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OUR VIEWPOINT

What "rights" are defended in the Paris Agreement and in the plans with false solutions to the climate crisis?

There are many analyses of the Paris Agreement and the reasons why it is a disaster for the climate. One critique is that it does not address the basic issue of human rights. Meanwhile, beyond the text itself, the Agreement actually guarantees and strengthens the rights of transnational corporations and financial institutions. Indeed, these institutions were endorsed in the side events that took place in Paris, in which they announced plans and financing of false solutions to the climate crisis. The objective: to transform problems into opportunities for the private sector, as in the case of the [REDD+ mechanism](#) and the new “ambitious reforestation plans,” announced before and during the Paris Conference.

In order to guarantee their interests, large corporations and financial institutions count on governments to be true defenders of their rights. This is no different from what already happens, very explicitly, in international negotiations around free trade agreements. Big oil companies, for example, must be very satisfied with the Paris Agreement, as they affirmed their right to continue contributing to the climate crisis with impunity. Without once using the words “fossil fuels,” governments nonetheless guaranteed the right of these companies and their shareholders to continue extracting and profiting from oil, gas and coal.

Not incorporating in a binding way the historic contribution and differential responsibility of industrialized countries that have emitted the most carbon dioxide (CO₂), is another way the Paris Agreement implicitly recognizes those countries' rights to extract fossil fuels and pollute. This condones large companies' rights to continue promoting and profiting from a destructive production and consumption model, while the negative impacts are borne by millions of people in the Global South.

However, large corporations' and financial institutions' influence is not limited to the official conference and Agreement. The REDD+ mechanism for example, while indeed referenced in the official text of the Agreement, actually received more emphasis in side events sponsored by Northern governments. These governments are interested in “offsetting” their emissions, while Southern governments are interested in the financing offered. In the first days of the Conference, the governments of Germany, Norway, and the UK, along with the World Bank, announced billions of dollars in total financing to invest in this false solution to the climate crisis. Meanwhile, together Brazil and the European Union put guidelines into the current Paris Agreement on how a future carbon credit market for REDD+ projects could work.

In the “Global Landscape Forum,” a parallel event organized by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the “AFR 100” Plan was launched. This Plan hopes to “recover” 100 million hectares of forests in Africa considered to be “degraded” or totally deforested, and it promises to create jobs and improve the welfare of the population (2). Ten African countries have already committed to “recover” over 30 billion hectares of land. The World Bank would offer billions of dollars in financing, and an additional US \$540 million would come from North American and European investors specialized in “green” businesses.

It is undeniably important to reforest areas affected by destructive activities, but it is essential to discuss how and in whose benefit this is done. There are serious doubts as to the sincerity of financial institutions like the World Bank and “green” investment funds, which are always alert to new opportunities in “green capitalism”—whose logic places profit over the wellbeing of local communities.

Part of the World Bank's legacy is having co-financed the failed Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP), a “reforestation” plan launched in the 1980s. The TFAP sparked riots in communities in countries like India, where, under the motto of “reforestation,” TFAP actually promoted monoculture tree plantations that benefitted the private sector and further destroyed forests. The World Bank continues to be one of the main promoters of monoculture tree expansion for pulp and other purposes, through its private sector arm, the International Finance Corporation (IFC). At the same time, the Bank is one of the main promoters of REDD+. In Mozambique, for example, the IFC is financing the Portuguese company Portucel, which is taking arable lands from farming communities in order to plant eucalyptus trees, undermining the food sovereignty of the people.

The participation of “green” investors in the AFR100 Plan also raises serious concerns, given that these same actors are already involved in so-called “reforestation” activities in Africa. These activities promote monoculture tree plantations, and their eye is on businesses like the carbon credit market and logging. One of the main companies that invests in carbon credit plantations is the Norwegian *Green Resources*, which has already been denounced in Uganda for destroying the livelihoods of the local communities through their carbon sequestration “reforestation” project. (3)

The AFR100 Plan is similar to another plan launched in July 2015 by President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil, one of the most important countries in the world for tropical forests. In an official visit to the United States, the president announced “recovery” of no less than 12 million hectares of forest. Here again skepticism is appropriate, since Brazil is the country in the Global South with the largest area of monoculture eucalyptus plantations for export-driven pulp production. Also involved are transnational corporations like the Swedish-Finlandish *Stora Enso*, and increasingly, investment funds that become landowners. The government erroneously calls these plantations “planted forests,” thereby making them eligible for the government's “reforestation” plan. Monoculture tree plantations are a strategic sector for Brazil, and the government incessantly seeks to promote its expansion, even using genetically engineered trees.

The articles in this newsletter highlight how the policies arising from the climate negotiations in fact involve rights violations. One article reflects on the relationship between REDD+ and rights, focusing on weak application of the principle of Free Prior

Informed Consent in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Another article, from Thailand, discusses popular struggles against hydroelectric dams and their huge impacts, exposing the fallacy of promoting dams as a source of clean energy. Finally, there are articles about the struggles of indigenous communities: the BriBri peoples in Costa Rica mobilizing against a REDD+ project in their territory, and the Pataxó people mobilizing against the *Stora Ensa* and *Fibria* eucalyptus plantations on their territory. The Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) reports on the impacts of extractive activities in indigenous communities in the Global North, which are carried out by companies buying carbon credits from projects in the Global South. Good Reading!

(1) <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2015/12/15/cop21-paris-redd-and-carbon-markets/>

(2) <http://www.wri.org/news/2015/12/release-african-countries-launch-afr100-restore-100-million-hectares-land>

(3) <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2015/11/27/the-swedish-energy-agency-has-frozen-carbon-credits-purchases-from-norwegian-plantation-firm-green-resources/>

THE PARIS AGREEMENT: WORSENING VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS AND PEOPLE'S TERRITORIES

Bribri: a people never conquered who are standing up to REDD

Continuous cycles of rebellion and resistance have characterized the history of a people living in the Costa Rican South Caribbean. Every 50 years, there are records of all types of actions carried out by the Bribri people in order to keep that that define them as such, the land. The burning of churches, resistance to monoculture banana plantations and struggles against dams, oil and gas have woven the history of this people. Their current adversary is not much different than the others, so the Bribri are standing up to them.

In United Nations conferences on climate change, Costa Rica is one of the countries that comes up when talking about the “Green Economy,” and it is seen as a testing ground for the multiple UN-fomented mechanisms that promote the commodification of nature. REDD+ is one such mechanism. Yet on the national level indigenous peoples are expressing their opposition and rejecting imposition of REDD+ in their territories. Meanwhile, the government has not respected indigenous people's right to self-determination in their territories.

