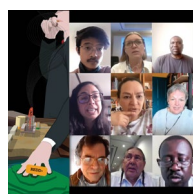




# World Rainforest Movement

Annual Report 2022



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# Who We Are

The World Rainforest Movement has existed since 1986, when it was founded by activists from around the world. Its main goal is to strengthen the global movement in defense of forests in order to fight deforestation and forest degradation.

WRM believes that this goal can only be achieved by fighting for social and ecological justice, and by respecting the collective rights of traditional communities and the right to self-determination of peoples who depend on forests for their livelihoods. For this reason, WRM's actions are aligned to support the struggles of indigenous peoples and peasant communities in defense of their territories.

## Our Principles

The WRM Secretariat team is committed to learning from communities themselves how best to support and strengthen their struggles:

- We work with grassroots organizations that have a deep knowledge of the complex realities in which they operate;
- We base our partnerships on mutual trust, shared perspectives and political analysis;
- We believe that community struggles are strengthened when there is an exchange of experiences among communities and community activists;
- We seek to understand the structural causes of forest destruction, from a local and community standpoint;
- We believe that exposing exploitation and abuse by forest-destroying actors is key to strengthening resistance and acting against the causes of forest destruction;
- We believe it is essential that the information, research and analysis produced by WRM be accessible to community activists and village leaders;
- We emphasise the special relationship that women have with forests and the importance of women's roles in: collective processes of organisation; struggle and resistance to the threats to their territories; production and strengthening of knowledge and culture; family and community life; and transformation of power structures to ensure meaningful involvement by all community members.

# What we do

- Supporting resistance and solidarity building processes of organisations and communities in defence of their territories and forests.
- Analyzing and exposing the following dimensions of forests destruction:
  - Expansion of monoculture tree plantations to produce timber, pulp, palm oil, rubber or biomass. This expansion has posed a major threat to communities in tropical forest areas and beyond.
  - Impacts of industries that extract timber, minerals, water and fossil fuels from forest territories, and the impacts caused by the infrastructure that supports this exploitation.
  - Initiatives that are presented as “solutions,” but which in fact only exacerbate forest loss and climate change. These initiatives include certification of forest management concessions, monoculture tree plantations, carbon and biodiversity offsets, environmental offset programmes and protected areas, among others.
  - New trends in corporate tactics and national and international policies that facilitate the appropriation of community forests.
  - Differentiated impacts that women face when their lands are encroached upon and appropriated—including sexual violence, harassment, persecution, and loss of livelihood, among others.

# Foreword

Although there is still no international agreement about the rules of a binding carbon market; polluting companies, governments from industrialized countries, big conservation NGOs, consultancy companies, carbon brokers, financial institutions, and other actors are investing and making large amounts of money in tropical forest countries via the carbon business.

What fuels this business is the fact that carbon offsets—and in particular, the mechanism called REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) is probably still the cheapest way for polluting companies to achieve the trendy label of “carbon neutral..In reality, this is a strategy to avoid and/or delay the critical need to reduce emissions—which is truly the only way to deal with the current climate chaos.

As a result, the exponential growth of this new 'extractive industry' presents additional problems for forest-dependent communities in Asia, Oceania, Africa and Latin America—whose territories and forests are targeted as carbon sinks, through the establishment of new conservation areas and large-scale tree plantations. Despite a discourse of benefits-sharing, in practice, carbon projects impose a number of fundamental changes—in particular restrictions and prohibitions on the way communities and Indigenous Peoples use and interact with their territories. But above all, carbon projects reinforce the destructive capitalist economy and perpetuate deforestation, giving polluters the option to buy their right to pollute. Just like the old model, this one is based on oppression—in particular of women, who are responsible for sustaining life in the communities. Essentially, communities are paying a high price so that polluting companies can access cheap carbon credits. Despite being presented under the new and appealing name of ‘Nature-Based Solutions,’ REDD projects actually promote the same colonial, patriarchal and racist vision of the “old” extractivist industry model, which continues to expand.

This is why opposing REDD, and supporting communities in their struggles against the imposition of REDD projects in their territories are among WRM's key activities.

In this annual report, you will find a selection of WRM's activities carried out in 2022, as well as a list of the publications released.

Good reading!



