



Bulletin Issue N° 208 – November 2014

OUR VIEWPOINT



What is the biggest REDD+ contradiction?

For almost ten years, a group of banks, corporations, governments and NGOs have been attempting to show the world that REDD+ is a good mechanism for combating climate change. REDD+ will be a cornerstone of the new global climate agreement that the world's governments are discussing right now in Lima, Peru, and which is expected to be finalized in 2015 in Paris. However, as WRM has sought to learn more about the REDD+ policies that have been designed over the years, and especially, the pilot projects that have been implemented, what we have seen is a consistently failed mechanism that suffers from many structural contradictions.

CLIMATE COP in PERU: MORE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR GLOBAL POLLUTERS



Masking the Destruction: REDD+ in the Peruvian Amazon

Peru has been a key actor in terms of policies to prevent growing deforestation. However, the capitalist logic established in international climate negotiations as well as in cooperation funds and the Peruvian political system have turned the 'commitments' to 'reduce' deforestation into latent threats to forests and forest peoples.

Thailand's New 'Forestry Master Plan': Same old strategy dressed up in new clothes

On 31 July 2014, the 'Forestry Master Plan' (FMP) was issued by Thailand's Internal Security Operations Command and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. There was no consultation with the public or civil society before the drafting of this plan, nor was there any kind of referendum or public



consultation after the plan was finalized. The over-arching goal of this plan is to “increase the forest cover” in Thailand from its current level of 33% of the country (17.1 million hectares) to 40% (20.5 million hectares) within 10 years. Since the issuance of the FMP, soldiers from the Thai military and the Royal Forestry Department officers have been frequently raiding communities and arresting villagers



Why are women fighting against extractivism and climate change? It is obvious that capitalism feeds on and is sustained by the exploitation of workers, women, indigenous peoples and nature. And, while it was believed that women’s bodies were the last frontier of capitalism, we now see that the borders have expanded towards other areas: the functions, cycles, elements and structures of the natural world. Photosynthesis, the carbon cycle, the production of water, the creation of biodiversity and other process that recreate life on the planet are now commodities that can be abstracted, appropriated, marketed and even turned into financial investment products.

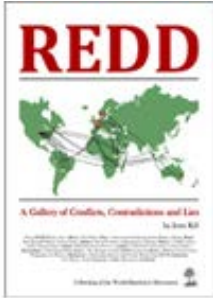


DRC: handing lands for industrial oil palm plantations, REDD and foreign investors
The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has the largest continuous rainforest area in Africa, which is one of the largest in the world. However, its high biological diversity, including humid, dry, wetlands, bamboo, mangrove and many other forests, which coexist for centuries with indigenous and forest dependent people, is under serious threat with the expansion of oil palm plantations and foreign investors in general. Moreover, climate policies related to forests in the DRC, such as REDD, pose further threats to forests and local communities by encouraging industrial oil palm cultivation.

WRM TOOLS FOR THE PEOPLES SUMMIT IN PERU

For almost 20 years, governments have spent thousands of hours inventing and discussing, adopting and justifying mechanisms that supposedly offset the emissions of the biggest polluters. In this way, the adoption of the only real way to tackle the roots of the problem has been avoided: drastically reducing emissions, that is, leaving the oil, coal and natural gas under the ground. It is expected that mechanisms like REDD+, Blue REDD and Landscape REDD, among others, will be pushed in the agenda of the climate talks in Peru to ensure that they form part of the next international UN climate agreement. However, the implementation of REDD-type projects and programs demonstrate that REDD is a perverse tool of distraction that enables continued deforestation and extractivist activities; that it lays the blame for deforestation on those least responsible, namely indigenous peoples and peasant farmer communities; that it weakens and threatens the rights of communities to their

territories; that it generates conflicts within and between communities, among many other problems. In view of this decisive moment at the international level, the WRM has prepared three publications aimed at disseminating information on the subject of REDD to contribute to the efforts of organizations and social movements fighting for real solutions and against false solutions to climate change.



REDD: A Gallery of Conflicts, Contradictions and Lies

This publication summarizes the problems identified in 14 REDD projects based on published field reports. All of the cases reveal a series of structural characteristics that undermine the rights of forests peoples and fail to address the crises of deforestation and climate change.



'Blue Carbon' and 'Blue REDD': Transforming coastal ecosystems into merchandise

This briefing addresses the promotion of 'Blue Carbon' initiatives, also known as 'Blue REDD', a new trend focused on trading the 'stored' carbon on marine and coastal territories, especially mangrove forests.



REDD moves from forests to landscapes: More of the same, just bigger and with bigger risk to cause harm

This publication addresses a new version of REDD, known as 'Landscape REDD', which is just as much of a false solution to climate change as the original version. Landscape REDD is aimed at including, besides forests, agricultural fields and practices. This trend remains a top-down approach, and focuses on protecting and promoting agribusiness, to the detriment of indigenous peoples and peasant farmer communities.

PEOPLES IN ACTION

- Cameroon: WWF complicit in tribal people's abuse
- Peru: The Matsés, last shamans of the Amazon rainforest, fight back against transnational oil company
- India plans huge palm oil expansion, puts forests at risk
- December 3: International Day Against Pesticide Use!
- Gendering Peasant Movements, Gendering Food Sovereignty
- Brazil: Federal Prosecutor's Office upholds injunction barring BNDES financing for Fibria

Celulose, a company certified by the FSC

RECOMMENDED

- Carbon violence: the impacts of Green Resources' carbon plantation in Uganda,
- The great REDD gamble. Time to ditch risky REDD for community-based approaches that are effective, ethical and equitable.
- World Cup carbon emissions “offset” by hydroelectric dams in the Amazon?
- Keeping Land Local: Reclaiming Governance from the Market
- Peru: Our Fight, indigenous peoples defending their territories
- Brazil: Large landholders, the main cause of deforestation in the Amazon

OUR VIEWPOINT

What is the biggest REDD+ contradiction?



For almost ten years, a group of banks, corporations, governments and NGOs have been attempting to show the world that REDD+ is a good mechanism for combating climate change. REDD+ will be a cornerstone of the new global climate agreement that the world's governments are discussing right now in Lima, Peru, and which is expected to be finalized in 2015 in Paris. However, as WRM has sought to learn more about the REDD+ policies that have been designed over the years, and especially, the pilot projects that have been implemented, what we have seen is a consistently failed mechanism that suffers from many structural

contradictions.

For almost ten years, a group of banks, corporations, governments and NGOs have been attempting to show the world that REDD+ is a good mechanism for combating climate change.

However, as WRM has sought to learn more about the REDD+ policies that have been designed over the years, and especially, the pilot projects that have been implemented, what we have seen is a consistently failed mechanism that suffers from many structural contradictions (you can find more information about REDD+ on the WRM website).

In spite of this, REDD+ will be a cornerstone of the new global climate agreement that the world's governments are discussing right now in Lima, Peru, and which is expected to be finalized in 2015 in Paris. The new agreement aims to increase financing from the World Bank and Northern cooperation agencies to change forest-related legislation in countries with tropical forests, in order to adapt laws to the market logic underlying REDD+.

