

# Industrial Tree Plantations

## **INVADING** Eastern & Southern Africa



World Rainforest  
Movement



**TIMBERWATCH**  
COALITION

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# ***Industrial Tree Plantations Invading Eastern and Southern Africa***

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## **1. Introduction**

This joint briefing by the Timberwatch Coalition (TW)<sup>1</sup> and World Rainforest Movement (WRM)<sup>2</sup> focuses on various internal and external factors determining changes in the extent of industrial tree plantations (ITPs) in 11 eastern and southern African countries. By ITPs, we mean large-scale, intensively managed, even-aged tree monocultures of mostly non-native eucalyptus, pine or acacia species, grown primarily to supply wood for industrial production processes, and other commercial activities such as trading in carbon credits.

As part of the broader land grabbing problem, the global South is seen by foreign, mainly Northern investors, as an attractive place to make easy profits through the conversion of 'unused' land into ITPs. The parts of Africa under review, especially coastal countries like Mozambique, also attract the attention of foreign speculators because they have the most suitable climate and land-types for tree plantations, besides being well located for easy access to timber markets in Asia. This study examines ITP expansion, and its external drivers, as well as the challenges presented by this expansion to affected local communities struggling to defend their lands and livelihoods.

The geographical focus of this exercise includes those regions in eastern and southern Africa where Britain, the dominant colonial power at the time, had already established some ITPs by the late 19th century. This included South Africa, which currently has the largest area under ITPs on the continent. Neighbouring Mozambique, formerly a Portuguese colony, has experienced the fastest rate of tree plantation expansion over the last 5-10 years. The other nine countries included within the scope of this study are: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Swaziland, Lesotho, and Madagascar, once a colony of France.

According to official figures (FAO), by 1990 these 11 countries already had more than 2.7 million ha in total under ITPs. At the same time, there were roughly 7 million ha in the whole of Africa, representing slightly less than 10% of the total area of industrial tree plantations in the global South<sup>3</sup>. Over the last few decades, industrial tree plantations have increased much more rapidly in the global South than in the global North. This is due to a number of factors which have made it more attractive for companies and investors to establish new tree plantations in the global South, including access to cheaper land and labour, less strict environmental laws, and significantly higher tree growth rates than for example in North America and Europe<sup>4</sup>. The area under ITPs in the 11 countries included in this assessment increased from the aforementioned 2.7 million ha in 1990, to 3.4 million ha in 2015, an increase of 25%. (See table on page 9)

This briefing aims to help explain why this expansion trend exists, to identify its drivers and its consequences, and to disseminate this and other relevant information among local, national, regional and international organisations and policy makers within and outside of Africa. The objective is to create greater public awareness of the increasing extent of the negative impacts caused by both existing and potential new industrial tree plantation projects in the affected countries, and to alert stakeholders about this trend, as well as to the threats and challenges it poses to local communities whose lands are being targeted by foreign tree plantation investors and wood-processing companies.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.timberwatch.org](http://www.timberwatch.org)

<sup>2</sup> [www.wrm.org.uy](http://www.wrm.org.uy)

<sup>3</sup> FAO Forest Plantations Working Papers - *TROPICAL FOREST PLANTATION AREAS - 1995 DATA SET* - Based on the work in 1997 of D Pandey, Consultant, Edited by M. Varmola and A. Del Lungo, May 2002

[ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/006/Y7204E/Y7204E00.pdf](http://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/006/Y7204E/Y7204E00.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Overbeek W, Kröger M, Gerber J.F. 2012. [An overview of industrial tree plantation conflicts in the global South. Conflicts, trends, and resistance struggles. EJOLT Report No. 3, p.100](#)



## **Overview of this briefing**

Following the introduction and overview (chapter 1), chapter 2 gives a brief history of how tree plantations came to eastern and southern Africa. Chapter 3 includes a table showing the official figures for tree plantation areas in the 11 countries included within the scope of this briefing, together with estimates of potential future expansion in the period up till 2035.