## Highlights from 2022

### Building Resistance and Solidarity

- In **West and Central Africa**, WRM continued its commitment with the **Informal Alliance Against Industrial Oil Palm Plantations**, a network of grassroots communities and organizations from nine different countries that works to strengthen and support community struggles. As a member of the Alliance Facilitation Team, WRM helped organize a meeting that took place in Côte d'Ivoire in May, with more than 50 participants from Nigeria, DRC, Rep. of Congo, Gabon, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast and Ghana. This was a very important meeting, as it was the first face-to-face gathering after more than three years of not being able to hold Alliance meetings due to the Covid19 pandemic. As a result of the meeting, [a declaration was issued](#) with four action points: 1) to fight against the expansion of oil palm plantations; 2) to boycott the RSPO certification; 3) to recover



Meeting of the Women of the Alliance

the lands taken from communities by multinational corporations and governments; and 4) to promote food sovereignty.

In the tradition of previous meetings, a **meeting of the Women of the Alliance** was also organized prior to the general meeting. It was attended by more than 50 women from the region. When talking about how the activities for the women of the Alliance have helped them in their lives, one of the women commented that: “The meetings opened a space for us to even speak about rape. Women were suffering but we were not able to speak. I’ve been beaten, molested. In the past



there was no possibility to speak about this. Now we can speak it out loudly.” Another woman said: “Nobody talked with the women when the company took our lands. Women’s issues are very important when talking about land issues.”

- In September, together with Land Watch Thailand, two visits were conducted in **Thailand** to meet communities affected by national parks. The community of BangKloi is facing several court cases and eviction threats after they returned to their ancestral forests; this was after years of dispossession caused by the creation of the Kaeng Krachan National Park. The community of Doi Chang Pa Pe in Chiang Mai, northern Thailand, is facing many challenges in maintaining their rotational agriculture practices—which are at the heart of their culture, livelihoods and conservation approach—due to severe restrictions imposed by the protected area authority. According to local activists, the Thai government is planning to expand protected forest areas in tandem with promoting carbon markets—in particular those based

on REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation). The visit also sparked several conversations with activists who wanted to better understand the connections between the expansion of protected areas, REDD and carbon markets.



Thailand

- In **Madagascar**, in October, WRM facilitated an exchange among communities from three different regions who are facing the impacts of the **mining giant Rio Tinto**: Antsotso and Saint Luce in the Anosy region on the east coast; and Toliara, located on the west coast of the island. The meeting created a horizontal learning space for community members who are affected in different ways by the company, so they could exchange and share their experiences to further build their resistance.



With the support of the World Bank, Rio Tinto set up a mining operation at the southeastern tip of Madagascar, to extract ilmenite from mineral sands within a 6,000-hectare concession. The mining operations have involved the deforestation of coastal areas, the removal of the top layer of the sandy soil in the mining areas, the eviction of local communities, and destruction across the coastal region—which is known for its high endemic biodiversity. Communities that primarily depend on artisanal fishing of lobster and a variety of fish have seen no benefits from the mine; instead, they have witnessed destruction of the coastal areas upon which they depend.

In 2015, the company set up one of the world’s first “**biodiversity offset projects**” in the Antsotso region, to offset forest destruction caused by the mining operation. The project has been considered an industry model for other companies to follow, and it is increasingly used as an example of “Nature-Based Solutions” (NBS). But in reality, the offset project has resulted in severe restrictions for communities on the use of their forests.



Mozambique

- In October, WRM also facilitated the visit of a woman leader and activist from a *quilombola* community in **Brazil going to Mozambique**. This is the second time that WRM has invited a woman activist to join activities in Mozambique, after a first experience in 2019. The reason WRM supports this kind of exchange is not only because of the strong connection black women from Afro-descendent communities in Latin America feel with the African continent; it is also due to the long-standing experience of quilombola communities in Brazil struggling against large-scale monoculture tree plantations, which is now an increasing problem in Mozambique. Additionally, in rural areas of Mozambique it is very difficult to talk with women, because they hardly participate in meetings; so the participation of the woman leader



from Brazil was key in creating specific moments during the village visits to talk, exchange and learn with the women only.

- In **Brazil**, WRM contributed to the process that reactivated the ‘**Alert Against the Green Deserts’ Network** ([Rede Alerta contra os Desertos Verdes](#)), a Brazilian network that brings together movements, organizations and communities in the fight against tree plantations. Given the context of long-standing resistance struggles of communities in existing plantation areas and the new cycle of plantation expansion happening in the country now, this is very important. As part of this process, a meeting with more than 70 participants from different regions was organized in September in Bahia. With the [release of a letter](#) on September 21st, International Day of Struggle against Tree Plantations, the Network once again exposed the serious impacts of the industrial tree plantation model and put forward a number of urgent demands to the Brazilian State.

