
World Rainforest Movement: The Mount Tamalpais Declaration

We, the undersigned non-governmental organizations, wish to express extreme concern about the role envisaged for tree plantations in helping industrialized countries meet their commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Kyoto Protocol of the Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Sixth Conference of the Parties, in November 2000 in the Hague, will likely determine the content of the so-called Clean Development Mechanism, which could allow many Northern countries to meet their emissions reductions targets by implementing projects in the South.

Trading carbon sequestered in tree plantations for carbon resulting from burning of fossil fuels cannot justify postponing deep reductions in CO₂ emissions in industrialized countries. First, the trade would perpetuate and exacerbate existing inequalities between rich and poor nations and between rich and poor within particular nations. Second, the trade would increase the area of industrial tree plantations, which are already posing severe social and ecological problems worldwide. Third, the claim of quantifiable "climate neutrality" on which this trade rests has a highly questionable scientific basis and sanctions external political interference in the policymaking of the countries of the South.

We, the undersigned NGOs, strongly support national and international efforts to address climate change, especially through energy conservation, consumption reduction, more equitable resource use, and equitable development and sharing of renewable sources of energy. We hold that a widespread trade in tree plantation "offsets", through the Clean Development Mechanism and other means, would block or undercut these necessary and urgent measures, which constitute a rare opportunity to move on from dominant and failed patterns of development. We urge governments not to include plantations as carbon sinks in the Clean Development Mechanism and to address industrial emissions separately from tree plantations. A liveable climate can be assured only by a commitment to tackling the root causes of global warming.