Proof of this occurred last October 15th 2015, when over 250 people from the 24 indigenous territories convened in the Costa Rican capital of San José, in order to meet with Costa Rican President Luis Guillermo Solís. The Bribris, Terrabas, Ngobes, and Cabecares peoples unanimously expressed their opposition to REDD+ in their territories and in all parts of the country.

This mobilization was not the first. For over five years the Bribri people have been holding workshops, meetings and press conferences in which they have discussed the specific impacts of various projects that commodify nature. Among these projects is the REDD strategy, which successive governments have tried to impose since 2008. The Bribri's central claim questions the legitimacy of these projects, which are imposed by international bodies and directly oppose their customs and worldview, especially their care and respect for nature.

According to Bribri stories and spirituality, the forest is sacred. It is the place where Sibù (the main spiritual being) created the universe, and with it corn, the origin of the Bribri peoples. Its center is Cerro Namaso, a sacred and important site, along with the entire forest, which covers much of their territory. The universe is represented in the Ûsure, the traditional conical house: it contains the sky, the stars, the Earth's surface and underground. The Bribri are responsible for safekeeping all of Sibù's creation.

For the Bribri and other indigenous cultures in the world, forests are of utmost importance; everything within them is considered sacred and therefore is respected and cared for. Using traditional methods, they hunt only what they need for subsistence. They take from the forest only what is necessary, without a market-oriented vision. They do not poison the earth, air or water.

Furthermore, Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO), to which Costa Rica is a signatory, states that indigenous peoples must be consulted anytime legislative or administrative measures are foreseen to directly affect them. These consultations must be free, prior and informed; and carried out through appropriate procedures and in good faith. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples also supports the principal of Free, Prior Informed Consent.

The REDD+ strategy development process began in Costa Rica in late 2008, with support from the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). Since its inception it has ignored the rights of indigenous peoples at the national level.

Reviewing the events, we observe the history of imposition:

In 2009 the REDD+ strategy was developed with the complicity of alleged indigenous representatives—individuals who had not been chosen by popular vote, nor by their customs. These imposed representatives never informed their communities about what they were negotiating.

In 2012 an indigenous consultation plan was developed with alleged indigenous leaders—appointed by the national government, not by the indigenous peoples.

In 2013 an Executive Decree created a REDD+ Steering Committee and Executive Secretariat. The latter has only one indigenous member representing all indigenous groups in the country (8 groups in all, distributed throughout 24 territories). Again, this appointment occurred without broad participation.

In September 2015, the government presented the program of Indigenous Fees for Environmental Services (PSA) in the framework of “pre-consultation.” This was simultaneously seen as laying the groundwork for REDD+. Once again, the same story was repeated: the program was developed without people knowing where it originated, who was involved, or how agreements were reached.

The National Forestry Financing Fund (FONAFIFO) is the agency responsible for implementing the national REDD strategy, and it plans to do so between 2016 and 2020. A consultation process with indigenous peoples is expected to occur, yet it should have happened prior to the current implementation process. Consequently there

is a huge information gap. Communities have many questions: How and Why has this sprung up? How does it work? What would the benefits and impacts be?

For over 530 years the same story of domination has repeated itself: trying to erase their language, which is essential to keeping their culture intact; imposing outside educational systems; and imposing governments and laws that have nothing to do with their traditional leadership structures and forms of government. This paves the way for mega projects that destroy the forest and pollute the rivers. Highways and electrical lines that cross through indigenous territories are being built, constantly invading their lands, and finally evicting them. REDD is no different than any other tool of colonization, but simply a new twist on capitalism.

REDD+, as conceived, prohibits the use of forests and thus all “resources” within. Those who marched in front of the Presidential Palace last October 15th are well aware of this: “REDD disrespects our worldview by placing a price on and commodifying our forests, our sacred sites, our rivers and all beings that inhabit them...We demand that our way of taking care of forests be respected, as it goes far beyond projects that come from outside. Those projects divide the fabric of our ancestral communities, which has enabled the mountains to remain intact today. As indigenous peoples we say: We cannot sell the air, the water, gold or the mountain...if we drain the lifeblood of the forest, it will die.” (1)

Despite indigenous people's demands that implementation of the REDD strategy be halted, the government's deaf reply at the Presidential Palace meeting was “REDD will happen, because it will.” Consequently indigenous groups are demanding a true dialogue, in which all the population of the territories can access complete and transparent information about the REDD objectives, and in which priority is given to the indigenous agenda, which seeks autonomy over their land, food, and culture.

The same afternoon of October 15th, the indigenous peoples present reaffirmed their conviction to continue building autonomy without asking permission to exist; and to continue to denounce the true culprits of the climate crisis: governments and corporations. This is one way to protect the forest and their communities, and move towards true territorial sovereignty.

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(1) Manifesto delivered at the Presidential Palace against REDD. October, 2015

From the loss of fish to climate change: A look into the recent dam movement in the Mekong Region

“The dams built on the Mekong mainstream and other rivers in the region have resulted in severe changes in the Mekong’s ecosystems, endangering life, livelihoods and the economy of the entire region. Indigenous peoples, women and children are most affected by these changes. The dams have also worsened the impacts of climate change that we are already facing.”

“We have witnessed and experienced the destruction caused by the dams. For us, who live by the river and experience every change in the water systems, there is no question that such dams result in serious negative impacts for present and future generations, and should not be built”

“Mekong governments: Listen to the people!”

Statement by local people on dams in the Mekong Region, 25 September 2015

The above statement, written by representatives of local communities from Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam, was endorsed by more than 8,200 people, mainly from local communities along the Mekong River, Tonle Sap (Great lake) in Cambodia and the Mekong Delta in Vietnam.