- In Cruzeiro do Sul, Acre, in the **Brazilian Amazon**, WRM contributed



‘Alert Against the Green Deserts’ Network, Brazil

to the organization of another meeting for political education around the huge problems and serious impacts that REDD projects and programmes cause for Amazonian communities. Nearly 50 people from indigenous and riverine communities from four different Amazonian states participated. The meeting created a space to discuss carbon companies’ ongoing practices of harassing communities to sign contracts and to hand over control of their lands to the companies. The meeting also launched a publication entitled “Golpe Verde” (Green Assault), which reflects on the 10-year experience with Acre’s jurisdictional REDD programme, as well as REDD experiences from some other states in the Amazon. The publication also warns how the logic of REDD continues, but now under the new name of NBS.



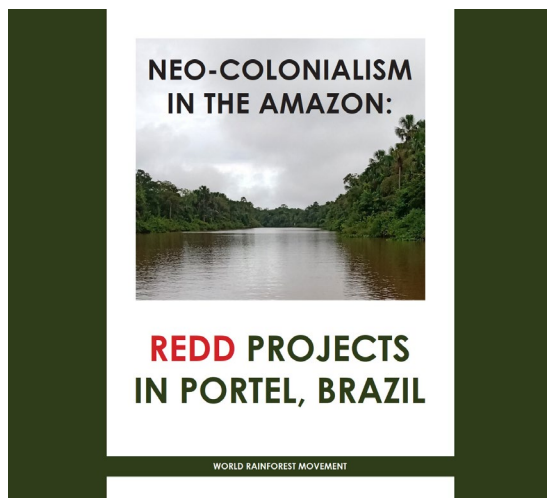
## Exposing the Actors Responsible for Forest Destruction and Land Grabbing

• In March, together with a group of organizations, WRM organized the [press conference: No to Nature-Based Solutions \(NBS\)](#)! This was a virtual event prior to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UN-CBD) meeting, where the new Global Biodiversity Framework was going to be discussed and agreed upon. The press conference was a space to publicize the release of a statement rejecting NBS, one of the major issues under discussion at the CBD. The statement was signed by almost 400 organizations worldwide.



Press conference: No to NBS!

• In May, WRM carried out a visit to the municipality of Portel in the **Amazon State of Pará, Brazil**, to talk and reflect with grassroots activists about four ongoing **REDD projects** that occupy a vast area of over 7,000 square kilometres of forest. The projects are spearheaded by investors from industrialized countries. Together with local groups, WRM produced the article [“Neocolonialism in the Amazon: REDD Projects in Portel, Brazil”](#), which exposed the different problems linked to the REDD projects. Among the problems are how the project brought huge benefits to the investors, who have pocketed more than USD 100 million through the sale of carbon credits to polluting corporations like Repsol (oil); Air France, Delta Airlines and Boeing (aviation); Amazon (e-commerce); Samsung, Toshiba and Kingston (technology); Aldi (supermarket chain); and Kering (luxury goods); among others. In sharp contrast, communities in the municipality have hardly benefited at all. And even though project documents state that 1,200 families gave their permission to sell carbon credits, these families have not been properly informed about, nor have they given their consent to, the project inside their territories.



One result of this report was that it alerted communities in other parts of the Amazon where REDD projects are rapidly expanding. Additionally, the report contributed to a decision by the State Public Prosecution Service in Pará (in particular the group of prosecutors working on land conflicts) to create a working group on the Forest Carbon projects, to better understand and monitor the many existing and planned REDD projects in the state.

- In June, together with the 'Alert against the Green Deserts' Network and the National Campaign against Agrotoxins and for Life (both Brazilian networks), WRM organized an [action alert](#) to denounce the government's approval of the commercial use of a **genetically engineered (GE) eucalyptus tree, which is resistant to the agrotoxin, glyphosate**. The action exposed both the authority responsible for this approval, the National Technical Biosafety Commission (CTNBio), as well as the pulp and paper company, Suzano, which developed the GE tree. This GE eucalyptus was created to be used in large-scale plantations, which means it will increase the impacts of such plantations on communities and the environment. The action alert urged the CTNBio to revoke the approval. It received support from more than 50 organizations worldwide.



