly violated. It is the large corporations which control a wood extraction network seeking to satisfy its continuous capital accumulation by selling -under eco-friendly labels and ‘sustainability’ certificates- the destruction and devastation of the forests on international markets.

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Indonesia: forests are more than land



Deforestation in Indonesia is not only about the loss of forest areas, it is a much more serious matter. A whole living system that evolved into one of extraordinary wealth of biodiversity is threatened with destruction.

For traditional communities, preserving the forest does not only mean to maintain their rights to land and territory but, fundamentally, to protect their civilization, upon which the essence of their culture depends. Communities' culture involves cross-generation adaptation processes that balance life and the sustainability of natural cycles.

When the Ministry of Forestry made an inventory of Indonesian lands as state forest areas, the social and cultural aspects were not part of this ministry's work. Thus, policy formulation and implementation excluded the presence of human beings coexisting with forest's living systems.

As a result of this classification, today, around 33 thousand communities live within so-called state forest areas. This is used by corporations for blaming communities as the disturbers and destroyers of the forests, which in turn, has become a legitimate instrument to expel forest people from their living spaces.

The conflicts with forest communities are then simplified with arguments of economic necessities and by reducing complex living systems to only 'land'. This simplification directs any 'resolution' into efforts of compensation and mediation.

As a matter of fact, these types of 'resolutions' disregard communities' just entitlement to cross-generation memory and cultural dependency on forests. Furthermore, media weakens communities by positioning them as equivalent to corporations during mediation processes. Yet, the recognition of the company's presence on communities' territories is essentially reaffirming the violations of customary laws by the state and the corporations.

Actually, when an ecological system is destroyed, the heavy burden to adapt to extreme environmental changes as well as the costs have to be borne by the communities.

For this article, I use the example of one species that has a strong attachment with the culture of indigenous communities in Indonesia. This example illustrates how the devastation of various biodiverse systems in the forest has a huge impact in the loss and destruction of communities' life.

Buffalo is a species that depends on 3 fundamental environmental factors; wide-open space to wander, a variety of herbs for its nutrition and resilience of its body, as well as clean water free of any chemical product. In the past 10 years, the number of buffaloes has declined drastically to one million heads due to the expansion of oil palm, timber, and industrial forest plantations.

Without even being noticed by the Indonesian government, the expansion of industrial plantations on communities lands promoted a dramatic decline of the buffalo population - a local asset that in economic terms represented up to 15 billion rupiah (around US\$1.5 billion) that could finance the education of 1 million children as well as health costs. This has also destroyed an important source of food and created collateral damages to traditional farming systems.

It is very important to recognize and protect community-based forest management systems. Not only do they protect the continuation of communities living within different territories, but also they prevent the people and the state from carrying the burden when ecological catastrophes occur.

Decisions over forests in Indonesia are still kept at the level of powerful institutions. Issues of ownership of territories or drivers of deforestation, such as the production and consumption model, are not mentioned at all by the government. These issues are intentionally excluded from the debates in order to avoid the immense responsibility that the state and corporate actors have to pay for their committed crimes.

Currently, life in the communities has become increasingly difficult. The state is forcing communities to live in a commodity-based economic system, in which the money they earn is not sufficient to cover their needs, especially after the loss of various living systems that used to be available in nature. The Indonesian state also has to cover big costs, considering the damage and the rehabilitation processes of the forest and its functions, such as the costs that must be spent each year to deal with forest fires and floods.

While the heavy burden from the environmental crimes have to be carried by communities, whom have to continuously adapt to the worsening environmental conditions, 27 states and 34 companies involved in the global deforestation process, signed the New York Declaration on how to save the world's forests, during the Climate Summit that was hosted by the United Nations in September 2014. The declaration targets 150 million hectares for 'forest restoration' by the year 2020 and up to 200 million hectares by the year 2030. This commitment is based on the fact that 1,6 billion people in the world depends on forests, while deforestation speed rate reaches 14 million hectares each year.

