



World Rainforest Movement

Annual Report 2023

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Who We Are

The World Rainforest Movement was founded in 1986 by activists from around the world. Its main goal is to strengthen the global movement to defend 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 who are defending 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 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 through the exchange of experiences;
- We seek to understand the structural causes of forest destruction, from a local and community-based standpoint;
- We believe that exposing exploitation and abuse by forest-destroying actors is critical in strengthening resistance and acting against the causes of forest destruction;
- We believe it is essential that WRM's information, research and analyses be accessible to community activists and village leaders;
- We highlight the special relationship that women have with forests, and the importance of women's roles in the following: collective processes of organisation; resistance to threats to their territories; production and strengthening of knowledge and culture; family and community life; and the transformation of power structures to ensure meaningful involvement by all community members.

Main Areas of Work

- We support the resistance and solidarity-building processes of organisations and communities who are defending their territories and forests.- We analyze and expose the following dimensions of forest destruction:
- The expansion of monoculture tree plantations to produce timber, pulp, palm oil, rubber or biomass. This expansion poses a major threat to communities in tropical forest areas and beyond.
- The impacts of industries that extract timber, minerals, water and fossil fuels from forest territories, and the additional 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

At the core of WRM's work is a commitment to facilitating community organisations, local support groups and community activists to connect across regions. We support cross-border grassroots alliances develop strategies to address the serious problems and conflicts that forest-dependent communities face worldwide. These problems are caused by sectors such as the palm oil industry and the conservation industry (through the actions of so-called conservationist NGO's), and by international policies, such as the promotion of forest carbon projects.

Because the operations and policies of corporations increasingly have a cross-border reach, it is crucial for communities to also be able to strategize across borders and learn from other communities' experiences and ways of organizing.

WRM pays special attention to the participation of women. In most places where WRM has a presence, patriarchy prevents women from actively participating in resistance processes; women rarely have a say in decision-making. This is why it is so important for WRM to incorporate a feminist perspective into all our activities.

Understanding women's struggles and needs also helps us to see more clearly how present-day capitalism, which is invading and destroying territories with increasing brutality, is a continuation of colonial exploitation. And this exploitation is based on racism and the patriarchal oppression of women.

What WRM has learned is that resistance struggles are stronger when both men and women have a say in decisions that affect their lives, when they are mutually and actively involved in resisting threats to their territories and life spaces.

Happy reading!



Highlights from 2023

Strengthening Resistance Process

In 2023, WRM continued facilitating the Informal Alliance against Oil Palm Plantations in West and Central Africa. A highlight of this work was an exchange we promoted, in which different communities shared their experiences reclaiming, reoccupying, and recovering their lands. This was very valuable, since land recovery is a long-standing goal of members of the Informal Alliance. Two members of the Alliance also visited a settlement of the Landless Peasant Movement (MST) in Paraná, Southern Brazil. This MST settlement was established on land that the community, after a long struggle, and with support of the Movement, succeeded in recovering from a big cattle producer. Since their reoccupation of these traditional lands, the people have begun a process to recover the forest that was destroyed by ranching. Their goal is to produce food and establish other economic activities to ensure the income and well-being of the community. The aim of the exchange was to learn about the difficulties and challenges that communities face when they engage in a struggle to recover their lands.

Another connection that WRM has facilitated is that between Indonesian and Brazilian activists fighting mining. Mining in Indonesia is responsible not only for deforestation but also for multiple conflicts with communities whose lands have been destroyed by mining companies. Indonesia has the largest nickel reserves in the world, and the extraction of this metal by public and private companies has turned Indonesia into the world's largest producer. Indonesia's nickel production has dramatically increased in recent years, from 130,000 metric tons in 2015 to 760,000 metric tons in 2020 (5). As more mines are exploited, more tailing dams are created. This is putting bigger regions and territories at risk, and is threatening major rivers, lakes and the oceans. Under the banner of the 'energy transition,' the Indonesian government is also investing in the expansion of its hydropower capacity, implementing new hydropower dam projects in the country.

Due to this context, in 2023, WRM facilitated an exchange between the Brazilian Movement of Dam Affected Peoples (MAB), and two Indonesian activists—one from the School for Democratic Economics, and the other from the grassroots organization, JATAM. JATAM supports community resistance struggles against large-scale mining and



hydro-electric mega-dams in Indonesia. MAB organized a field visit in Minas Gerais, Brazil, where in 2015 and 2019, tailing dams of the companies Vale and BHP, respectively, ruptured. In both disasters, the resulting mud flow killed hundreds of people. These disasters also caused destruction and death in an area that extended far beyond the local region, including along the entire Doce river basin—which is one of Brazil's most important river basins. The two activists from Indonesia were able to learn important lessons from their Brazilian counterparts, which will serve them in Indonesia—where there are thousands of tailing dams. This is critical, in light of the current push for mega-dams in North Kalimantan to power the [large-scale Kalimantan Industrial park](#) (KIPi) [and the new capital of Indonesia](#).

For years, communities in Mozambique have been resisting the eucalyptus monoculture plantations of Green Resources and Portucel, which are the main plantation companies operating in the country. WRM has supported these communities by helping strengthen their networks nationally, and by facilitating international exchanges and solidarity-building processes with communities in Brazil

who are in the same struggle. WRM's support has been going on for more than five years. In 2023, a virtual exchange took place between activists from Northern Espírito Santo and Mozambican community activists who shared concrete experiences of reclaiming lands.