In chapter 4, the political processes and other factors that drive tree plantation expansion in the subject countries, together with the purposes for which new tree plantations are being established, are described and commented upon.

Chapter 5 covers some of the main challenges that communities face when confronted by 'marauding' tree plantation companies, with examples of communities that have already experienced the invasion of their lands and lives by industrial tree plantations. This is followed by concluding remarks in chapter 6.

In the Appendix, brief reviews of the situation in respect of tree plantations in each of the 11 countries are included, mentioning some of the main tree plantation projects being developed, the actors involved, and other relevant information.

To produce a briefing that simultaneously reviews data from several separate countries is not an easy task, because it is often difficult to obtain reliable information. This briefing should therefore be viewed more as a 'project in progress', than a conclusive report. Any reader comments, or any new or additional information in respect of the 11 countries under examination, as well as from other African countries that have not been included, will be welcomed. This assistance will make it possible to share more information about, and to give more visibility to the issue of ongoing ITP expansion in Africa. It will also help us to publish updates, with the aim of supporting local communities engaged in struggles to resist the expansion of existing, or new, tree plantation projects.



*A plantation of invasive eucalyptus trees being logged in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. This is an increasingly common sight in parts of Africa where eucalyptus plantations are being grown for industrial production of wood-based materials including pulp, paper and packaging.*

## **2. Background**

From the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, while under the political control of Britain – the main colonial power in the region at the time - many African countries were pressured to establish timber plantations as a response to the perceived depletion of their forests. In 1876, South Africa was among the first countries to establish eucalyptus plantations to provide fuel for railway engines, and pine plantations for timber used in construction<sup>5,6</sup>, followed later by Swaziland, Uganda and Kenya. From 1945, after the end of World War II, timber plantations were expanded to increase production of wood-based products and materials that had become scarce in industrialised countries, partially due to the increased wartime use of fuel wood that had been required for military purposes.

According to Jacovelli (2014)<sup>7</sup>, from the 1960s onwards, more tree plantations were established in Africa, pushed by national forest departments that also undertook related research and training. As countries became independent from Britain over those years, they received further support from various development institutions for setting up 'forestry' departments as well as for establishing ITPs. One of these was the British Colonial (later Commonwealth) Development Corporation (CDC), which established extensive timber plantations as well as pulp and paper mills in several countries of eastern and southern Africa, including Tanzania, South Africa and Swaziland. Apart from Madagascar – a former French colony – and Zimbabwe, which was suspended in 2002, all countries covered in this briefing are members of the Commonwealth.

Another international institution supporting the process of tree plantation expansion is the World Bank, which has financed ITPs in Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and Swaziland, as well as in Zambia together with the CDC. The Norwegian government, through its development agency NORAD, has financed ITPs in Uganda and Tanzania, while the Finnish government has promoted tree plantation expansion in Mozambique and Kenya.

Since the 1980's, International Monetary Fund (IMF)<sup>8</sup> policies based on the neoliberal economic model and endorsed by development banks like the World Bank, were used to impose "structural adjustment programmes" onto many countries in the global South. In order to access money from the IMF to pay off debts to Northern governments and banks, states were obliged to promote privatisation, liberalise trade, and offer export incentives and subsidies to companies – including for industrial tree plantations<sup>9</sup>.

Over the last 5 to 10 years, the privatisation of national 'resources' (state-owned land and plantations) has become further entrenched via access to finance from 'development' banks and private and public investment funds. This has allowed corporations to access cheaper state-owned and community lands, and make low-cost investments in new and existing tree plantations in Africa, as part of the broader land and natural resource-grabbing processes.