## Producing Information and Analysis



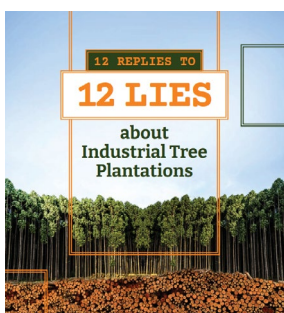
**Our lands back!** During 2022, WRM produced a series of articles about grassroots struggles that have succeeded in getting back part of their territories:

- [“Reclaiming land in Misiones, Argentina: A Fight for Social Justice and a Dignified Life”](#), which tells the story of a community that succeeded in getting their lands back from the transnational pulp and paper company, Arauco, after almost 20 years of struggle.
- [“A Struggle Lasting More than 40 Years”](#), in which Tupinikim indigenous leaders in Brazil share their peoples’ experience in their struggle for their territory against one of the largest eucalyptus plantation and pulp production companies in the world, Aracruz Celulose—currently named Suzano Papel e Celulose.
- [“Quilombola communities recover land and water after 40 years of eucalyptus monoculture in Brazil”](#), a conversation with two quilombola activists who reflect on this difficult but very fertile resistance process.



### **How forest policies and agencies promote sustainable destruction**

This [briefing](#) looks back at a United Nations (UN)-led process on the Underlying Causes of Deforestation that took place more than 20 years ago. It exposes how the causes identified in 1999 are not only as significant today as they were 20 years ago; they have also been reinforced in many ways, including through so-called “solutions”—such as the many certification schemes, REDD and “Nature-Based Solutions.”



### **12 Replies to 12 Lies about Industrial Tree Plantations**

In September, within the framework of the International Day of Struggle against Monoculture Tree Plantations, WRM released [this booklet](#), which counters the most common misleading arguments used by the promoters of industrial tree plantations. It is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French.



### **15 Years of REDD: A Mechanism Rotten to the Core**

This [publication](#) compiles eleven articles that reflect on the fundamental problems with, and dangerous dimensions of, the REDD mechanism. Written by authors reporting on the experiences with REDD in their countries, the publication was the result of a networking process with organizations and activists in Asia, Africa and the Americas. It aims to help activists on the ground strengthen their arguments and actions against offset schemes like REDD. The book was initially published in French, English, Indonesian, Spanish and Portuguese, and was later translated into Thai. Additionally, an [open webinar](#) was organized with the authors of the publication “15 Years of REDD: A Mechanism Rotten at the Core.” More than 70 participants joined the webinar.



### **Video: “Resisting industrial oil palm plantations”**

Together with a group of women from Uganda, WRM produced [this video](#), which highlights the resistance of communities, and of women in particular, on Buvuma Island—where the Bidco company (partially owned by the transnational Wilmar company) is trying to expand its industrial oil palm plantations. By making false promises, including the use of smallholder schemes, the company seeks to expand its control over territories and people’s lives.



### **A critical reflection on participation in international forest policy processes**

In October, on the eve of UN climate and biodiversity Conferences of the Parties (COPs), WRM released [this briefing](#) that intends to reflect on participation in international forest policy processes. It is based on WRM’s experience and that of grassroots activists with whom WRM collaborates.



## WRM Bulletin

# Denouncing and resisting the injustices and violence of capitalism in the forests

WRM published five issues of [its bulletin](#) in 2022. All of them are available in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese. Some articles are also available [in Indonesian](#). Twenty-nine organisations and activists from Africa, Asia and Latin America have contributed to the issues.

The bulletin was distributed to WRM's mailing lists, posted on its website, made available in pdf for download, and shared widely through WRM's social networks.

WRM 2022 bulletin issues at a glance:

- Bulletin 260: [Land Concessions: An underlying cause of forest destruction](#)
- Bulletin 261: [Territories in struggle against tree monocultures, mega dams and Protected Areas](#)
- Bulletin 262: [Defending water is defending land and life](#)
- Bulletin 263: [In solidarity with communities resisting tree monocultures](#)
- Bulletin 264: [Reflections, stories and struggles against the violence of the green economy](#)



## WRM Structure and Financial Overview

Stichting World Rainforest Movement (WRM) is a Dutch foundation registered in 1999 at the Dutch Chamber of Commerce under number 34118798.