The statement was read publicly on 11 November 2015 during the Regional Public Forum called **“Local Mekong peoples' voices: the message to Mekong governments on Mekong dam”**. The Forum was held in An Giang University of the Mekong Delta in Vietnam, and was hosted by local community representatives from the three countries and their NGOs alliances. At the final part of the Forum, Mrs. Huynh Thi Kim Duyen, representative of Ga Mau Province of Vietnam’s Mekong delta got up for her final statement; *“The Vietnamese local people would like to ask - that Don Sahong Dam should be stopped”*. Such a public spoken statement requesting the dam to be stopped, was truly something new to hear from Vietnam. Equally active in the Forum was the representative from Tonle Sap Lake in Cambodia. Mr. Sam At, a fisherman from Tonle Sap in Cambodia states clearly his opinion: *“Cambodia will have to bare the most severe impacts of the Mekong dams on fisheries, especially from the Don Sahong Dam. We want to know why the Don Sahong Dam and other dams keep being pushed forward and why none of the governments will listen to us.”*

In the past almost three decades of the dam campaign among the Mekong civil society and local people, one of the biggest obstacles that has blocked many NGOs, and especially local Mekong communities to participate in the campaign, has been the crippling political relationship between people and their own government. The lack of democracy within the socialist scheme in Vietnam and Laos has always affected directly the space for civil society organizations (CSOs) and local people to influence energy planning and hydropower dams matters. Thailand and Cambodia, even with more democratic spaces in principle but being led by pro-business and centralized power governments, have continually caused similar results: no access to information and even endangering the lives of the CSOs and local people within the movement.

However, the present situation related to hydropower dams has strengthen the movement of local people and goes beyond the obstacles of the Mekong governments and other influential groups in the region. The political obstacles are now being challenged by local people. They are calling for a direct dialogue between Mekong governments and Mekong people on the unbearable impacts of hydropower projects that people are being forced to suffer since China begun to construct the first dam, Manwan, on the upper part of the Mekong mainstream in 1986. The chronology of impacts from hydropower dams in the Mekong River basin continues (from the China dams) to the Pak Mun dam, which was constructed on the largest Mekong tributary in Thailand and completed in 1994. In 1997, Vietnam built the Yali Falls dam on the upper Sesan River, the major river of the Mekong basin. And finally, since 2012, after China finished five dams on the upper Mekong, Lao PDR begun the construction of a series of dams on the

lower Mekong mainstream, with the Xayaburi dam. Currently, Laos continues to push for construction of the Don Sahong Dam without listening to the voices of concern from all over the region.

The strongest voices in the Mekong region are local communities who face the problems directly. In Cambodia, more and more people and communities are facing the severe change on fish lost from the Mekong mainstream, Mekong tributaries and around the Great Lake. Studies that have come out since 2011 from the Mekong River Commission and the fish expert pointed out that *“if, by 2030, eleven dams are built on the Lower Mekong Basin mainstream, forecasted total fish losses would amount to 550,000 to 880,000 tonnes compared to the baseline year 2000 (a 26-42 percent decrease). This is a loss of approximately 340,000 tonnes compared to a situation in 2030 without mainstream dams. Estimates of the cost of lost fish production range from US\$200 million to US\$476 million a year.”* Not only the ‘nation of fish’, Cambodia, but also fishing communities in the region are increasingly experiencing a reality without fish, including many indigenous communities whose livelihood depends almost entirely on fishing.

Along with the fisheries lost, the conclusion that dams in the Mekong region have worsened the existing impacts of climate change, especially in Vietnam, has become one of the key reasons for more space to open up to local people in Vietnam to participate in the hydropower dams matters today. Lack of fresh water from the Mekong to come down to the delta, as well as the lack of good sediment for agriculture is affecting an area where 70 percent of agriculture products of Vietnam are grown. 78 percent of the land in the 40,000 square kilometers of the Mekong River Delta is used for rice production, and most of it lies barely more than two meters above sea level. That this land risks disappearing into the sea because of climate change, exacerbated by hydropower dams upstream, has obviously become a concern for a million people in the country. People are also concerned about water for everyday’s consumption.

Beyond the limits of political space and propaganda on hydropower dams that the dam proponents keep presenting to the Mekong governments, are the actual impacts and real suffering of the Mekong people. The existing and foreseeable impacts of the large scale hydropower dams in the Mekong region have been very clear. It is therefore impossible to convince local people that large scale hydropower is a ‘clean’ source of energy. Along the same lines, the propaganda that presents large scale hydropower dams in the Mekong basin as ‘sustainable’ cannot be taken seriously by local people, when looking at the severe impacts of existing dams on their lives and economies at the local, national and regional scale. What is only worth looking forward and hoping for, is actually what local Mekong people state in their recent statement; *“It is time for our governments to hear our voices and respect our rights to make a decision about the future of our rivers and our lives.”*

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Carbon Offsets and Trading:
A logic that violates Indigenous and human rights

For the majority of people in the Global North, little attention was given to the details of the recently signed agreement during the UN climate talks in Paris last December, sans a mention on the national news or a blurb on social media. Those who have been paying attention and attempting to highlight the incongruities of the details in the Paris Agreement, and the long history of these negotiations, beginning with the Kyoto Protocol, are largely from Indigenous and front line communities. Those surrounded by oil and gas drilling, transport, manufacture of deadly chemicals and petroleum byproducts, and monoculture industrial farming.

“In the face of the climate crisis Indigenous Peoples are both on the front lines of the impacts of climate change, and at the forefront of the battles to keep fossil fuels in the ground. The Paris Agreement, as it stands, undermines the sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples globally and pushes forward false solutions to the climate crisis.”

Indigenous Environmental Network (1)

The content of the Paris agreement in reality is based on a purely capitalistic model that eliminates Indigenous and human rights. This glaring omission, as it appears, is to preemptively absolve any violations that may occur as corporations and governments designate Indigenous and traditional lands for carbon sinks and offsets - a dangerous shell game where emissions at their source in the Global North are “compensated” in the Global South by among others, commodifying forests -, as well as for further extraction.

Flooding, drought, and widespread agricultural and animal borne diseases are becoming more severe, limiting subsistence resources, and threatening food sovereignty. In the Global North, entire villages along coastal regions are losing land mass to rising ocean levels – lands that they have inhabited for countless generations and which hold great cultural and spiritual significance, calling into question their future survival as a unique race.

“Since 1932, south Louisiana [United States] has lost over 1,900 square miles (3,058 square km). They say every hour an acre is lost from our shores. We are experiencing more violent and frequent hurricanes and tropical storms and higher surges of water. Hurricane Katrina was not the first and we have had multiple storms since and we know there will be more to come... Sea levels are rising and the 10,000+ miles [17,000+ km] of oil and gas canals dredged by the industry for natural resources extraction has left our wetlands in a state of irreparable loss. Freshwaters no longer regularly flood our territory, saltwater instead singses our shores, killing the biodiversity and forcing coastal communities to migrate to higher grounds. They say communities will have be sacrificed and those communities at the ends of the road where the Houma once found refuge is now turning into open waters.”

Monique M Verdin, Paris 2015, from the Indigenous Houma nation, Louisiana (2)

Another glaring omission in the Paris agreement are mandates to reduce fossil fuels extraction. Instead, “green economy” schemes, like the United Nations/World Bank’s REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) programs,

will provide the financial mechanisms for industrialized nations to justify expansion of fossil fuel regimes.