Enough reasons for the WRM, together with a group of international organizations and networks, to make a [call to action](#), emphasizing the need to fight not only against REDD+, but also against the oil, gas and mining industries that particularly benefit from REDD+, as well as fighting against globalized .

This is also a good time to review some of the most serious contradictions of the REDD+ mechanism:

1. On one hand, REDD+ promoters claim that local communities will not be negatively affected by REDD+ projects, since all projects will be implemented on the basis of the principle of free, prior and informed consent. On the other hand, the implemented projects for the reduction of forest carbon emissions have been designed and defined by technicians from the corporations/NGOs promoting the projects, without giving the communities the necessary and complete information and without consulting with them as to whether or not they wanted to turn their forests into forest carbon 'reservoirs'. To make matters worse, these projects tend to negatively affect food sovereignty, communities' control and autonomy over their territory, as well as local criminalization.
2. On one hand, REDD+ promoters justify their projects by pointing the finger of blame at communities who depend on forests as the main drivers of deforestation. On the other hand, they downplay the true causes of deforestation and the role played by those who are really responsible, namely the corporations and financial institutions behind the construction of hydroelectric dams, industrial agriculture, large-scale mining projects, oil and gas operations, etc. To make matters worse, these corporations are the ones who benefit most from REDD+ projects through the purchase of carbon credits and the fact that these projects allow them to 'greenwash' their public image.
3. On one hand, REDD+ promoters tell the communities who live in the area of the project that 'protecting' the carbon in their forest will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and climate change impacts globally. On the other hand, they do not tell these same communities that the 'protection' of the carbon in their forest gives big polluting industries the right to continue emitting more carbon emissions into the atmosphere, and that this, in time, will exacerbate climate change to a much greater extent, with impacts on tropical forests as well. On the contrary, REDD+ promoters force communities – whose carbon emissions are almost non-existent – to change their ways of life, while the 'way of life' of big corporations in industrialized countries can continue unchanged thanks to REDD+.
4. On one hand, REDD+ promoters allocate more than half of the money spent on projects to consultants to carry out more and more assessments of the amount of carbon that is supposedly stored today and in the future in the forest within the project areas. On the other hand, these assessments are not reliable, and even worse,

they further distract attention from the real causes of global warming.

5. On one hand, REDD+ promoters claim that reforestation, or rather, the planting of trees, can also be considered as a REDD+ project because it increases the world's 'forested' area and the 'conservation' of carbon stocks. On the other hand, this supposed reforestation is carried out through the establishment of large-scale monoculture plantations of eucalyptus trees to supply pulp mills, with industrial and mechanized production processes, a short growing cycle of six years, and heavy use of toxic pesticides and petroleum-based chemical fertilizers.

6. On one hand, the promoters of REDD+ claim that agriculture can be 'climate smart'. On the other hand, their means for making agriculture "smarter" is through industrial agriculture that uses transgenic seeds planted in large-scale monoculture plantations with a heavy dependence on petroleum products.

7. On one hand, an energy company from an industrialized country in Europe or North America that has bought carbon credits from a REDD+ project claims to have documents that prove its ownership of the carbon supposedly stored in a certain area of forest. On the other hand, this forest is thousands of kilometres away from this alleged 'owner' of the carbon, and the company knows absolutely nothing about the place where 'its' carbon is 'stored' or about the people who have roots in this territory that go back for countless generations.

8. On one hand, the Norwegian government supports the Brazilian government with millions of dollars to reduce emissions from deforestation. On the other hand, that same Norwegian government has just announced that its state-owned oil company, Statoil, is going to drill new offshore wells off the coast of Brazil, which will even further increase the amount of carbon in the atmosphere, as well as increasing its profits – which greatly surpass the amount of money granted to 'reduce deforestation' to the governments of Brazil and other countries in the South.

9. On one hand, REDD+ promoters have succeeded in getting a lot of time and money spent on a secondary cause of climate change: deforestation and forest degradation. On the other hand, governments have spent little time and money on confronting the main problem. To make matters worse, this is not due to a lack of awareness and knowledge of what would actually solve the problem: leaving oil, gas and coal underground.

10. On one hand, the promoters of REDD+ claim that it will only be possible to save the world's tropical forests by using mechanisms like REDD+ and establishing the monetary value of nature. On the other hand, for the communities who depend on forests, these forests have countless values that are beyond measure; it is impossible to put a price tag on something that indigenous communities consider sacred.

And now it's up to you to make the tough decision of choosing which one of these is the biggest contradiction of REDD+!

CLIMATE COP IN PERU: MORE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR GLOBAL POLLUTERS

Masking the Destruction: REDD+ in the Peruvian Amazon



For almost 20 years, the United Nations climate negotiations have promoted the carbon market as the flagship ‘solution’ for climate change. However, this market allows corporations and governments to offset their pollution, without having to reduce the emissions at source. As a result, not only have global levels of the greenhouse gases that cause climate change increased, but also, large-scale projects implemented primarily in countries in the South to ‘offset’ the emissions of countries and corporations in the North have given rise to environmental devastation, the plunder of land and territories, social conflicts, and even violations of human rights.

It is within the framework of carbon ‘offsets’ that negotiations began in 2005 around a mechanism for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) and forest conservation, sustainable forest management and the enhancement of carbon stocks (REDD-Plus or REDD+). The Peruvian government has been one of the leading promoters of this mechanism since 2008.

REDD+ assigns a monetary value to the capacity of the forest’s trees, plants and soils to ‘store’ carbon, imposing the logic of the carbon market on forests. In order to implement REDD+, changes must be made to existing legal frameworks related to forests, and therefore, to the territories of indigenous peoples and other communities who depend on forests. Peru participates in almost all of the international processes that promote REDD+, such as the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and Forest Investment Programme (FIP), the UN-REDD Programme, and others.

But, who benefits from REDD+ ?

The ‘readiness preparation’ REDD+ documents in Peru almost always point to peasant farmers as the main agents of deforestation for clearing small parcels of land for subsistence agriculture. A recent analysis of satellite images from the eight Amazon countries that share the Amazon, excluding Brazil, reveals that Peru experienced the greatest loss of forests in 2012, with a 67% increase in deforestation as compared with the previous year. More than 65% of Peru’s indigenous territories and 49% of Protected Natural Areas overlap with oil blocks. At the same time, social conflicts and the criminalization of popular resistance are on the rise. The REDD+ documents do not look at the structural causes of these high rates of deforestation. These documents give no consideration to halting oil and gas extraction, or large-scale infrastructure projects like mega-dams, or industrial oil palm plantations. Instead of analyzing the ‘whys’ of deforestation, they cover up the responsibility of the agents responsible for the large-scale destruction of the Amazon, and lay the blame on the smallest and

most vulnerable.