The commitment to reduce deforestation and incite 'forest restoration' will not likely become a reality. This commitment made by governments and a series of monoculture-related business groups is in fact only a strategy to cover up their actual crimes. For instance, in Indonesia, a group of businessmen signed a commitment to reduce deforestation rates. However, they ended up making a deal with the government, targeting 1,1 million hectares of forest for oil palm plantations by 2015 and 5,9 million hectares of forest for industrial forest plantations from the 14 million hectares that are threatened by deforestation.

The New York Declaration on Forests does not only hide the perpetrators of Indonesian rainforest destruction from the public eyes, but it also manages to propagate the next phase of natural resources business in Indonesia. Having survived with no sanctions from a series of environment destructions by extracting oil palm



and pulp and paper, now the big corporate groups are riding the climate change issue for their businesses. Concessions to make money with the conservation of biodiversity and carbon have already reached 397.878 hectares in the year 2014, with the target of 2,6 million hectares.

If the government would have wanted to use the summit for truly dealing with deforestation, company groups like APP, GAP, and WILMAR should not have been allowed in the forum. Since 2013, their concessions have been the reason of Indonesia's haze caused by the fires. Walhi also found an attempt to hide illegal logging by the second layer of WILMAR's subsidiary group, conducted by PT.

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### REDD+ myth: Sustainable Forest Management



Myth: Sustainable Forest Management will reduce forest emissions and bring sustainable development.

The UN climate negotiations included the concept of 'Sustainable Forest Management' (SFM) in the agreements of 2010 in Cancun, Mexico, under a concept called REDD+, "Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, the conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries" (1). Under REDD+, SFM is promoted as a way of achieving emissions reductions. The reality is that SFM is the myth that allows destructive and often illegal logging to continue with impunity.

Everyone these days practices 'sustainable forest management'. Even Malaysian company Rimbunan Hijau, one of the world's most destructive logging companies (2), claims on its website to practice 'sustainable forest management' and to "keep Malaysia green" with their "investment in tree plantations" (3). Companies keep pushing the idea that monoculture plantations can be 'sustainable'. Rimbunan Hijau even claims to be "planting forests". The UN itself also considers industrial tree plantations as forests. This is, simply put, a flagrant error. Plantations are not forests. Forests contain diverse webs of life and plantations are void of biodiversity and with polluted soils and water streams. This endangers Indigenous and forest dependent people and exacerbates

climate change.

As Patrick Alley of the NGO Global Witness points out in a recent talk, ‘sustainable forest management’ is a ‘nasty little euphemism’ (4). The logging industry has managed to portray itself as an almost philanthropic venture, bringing jobs and development. Alley explains that, “You can divide the industrial logging industry in the tropics into two categories: The criminal and the legitimate. The criminal is criminal. And the legitimate is much the same, but with better PR.”

The logging industry has had plenty of help in pulling off this perfect crime, as Alley describes it. Continued logging in the tropics has even been encouraged with taxpayers’ money. In the nine years up to June 2011, the World Bank poured US\$4.1 billion into the forestry sector. A 2013 review by the Independent Evaluation Group found that overall these projects have failed to address poverty or to benefit local communities (5).

Predictably, the Bank’s management rejected the criticism and the money from the World Bank keeps coming (6). In August 2013, the Bank announced that it was handing out US\$31.83 million for participatory ‘sustainable forest management’ in Laos (7). This is a country that has seen its forests devastated by illegal logging, which shows no signs of stopping before the last forest has been felled (8). Yet, rather than supporting initiatives to round up the criminals running the illegal logging, the World Bank is pouring in yet more money into little more than greenwash for continued logging.

A film on industrial logging in the Democratic Republic of Congo made by Global Witness showed the impacts of industrial scale logging with the back up of the World Bank and international donors (9). Again and again, communities told of exploitative companies, damage to their ecosystems and livelihoods, lack of benefits, and increasing conflict and violence. It is impossible not to see the contradiction between the programs of ‘sustainable forest management’ that claim to reduce deforestation and the social and environmental destruction caused by the logging industry in the DR Congo.