Indigenous and front line communities, where industry and fossil fuel extraction is concentrated, are threatened by the pollution that continues to flow into the very air they breathe and the water they drink. Canada's controversial tar sands, a massive oil extraction project in Northern Alberta, offshore drilling in Alaska's outer continental shelf, and hydraulic fracturing in North Dakota are just three examples that disproportionately impact Indigenous Peoples of the North.

“As Denedeh people of the North and the Arctic we have already experienced a 2 degree shift and real impacts of climate change. We are also downstream from the largest industrial project on the planet, the Alberta Tar Sands, that are compounding climate change impacts through the contamination and degradation to the lands we rely on. We need more than written or verbal commitments, we need real action on climate now and that means we can't expand the tar sands and we must keep fossil fuels in the ground.”

Daniel T'Seelie, Dene community member (3).

On top of that, with this omission, the Paris agreement will continue the privatizing and sale of Indigenous Peoples' lands in the Global South for the express purpose of hiding or masking the pollution from the source. For tropical forests, REDD+ means that the world's most powerful economies will soon begin generating significant incentives within the already bloated and unstable world financial markets for “investing” on forested lands.

The US state of California's AB32 – Global Warming Solutions Act (4) and REDD+, provide mechanisms that designate large swaths of forests for carbon sinks or offsets, with little or no Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), as designated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Entire communities in the Global South and North are then subject to the loss of their land tenure rights and in many cases are evicted from their homes by military or police actions.(5)

Indigenous Peoples have survived for millennia by adhering to Natural Law, which are comprehensive and unchangeable truths or principles inherent in the natural world. These principles determine how resources are used and protected in order to maintain the regenerative qualities of biodiversity and ensure that all elements of life in this world are able to coexist and thrive. For peoples of the forests, it is understood that this biodiversity is to be respected and cared for because forests are also the lungs of Mother Earth.

Indigenous Peoples are people of the land and of the waters; and we are confronting many challenges: challenges such as extreme changes in the climate, extreme weather events, extreme energy development, and the continued push of economic globalization and a continuation of western forms of development. Fossil fuel development within Indigenous Peoples' territories, land, water and seas are on the increase. It is business as usual. The petroleum and extractive industries with the helping hand of the governments are expanding exploration to find more fossil fuels and furthering its energy addiction and high consumption levels.

Casey Camp-Horinek, Ponca, Oklahoma, U.S. (6)

Financing, if in any form, should come as penalties to be paid at the source and not from a market where a select few profit. Indigenous peoples and front line traditional communities should be free from roads, mono-crop plantations, mineral and fossil fuel extraction and other forms of mega projects.

“The transformation of how we protect the lands and territories in which we live, play, and love on will only be influential if we recognize where the change has to come from in order to end land desecration projects and environmental violence. It will come from the primary keepers of the land through means of finding community solutions to end the greed, the corruption, and the colonial thinking. It will come from land-based practices being the only way we can have a relationship with the land. It will come from listening to the words the old people speak, and never again neglecting our true roles, never again breaking the sanctity and prayers that generations before spoke. We must be true to the prayers of those before us, and again not look to colonial meetings for Indigenous solutions.”

Andrea Landry, Pays Plat First Nation, Canada (7)

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Indigenous Environmental Network, <http://www.ienearth.org/>

(1) The Indigenous Environmental Network is an alliance of grassroots Indigenous Peoples whose mission is to protect the sacredness of Mother Earth, <http://www.ienearth.org/>

(2) “5000 miles from Grand Bois. Red Road to Paris”, Monique Michelle Verdin, <http://indigenusrising.org/5000-miles-from-grand-bois-red-road-to-paris/>

(3) Indigenous Environmental Network Press Release, December 2015, <http://indigenusrising.org/indigenous-environmental-network-cop21-delegation-responds-to-announcement-of-canadas-support-of-1-5-climate-target/>

(4) California's AB32 Global Warming Solutions Act: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/ab32/ab32.htm>

(5) “Newest Scam on Fringe of Climate Change Involves Land-Grabs in Peruvian Rainforest” <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2012/03/08/newest-scam-fringe-climate-change-involves-land-grabs-peruvian-rainforest-101867>

(6) Presentation of the Indigenous Environmental Network and Indigenous Peoples of Mother Earth and our Grandmothers – and Future Generations, <http://therightsofnature.org/casey-camp-horinek-opening-expert/>

(7) “COP21 Will Not Save our Lands and Territories”, Andrea Landry, <http://indigenusrising.org/cop21-will-not-save-our-lands-and-territories/>

Brazil: The monoculture eucalyptus company, Veracel Celulosa, is trying to evict indigenous Pataxó from their land

The Pataxós of Nueva Esperanza village—in the municipality of Itamarajú in the southern tip of Bahia state—are under threat of eviction. The Brazilian government has already formally recognized a 52,100-hectare area, part of Barra Velha, as belonging to the Pataxós. Nevertheless, the government has not yet issued the declaratory decree, an action which would end the constant violence against the inhabitants of Nueva Esperanza and the roughly 7,000 Pataxós who live in the territory. The Pataxós are denouncing the government's delay, as well as the impacts caused by Veracel Celulosa, a company owned by transnational Swedish-Finlandish Stora Enso (50%) and Fibria (50%). The indigenous Pataxós are fighting Veracel Celulosa's attempts to evict them,

while trying to survive on a mere 20 hectares of land surrounded by the company's eucalyptus trees.

The Portuguese colonizers, impressed with the natural beauty and abundant potential of the integrated colonial economy, started the process of conquest of this region, long known as the southern tip of Bahía. The large tropical forests throughout the region, with their vast mangroves and “*mussurunga*,” supported the economy for over two centuries, which was based on logging primarily for naval and civil constructions. The complex geographic landscape, formed by a plain giving way to high and lush reliefs rising 24 km from the coast, was an obstacle to the expanding occupation. With heights of 200 to 900 meters above sea level, the landscape served as shelter for the natives who were not allied with the colonists. Historical accounts illustrate the beauty and characteristics of the landscape, such as the one from Austrian prince Maximiliano de Nied-Nieuwied who crossed the region in 1816. These accounts also describe the strategy of indigenous peoples to take refuge in the abundant forests of the regions, as in the case of the Pataxós (1).