The current map of mining projects of the Peruvian Ministry of Energy and Mines reveals that there are 50,516 mining concessions in force, and 49.6% of the territory of communities in the mountains overlaps with mining concessions. The resulting forced evictions, local contamination, criminalization of protest and other factors have pushed many communities to seek out other lands. In the meantime, 84% of the Peruvian Amazon region is covered by hydrocarbon concessions, while a decree issued in 2011 declared the construction of 20 large hydroelectric power stations along the Marañon River to be a matter of 'national interest'. Most of the electricity will be exported to Brazil, while the rest will be used for mining megaprojects in the Andean region. Industrial oil palm plantations are also rapidly expanding in the Amazon.

The greater deforestation and the more threats to the forests there are, the more REDD+ projects can be justified. Without challenging or questioning the current extractivist model, REDD+ projects not only generate carbon credits that allow the expansion and legitimization of the activities that are to blame for deforestation, in addition to creating lucrative financial speculation markets, but they are also dependent on this model.

The REDD+ process in Peru

The implementation of REDD+ in Peru began in 2009 when it was selected as a pilot country for two World Bank programmes that zealously promote carbon markets: the FCPF and the FIP. These programmes offer financing for, among other things, opening up the countries of the South to the carbon market in connection with forests. In order to access FCPF funds, countries must submit a REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP). Peru's R-PP was accepted in 2011, although it still lacks final approval. The R-PP leads to a National REDD+ Strategy as well as a National Investment Strategy developed in the framework of the FIP.

The FCPF and FIP also receive funding from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), several European governments, the United States and Japan, as well as private actors like the UK old giant British Petroleum (BP). History demonstrates, however, that these actors have facilitated activities that are underlying causes of deforestation, marginalizing peoples who depend on the forests. For example, the IDB also finances such destructive initiatives as the Camisea gas project and the rezoning of land for the expansion of oil palm plantations in the Amazon. So, if the agenda is to continue with a destructive extractivist model, then what are the real interests behind pushing forward REDD+ in Peru?

The controversial Camisea project for the extraction of natural gas in the middle of the Amazon rainforest also involves the construction of hundreds of kilometres of gas pipelines, fractionation and liquids recovery plants, ports, access roads and the installation of power lines, in areas which overlap with numerous communal reserves, indigenous territories and national parks. The proposed expansion of the Camisea project overlaps with the Kugapakori, Nahua, Nanti and others Territorial Reserve (RTKNN), which is home to indigenous peoples living in different stages of voluntary isolation and initial contact. The reserve also serves as a buffer zone of the Manu National Park, where, according to UNESCO, the biological diversity "exceeds that of any other place on Earth."

In December 2012, the IDB provided the Peruvian government with US\$1 million to 'protect' indigenous reserves for peoples living in voluntary isolation. However, the category of 'indigenous reserve', in accordance with national legislation, allows extractive activities if the government considers them to be a 'public necessity'. In this way, funding is being provided for studies to re-categorize five territorial reserves, including the RTKNN, as indigenous reserves, exposing them to possible interventions. In addition, under the discourse of 'protection', the funds will also be used for "an analysis of avoided deforestation" on the reserves for peoples in voluntary isolation or initial contact – in other words, an assessment of carbon 'stocks'. Also specified is the design of "a financial mechanism for their protection with the sale of carbon credits" through a REDD+ project.

In 2002, in another attempt to clean up its image, the IDB approved a US\$5 million loan to the government of Peru to strengthen its capacity to supervise and monitor the “environmental and social impacts of the Camisea project” and establish initiatives for “sustainable and harmonious development in its area of influence.” However, in 2003, it granted a loan of US\$135 million to a private consortium for the construction of the main gas pipelines for the Camisea project, thus providing support for the “gas transportation component” of the project. In 2007, it approved a US\$400 million loan to a private consortium headed up by Hunt Oil. REDD+, in reality, makes it possible to secure rights over the carbon credits on the reserve, while legitimizing extractive activities in the area.

In the meantime, Pluspetrol, the oil company that heads up the Camisea consortium, signed an agreement in 2013 for a UN carbon market offset project involving its gas processing plant. The company claims that it will reduce the plant’s carbon emissions by installing two waste heat recovery units and thus avoiding the installation of hot oil heaters, which means avoiding the additional burning of fossil fuels. Through this project, Pluspetrol will be able to generate carbon credits up until 2020 and sell them on the carbon market, thus further boosting its profits. However, behind the company’s discourse of ‘energy efficiency’ and ‘sustainability’ is the reality of a mega-project that is causing destruction to the territories and peoples of the Urubamba valley. The carbon market is not only legitimizing the operations of an oil company, but also supporting their expansion

What is the ‘plus’ in REDD+?

The ‘plus’ (+) in REDD+ refers to the inclusion of activities aimed at (1) conservation of forest carbon stocks, (2) sustainable forest management and (3) enhancement of carbon stocks. Although these may sound like positive proposals, the reality is that these ‘activities’ even further open up forested areas to the entry of corporations and private interests.

During the 2008 UN climate negotiations, the Peruvian Ministry of the Environment (MINAM) announced the National Forest Conservation Programme (PNCB), with the objective of conserving 54 million hectares of forest, including protected areas, concessions for ecotourism and conservation, territorial reserves for indigenous people in voluntary isolation, and Amazon wetlands. The programme also set a target to reduce net deforestation to zero by 2020. With financial support from the German, U.S. and Japanese governments, the PNCB acts as the umbrella programme in which REDD+ would be included for ‘carbon dioxide sequestration’. Through the PNCB, the government of Peru is promoting an initiative through which indigenous communities would be paid around US\$3.7 per hectare per year, during a five-year period, in exchange for the commitment to ‘guard’ the forests where they live. The agreements cover the total number of hectares of forests of the communities. They not only strip them of their autonomy and control over the use of their territories, but in addition, they create conflicts between and within communities as they require ‘monitoring’ and ‘policing’ among themselves.

Meanwhile, the imposition of national parks or protected areas has also led to the forced displacement of local communities. In the forests of northern Peru, for example, the community of Nuevo Lamas has been resisting the Cerro Escalera Regional Conservation Area. The park authorities have restricted their access to the forest for hunting and gathering and prohibited their traditional system of shifting cultivation. In 2010, charges were brought against three members of the community for practicing this system of agriculture. In addition to Nuevo Lamas, there are other communities that depend on this area for vital forest resources. Charges have also been brought against eight members of the community of Alto Pucalpilllo – where community members only have title to the area around their houses – for the deforestation of 0.25 ha in order to make a small campsite where they could grow food during hunting and gathering expeditions. According to a study currently in progress, there are at least 32 communities where the inhabitants have land titles that only cover their houses, and at least 13 that are not even officially recognized. Meanwhile, the 132,000-hectare Cerro Escalera Regional Conservation Area has been created alongside hundreds of thousands of hectares of private ‘conservation’ concessions

granted to NGOs and private companies.

REDD+ also fosters industrial logging operations and the establishment of monoculture tree plantations. FIP financing, for example, includes funds for the following actions: (1) granting forest concessions for the extraction of timber, preferably with ‘certification’, from organizations like the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). This serves as a strong incentive for industrial logging, an activity that has already been heavily challenged in Peru by local communities, and is a significant cause of deforestation; (2) promoting ‘carbon positive’ agriculture, such as oil palm plantations, which already have national and international support as an alternative to plantations for drug trafficking; and 3) promoting large-scale tree plantations, including the recommended establishment of 250,000 hectares of plantations in Cajamarca and Huánuco, near San Martín and Ucayali.