A key role in driving tree plantation expansion has been played by the United Nations (UN) Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). Through international development institutions such as the CDC, the World Bank and international development aid agencies from Northern countries, the FAO has been responsible for introducing, and promoting the Northern 'forestry' tree plantation model throughout Africa. This industrial model with European roots is based on a distorted definition in which a forest is seen only as a 'bunch' of trees with the primary

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<sup>5</sup> Overbeek W, Kröger M, Gerber J.F. 2012. [An overview of industrial tree plantation conflicts in the global South. Conflicts, trends, and resistance struggles. EJOLT Report No. 3, p.100](#)

<sup>6</sup> Jacovelli, P.A. 2014, The future of plantations in Africa, *International Forestry Review* Vol16(2)

<sup>7</sup> Jacovelli, P.A. 2014, The future of plantations in Africa, *International Forestry Review* Vol16(2)

<sup>8</sup> The IMF was founded, together with the World Bank, during the Bretton Woods conference in 1944 in the USA, with the aim of rebuilding an international monetary system in the global North after World War II

<sup>9</sup> Overbeek W, Kröger M, Gerber J.F. 2012. [An overview of industrial tree plantation conflicts in the global South. Conflicts, trends, and resistance struggles. EJOLT Report No. 3, p.100](#)

purpose of producing timber<sup>10</sup>. The FAO asserts that palm oil plantations are not considered 'forests', but an agricultural crop, because they are "established mainly for other purposes than wood".<sup>11</sup> This exposes FAO's narrow interest in promoting forests and tree plantations as sources of wood instead of taking a more balanced approach. As such, the misleading 'forest' definition of the FAO includes industrial, large-scale, even-aged monocultures, usually in plantations of millions of non-native, potentially invasive trees, including genetically engineered eucalyptus and poplar varieties, that are misleadingly described as "planted forests". This biased definition fails to recognise other essential functions, benefits and values of real forests, and equally ignores the important role of human communities that sustainably live in, protect, and depend on forests, for their livelihoods and their cultural identities.

A definition that is so narrowly focussed on the wood/timber/carbon content of tree plantations and forests that are collectively called "forests", does however give many advantages, and financial benefits, to timber plantation companies and wood-based industries. Most UN agencies and government members ignorantly apply the FAO's misleading concepts of 'forestry', 'afforestation' and 'reforestation' to tree plantations, on the false assumption that the planting of any trees, even of invasive alien species, is creating forests. The current FAO forest definition is an outcome of heavy lobbying by certain of its member governments on behalf of corporate interests. However, the FAO has failed to extend the same consideration to forest-dependent communities and other peoples whose territories have been invaded by ITPs. These groups have not been offered a fair chance to be meaningfully included in global consultation processes to develop appropriate and acceptable definitions for both tree plantations and forests.<sup>12</sup>

Using its considerable influence, the FAO has effectively been able to dictate the kind of 'forestry' model to be used in Africa, and therefore also expects from UN member countries in the global South that they should adopt FAO's 'industrial forestry' norms and definitions. This is borne out by a statement issued by South African "Forest Policy" Directorate, who maintained that South Africa was committed to the use of FAO terminology and definitions because "... in the international forest policy dialogue [...the FAO Committee on Forests (COFO) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)] plantations are acknowledged and recognised as forests"<sup>13</sup>. The FAO and its 'forest' definition also tend to influence the policy decisions and actions of other international and regional institutions and structures in relation to forest issues on the African continent. These include the World Bank, the UNFCCC climate change negotiations, the UNEP-hosted Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) discussions, the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the African Forest Forum (AFF).

During the 14<sup>th</sup> World Forestry Congress (WFC) held in Durban in September 2015, (The WFC is the main international conference on forests and forestry organised by FAO every six years), a Civil Society Alternative Programme<sup>14</sup> was organised by several South African and international civil society groups to protest FAO's policy of promoting ITPs. On one day during this event, thousands of people marched through the streets of Durban to the WFC conference venue to tell the FAO that tree plantations are not forests. People were protesting against FAO's role in promoting the expansion of ITPs throughout Africa and the global South. At the end of the march, a petition with more than 100,000 signatures from all over the world, demanding a fundamental change in the FAO definition, so as to end the ongoing destruction of forests and other ecologically valuable areas such as savannahs and grasslands by industrial tree plantations, was handed to WFC and FAO officials.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See [http://wrm.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Definition\\_of\\_Forest.pdf](http://wrm.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Definition_of_Forest.pdf) ; and about industrial oil palm plantations expanding, but mainly in West and Central Africa (see <http://wrm.org.uy/?s=oil+palm+in+africa> )