Like many others indigenous groups in Brazil, the Pataxós have suffered expropriation of their lands since colonization, but there are also many Pataxós living in the southern tip of Bahía in the Monte Pascoal region. On September 1st, 1991 and after many struggles, through Decree No. 1393 they obtained demarcation of a 8,628-hectare territory called Barra Velha de Monte Pascoal. However, the Pataxós living within and around this territory are calling for the boundaries to be revised to cover 52,100 hectares. In 2008 the Brazilian government recognized that the Pataxós have traditionally occupied the 52,100 hectares, and that this territory is essential for their physical and cultural survival. About 24,000 of the 52,100 hectares are part of a Conservation Unit, which is Monte Pascoal Park for the Pataxós. This recognition is based on publication of the demarcation report, which is the basis for the new territorial limits in the Official Journal of the Union. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Justice has not issued the declaratory decree, alleging there are six security mandates, i.e. prosecutions, against the demarcation, from property owners and municipal regional governments, such as the City Council of Porto Seguro and Prado. Consequently, the violence continues.

Apart from property owners, the other main invader in Pataxó territory is the eucalyptus pulp production company, Veracel Celulosa. In the case of Nueva Esperanza village, the area the Pataxó reoccupied in March 2013—within the already demarcated 52,100-hectares of Barra Velha—was threatened when Veracel Celulose went to court to try to evict the Pataxó from this area. The first judge who tried the case (0002592-59.2013.4.01.3310) decided to allow the Pataxó to remain in their territory—in consideration of the demarcation the Brazilian government already made—and opted to wait for the government's declaratory decree. However a new judge recently took over the case, and is threatening to review the former judge's decision and evict the 35 Pataxós families living there, almost 160 people of all ages.

Since 2013 the Pataxó of Nueva Esperanza have been trying to survive on a mere 20 hectares, surrounded by Veracel's eucalyptus plantations. Where there used to be eucalyptus trees, the Pataxó now grow food such as cassava and pineapple to support their families. But they still suffer the impacts of Veracel's eucalyptus plantations on a daily basis, and experience extreme water shortages. A prolonged drought is

intensifying the already devastating impacts of large-scale eucalyptus monoculture. The Pataxó indicate an area where eucalyptus trees growing close to water springs have destroyed these sources, making it necessary for them to dig a well to guarantee minimal water supply for their families.

Another severe impact is Veracel's pesticide spraying. The Pataxó report that Veracel has been spraying pesticides from small planes lately, in order to kill caterpillars that attack the eucalyptus trees. But the aerial spraying is also affecting the Pataxó families who essentially live inside the plantations. Inhabitants claim they were not notified about these sprayings, and that don't have knowledge about the products. What they do know is that the products have caused various illnesses such as itching and respiratory problems, mainly among the children. They claim the company has only brought misfortune, and that the promises it made to the community were a lie. They compare Veracel to Alvares Cabral, the first Portuguese explorer who came to Brazil, beginning the era of colonial rule. They make this comparison saying that Cabral had the same objective then as Veracel does today: to evict indigenous peoples from their territories.

The Pataxó of Nueva Esperanza dream of having a dignified life, which would mean control over their territory so that they can live well within it, and see their children and grandchildren be born and live in peace. “Our population is growing and our area is too small to feed our children with dignity and health. We cannot endure another invasion that destroys our land and people,” says one of their leaders.

Veracel is a company certified by the FSC certification (Forest Stewardship Council). The company claims on its webpage that it “understands, respects and contributes to indigenous causes” (2). Veracel's FSC certification has been denounced many times, yet not even the most serious complaints have managed to get its certification revoked (3). This proves that the FSC and its members—companies, NGOs and other civil society organizations—are complicit in the situation, since they have taken no measures despite many complaints over time.

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CASE STUDY: REDD IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Congo Basin Rainforest Project: Communities leery of "Conservation Revolution"

The Mai N'dombe REDD project in the Democratic Republic of Congo features regularly in promotional material on REDD+. The project, set up by a Canadian firm and now run by California-based Wildlife Works, markets carbon credits based on the claim that without the project, forests in the project area would have been decimated by

industrial logging. Benefits for local communities are a cornerstone of the project's marketing material. Much of the land in the region is known to be under local communities' customary tenure. Questions arise whether communities in the area perceive the REDD project as beneficial as descriptions in the marketing material suggest.

The Mai N'dombe REDD project in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) features regularly in promotional material on [REDD+](#). Sometimes also called the 'Congo Basin Rainforest Project', it stretches over ca. 300,000 hectares of forested land several hundred kilometers to the northeast of DRC's capital, Kinshasa. The project was set up by Canadian company ERA Ecosystem Restoration Associates Inc. (ERA, since incorporated into Offsetters Climate Solutions, which in 2015 became NatureBank Asset Management Inc.). In 2011, ERA acquired a forest conservation concession from the DRC government. Two years later, ERA sold ERA-Congo, the company set up to manage the REDD project in DRC, to a California-based company called Wildlife Works Carbon (WWC), which also runs the Kasigau Corridor REDD+ project in Kenya ([see more information](#)). The WWC Mai N'dombe REDD project is not to be confused with the DRC government's proposal to turn the entire newly created Mai N'dombe province, an area of 12.3 million hectares inhabited by some 1.8 million people, into a 'jurisdictional REDD' pilot initiative under the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. (1)

The business model of WWC's Mai N'dombe REDD project is to sell carbon credits. It generates these credits by producing reports showing how the project's activities prevented deforestation. Those reports are then verified by auditing firms, paid for by the REDD project (see [10 Things Communities Should Know About REDD](#), available also in Lingala and Swahili).

In 2011, ERA claimed that the "Improved Forest Management portion of the project will result in the cessation of active commercial logging activity". (2) In December 2012, the auditing firm Det Norske Veritas (DNV) accepted the claim that without ERA's intervention, re-issuance of two logging concessions cancelled in 2008 would have been imminent. But – in 2011, the DRC government's moratorium on issuing new logging licenses, which dates back to 2004, was still in place. This raises questions over ERA's claim that its intervention prevented imminent issuance of new logging licenses for the project area. WWC mentions correspondence with ministers as evidence that the two logging concessions which were turned into a forest conservation concession for the REDD+ project would have been re-issued. However, no new logging concessions have been issued anywhere in the country since 2011, and doing so would have breached a Presidential Decree. The majority of the carbon credits are thus based on the claim that a re-issuance of logging concession and commercial logging activities were imminent in 2011.

