$inks: who wins, who loses?

Members of the Global Forest Coalition and other NGOs and IPOs that gathered in Lyon in September 2000 prepared a statement explaining the reasons for opposing to carbon sinks in the Clean Development Mechanism. Here there are some of the reasons:

1. Sinks are neither long term nor short term solution to mitigating climate change. The lack of verifiable ways of estimating the ability of forests and other ecosystems to 'compensate' for industrial emissions means that the inclusion of sinks in the CDM would destroy the Kyoto Protocol.

2. Including sinks in the CDM would lead to Annex 1 countries receiving credits for forest conservation, restoration, reforestation and tree plantation establishment while the rights and interests of indigenous and other local communities which have been inhabiting and protecting these forests for centuries are neglected.

3. Including sinks in the CDM as a way of meeting the commitments of governments would reinforce existing inequalities. The climate crisis is due to the industrial societies using more than their fair share of the world's carbon cycling capacity to gain more than a fair share of the world's resources. This problem will not be solved by abdicating them a right to take over other people's lands and seas for so-called carbon sequestration and storage.

4. Sinks in the CDM would constitute a worldwide strategy for expropriating Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' lands, seas and territories and violating their fundamental rights.

5. Including sinks in the CDM would provide a huge incentive, on top of existing subsidies, for the establishment of Northern-driven, large scale, environmentally and socially destructive monoculture tree plantations. These plantations are already proving disastrous for peoples and their environments all over the world. Moreover, carbon plantations will result in little revenue for host countries, provide an obstacle for their present and future sustainable development while awarding Annex 1 countries huge sums in terms of carbon credit.

6. Including sinks in the CDM would not address the underlying causes of forest loss. Nor would it create macro-economic conditions making forest conservation and restoration possible. Such conditions include debt reduction, sustainable consumption and production patterns, revision of Structural Adjustment Programmes, strict regulation of international private investment flows and ensuring equitable relationships between North and South.