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/ap862e/ap862e00.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> [http://wrm.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Definition\\_of\\_Forest.pdf](http://wrm.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Definition_of_Forest.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> SA Department of Water Affairs and Forestry re 'Plantations are not Forests' debate. Forest Policy Directorate, 27-3-2001

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.timberwatch.org/index.php?id=119>

<sup>15</sup> <http://wrm.org.uy/actions-and-campaigns/tell-the-united-nations-plantations-are-not-forests>





The FAO debating team at the second public debate of FAO vs Civil Society, held at the end of the WFC and CSAP programmes. L-R, Tiina Vahanen, Eduardo Mansur, Jeff Campbell.



Stickers such as this were given to CSAP participants and supporters at the 'Real Forest Rally' march to deliver a petition<sup>16</sup> with more than 100, 000 signatures to the organisers of the WFC.

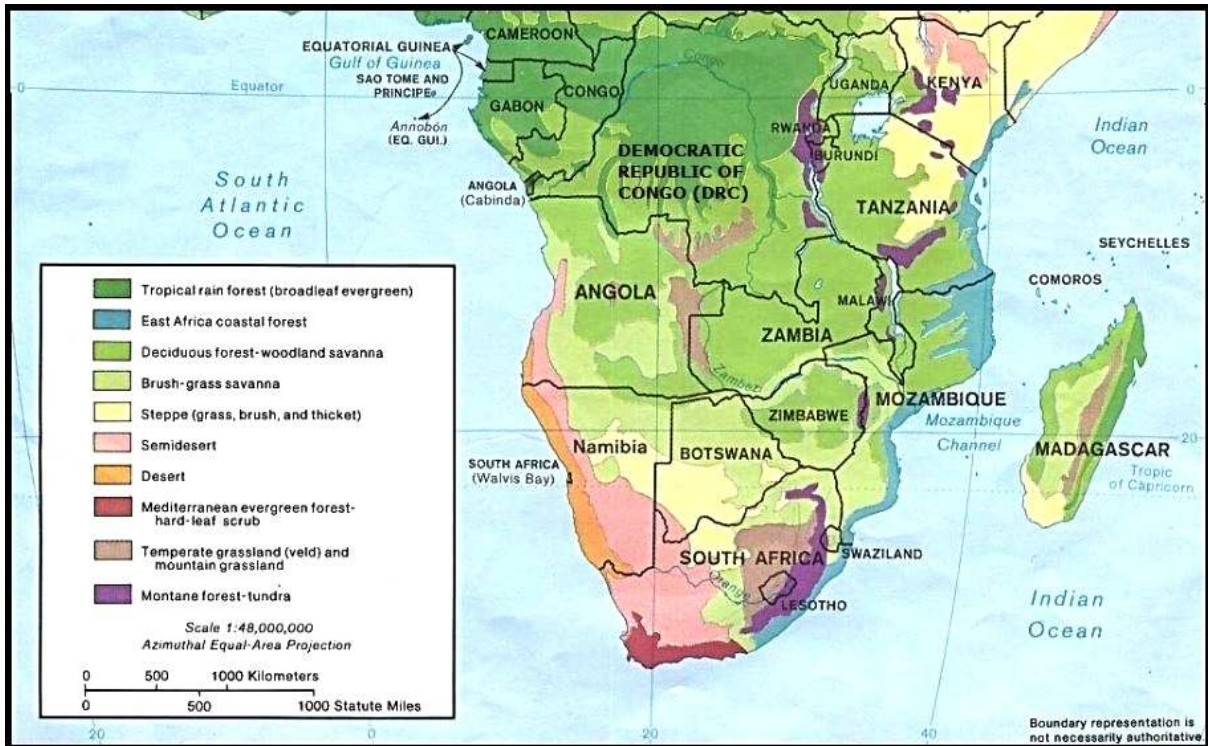


A Civil Society Alternative Programme (CSAP) banner used during the Real Forest Rally and 'fake forest' protest that took place in Durban, South Africa on 10 September 2015.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.rainforest-rescue.org/petitions/1013/tell-the-united-nations-plantations-are-crops-not-forests>



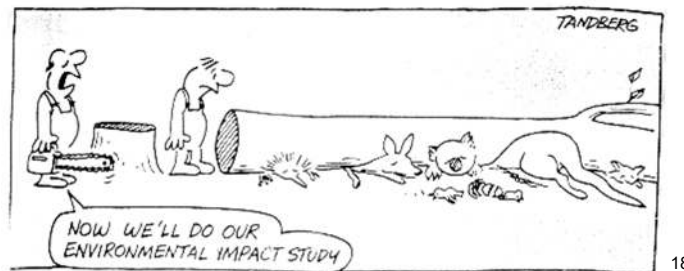
*Industrial tree plantations invading eastern and southern Africa*



Map (modified) showing the distribution of the main natural vegetation-types (biomes) in eastern and southern Africa. Source: Basic Maps of Africa<sup>17</sup>

The areas being targeted for the expansion of existing, or for the establishment of new tree plantations in eastern and southern Africa, are typically those with optimal tree growing conditions, in particular where there is an annual rainfall between 800 and 1200 mm p.a. The tropical rain forest, coastal forest, and woodland savanna zones shown on the map of the region above are generally areas where plantations of fast-growing trees will do well, because it is there where they will find sufficient water and suitable soil-types.