“Re-creating” life?

The controversial Conga mining project planned by Newmont-Buenaventura-World Bank (Minera Yanacoch) in the northern region of Cajamarca has become a symbol of the struggle to protect water. The proposed site for the open-pit mine is at the headwaters of a river basin that supplies five micro-basins, affecting more than 600 springs in addition to the imminent loss of numerous lakes, with drastic impacts on the population. As a result, the company is offering to ‘re-create’ the lakes with artificial reservoirs to ‘compensate’ for their destruction. However, it is impossible to make this replacement and much less to ‘compensate’ for the lost natural lakes with manmade reservoirs. Local communities and governments have been waging months of intense protests, for which they have been violently criminalized and pursued. Just as REDD+ generates a system of carbon offsets to compensate for atmospheric pollution, numerous markets are being promoted that would allow for other ‘services’ provided by nature to be marketed or even ‘re-created’ – such as, in this case, the water cycle. The idea that the destruction can be ‘offset’ is extremely dangerous and serves to cover up increased extraction and devastation.

A logic of accumulation

The foundations of REDD+ are rooted in the carbon market. REDD+ establishes the fragmentation of territories into commodities, now also including ‘environmental services’, biodiversity, water, and others. As hard as some may try to change its objectives, REDD+ is being financed, implemented and planned to serve as a carbon market mechanism. As with any market, investors are concerned above all with the “value” and quality of the merchandise. The experience of recent years has demonstrated that REDD+ projects establish packages of ownership rights over trees, plants, forests and soils to be appropriated by powerful actors.

REDD+ is based on the premise that, without challenging the extractivist model or tackling the underlying causes, adding a monetary value to the carbon cycle will create sufficient incentives to reduce deforestation. This clearly does not work. Deforestation and forest degradation are driven by an economic logic of continuous ‘growth’ that depends on extraction and, therefore, large-scale deforestation and the plunder of communities who depend on forests. This same logic views the functions and cycles of nature as commodities;

it views forests as tree plantations, and the many ‘values’ of forests as a single monetary ‘value’. This logic aims to blind us to the many possible options outside the framework of predatory capitalism. Let us not be caught up in the REDD trap!

This article is a summary of the publication “Masking the Destruction: REDD+ in the Peruvian Amazon”, by Joanna Cabello, World Rainforest Movement, http://wrm.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Masking_the_Destruction.pdf

Thailand’s New ‘Forestry Master Plan’: Same old strategy dressed up in new clothes



On 31 July 2014, the ‘Forestry Master Plan’ (FMP) was issued by Thailand’s Internal Security Operations Command and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. There was no consultation with the public or civil society before the drafting of this plan, nor was there any kind of referendum or public consultation after the plan was finalized.

The Forestry Plan aims to “resolve the problems of forest destruction, trespassing of public land and sustainable management of natural resources”. The over-arching goal of this plan is to “increase the forest cover” in Thailand from its current level of 33% of the country (17.1 million hectares) to 40% (20.5 million hectares) within 10 years.

The three stated objectives of the FMP are:

1. To stop forest degradation and reclaim illegally used forest lands as stated in the goal within one year.
2. To establish efficient, effective and sustainable forest management systems within two years
3. To re-establish healthy forests in the country during the next 2-10 years.

In its action plan, the FMP designates ‘crisis zones’ - areas that the Royal Forestry Department (RFD) believes have large numbers of forest encroachment cases and illegal logging. Northern Thailand is home to most of these ‘crisis zones’, which has made forest dependent community members fearful that actions will soon be taken against them, if they have not already begun. Another troublesome aspect of the FMP, specially for Northern Thai forest communities, is that RFD officials will be relying on outdated aerial surveillance maps to

determine whether a community has encroached on 'State lands'.

Furthermore, the FMP action plan states that the RFD will need to increase its resources (staff, vehicles, weapons, radios, GPS devices, etc.) in order that the action plan be successfully implemented. The RFD has submitted a budget to the government to support this request.

Evictions, Arrests, Detentions, Fines

Since the issuance of the FMP, soldiers from the Thai military and RFD officers have been frequently raiding communities and arresting villagers, and quickly moving onto their next targets, to avoid confrontation with other locals. The Northern Peasants' Federation (NPF), a network of Thai small scale farming communities from 9 Northern Thai provinces, has observed that the RFD has been targeting indigenous communities first (Lisu, Lahu, and Karen peoples were the first to be arrested and issued eviction notices). During past 'crackdowns' by the Thai military/RFD, entire communities were evicted, but this time, the RFD/Army are targeting individuals within communities, which has created discord and disunity among these communities.

According to the Internal Security Operations Command, 501 people have been arrested and prosecuted for forest and public land encroachment since the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) took power in May 2014, while 55,000 hectares of land has been confiscated in 68 provinces. In the North, over 200 cases have been filed against forest community members, mostly for possession of illegal wood. Many of the persons accused do not understand why these charges have been filed against them, as they feel that they had been living within the rules.

The more things change, the more they stay the same...

The FMP is the latest in a long line of attempts by the Thai RFD and Army to evict forest dwellers. For example, in the early 1990s, also following a military coup, the Army and RFD cooperated to implement the "Kho Cho Ko" program (1) in Northeast Thailand. The project wanted to 'relocate' people from 'protected' forest areas and watersheds as well as so-called degraded forest lands. In total, the project planned to 'relocate' about 6 million people living in 9,700 forest communities from their dwelling in 1,253 forest areas all over Thailand. Under the "Kho Cho Ko" program, villager's houses were demolished and they were forcibly evicted in order to "reforest" the degraded forests with monoculture plantations of fast-growing tree species such as eucalyptus. The evictions resulted in large-scale protests by affected communities which, backed by accurate information about the impacts of the programme, finally forced the government to withdraw the "Ko Cho Ko" program in 1992.

Update

On November 9th, NPF planned the march "Walking for Land Justice" in order to ask for a cessation of the Forestry Master Plan until a review and public consultation, as well as support for the "Four Laws for the Poor" campaign (2). The walk, however, was halted by the Army after the first group of farmers had walked a mere 5 meters outside of the gathering place. Two participants- Chulalongkorn University political science lecturer Prapart Pintobtang and Phrae forest group's member Pisist Taja were arrested and held in a police truck for 30 minutes before being released. After hours of negotiations between the Thai Army and NPF, it was agreed that the walk would be postponed in exchange for a negotiation meeting between a key member of the government- Prime Minister's Office Minister ML Panadda Diskul- and NPF representatives at the Chiang Mai provincial hall on November 13th.

On November 13th, farmer representatives met with ML Panadda Diskul and explained their current grievances and the threats they have faced as a result of the FMP. He agreed to arrange for the release of the 19 indigenous Karen villagers who were still in detention in Mae Hongson Province, as well as to present the

farmer's issues to the relevant agencies and officers in Bangkok. It was also agreed at this meeting that the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Gen Dapong Ratanasuwan, would come to Chiang Mai on November 17th, for discussing the FMP.