Project calculations set emissions prevented by the Mai N'dombe REDD project at 1.5 to 3.0 million tonnes of CO₂ per year over the 30-year period of the project (for comparison, Denmark's annual emissions from international aviation were 2.5 million tonnes in 2013). Another questionable assumption. A December 2015 draft of the DRC government's so-called "Emission Reduction Programme Document" to the World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility confirms that of 11 industrial logging concessions in the Mai N'dombe province, only two are currently operational. Furthermore, official

government figures show no recorded timber production at all between 2002 and 2006 for the two logging concessions that now make up the WWC forest conservation concession. Irrespective of this context, DNV verified conformity with the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) and the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) standard. DNV also confirmed that between March 2011 and October 2012, the Mai N'dombe REDD project had prevented the release of 2,548,715 tonnes CO₂-carbon credits that could now be sold with the CCBA and VCS seals of approval.

The project did not just pass the CCBA standard assessment. It was awarded a "Gold Level" certification, meaning the project provides more than the required biodiversity and climate adaptation benefits - certainly a bonus for marketing the 2.5 million carbon credits. Many buyers of offset credits are aware of the reputational risk REDD+ credits can pose when conflicts between the REDD+ project developer and communities arise. Companies interested in REDD+ offset credits therefore see certification as a quality assurance – a false expectation, considering that many certified REDD+ projects are known to have caused or exacerbated conflict. (3)

Shortly after the Mai N'dombe REDD project received VCS and CCBA certification, its owners announced the first sale of carbon credits, in January 2013. A German firm, Forest Carbon Group, acquired 300,000 carbon credits from the project, with options to buy more. The Forest Carbon Group, in turn, offers the REDD credits to companies and individuals wishing to compensate their greenhouse gas emissions. Initially, their main clients were regional energy companies in Germany, who in turn used the carbon credits to offer "climate neutral natural gas" to their customers. (4) The project is still marketed on the Forest Carbon Group website, suggesting that perhaps not all of the credits they bought in 2013 have been sold yet. How much money has been raised to date through the sale of carbon credits from the Mai N'dombe REDD project, is not known; nor how much money communities in the project area have received. But a 2015 report by the organisation IIED notes that, according to information from the project owner, operational costs for the project are around US\$ 2.5 million per year. (5)

Since 2015, the Mai N'dombe REDD project has also been offering carbon credits directly to individuals, through "Stand for Trees", an initiative supported by US developmental agency USAID. The initiative aims to increase sales of forest carbon credits after corporate purchases have not been developing as expected. In December 2015, the project also tried to raise funds through an online donation platform, receiving US\$ 4,720 of the US\$ 50,000 hoped for. (6) It appears that carbon credits currently on sale from the Mai N'dombe REDD project are still part of the credits issued following the December 2012 verification audit by DNV. (2)

Benefits for local communities are a cornerstone of the Mai N'dombe REDD project's marketing material. "The local forest community of 50,000 Congolese villagers receive direct benefits from the project", reads the first sentence of the "Project Impacts" description on the Wildlife Works website. (7) Six out of 11 slides that make up the project presentation highlight community benefits, and the joint ERA and WWC press release announcing successful VCS and CCBA certification in 2012 states that "local communities will receive direct benefits from the project in the form of jobs, schools, health clinics, improved food security through better agronomy and redevelopment of robust native fish stocks, capacity building of local NGOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs), all financed through a transparent and equitable sharing of the

carbon revenues." (8) At the same time, documents prepared for auditing firms describe forest use by local communities as the biggest remaining threat to the forest. In 2011, ERA wrote that the "reduction of illegal logging and the reduction of unsustainable forest clearing for agriculture and fuel wood will be addressed in the REDD+ portion of the project." (9) Analysis of tree cover data for the area using Global Forest Watch suggests that deforestation in the REDD project actually soared in 2011. Whether this was as a result of people quickly clearing land for food production in anticipation and fear of imminent restrictions or due to illegal logging within the conservation concession, is not known. Many REDD+ projects first put forest use restrictions in place before alternative options for peasants relying on the forest to grow the food that feeds their families are operational at village level. Information gathered during a visit in 2014 by the World Rainforest Movement (WRM) to the Mai N'dombe area suggests that the same is true for the Mai N'dombe REDD project.

In November 2014, WRM visited the area on invitation of the national peasant organisation Confédération paysanne du Congo, COPACO-PRP, a member of La Via Campesina. The joint activities in the region took WRM and COPACO-PRP through villages along a road that cuts through the middle of the REDD+ project concession. However, it was not possible to interview people in some villages along the road because of a combination of high tensions between communities in this portion of the conservation concession and the REDD+ project and hostility from project staff and supporters towards WRM before, during and after a workshop on climate change and REDD+, held in the city of Inongo (where the Wildlife Works project office is also located). But conversations in Inongo and the town of Nioki, south of the REDD conservation concession, suggest that the benefits highlighted in promotional material about the Mai N'dombe REDD project may not be quite so apparent to all in the communities. It seems very likely that opposition to the project remains strong in many villages, especially in the western, inland portion of the concession. Coincidentally, in one of its audit reports, DNV note that they did not visit this portion of the conservation concession during their certification assessment, citing time constraints. There is no indication that DNV sought information from local organisations about the perception of the REDD project in the part of the concession area not visited during their field audit.

Rights made to fit REDD+, not REDD+ made to fit rights

Many workshops have been held and papers written on the issue of 'Free, Prior and Informed Consent' (FPIC) in relation to REDD+. Most of them miss the point, however. They skip over the question of whether REDD+ as a mechanism that sells carbon credits justifying destruction elsewhere could ever be considered to have the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of all of those whose way of life is significantly affected by the project activity: people faced with continued destruction of the territories they depend on as a result of a company buying a carbon credit from a REDD+ project elsewhere are never asked whether they consent to the carbon offset, for example.

Neither ERA nor WWC bought the land that generates their REDD carbon credits. Rather, ERA convinced the DRC government to issue a forest conservation concession for the land that had previously been part of two industrial logging concessions. These logging concessions had been cancelled, like most other industrial logging concessions in DRC, as part of an Interministerial Commission process in 2008 which was set up by the World Bank to rule on the legality, or otherwise, of the country's 150 or so

industrial logging operations. (10) As a concession-based initiative, the Mai N'dombe REDD project demonstrates another problem with the FPIC debate in REDD+: the common gap between how FPIC is applied in REDD+ initiatives, and how application of FPIC is communicated in REDD+ marketing material.