Recent research led by scientists from Lancaster University reveals that the impact of ‘selective logging’ and surface wildfires in the Amazon has been grossly underestimated. (10) The NGO Greenpeace calls logging in the Amazon “The Silent Crisis” as criminals launder illegal timber as legal with official documentation (11). Defenders of the ‘sustainable forest management’ claim that this can be accomplished by extracting only few tree species and leaving the rest of the forest ‘standing’. However, although ‘selective logging’ sounds better than ‘clear-cutting’, in reality, bigger areas of forests are being affected. This has huge implications for REDD+ as SFM is one of the ‘plus’ parts of REDD.

Furthermore, another recent study in East Kalimantan exposed no difference in carbon emissions between Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified logging operations and conventional logging concessions. In 2009, FSC formed a Forest Carbon Working Group, which produced a “Strategic Framework for an FSC Climate Change Engagement” in November 2012 (12). One of these goals is that, “FSC is recognized by credible forest carbon schemes in order to facilitate and lead participants towards FSC certification.” However, FSC has a controversial record (13), as a result of its certification of monoculture tree plantations and destructive logging operations, and its failure to hold its certifying bodies to account.

In 2011, professors Bradshaw and Laurence co-authored a paper titled “Primary forests are irreplaceable for sustaining tropical biodiversity”, which was published in Nature (14). Laurence wrote in the ALERT website that, “Indonesia alone has at least 35 million hectares of selectively logged forest – an area larger than Germany – and much of this logged forest is unprotected and being cleared for agriculture” (15). Bradshaw also told in a recent interview that, “It’s insane to consider ‘lower-emission’ logging at all considering the [intervened] forests, no matter the disturbance, are never able to retain as much carbon or biodiversity as primary forests” (16).

SFM can therefore mean the expansion and legitimacy of industrial-scale commercial logging operations in tropical forests.

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Brazil: The struggle of the tupinamba indigenous people to protect their territory and the conservation of forests



For over 500 years, the indigenous tupinambá people have been massacred and expelled from their territory in the southern part of the state of Bahia. But, since 2004, they succeeded in regaining control of part of their territory, covered by the rich Atlantic Forest (Mata Atlântica) which they call the dwelling of the ‘enchanted ones’. The ‘enchanted ones’ guide the lives and struggles of these people. This is one of the tupinambá people’s main motives to guard the forest, which for them is sacred, dwelling place of the gods and the source of all life. In this article, besides explaining how they preserve the forest, they make a strong criticism of ‘sustainable forest management’ schemes that promote the ‘selective’ extraction of wood.

### A tireless struggle for their territory

This is the story of Serra do Padeiro, one of the tupinambá communities within the tupinambá indigenous territory, in the heart of the Atlantic Forest in the state of Bahia. This forest area, one of the best preserved in the region, has been the target of attacks by large landowners (latifundistas) since the 16th century, when Brazil was colonized by the Portuguese and was subjected to successive cycles of capitalist exploitation. The history of the tupinambá community of Serra do Padeiro has been marked by massacres and attempts of evictions. However, it has also been marked, above all, by their strong struggle to defend the most sacred for them: the forests that cover the hills of the region, providing abundant food and water and a good territory to live in. Babau, the chief of the Serra do Padeiro community, said that the territory is “mother earth, which is made up of everything. Mother earth gave us the river, which is the milk that nourishes us and gives us water to drink, and the forest, which is our roof and our banquet to feast on.” To the tupinambá people, the conservation of the forest, which is abundant on the higher slopes, is also essential because it is the dwelling of the ‘enchanted ones’ that guide the tupinambás during their life’s journey. As Babau said, the forests “represent our faith, our culture, our religion.”

Land invasions and illegal dispossession by the dominant regional elite, with the support of the State, led the tupinambás to be confined to a very small area at the beginning of the last decade. This elite assisted in the continuous logging and intensive hunting promoted by large landowners. The destruction of the forest and water springs was a fundamental reason for the tupinambá people to start in 2004 organizing for the process of recovering their lands. In that moment, the large landowners were expelled and thousands of hectares of indigenous land were reoccupied. As a result of pressure from the indigenous people, the federal government set up a Technical Group (TG) to identify the territory traditionally occupied by the tupinambás. The tupinambás wanted the return of 70,000 hectares, but the TG defined an area of 47,000 hectares, extending from the coast of Bahia to Serra do Padeiro. But, instead of demarcating and regularizing this already reduced

territory, the government, pressured by regional landowners, company owners and influential politicians, invested since 2008 on a process of intimidation and repression, with violent invasions and arbitrary arrests in the tupinambá territory by the Federal Police, with support from the National Security Force and the Army. To 'solve' the land conflict problem, the government proposed a process called the 'negotiating table', in which the tupinambás would have to reach an agreement with other actors from the region with an interest in the territory to be demarcated. This means that they would be obliged to give up their right to the territory, which is constitutionally guaranteed, for an elite that has always resorted to massacres and the elimination of its people.