Prior to all of the events and meetings that have occurred in Chiang Mai during November, the Thai Army has visited NPF members at their office and warned them not to carry banners, wear campaign shirts, chant slogans, or even hold up four fingers in support of the "Four Laws for the Poor" during their gatherings. While the negotiations were occurring inside the Chiang Mai Provincial Hall on November 13th, Thai military walked among the villagers waiting outside and ordered them to sit apart in groups of less than 5 persons while they were waiting.

Final Remarks

At NPF, we agree with the RFD that Thailand's forests are dwindling and need to be protected. However, the persons and groups responsible for the continuing degradation of Thailand's forest lands are not small scale farmers and villagers, but are land speculators, resort and plantation owners. They should be the target of any State plan to rehabilitate and conserve forest lands. Instead of implementing repressive 'Forestry Management' schemes which harm the real forest protectors, we recommend the adopting of the "Four Laws for the Poor", which aim to support community-based land and natural resource management- the most just and sustainable method to maintain Thailand's precious forests and environment.

NPF Thailand

Email: npf_thai@yahoo.com

(1) "Kho Cho Ko" is the Thai acronym for the longwinded "Farmland Allotment Program for the Poor Living in Degraded Protected Forest Areas"

(2) See <http://www.landjustice4thai.org/4laws.php> for more information on this campaign

Why are women fighting against extractivism and climate change?



It is obvious that capitalism feeds on and is sustained by the exploitation of workers, women, indigenous peoples and nature. And, while it was believed that women's bodies were the last frontier of capitalism, we now see that the borders have expanded towards other areas: the functions, cycles, elements and structures of the natural world. Photosynthesis, the carbon cycle, the production of water, the creation of biodiversity and other process that recreate life on the planet are now commodities that can be abstracted, appropriated, marketed and even turned into financial investment products.

In practice, just as women have been subjugated by capital, today nature has also been pressed into servitude to permit seemingly endless accumulation. Just as women supposedly know and should 'love' and must therefore obligatorily take responsibility for the care of the home, the elderly, the sick and children (without pay, because it is not a job, it is something inherent to them), Mother Nature provides us with environmental 'services' because she 'has always done it' and it is inherent to her.

Neither of these suppositions is true. On one hand, the love a person may feel cannot be used as a justification to turn her into a domestic slave or a breeder of human beings. Similarly, the gifts of nature cannot be used as a source of 'services', formerly referred to more commonly as 'natural capital'. This change in terminology is not insignificant, because it represents the premise that nature has goods and offers services, and reflects a high degree of abstraction, since it is no longer An Environmental Capital, but rather infinite commodities that can contribute to the growth of monetary and financial capital.

Capitalism depends not only on the –unpaid- domestic labour of women, but also on the millions of poorly paid women who join the labour market; it is almost An endless Human Capital. Governments tend to promote programmes for women entrepreneurs who work at home so that, in practice, they neither neglect their 'obligations' in the home nor do they need to access social security. In the Amazon, for example, the oil companies need women to take care of the home while the men go out and work in oil industry activities; or they need women to cook and do laundry in the work camps; or they need women sex workers in the areas near the oil industry operations. In Ecuador, the authorities proudly point to their promotion of projects sustained by women, such as those created to feed the hordes of oil industry workers who invade their territories to clear the forests and conduct seismic surveys. However, these jobs have turned the women of the region into the servants of oil capital. The same thing is happening with nature. The 'environmental services' market appropriates the functions of nature and turns them into a form of work.

This is the case with the REDD+ and REDD++ mechanisms (1), and projects of this type, which represent a double opportunity for profits: on one hand, governments, companies and banks buy or sell environmental

services (such as the carbon cycle), appropriating the work of nature, and on the other hand, they have the communities who work like any other stock of cheap labour, taking care of their commodities and becoming part of the global market. In the latter case, it is also women who play an important role when they find themselves deprived of their autonomy and creativity.

For example, in Ecuador, women and nature both suffer and are subjected to this double subjugation. The over-exploitation of women's work is combined with the criminalization of women who have an abortion; nature, contaminated and deteriorated, is fenced in, its rivers are dammed, and it is turned into a supplier of ecosystem goods and services. Both are placed at the service of the new model of production and knowledge. This capitalist modernization plan is creating new types of women, who are less emancipated, and new kinds of nature, which are less free.

Through discipline, just as they have done with women who want to be in control of their own future, they attempt to "control nature, tame it, live in harmony with it but know how to control its extremes or otherwise continue to be its victims" (2). Nothing has changed in the conception of modernization in over 300 years.

In spite of this, both women and nature are fighting back. In fact, it is women who have shown the most forceful resistance against the entry into their territories of oil, mining and environmental services companies. They fight in their homes when their husbands want jobs with the oil company, they fight in the communities because they are opposed to REDD projects, they fight in the cities for democracy. Women play a key role in the resistance against the extractive model, and in the anti-capitalist process of change. At the same time, nature is manifesting its fierce resistance through climate chaos, floods, droughts, etc. We need to enter into a dialogue with it and listen to its message.

An example of organization and resistance is that of the women in Ecuador, where a meeting of women fighting against mining and oil operations was held in October 2014. This meeting resulted in the Declaration of the Meeting of Women against Extractivism and Climate Change, which states:

"We do not want the development alternatives that have signified the extinction of cultures and peoples; this is a development of death, of destruction, based on exploitation, primarily of oil and minerals. This development has no future. We know this because we have already lived with it for more than 500 years. We have the alternative to this kind of development.

This is why we call for:

- the recovery of food sovereignty
- the recovery of water sovereignty
- the recovery of energy sovereignty, in other words,
- the recovery of Mother Earth as the source of nourishment for our bodies, for our people
- production aimed at generating healthy food for Living Well.

This is why we are fighting for the minerals to be left underground, and for the oil of the Amazon to be left untapped. These are the real solutions for climate change and a way to conserve our biodiversity, which is our true wealth" (3).

There are many examples like these. Women joining together, building solidarity, and developing creative and courageous forms of struggle and resistance. It is time for the next UN climate negotiations to be feminized!

Ivonne Yáñez, Acción Ecológica, Ecuador

Email: ivonne@accionecologica.org

- (1) For more information on the problems with REDD, see: <http://www.accionecologica.org/servicios-ambientes/documentos-de-posicion-de-a-e/1782-posicionsociobosque>
 - (2) Rafael Correa, Enlace Ciudadano 350, 30/11/2013
 - (3) <http://territorioyfeminismos.org/2014/10/15/encuentro-de-mujeres-frente-al-extractivismo-y-al-cambio-climatico/>
-

DRC: handing lands for industrial oil palm plantations, REDD and foreign investors



The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has the largest continuous rainforest area in Africa, which is one of the largest in the world. However, its high biological diversity, including humid, dry, wetlands, bamboo, mangrove and many other forests, which coexist for centuries with indigenous and forest dependent people, is under serious threat with the expansion of oil palm plantations and foreign investors in general. Moreover, climate policies related to forests in the DRC, such as REDD, pose further threats to forests and local communities by encouraging industrial oil palm cultivation.