Timber companies also prefer to plan plantation projects in logistically strategic places within those regions with optimal growing conditions, e.g. along main roads, close to railways, urban centres and/or ports. Suitable land areas targeted for plantation expansion are, due to their characteristics, also where local communities can most often make their livings, or which can be utilised for supplying local markets with food that they grow or harvest there. Once-fertile land is being stripped of its biodiversity, and even the top soil, and left with very little of use or value to local communities; through the mindless short-term greed of timber, pulp and paper companies that cannot see beyond their next profit statement. As a result, conflicts with local communities resisting the invasion of their lands are likely to arise.



<sup>17</sup> Source: [http://www.catsg.org/cheetah/07\\_map-centre/7\\_1\\_entire-range/basic-maps/africa\\_vegetation.gif](http://www.catsg.org/cheetah/07_map-centre/7_1_entire-range/basic-maps/africa_vegetation.gif)

<sup>18</sup> Source: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/u3500e/u3500e06.htm>

### 3. Existing and future tree plantations

The main source of official information about the area of land under tree plantations in different countries is the FAO. However, in order to compile its 'forest' reports, the FAO relies mainly on figures provided by national governments. The reliability of available data is thus dependent on whether, or to what degree of accuracy, countries gather their tree cover data. If the governments cannot provide the required information, then the FAO might draw information from other sources such as timber company reports. For these and other reasons, the FAO figures are not always reliable, and in several countries, people have claimed that the tree plantation area is actually larger than stated in the official FAO figures.<sup>19</sup>