Against the 'sustainable forest management' that promotes 'selective' wood extraction

The Atlantic Forest, still abundant in the area, feeds this struggle. The tupinambás have a special care with this forest. To them, the forest is sacred and a constant 'companion.' Babau summarizes this relationship when talking about the struggle to recover their territory: "We joined forces with nature and nature joined forces with us."

Since they reoccupied their territory and the logging stopped, they observed how the forest and, therefore, the water springs are recuperating, how the waters were also running with a greater flow. The tupinambá people are opposed to logging. Babau explains: "The main problem in extracting wood from areas where the tupinambás live is that, culturally, we depend on the forest to perform certain rituals. And in order to perform our rituals, the forest must be intact; the entire chain of life must be protected. When the large landowners began their excessive deforestation, the springs of water we needed began to disappear, the hunting we needed was disappearing, the birds were disappearing (...) As our entire spirituality is closely tied to life and nature, and nature is life, we were all being directly affected, and we had to take immediate measures to defend our life. So we set out to protect nature and then we managed to restore our territory again."

Some groups advocate the option of a 'sustainable forest management' as a way to preserve forests, but Babau said: "There is nothing sustainable about it. If you cut a tree because you need a house, it is a necessity, but when you cut hundreds of trees to satisfy society's needs, it is completely absurd, because nature cannot give back at the same rate that society is taking out. And they cannot forget the fact that that nature exists to protect other lives. When they cut the trees, how many other lives are they destroying upon the earth? And they [the logging companies] do not weep or mourn, because they do not see the deaths that follow. (...) Imagine if the animals of the forest said, 'Well, to make our houses we will go to the city to destroy such-and-such building and bring the material back to the forest to build our house.' How would that city be affected, how would it survive? So taking away the animals' home, taking away the birds' food and the hunting, has nothing sustainable about it. With the size of society as it stands nowadays, another mechanism has to be thought of (...). The largest trees in the forest protect the smaller ones from the wind, from the sun position, and so on. When one element is taken away, something else is being affected. The winds will be stronger, the sun will hit more upon the soils, and you will get the soils drier at that moment, the water will evaporate, a whole combination of connected things are set in motion. So I am against the sustainable forest management."

In regard to the extraction cycles of 'selective' logging of approximately 15-years in areas under 'sustainable forest management', with the promise that three or four seedlings will regrow from each adult tree –which would guarantee forest regeneration–, Babau commented: "I agree with them that three or four seedlings will sprout up, right? But, how many years will it take for that species to produce fruits to feed the birds, and for the first animals to be able to live around that adult plant?" And he continued: "Can a hungry person wait 15 years for a meal? No, they can't. (...) So, this kind of thinking is not compatible with someone who loves life on the planet. Because they are not cutting down just one tree. With this 'selective' process, they are cutting down hundreds of trees. So, they are taking away an enormous amount of food from the forest animals, and the whole food chain is being affected, the whole forest society is affected. But because human beings think that society is only theirs and that the forest does not have its own society, they think they have the right to rule,

saying that nature can regenerate by itself. That is not true: nothing regenerates by itself. There is a context, everything, for the regeneration of anything.”

### Securing wood without destroying the forest

The tupinambás’ most important traditional agricultural crop is cassava, which they use to make flour of excellent quality. It is the community’s main source of income, together with shade-grown cocoa grown under the forest trees. They also cultivate a wide variety of other foods, including fruits, which contribute to the community’s food sovereignty. Cassava and the other crops are grown on plots reserved for farming. According to the tupinambás, it is not necessary to use forest areas for agriculture.