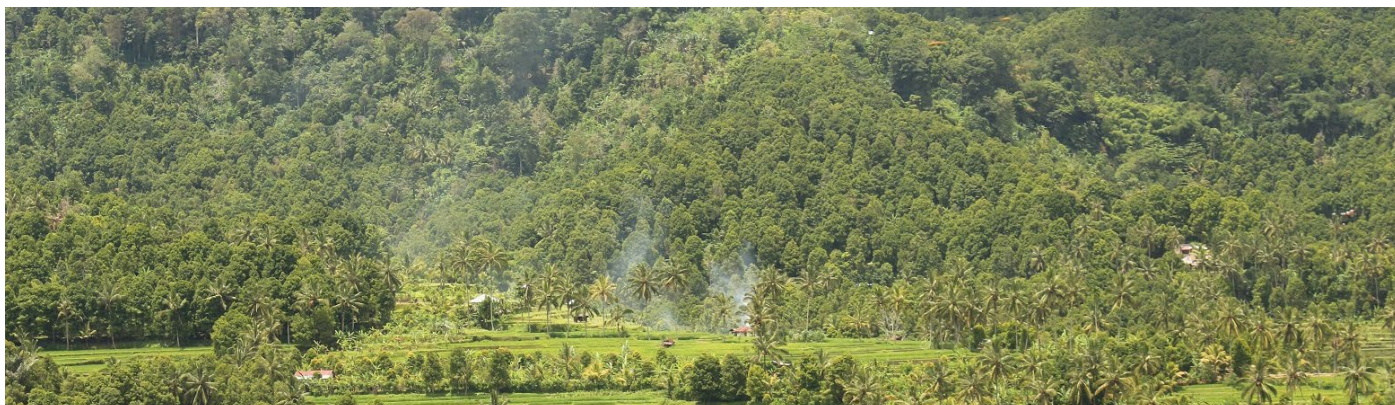
The Board members of the Stichting WRM, responsible for governing legal and financial-administrative issues, are: Larry Lohmann, Chairman; Ivonne Yáñez, Treasurer; Silvia Ribeiro, Secretary; Premrudee Daoroung, Member

The Uruguayan Education Ministry has granted the Stichting WRM registered in the Netherlands permission to function in Uruguay, where the office of the WRM International Secretariat is located. In Uruguay, the Foundation is registered under the name of “Fundación Movimiento Mundial por los Bosques Tropicales,” with the fiscal registration number (RUT) 00215767260016.

In 2016, WRM was granted ANBI in the Netherlands. The acronym stands for "Algemeen Nut Beogende Instellingen," which is a status granted to foundations registered with the Dutch Chamber of Commerce whose mission and activities are deemed by the Tax Service to overwhelmingly serve the common good.

The **WRM International Secretariat** is a team of seven people located in different countries, with its office in Uruguay. The International Secretariat team receives input and guidance for its activities from the WRM Advisory Committee; from WRM strategy meetings with allies from different continents; and from regular interaction between the team and hundreds of activists, community organizations, social movements, NGOs and indigenous peoples' organizations in countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Coordination Team is composed of two team members: Winnie Overbeek and Teresa Perez.

The **WRM Advisory Committee** in 2022 consisted of the following members: Hendro Sangkoyo, School of Democratic Economics (Indonesia); Larry Lohmann, The Corner House



(United Kingdom); Nasako Besingi, Struggle to Economize the Future Environment (Cameroon); Premrudee Daoroung, Project SEVANA South-East Asia (Thailand); Shalmali Guttal, Focus on the Global South (Thailand); Silvia Ribeiro, ETC Group (Mexico); Tom Goldtooth, Indigenous Environmental Network (USA); Ivonne Yáñez, Acción Ecológica (Ecuador)

### **WRM's Remuneration Policy**

The members of the Dutch WRM Foundation Board and WRM Advisory Committee, as well as any volunteers WRM might work with, do not receive any form of salary or honorarium for the activities they carry out for WRM. They can, however, request reimbursement for costs incurred for participation in WRM meetings, such as transport and accommodation expenses.

Only WRM International Secretariat staff receive a salary or honorarium. Individuals hired for short-term, specific activities, such as carrying out case studies, can receive an honorarium, based on a contract clearly describing the tasks to be carried out and the remuneration agreed upon.

### **Funding**

In 2022, WRM core activities were funded by SSNC (Swedish Society for Nature Conservation) from Sweden; Misereor/KZE, from Germany; HEKS/EPER, from Switzerland; Olin gmbH, from Germany; and Swift Foundation, from the United States. The total executed income for the year 2022 was USD 303,261.

WRM 2022 Annual accounts have been audited by the firm PKF, in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing issued by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC).



## Contact Details

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