Industrial oil palm expansion in DRC

Canadian company Feronia Inc owns some of Africa's largest oil palm plantations in the DRC. Set up by Canadian hedge fund (1) "TriNorth Capital Inc" and venture capitalist Ravi Sood in 2008, Feronia bought "Plantations et Huileries du Congo", a set of three separate plantations from the Anglo-Dutch multinational company, Unilever.

Despite initial high profits, with a value of more than US\$100 million in 2011, the company started to post losses and shareholders started to leave. As an article from Reuters points out, the company blamed this on a drop in oil palm prices, political risk in the DRC, and a 2012 land law designed to make Congolese people the majority holders of land concessions (2). But in 2013, Feronia attracted development agencies interest in its plantations, which cover 107,000 hectares. Government-backed 'development' funds from Britain, France and Spain bought 60 percent of Feronia for about US\$35 million, rescuing it from collapse.

One of the government-backed investors said the capital injection into Feronia shouldn't be viewed as a bailout

but as a long-term investment in Africa. However, as the same Reuters article highlights, activists denounce that Feronia's purchase of the plantations, partly with public funds, has not led to any improved conditions for workers beyond maintaining their jobs. Most are poorly paid, often earning just over US\$1 a day. "Workers are living in crumbling homes, in severe disrepair. There is malnutrition in the communities near the plantations," said Jean Francois Mombia to Reuters, a campaigner with RIAO-RDC, an NGO working with labourers at Feronia's operations.

Scrutiny of Feronia shows one more example of many that follow a wave of foreign investment in African farmland, leading to land grabs and conflicts. Evidence shows that between 2006 and 2012, substantial forest loss occurred in and around Feronia's concession area. Besides, a visit to one of Feronia's oil palm plantations, located in the Boteka village, by the NGO Moabi DRC (3), identified the risks of deforestation in case of further expansion of these plantations, considering that the buffer area of the Boteka plantation overlaps with 23,674 hectares of primary forest, 4,267 hectares of secondary forest and 251 hectares of savannah. Therefore, with vast tracks of tropical forest straddling the equator, an abundance of freshwater, and a favorable climate, DRC could follow countries like Indonesia, which already has millions of hectares of forests converted into oil palm plantations, and become a major exporter of oil palm.

How promoting REDD is also promoting industrial oil palm expansion

The Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) programme aims to privatize the capacity of trees, soils and vegetation to 'store' carbon dioxide. The aim is to turn the carbon into tradable credits so that the loss of carbon in one place could be 'compensated' with the carbon 'stored' somewhere else. This in practice has already put local and indigenous territories under threats from investors seeking to profit from this climate policy.

DRC was the first country in the Congo Basin to receive financing through the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and the UN REDD Programme in order to prepare the country to initiate REDD activities. The country was required to create a National REDD Strategy, a Readiness Preparation Proposal and some studies on the potential of REDD for the DRC.

The first study on the causes of deforestation in the DRC was released in 2007 by the US-based Woods Hole Research Centre. This highly controversial study, in addition to assessing the carbon sequestration 'potential' of DRC's forests, pointed to local communities as the primary drivers of deforestation while downplaying the impact of other actors such as industrial logging or monoculture plantations. This was severely criticized by indigenous peoples' organizations in the DRC, who demanded the recognition of their customary rights.

Moreover, as a step towards developing its National REDD Strategy, the DRC published a report on the country's REDD potential in 2009 with the support of US-consultancy firm McKinsey. The report involved guidelines in three sectoral sections: "sustainable extraction", including timber harvesting and monoculture plantations; "accelerated development of permanent agriculture", including the development of intensive agriculture, mainly of oil palm cultivation; and "interministerial coordination" (4).

If these guidelines were to be followed, the impact on indigenous peoples and small-scale farmers would be disastrous. The measures recommended include the conversion of close to seven million hectares of supposedly 'marginal' lands and four million hectares of 'degraded' forests into monoculture plantations to sequester carbon dioxide. Currently, there are no regulations preventing palm expansion into REDD project areas.

DRC's government has already started the handing of huge extensions of farmland to foreign investors through 'agricultural business parks'. The government aims to stop the country's reliance on subsistence farming, creating fears of local land grabs. The plans are to sell 25-year leases to the lands, or longer if new legislation is

passed. Africom Commodities Pty. Ltd., a closely held South African company, is developing the first 80,000 hectares ‘agribusiness park’ near Kinshasa in partnership with the government. Africom already has planted 2,200 hectares of maize, and a total of 10,000 hectares will be planted by the end of January 2015. The government plans to develop 21 ‘agribusiness parks’ saying that these would provide food, employment and a market for nearby small-scale farmers (5). However, converting DRC’s forested lands into large mono-crop farms, which depend on the use of GM seeds and agrotoxics, clashes with local communities’ ownership and traditional use of their lands. Organizations of peasant associations and communities like Copaco and Conapac are concerned, for example, that this and other similar initiatives may transform some of the peasants into mere employees, basically leading to massive displacements of peasants. They also worry of an acceleration in the process of land acquisition by the national elite, which has already begun (6).

Furthermore, at least four REDD projects overlap with indigenous territories in the DRC (7). REDD as well as other proposed land uses overlap with customary rights of local communities and could impede their access and use of the forest. Pygmy communities, in particular, are increasingly vulnerable to loggers, extractivist projects, and monoculture agriculture. Their customary rights are not recognized under DRC law and few of their customary rights have been mapped.

Plantations are not forests!

The expansion of monoculture plantations, particularly oil palm plantations, in Africa and elsewhere, has been accompanied by a number of detrimental social and environmental impacts, such as the expropriation of ancestral lands of local and indigenous communities, the pollution of water sources and agricultural soils due to the use of agrotoxics, and many more. Now, with the climate policies aiming to capture the carbon dioxide ‘stored’ in the trees for its trade in the financial markets, more interests and powerful actors are interested to enter these already vulnerable areas. For them, trees in monocultures are just the same as forests because what matters is the amount of carbon ‘stored’ in the trees and thus the profit they can gain from them. Indigenous and forest dependant peoples however, who have been the guards of these forests for centuries, are resisting worldwide to protect their diverse territories.

(1) A “hedge fund” is an investment vehicle that pools capital from a number of investors and invests in securities and other financial instruments

(2) Reuters, November 2014, <http://www.trust.org/item/20141112163534-sptur>

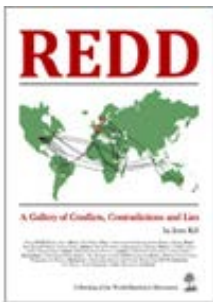
(3) Moabi DRC, <http://rdc.moabi.org/will-drc-palm-oil-plantations-cause-forest-loss/en/#5/-2.833/22.830&layers=>

(4) WRM (2011) Conservation International REDD pilot project: a different kind of Disney production, <http://wrn.org.uy/books-and-briefings/democratic-republic-of-congo-conservation-international-redd-pilot-project-a-different-kind-of-disney-production/>

(5) <http://online.wsj.com/articles/congo-plans-to-lease-farmland-in-bid-to-bolster-food-productivity-1414506517>

(6) <http://www.southworld.net/drc-agro-industrial-parks-to-address-the-food-security-challenge/>

(7) Moabi DRC, http://rdc.moabi.org/redd_risk/en/#5/-2.833/22.830&layers=moabi_redd_projects



REDD: A Gallery of Conflicts, Contradictions and Lies

This publication summarizes the problems identified in 14 REDD projects based on published field reports. All of the cases reveal a series of structural characteristics that undermine the rights of forests peoples and fail to address the crises of deforestation and climate change.