However, they need firewood to roast the cassava flour. To satisfy this need, they have planted fast-growing native species that are good for firewood on an area of degraded land, close to one of the flour houses. Marluce, an inhabitant of Serra do Padeiro, said: “It only takes three pieces [of this firewood] to roast one sack of flour. We can even burn the green firewood.” Célia, one of the teachers in the community who contributes with indigenous education, calls their reforestation as the ‘energy forest,’ and says that it also meets other demands for wood: “This energy forest also provides fence posts for cattle and livestock enclosures, because the pasture areas require a lot of fence posts. (...) If we would have to get the wood from the forest, the trees would take many years to grow back. But this energy forest takes only a few years to grow, makes excellent wood, is resistant to plagues and it lasts. We made this experience and it has given good results.”

According to Célia and Marluce, the forest plays a very important role in women’s lives. Célia explains: “Mainly because of our rituals, we are deeply identified with the forest, even for medicines, herbs, animals, we use all sorts of things from the forest and it must always be intact (...) to make certain remedies.” Marluce adds: “Our flora and fauna already were seriously plundered, even our fish, they [the landowners] poisoned them back then, but after, things have changed (...), now, there is a water shortage in the nearest city, while we have plenty of water here. Our concern is to preserve our forests and our animals (...), it is a source that we can need someday in the future or our grandchildren, won’t they? That is why we protect them.”

### What is a forest for the tupinambás?

To the tupinambás, a forest is much more than a collection of trees, which is the definition internationally adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The FAO definition serves the interests of logging companies that see forests as a huge ‘wood warehouse’ to be extracted solely for the purpose of generating profits. The FAO definition also serves the interests of companies that promote eucalyptus monocultures, which Babau refers to as “the monocultures of death.”

As for the tupinambás’ definition of forests, Babau says: “The forest, for us, the tupinambás, is the home that protects life. Do you remember that we, the tupinambás, used to live in this country without building houses of bricks and mortar? And, who ensured our survival here for generations? Was it not the forest? Was not the forest our roof? Was it not also the forest that fed us? So, the forest is not just a collection of trees. The forest supports a dynamic society that depends on it. The birds make their nests in the branches of the trees. Several types of animals, like monkeys, need the gravatá (an epiphytic species of plant) to live in, they need tree trunk hollows to live in. The forest also provides food for many animals, including the wood itself, when it rots and falls to the forest floor and generates different bacteria, creates life which nourishes other animals. So, defining a forest as a collection of trees shows that human beings, at the very least, are backward in thought and in their understanding of life.” And he warns: “To destroy the forest is to destroy the life on earth, and if the life on earth is destroyed, no one will survive, because earthquakes, tsunamis and hurricanes will increase in frequency and intensity (...). Just let them do forest managements, let them intervene with what they should not intervene with; you have seen nothing yet, (...) because nature will revenge itself, and human beings are not yet ready to

survive nature's rage.”

Winnie Overbeek (email: [winnie@wrm.org.uy](mailto:winnie@wrm.org.uy))

International Secretariat of the World Rainforest Movement

Support the tupinambá people's struggle  
to demarcate their territory in Bahia  
by signing the petition at  
<http://campanhatupinamba.wordpress.com/>

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## PEOPLES IN ACTION



India: Struggles against POSCO's steel plant in Odisha are determined to continue until company withdraws

On 20th September 2014, villagers of Dinkia made unanimous resolution in their local council not to use their forested lands for non-forest purposes. In a press release from the Posco Pratirodh Sangram Samiti (PPSS), they denounce that “When we are facing untold sufferings because of pro-POSCO attitude of the administration and police... even the supporters and sympathizers of our struggle have been targeted”. They add that this move is aiming “to keep these people and groups away from us so that they make unleash more repression and atrocities on us.” Peasants of six blocks of the Jagatsinghpur district demonstrated before the district collector office against the diversion of water from agriculture from Hansua River to POSCO. Moreover, villagers that reoccupied their lands were forcefully occupied in 2011 by the Government of Odisha and handed over to the South Korean POSCO. Recently, POSCO filed cases against 32 persons. Despite increasing violence and repression, in a recent public meeting, thousands of tribal communities “vowed, taking water in their hands, to protect Khandadhar and the bounty of nature it endures from all kind of corporate invasion till their last breath.” The press release appealed to all civil society to extend support to their long struggle.