To our knowledge, communities in the REDD project area were not involved in the negotiations over issuance of the forest conservation concession to ERA, now held by WWC. There is also no indication of ERA having consulted communities in the area prior to seeking negotiations with the government to canvass community views on their proposal. Only after the Carbon Rights Agreement and the Forest Conservation Concession contracts were signed between ERA and the government of DRC in March and August 2011, respectively, and after having announced that they will seek certification to the CCBA standard, does ERA seem to have entered into contact with communities. When ERA arrived in communities, the big decision – allocation of a forest conservation concession that would restrict forest use which provides the livelihood for a large part of the local population – had already been made. Thus, no consent seems to have been sought from communities over this decision that provides the basis for the REDD project. That fact, however, is not stated clearly in public relations material highlighting social benefits and the involvement of communities in project activities.

Instead, the Mai N'dombe REDD Project Design Document provides ambiguous information. A formulation on page 70 suggests that community representatives had a say in whether the REDD project would be developed, ("In accordance with the requirements of the concession contract process, local leadership in the project area has given consent to ERA to develop the REDD+ project"). A few pages later, the document clarifies that, actually, communities were only presented with the choice of participating in the project, or not: "Stakeholders are able to impact project design, air grievances, and give or withhold free prior and informed consent to participation in project activities." (11)

These formulations raise more questions than they answer. What, for example, happened if a community opted to not "participate" in the project, and continues to use the forest as they did before? Was this portion of the forest that is part of the conservation concession but might also be a customary land use area, taken out of the carbon inventory? Can communities continue using the forest as they did before? Was this explained as an option communities had during the FPIC consultation process? If that was not an option, why was it not? (12)

Such questions appear all the more relevant considering that much of the land in the region is known to be under local communities' customary tenure. Communities may therefore not recognize the boundaries of a concession if it overlaps their customary land. UK-based NGO Forest Peoples Programme estimate that *at least* one third to one half of the WWC conservation concession overlaps local communities' customary territories. The 'Mapping For Rights' initiative by the Rainforest Foundation UK has even documented the extent of customary tenure in areas bordering and overlapping the western edge of the WWC Mai N'dombe REDD project. (13) And there is indication of conflict over agreements having been signed with the REDD project, seemingly without full consent from the villages that customary chiefs (claim to) represent. In 'Redeeming REDD', Michael Brown notes that "In October 2012, reports of conflict in the

Basengele sector of the conservation concession area circulated through email traffic [...]. The customary chief in Bongo was apparently shot at, and his house reportedly burned for having been perceived as signing away customary lands to foreigners without full community consent." (14) The incident was also mentioned in conversations WRM staff held while visiting the area in November 2014. People explained that the person had been one of three customary chiefs ("*chefs de groupement*") who had signed agreements with the REDD project, and that the agreements signed with those three customary chiefs at the clan level (*chef de groupement*), rather than village level (*chef de terre*), were cited by the REDD project as proof of community consent. The incident cited above took place in the part of the conservation concession, which WRM's 2014 visit found to be hostile. A September 2015 presentation on possible benefit sharing models should the DRC government's proposal for a 'jurisdictional REDD' pilot project under the World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility be accepted, notes that communities, in the Basengele area, continue to oppose the REDD+ project.

The DNV audit reports for CCBA certification do not mention any of this information, even though the CCB standard contains a rather long definition of FPIC. And, DNV decided that the Mai N'dombe REDD project complies with the requirements. The CCB standard defines "Prior" as "sufficiently in advance of any authorization or commencement of activities". Did communities have "the option of withholding consent" over the principal decision that authorizes the REDD project (issuance of the conservation concession)? If that option was not provided, with the justification that no such procedure is foreseen in DRC law, for example – should this not be communicated clearly, explaining what decisions community consent was sought on and for which decisions no consent was sought?

The CCBA definition of "Informed" includes among others that communities whose consent is sought must be provided with "a preliminary assessment of the likely economic, social, cultural and environmental impact, including potential risks and fair and equitable benefit sharing in a context that respects the precautionary principle". One would assume that such information includes legal documents and contracts, especially if a Prime Ministerial decree (of May 2011) already requires such information to be made public. This would include, for example, the legal documents establishing ERA's (and now WWC's) Mai Ndombe forest conservation concession. Individuals and representatives from state authorities whom WRM staff spoke to during the November 2014 visit were not aware of these documents. They also noted that the '*Cahier de Charge*', the document that is part of the legal arrangements and outlines the obligations a concession holder has towards communities within the concession area, was available 'in theory' but not in practise. An extensive online search following the 2014 field visit provided no indication that these legal and regulatory documents are in the public domain or that they are accessible to communities in the REDD project area.

One more REDD+ project long on promises and short on delivering on them?

The construction of 19 schools during the 30-year lifetime of the project is one of the much-advertised project benefits for communities. By mid-2015, five years into the project, two schools had been completed and plans for another two were underway. Both schools were constructed in communities near the lakeshore, benefitting communities along the lake rather than communities inland, a project decision that

holds the potential to further exacerbate tension between communities. In conversation in November 2014, residents of Inongo mentioned that a boat which had been used to transport dignitaries to the opening of the first school in Lukongo, some 30km from Inongo, had gone up in flames shortly after the party's return to Inongo.

Another promise the REDD project has made is to introduce villagers to more productive farming systems including high-value crops such as vegetables and beans, and provide support in accessing markets for such produce. When WRM staff visited the area in 2014, only one demonstration garden was said to be up and running, in the lakeside town of Kesengele. This is confirmed by a report from the Forest Peoples Programme, published in late 2013. (15)

In conversation, people also questioned the economic viability of proposed activities. People reported difficulties that had arisen in earlier trials at growing beans, and that soils suitable for growing beans were found only in a small portion of the conservation concession. Asked about their view on the proposal to transport beans and onions to markets in Kinshasa, particularly given the state of infrastructure (or rather, the near complete absence thereof), the response was consistently one of consternation: "Right now, we transport onions from Bas Congo to Inongo, why not work on better local markets?" "With such a long distance to transport anything to Kinshasa, and the roads as they are, how could vegetables produced by the REDD project possibly compete with beans or onions grown in Bas Congo? Access there is much easier and much closer to Kinshasa than from Mai N'dombe", were just some of the remarks.

And, of course, the project promises to generate "direct local jobs". Just how many of them the Mai N'dombe REDD project provides, is unclear. Information in documents about the project is contradictory. Information on the "Stand for Trees" website claims that the project "directly employs over 170 local people", while slide 11 of the project description on the WWC website states that the project provides employment for just 60 people. And of course, the numbers alone do not say anything about the working conditions; whether people are hired on short-term contracts or whether these 170 / 60 people are employed by WWC.