Table 10. Planted forest 1990-2015														
Country/Territory	Planted forest (1 000 ha)						Annual change rate							
	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	Tier trend	1990-2000		2000-2010		2010-2015		1990-2015	
							1 000 ha/yr	%	1 000 ha/yr	%	1 000 ha/yr	%	1 000 ha/yr	%
Kenya	163	120	166	193	220	1	-4.3	-3.0	7.3	4.9	5.4	2.7	2.3	1.2
Lesotho	6	8	9	10	17	1	0.2	3.2	0.2	2.4	1.3	10.5	0.4	4.3
Madagascar	231	272	290	415	312	1	4.1	1.6	14.3	4.3	-20.6	-5.5	3.2	1.2
Malawi	132	197	285	365	419	1	6.5	4.1	16.8	6.4	10.8	2.8	11.5	4.7
Mozambique	38	38	24	12	75	2	0.0	0.0	-2.6	-10.9	12.6	44.3	1.5	2.8
South Africa	1626	1724	1750	1763	1763	1	9.8	0.6	3.9	0.2	0.0	0.0	5.5	0.3
Swaziland	160	150	145	140	135	2	-1.0	-0.6	-1.0	-0.7	-1.0	-0.7	-1.0	-0.7
Uganda	34	32	31	55	60	1	-0.2	-0.6	2.3	5.6	1.0	1.8	1.0	2.3
United Republic of Tanzania	150	200	230	240	290	1	5.0	2.9	4.0	1.8	10.0	3.9	5.6	2.7
Zambia	60	60	60	62	64	1	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.3
Zimbabwe	154	120	108	87	87	1	-3.4	-2.5	-3.3	-3.2	0.0	0.0	-2.7	-2.3

Table: The area of "planted forest" (tree plantations) from 1990 - 2015 for the 11 subject countries, adapted from the table in FAO's "Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015"<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> Overbeek W, Kröger M, Gerber J.F. 2012. [An overview of industrial tree plantation conflicts in the global South. Conflicts, trends, and resistance struggles. EJOLT Report No. 3, p.100](#)

<sup>20</sup> GLOBAL FOREST RESOURCES ASSESSMENT 2015 Desk reference, FAO, 2015 - <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4808e.pdf>

The “Global Forest Resources Assessment” (FRA2015), released in September 2015 at the World Forestry Congress (WFC) in South Africa, favoured using “planted forests” to mean tree plantations. However, other FAO reports have used equally confusing and contradictory terms like “forest plantation”, “commercial plantation”, “plantation forest”, “forestry”, “afforestation” and “reforestation”<sup>21</sup> when referring to tree plantations. The FAO’s 2016 ‘State of the World’s Forests’<sup>22</sup> report, notably the section on Ghana (p.70), uses such terms quite randomly.

Based on FAO information, the overall trend between 1990 and 2015 in the 11 countries under the scope of this report, with the exceptions of Swaziland and Zimbabwe, is one of expanding ITPs. However, there is reason to doubt the accuracy of the information used by the FAO to calculate changes in areas covered by forests or tree plantations; because it appears some countries might have confused areas where tree plantations or infestations of alien trees have become established in the place of indigenous forests, with forests. CIFOR’s Peter Holmgren has attempted to defend the considerable differences between information in FAO’s FRA2015, and data from Global Forest Watch’s satellite-monitoring of changes in forest cover.<sup>23</sup> Peter Holmgren was previously employed at the FAO, where he helped promote the notion that tree plantation areas should be counted as forests when calculating global forest cover. This could mean that the actual area of forest that has been lost has been under-stated, whilst informal tree plantations and uncontrolled ‘feral tree invasions’ may have expanded exponentially.

Country	1990	1995	Change	2015	Change	2035
South Africa	1626 000	1428 600	137 000	1763 000	177 000	1940 000
Swaziland	160 000	135 000	-25 000	135 000	5 000	140 000
Lesotho	6 000	6 000	11 000	17 000	13 000	30 000
Zambia	60 000	60 000	4 000	64 000	20 000	84 000
Zimbabwe	154 000	110 000	-67 000	87 000	13 000	100 000
Malawi	132 000	122 000	287 000	419 000	-269 000	150 000
Mozambique	38 000	45 000	37 000	75 000	95 000	170 000
Kenya	163 000	240 000	57 000	220 000	80 000	300 000
Tanzania	150 000	200 000	140 000	290 000	50 000	340 000
Uganda	34 000	26 000	26 000	60 000	30 000	90 000
Madagascar	231 000	335 000	81 000	312 000	48 000	360 000
Total	2754 000	2707 600	688 000	3442 000	262 000	3704 000
Source	FRA 2015	FAO <sup>24</sup>	FRA 2015	FRA 2015	Estimate	Estimate