See full press release here:

<http://odishasuntimes.com/89640/fight-says-odisha-anti-posco-outfit/>



Malaysia: Asian Development Bank Urged to Shelve Loan For Power Grid in Sarawak

Environmental and human rights groups from Malaysia and abroad are calling on the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to stop a proposal to loan up to US\$45 million for building the “Trans-Borneo Power Grid” (transmission lines) in Sarawak, Malaysia. 40 organizations questioned the ADB for its investment in the company Sarawak Energy Bhd, when it has been beset by charges of corruption, exposed for

irresponsible project management practices, and the subject of investigations by the Malaysian Bar Council and the Malaysian Human Rights Commission due to complicity in violations of the constitutional rights of Indigenous Peoples.

See full letter here:

<http://www.internationalrivers.org/resources/8416>



Anglo-American in Brazil: another case of public hearings legitimizing destructive corporate projects

Increasingly in many countries, the instrument of ‘public hearings’ further serves to legitimise corporate projects with negative impacts. The government of the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais granted, despite of a ‘public hearing’, a license to the mining giant Anglo-American to operate its Minas-Rio iron ore mining project. This has caused strong indignation among local populations who have already been severely impacted by and resisting the mine's activities. The massive project includes extraction of the ore as well as a 525-kilometer pipeline to a port in the Rio de Janeiro state. A resident denounced the ‘official act’ of the hearing as a “simulation of democracy by conceding this operation licence to a criminal mining company”, and accused the company of “consciously promoting and planning social suffering as well as (...) the crime of environmental racism”.

Read the full article (in Portuguese):

<http://racismoambiental.net.br/2014/10/eu-vi-o-horror-e-vos-acuso-por-andrea-zhuri-denuncia-forte-e-corajosa-que-precisa-ser-espalhada/>



Ecuador: Statement of the women’s gathering against extractivism and climate change

The group “Critical views of the territory from the feminism” participated in the gathering with dynamics, body mapping and sharing experiences between women from communities and urban feminist women and men from Quito. The statement denounces that it is women who, “as well as defending life, water and the territory, we guard the health of our families, the food sovereignty, the human rights and the defence of Mother Earth by confronting the capitalist system, which is expressed in the depredations of extractivism and which is inequitable, unjust, ignores women and prioritizes the reproduction of capital over the reproduction of life.”

See the complete statement (in Spanish) here:

<http://territorioyfeminismos.org/2014/10/15/encuentro-de-mujeres-frente-al-extractivismo-y-al-cambio-climatico/>

India: Appeal to the government of India and to the UN on Development,





Rights & Biodiversity in Forest Communities to protect indigenous rights  
The government of India has launched, in the name of ‘development’, several processes that remove or dilute legal protection of forest communities’ rights and their biodiverse environment. Among them, hard-won recognition of forest peoples’ rights in the Forest Rights Act. This Act has been crucial in supporting forest communities demanding control over the land they depend on. Implementation of the Forest Rights Act has been slow and is continuously being disrupted by the Forest Department and other agencies of the Indian government. An international appeal aims to prevent indigenous forest communities’ rights and their biodiverse environment from being displaced and destroyed by industrial expansion.

Read full appeal here: [http://adivasi-info.net/Appeal\\_to\\_India\\_&\\_UN\\_on\\_Forest\\_Communities.pdf](http://adivasi-info.net/Appeal_to_India_&_UN_on_Forest_Communities.pdf)

## RECOMMENDED



Small step from industrial logging to “the perfect crime”, explains Patrick Alley of NGO Global Witness

“Industrial logging: one of the most corrupt and destructive trades on this planet. Their business model is reliant on wrecking the homes of millions of the world’s poorest people, on dismantling the planet’s life support systems, on robbing countries blind and funnelling the money overseas and convincing us all that this is completely normal and sustainable. The business of cutting down the last tropical rainforest... The big myth is that industrial logging in the forests brings sustainable development, jobs and money to poor countries. The problem is that it is not sustainable and it brings little or no development, but it has borne a nasty little euphemism: sustainable forest management... In order to sell the myth, the logging industry needs people to buy in.”