The cases demonstrate that local communities did not have the option as to whether or not they gave their consent to the REDD project. In many cases as well, the information they were given was biased or incomplete. In the cases where REDD projects were presented to the communities, the project promoters made many promises of benefits and jobs in exchange for the community's acceptance of the project. What the communities got instead of the promised benefits, however, were harassment, restrictions on the use of the territories on which they depend for their livelihoods, and blame for causing deforestation and climate change. In almost none of the examples were the communities informed that the product generated through REDD projects – carbon credits – would be sold to polluters in the industrialized countries, including some of the biggest corporations involved in fossil fuel extraction. Peasant agriculture, particularly shifting cultivation, is vilified in most REDD projects as a cause of deforestation, while the main causes of deforestation – oil, gas and coal extraction, mining, large-scale infrastructure projects, mega-dams, industrial logging and agribusiness – are neither mentioned nor addressed in REDD initiatives. REDD has also failed to secure the rights of communities to their territories, as demonstrated by the 14 examples used.

If REDD and its variations like Blue REDD, Landscape REDD and others are incorporated in future climate agreements, it will be an unprecedented disaster. It is time for governments to stop playing this game and start looking at real measures that address the true causes of deforestation and climate change.

The publication REDD: A Gallery of Conflicts, Contradictions and Lies is available in: http://wrm.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/REDD-A_Gallery_of_Conflict_Contradictions_Lies.pdf



'Blue Carbon' and 'Blue REDD': Transforming coastal ecosystems into merchandise

This briefing addresses the promotion of 'Blue Carbon' initiatives, also known as 'Blue REDD', a new trend focused on trading the 'stored' carbon on marine and coastal territories, especially mangrove forests.

Previously published as an article in the [WRM Bulletin No. 204](#), the article aims to contribute to a better understanding of this trend, exploring some of the 'Blue Carbon' or 'Blue REDD' initiatives or projects that are already underway, and which are the actors behind them. It also describes and comments on some of the main arguments used by these actors. The main goal of the briefing is to raise awareness of this new trend and explain why, instead of helping to resolve the climate crisis, these initiatives tend to benefit financial markets.

The briefing is accessible at: <http://wrm.org.uy/books-and-briefings/blue-carbon-and-blue-redd-transforming-coastal-ecosystems-into-merchandise-2/>



REDD moves from forests to landscapes: More of the same, just bigger and with bigger risk to cause harm

This publication addresses a new version of REDD, known as ‘Landscape REDD’, which is just as much of a false solution to climate change as the original version. Landscape REDD is aimed at encompassing besides forests, agricultural fields and practices. This trend remains a top-down approach, and focuses on protecting and promoting agribusiness, to the detriment of indigenous peoples and peasant farmer communities.

Previously published as an article in the [WRM Bulletin No. 204](#), the article aims to understand how Landscape REDD is the same idea as REDD, just bigger – and with the potential to do more harm.

To learn more about this new trend, see the article at: <http://wrm.org.uy/books-and-briefings/redd-moves-from-forests-to-landscapes-more-of-the-same-just-bigger-and-with-bigger-risk-to-cause-harm-2/>

PEOPLES IN ACTION



Cameroon: WWF complicit in tribal people’s abuse

The NGO Survival International uncovered serious abuses of Baka “Pygmies” in southeast Cameroon, at the hands of anti-poaching squads supported and funded by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The Baka are being illegally forced from their ancestral homelands in the name of “conservation” because much of their land has been turned into “protected areas” – including safari-hunting zones. Rather than target the powerful individuals behind organized poaching, wildlife officers and soldiers pursue Baka who hunt only to feed their families.

See full article: www.survivalinternational.org/news/10456%20/

Peru: The Matsés, last shamans of the Amazon rainforest, fight back against transnational oil company

The Matsés indigenous people are fighting back to stop Pacific Rubiales Energy, a Canadian oil and gas company, from destroying their territory and endangering their lives and forests. One of the company’s exploration blocks, on the Brazilian border,



is in an area proposed for designation as a national reserve, theoretically to protect the Matsés. Another block overlaps with land officially demarcated as the territory of this indigenous people. But the Matsés are standing up against the company. “Our ancestors always told us that it is outsiders who begin conflicts. Just like during the rubber boom, they are going to come again and cause conflicts between us. Go and tell the whole world that the Matsés are standing firm in our opposition to the oil company. We do not want our land to be invaded!”

See full article in Spanish at: <http://www.soldepando.com/los-matses-ultimos-chamanes-del-bosque-amazonico-que-resisten-a-una-trasnacional/>



India plans huge palm oil expansion, puts forests at risk

While Malaysia and Indonesia produce over 85% of the world’s palm oil, India is its largest importer. To boost palm cultivation, the Ministry of Agriculture introduced a Special Program on “Oil Palm Area Expansion” in 2011-12 aimed at increasing oil palm production in the 12 states from 50,000 to 300,000 metric tons in the next five. This plantations expansion falls within the government’s New Land Use Policy (NLUP) to wean farmers away from their traditional practice of subsistence farming. But conversion to oil palm plantations is not only leading to the destruction of forests and biodiversity but also is undermining food sovereignty, traditional knowledge and agricultural practices from local farmers.

See full article at: <http://news.mongabay.com/2014/1004-gfm-dasgupta-mizoram-palmoil.html#d0hLJB2iiEW5xse6.01>

December 3: International Day Against Pesticide Use

The date was chosen by the Pesticide Action Network to commemorate the 30,000 people killed as a result of the Bhopal disaster in India in 1984, when 27 tons of deadly gas used in the manufacture of pesticides were released by a leak at a Union Carbide plant. In addition to the thousands of deaths, thousands of others were left with nervous system damage and other physical injuries. The use of toxic pesticides is closely linked with monoculture plantations and agroindustry, two of the main causes of deforestation and devastation for communities who depend on forests. WRM joins in solidarity with the call against the use of toxic pesticides and joins in the Via Campesina/CLOC Continental Campaign Against Pesticides and For Life in Latin America: <http://www.cloc-viacampesina.net/pt/campanas/campana-contra-los-agrotoxicos-y-por-la-vida>, as well as the Campaign Against Pesticides and For Life in Brazil: <http://www.contraosagrotoxicos.org>. For more information on the



particularly serious situation in Brazil – the world’s biggest consumer of pesticides and the country of the South with the largest area of industrial tree plantations for pulp production.