What "Conservation Revolution in the Congo Basin Rainforest"?

In one marketing initiative, the Mai N'dombe REDD project is presented as the "Conservation Revolution in the Congo Basin Rainforest". (6) Considering the impressions gained during WRM's November 2014 visit to the region and information gathered since, such a "revolution" is hard to make out. Rather, looked at from the vantage point of the project's impact on community rights and justice, what we see is another REDD+ project where the stories presented in glossy brochures and talks at international trade fairs and UN conferences differ markedly from the realities in the project area. Interestingly, and in sharp contrast to most other REDD+ projects we have visited over the years, we spotted only one placard announcing the Mai N'dombe REDD project during the 7+ hour drive on the road that cuts through the REDD+ concession. Perhaps such placards are more common along the lakeshore, where the majority of community-related activities linked to the REDD project appear to be taking place?

In sum, the Mai N'dombe REDD project is another strong candidate for a collection of REDD+ conflicts, contradictions and lies.

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https://s3.amazonaws.com/CCBA/Projects/Mai_Ndombe_REDD_Project/Mai+Ndombe+Final+CCB+PD+D.pdf Accessed 05 January 2016.
- (12) Project documents state, that a buffer area of 2.5 km radius around villages is not included in the carbon inventories and that this area is available for food production. No information is available in these project documents on whether and how this buffer reflects the distribution of traditional use areas which are often located much further away from a village than 2.5 km, and that the October 2012 project report cited above itself notes on page 71 that "Individuals walk on average between 5 and 10 km to farming plots".
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PEOPLES IN ACTION

“The Mauzes”: defending territories and life

Since joining Indonesia officially in 1969, Papua had only seven oil palm companies until 2005. In 2014, the number jumped to 21 companies, with another 20 companies

gearing up to start their operations. In the midst of fierce conflicts between the oil palm industry and affected indigenous peoples, the central government launched a one million hectares rice fields program known as the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE). The idea is to turn Papua in a centre for export oriented food and energy production. What will happen to the traditional communities in Papua whose lives depend on the forests? “The Mauzes” is a documentary showing the struggles of local communities to defend their territories and traditions and the tactics and harassment used by the companies and security forces. The video is part of Ekspedisi Indonesia Biru series which is now available with English subtitles.

See video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pch7efib8qo&feature=youtu.be>

Children coping with evictions of World Bank-financed projects

An article from the “Food and Environment Reporting Network” highlights an investigation into the hidden toll of World Bank–financed development projects, which shows how evictions, loss of family income and other hardships associated with dams, roads and other projects can be especially harmful to young people. The case of a 9-year old coping with the trauma of eviction in Indonesia evidences how forced evictions can have long-lasting psychological impacts on children with post-traumatic syndromes. According to the article, studies show that children whose families have been forced to relocate are also at greater risk of disease, hunger and loss of education. Despite World Bank’s public statements on its work in improving education or reducing child mortality, the fact is that the Bank is also increasing its financial support for dams, oil palm plantations and other big-ticket initiatives that are the most likely to displace large numbers of people.

Access the article in English at:

http://thefern.org/2015/10/children-left-vulnerable-by-world-bank-amid-push-for-development/?utm_source=People+and+Forests+E-News&utm_campaign=91780ed9a5-People_and_Forests_E_News_Oct15&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_45977cdf4-91780ed9a5-399259537

Up in Smoke: Failures in Wilmar’s promise to clean up the palm oil business

A report by some of the Friends of the Earth groups shows how some of the fires that affected Indonesia’s forests in the last months can be traced to companies that supply or are owned by Wilmar International, a company that spurred a dramatic wave of sustainability pledges in the palm oil sector in December 2013. Despite new evidence that the company violates its own ‘no deforestation’ policies, this report sustains how major U.S. and European investors have not taken significant steps to address these problems. According to Indonesian law, the companies are legally responsible for the fires.

Access the publication in English here: <https://www.foeeurope.org/up-in-smoke-failures-Wilmar%E2%80%99s-promise-clean-up-palm-oil-business>

RECOMMENDED

Defending the commons: news from the Nyeli movement

Nyeli, a platform for the international movement for food sovereignty, launched a new issue of its newsletter last December. This time focusing on “Forests, foraging and the commons”, the newsletter reflects on the importance of forests, wild plants and the commons to people’s and communities’ food sovereignty. It also shares several

experiences from different parts of the world. “Protecting and regenerating diverse natural environments and ways of eating and living in harmony with these environments are essential elements of food sovereignty. Equally important, they are a direct form of resistance to the commodification and financialisation of nature, and to capitalist markets”.

Access the newsletter in English here: <http://www.nyeleni.org/>

International Rights of Nature Tribunal offers Earth-driven, not market-driven, solutions to climate change

The third International Tribunal for the Rights of Nature took place in Paris in parallel to the UN climate talks. Basing its judgements on the Universal Declaration for the Rights of Mother Earth and international human rights law while recognizing ecocide as a crime, the Tribunal provided a clear direction in each case on who is accountable and on what must be done to repair the harm and restore Earth (and communities) to health and well-being. Indigenous peoples from around the world played a leading role throughout the Tribunal as judges, experts and witnesses. The Tribunal strongly supported keeping fossil fuels in the ground as an essential approach to prevent further harm to Nature.

Read an article on the Tribunal in English at: <http://therightsofnature.org/ron-events/tribunal-offers-earth-driven-not-market-driven-solutions-to-climate-change/>

WRM materials in Swahili and Lingala

The report “12 Replies to 12 Lies about Oil Palm monocultures plantations”, which aims at strengthening the struggles of all those who are opposing large-scale oil palm plantations in the global South, is now also available in Swahili y Lingala.

<http://wrm.org.uy/books-and-briefings/12-replies-to-12-lies-about-oil-palm-monocultures-plantations/>

Access PDFs:

Swahili: http://wrm.org.uy/fr/files/2013/06/12_responses_Swahili.pdf

Lingala: http://wrm.org.uy/fr/files/2013/06/12_responses_Lingala.pdf

Likewise, the booklet “10 things communities should know about REDD”, which aims to inform communities about the serious problems that a REDD project can cause for the people involved, is now also available in Swahili y Lingala.

<http://wrm.org.uy/books-and-briefings/10-things-communities-should-know-about-redd/>

Access PDFs:

Swahili http://wrm.org.uy/fr/files/2012/10/10_Alerts_sur_REDD_Swahili.pdf

Lingala http://wrm.org.uy/fr/files/2012/10/10_Alerts_sur_REDD_Lingala.pdf

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