See full video here: [www.globalwitness.org/blog/how-the-logging-industry-tricked-us-into-financing-our-own-destruction/](http://www.globalwitness.org/blog/how-the-logging-industry-tricked-us-into-financing-our-own-destruction/)



Two-years research into business links of the NGO WWF in all corners of the world uncover the true face of the panda

The Silence of the Pandas became a German bestseller in 2012. A series of injunctions and court cases launched by WWF delayed publication of the investigative report into English. A revised English edition, renamed Pandaleaks, has recently been published. The journalist and filmmaker Wilfried Huismann exposes how the WWF, the renowned global nature conservancy brand, greenwashes ecological crimes committed by corporations. Examples include corporations involved in destroying the last remaining rainforests and natural habitats on earth; and WWF accepts their money. This business model of the famous ‘eco’ organization does more to harm nature than to protect it.

See link to articles and videos at: <http://www.pandaleaks.org/book/>  
Also read this article (in Spanish): <http://www.laгранepoca.com/>



Peru: “The Laundering Machine: How fraud and corruption in Peru’s concession system are destroying the future of its forests”

A report by the Environmental Investigation Agency documents how ‘formal’ and ‘legal’ mechanisms for timber extraction in Peru are serving to ‘launder’ wood of controversial or illegal origin. Species like mahogany, for instance, are protected under Peruvian law which stipulates they may only be felled in concession areas awarded to specific companies. However, according to EIA, many loggers are cutting down mahogany and cedar trees in non-concessionary areas and selling the wood illegally to formal companies, which in turn pass it off as mahogany and cedar originating from their own concession areas. This timber is ultimately exported.

See the complete report here: <http://eia-international.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Laundering-Machine.pdf>



The curse of palm oil in Cameroon: Pollution, expropriations and land grabbing

Local communities affected by the oil palm plantations from the Société des Palmeraies du Cameroun (SOCAPALM) are waging an all-out battle to defend their rights, which are being trampled on with impunity. This giant agro-industrial palm oil production company, controlled by the Bolloré Group, has planted vast plantations in the coastal, central and southern regions of the country. Moreover, Bolloré also owns SOCFIN, the company responsible for destruction of villages and human rights violations in Nigeria. Mbonjo, Cameroon, is a village of over 2,000 people whose livelihoods are subsistence farming and small-scale fishing. They sell their surplus in nearby marketplaces. For the past several years, these hardworking people have been unable to concentrate on their rural activities. They live each day as if it were their last. “We have not got enough land for farming, because we are the victims of brutal land appropriations. SOCAPALM says there is none left for us. We are reduced to begging for a plot of earth,” said His Majesty Martin Mbongo.

Read the full article here (in French):

<http://cameroonwebnews.com/2014/08/27/cameroun-mbonjo-la-malediction-de-lhuile-de-palme-enquete/#sthash.oIE54fCY.dpuf>

Read a WRM interview with a local resident from Nigeria, Sunny Ajele, explaining the amount of devastation and criminalization that the company brought to their lives:

<http://wrm.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section1/nigeria-okomu-oil-palm-company-destroying-communities-for-oil-palm-expansion/>



Indonesia: Wilmar continues to engage with suppliers that clear orangutan habitat, forested deep peatlands and high carbon stock forests  
Despite the fancy PR campaigns of Asia's giant agribusiness group Wilmar praising itself for its "No Deforestation" policy, the company continues to purchase palm oil from suppliers that continue to clearcut vast forests and peatlands. Wilmar's business outside the PR department appears to be largely unaffected by its "No Deforestation" policy.

See full report by Greenomics Indonesia here:

[http://www.greenomics.org/docs/Wilmar%27s-suppliers\\_deforestation\\_\(LowRes\).pdf](http://www.greenomics.org/docs/Wilmar%27s-suppliers_deforestation_(LowRes).pdf)



"A chance for change in the Congolese forests," a video produced by the NGO FERN

This video shows the struggle of communities that depend on the forests in the Republic of Congo, and that of their defenders, to reduce the impacts of deforestation and to guarantee their rights to manage and control their own forests,  
<http://www.fern.org/hopeforcongo>