Lastly, WRM facilitated a virtual workshop with women activists from different parts of the world. Specifically, there were women from three communities in Thailand, who are struggling against mining, oil palm and the expansion of conservation areas, respectively. And there were three women from Latin America: one from the landless peasants movement of Brazil (MST) fighting against tree plantations; one from Ecuador fighting against a mining company; and the third from Mexico, from the Women of the Chiapas Coast Against Oil Palm. It was the Thai community women who requested WRM's support in organizing this exchange; they wanted to understand how women in Latin America are responding to the same threats, and how they are organizing and resisting. The activity was a big success, and the women suggested a follow-up session, which is planned to take place in 2024.

Exposing the Activities and the Actors behind Forest Destruction and Right Violations

One of WRM's main tasks is to expose the activities of different actors—such as financial institutions, corporations and governments—that directly lead to forest destruction or result in the violation of forest-dependent communities' rights. Besides exposing these actors for the destruction and violations they cause, WRM attempts to reveal their tactics and strategies. This is so that other grassroots communities, organizations, and activists can be aware of how these actors behave.

In 2023, WRM exposed the Brazilian company, Suzano, the largest holder of eucalyptus plantations in Brazil and one of the largest pulp and paper companies globally. Despite being responsible for numerous conflicts, rights violations and environmental destruction over the years, Suzano is receiving investments for selling so-called “green bonds.” At the request of *quilombola* communities in the Extreme South of Bahia, WRM organized an action alert to demand an immediate stop to the illegal deforestation that is occurring in their territory to make way for a new road. More than 340 organizations and individuals supported the action. A second action urged the company to stop the eviction of a landless peasant community (part of the MST) from

lands that Suzano claims to be their own. However, the community has been occupying this land for years, producing food on it and building a future for their families. WRM has published several articles on Suzano in its bulletin. Together with the Brazilian network, Alert against the Green Desert, we also released a [factsheet](#) entitled “What you need to know about Suzano Papel e Celulose.”

Over the last five years, WRM has been working to expose the failures of REDD projects in several countries. In 2023, WRM exposed the negative impacts of two REDD projects operated by the company, Biofilica Ambipar, in the Brazilian Amazonian state of Pará. One of these projects is with the logging company, Grupo Jari Florestal, and the other is with the palm oil company, Agropalma. Biofilica is a transnational company that aims to become the biggest company in the “nature-based solutions” business. WRM's [article](#) exposed how their REDD projects in Pará result in oppression and violence against communities.





The WRM Bulletin: Denouncing and resisting the injustices and violence of capitalism in forests

The WRM bulletin, which has been published since 1997, is one of our most important tools. Five issues of the bulletin were produced in 2023 and distributed via WRM's mailing lists, website and social networks. Collectively, they contained more than 30 articles—mostly written by WRM partners from different countries. All of them are available in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese. Some articles are also available [in Indonesian](#).

The WRM bulletin is a key tool to expose corporate activities and state policies that lead to deforestation and/or forest degradation – which lead to violations of forest-dependent Peoples' and communities' rights.

2023 WRM bulletin issues at a glance:

Bulletin 264: Reflections, stories and struggles against the violence of the green economy

Bulletin 265: The extractivist onslaught and carbon markets in the forests: impacts and resistances

Bulletin 266: When 'green' only means money: violence and lies of the 'green' economy

Bulletin 267: Resistance and solidarity against the corporate assault on territories

Bulletin 268: The green scam: oppression, conflicts and resistance



WRM podcast series: Women's struggles for land

In 2023, WRM began to produce a new information-sharing tool: a podcast. Upon the request of several groups with which WRM is collaborating, we decided to produce an initial series of podcasts to share stories about women's struggles for land.

The aim of the podcast is to highlight the different layers of oppression that women activists face when industrial plantations arrive in their territories—as well as the role that women play in resistance. Another goal of the podcast is to highlight, and build solidarity for, the many struggles that women are leading around the world to stop land grabs and the corporate takeover of life.

The first podcast in the series was focused on



Multimedia 28 July 2023

Podcast: Women of the Chiapas coast facing oil palm

In the state of Chiapas, in southern Mexico, women's organizations are resisting the advance of a monoculture crop that is invading their lands and bringing scarcity and water pollution.



Multimedia 22 March 2023

Podcast: Testimonials from women affected by SOCFIN plantations in Sierra Leone

Socfin oil palm plantation company has meant violence and oppression in several African countries. Sierra Leone is no exception.

Sierra Leonea. Jointly produced with the Sierra

Leonean women's network, WONAPRI, it tells the story of women from the Malen Chiefdom whose lands were granted to the multinational company, Socfin, to plant industrial oil palm plantations.

The second podcast shares the story of a women's organization in Chiapas, which the women formed to ensure a safe space for them to discuss and resist the violence caused by the expansion of oil palm monocultures.

The third and final podcast will be released in 2024.



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 2023** consists 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.



Founding

In 2023, WRM's core activities were funded by **SSNC** (Swedish Society for Nature Conservation) from Sweden; **Misereor/KZE** from Germany; **HEKS/EPER** from Switzerland; and **Swift Foundation** from the United States.

WRM's 2023 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). A summary of the Annual audit is available [here](#). It includes a summarized version of the Notes to the financial statements.



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