See the “Manifesto for the International Day of Struggle Against Pesticides (in Portuguese) at: http://wrm.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Campanha_03_-_dezembro_2014-DIA-INTERNACIONAL-CONTRA-USO-DE-AGROTOXICOS.pdf



Gendering Peasant Movements, Gendering Food Sovereignty

A problem peasant women face is invisibility in the feminist and women’s movements. A second problem is the weakness with which the food sovereignty concept has dealt with the challenges of feminism. Food sovereignty is based on the conviction that each people has the right to make decisions about its own food systems: about its own eating habits; about its production, marketing, distribution, exchange, and sharing; and about keeping food and seeds in the public sphere. If we establish that food sovereignty is how people decide what to produce and under what conditions, our question from a feminist point of view is, then: how do people make decisions? Who decides how power is organized? Probably, in reality we’ll see that peasant women are in secondary roles in decision-making areas.

See full article at:

<http://upsidedownworld.org/main/international-archives-60/5110-latin-america-gendering-peasant-movements-gendering-food-sovereignty>



Brazil: Federal Prosecutor’s Office upholds injunction barring BNDES financing for Fibria Celulose, a company certified by the FSC

The Federal Public Prosecutor's Office (Ministério Público Federal or MPF) of Brazil has ruled to suspend financing from the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES) to Fibria, the country’s largest pulp and paper company, for the establishment of a eucalyptus plantation on the territories of quilombola (African-descendant) communities in the north of the state of Espírito Santo. Fibria is accused of using fraudulent means to obtain the rights to the area where it planned to establish a eucalyptus plantation for pulp production. It should be emphasized that this fraudulent conduct, denounced by the Alert Against the Green Desert Network for more than 10 years, did not prevent the company from obtaining the FSC seal of “good forest management”. In its ruling, the MPF has not only requested the return of the fraudulently acquired land to public ownership, but has also called for title to the land to be granted to the quilombola communities of São Mateus and Conceição da Barra, once their traditional occupancy of the land has been confirmed. The demarcation of quilombola lands in Brazil has been kept at a standstill for years due to pressures exerted by the Brazilian agribusiness industry, which includes the eucalyptus plantation sector.

See full article in Portuguese at: http://noticias.pgr.mpf.mp.br/noticias/noticias-do-site/copy_of_geral/mpf-mantem-liminar-que-suspende-financiamentos-do-bndes-a-fibria-celulose

RECOMMENDED



Carbon violence: the impacts of Green Resources' carbon plantation in Uganda

A new report by the Oakland Institute introduces the term 'carbon violence' to describe the impact of Green Resources' plantation operations in Uganda on local communities and their environment. Green Resources is a Norwegian-registered plantation company with 41,000 hectares of plantations in Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda. The company's plantations, certified under FSC, are used for timber products and generate carbon credits. The report found that somewhere between 8,000 and 40,000 people "face profound disruptions to their livelihoods, including many experiencing forced evictions." In addition to losing access to the land, villagers report pollution of water and land by the agrochemicals used in the plantations.

See article at: <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2014/11/04/carbon-violence-the-impact-of-green-resources-carbon-plantations-in-uganda/> and full report at: <http://www.oaklandinstitute.org/darker-side-green>



The great REDD gamble. Time to ditch risky REDD for community-based approaches that are effective, ethical and equitable.

A Friends of the Earth report looks at specific case studies which demonstrate that REDD projects can facilitate rather than prevent the continued use of fossil fuels; exacerbate tensions over land and resource rights; have significant negative impacts on forest-dependent Indigenous Peoples and local communities; threaten food security; and even endanger forests. Some REDD projects have also faced significant financial difficulties, wasting considerable amounts of public funding.

See full report at: <http://www.foei.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/The-great-REDD-gamble.pdf>

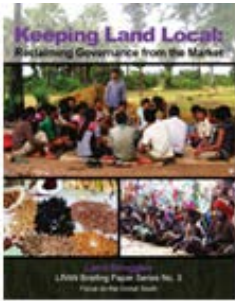


World Cup carbon emissions 'offset' by hydroelectric dams in the Amazon?

An article by Brazilian organizations FASE Amazonía, Grupo Carta de Belém and Fórum de la Amazonía Oriental, published by the newspaper "Aldeia", challenges the myth – rooted in the carbon market – that the energy produced by hydroelectric plants is 'clean' energy, that is, an energy source that does not create polluting emissions. This claim ignores the many impacts caused by mega-dams in terms of deforestation, the displacement of populations, the building of roads in formerly inaccessible areas, the permanently flooded areas that produce greenhouse gas

emissions, etc. Moreover, hydroelectric projects can be used to generate carbon credits through carbon market-based ‘offset’ mechanisms. This means that carbon credits generated by destructive projects like mega-dams have been used by the Brazilian government to claim that the also destructive FIFA World Cup was a “green” event.

See full article at: <http://terradedireitos.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Jornal-Aldeia-2014-Final.pdf>



Keeping Land Local: Reclaiming Governance from the Market

Through a series of articles, this report, from the organization Focus on the Global South, denounces how land, forests and water are being captured and enclosed for a range of purposes: industrial agriculture, tree plantations, hydropower, extractive industry, tourism, physical infrastructure, real estate development, Special Economic Zones and, quite simply, for financial profit through the construction of new markets. Local populations, for the most part, lose their livelihoods, homes, cultures, identities and access to natural food cupboards; they are forcibly evicted or relocated, and often pushed into precarious, low-paying wage labor. By denouncing these threats to forests as threats to the “global commons,” local governance could be captured by those with no local obligations and accountability, once again robbing local populations of their rights to make collective decisions about the lands and ecosystems that nurture their lives.

See full report at:

http://focusweb.org/sites/www.focusweb.org/files/LandStrugglesIII_HIRES.pdf



Peru: Our Fight, indigenous peoples defending their territories

The video from “If Not Us Then Who?” follows the aftermath of the murders of four indigenous leaders and activists, including Edwin Chota, in Peru. Through their widows and friends we learn about their ongoing fight for land titling. This story is one of many examples of Indigenous Peoples defending the forest and paying the ultimate sacrifice. The video was released in conjunction with a new report from the NGO Global Witness, “Peru's Deadly Environment”.

See video at: <http://ifnotusthenwho.me/#>

See report at: www.globalwitness.org/perudeadlyenvironment/docs/peru_deadly_environment_en.pdf

Brazil: Large landholders, the main cause of deforestation in the Amazon

A study conducted by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) of Sweden reveals that deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon, which had been curbed for almost a



decade, began to increase again in 2013. While earlier studies pointed to the expansion of forested frontiers by peasant farmers and small-scale ranchers, this study demonstrates that those primarily responsible for deforestation are large landholders. In an interview with the newspaper “El País”, the head author of the research study explained, “Smallholders maintain the land better. They clear smaller areas with no edge-related impacts or effects; the surrounding area is less prone to drought and closes faster.” In the meantime, large-scale cattle ranchers and soybean growers cause 80% of deforestation.

See article in Portuguese at:

http://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2014/10/13/ciencia/1413222640_280888.html

and full study at: <http://www.pnas.org/content/111/43/15591.full.pdf+html>