*Table comparing past estimates and increases (1990 to 2015) with estimated possible future expansion or contraction of tree plantations between 2015 and 2035, based on FRA 2015 (see above) and other FAO reports, as well as from other predictions cited in this briefing. (Note: Imprecise terminology, inconsistent reporting, possible arithmetical errors, and FAO’s confusing definitions of ‘forest’, could have contributed to variability in some of the 1990/1995-2015 estimates of so-called “planted forest” areas above, e.g. the large increase in Malawi’s “planted forest” area. The estimates by country for 2015-2035 will hopefully be more realistic.)*

<sup>21</sup> See FAO A & R definitions, 2000, Holmgren <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/006/ad665e/ad665e00.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> See FAO ‘State of the World’s Forests 2016’ - <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5588e.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> <http://blog.cifor.org/34669/can-we-trust-country-level-data-from-global-forest-assessments?fnl=en>

<sup>24</sup> FAO Forest Plantations Working Papers - TROPICAL FOREST PLANTATION AREAS - 1995 DATA SET - Based on the work in 1997 of D Pandey, May 2002 <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/006/Y7204E/Y7204E00.pdf>



As demonstrated by the table above, obtaining reliable or accurate information about the true extent of tree plantations can be a challenge, and this makes future projections even more difficult. This blog article by Jonah Busch makes a strong case in support of this assertion.<sup>25</sup>

In a study of wood consumption in Africa, an investment management fund called Global Environmental Fund (GEF), - not to be confused with the World Bank's Global Environment Facility (also known as GEF) - expects that demand for industrial wood and fuelwood in Africa will increase by more than 70% over the period 2010-2030.

Similarly, in 2012, Finnish consultancy Indufor predicted increased demand for wood, and an average annual expansion of tree plantations in Africa of 40,000 to 50,000 ha. Indufor considers this figure to be relatively low compared to other regions, due to difficulties with establishing new tree plantation projects in Africa. Although it believes there are "large, fertile and under-developed land areas suitable" for ITPs, it anticipates that not enough private capital will be invested because of the high risk of conflicts with local communities that claim ownership of the lands targeted for plantations<sup>26</sup>.

Indufor's assessment that Africa has great potential for new tree plantations has been confirmed by several other actors, such as the World Bank and other international financial institutions, including pension funds that are among those that invest in, and promote, tree plantation expansion in eastern and southern Africa. The Indufor consultancy also has its own "field projects" in Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique and South Africa.<sup>27</sup>



*'Feral' tree invasions such as this 'jungle-gum' eucalyptus thicket in South Africa, might qualify to be 'forests' by FAO rules, but they certainly should not be called such. Nor should they be classified as tree plantations, which need to be registered as 'water users', and to obtain licenses for their water consumption and stream flow reduction, in order to be "lawful", in terms of South Africa's National Water Act (No.36 of 1998).*

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.cgdev.org/blog/three-reasons-fao%E2%80%99s-new-forest-numbers-don%E2%80%99t-add>

<sup>26</sup> [www.globalenvironmentfund.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/GEF\\_Africa-will-Import-not-Export-Wood1.pdf](http://www.globalenvironmentfund.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/GEF_Africa-will-Import-not-Export-Wood1.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/pubdocs/publicdoc/2016/3/509791457041122238/Indufor-forestry-investments.pdf>

## **4. Drivers of tree plantation expansion**

### **Tree plantation expansion as ‘land-grabbing’ in Africa**

According to Jacovelli (2014), a main driver of the new wave of tree plantation projects in Africa over the past 5-10 years is finance capital focused on long-term speculation in land under tree plantations as a new investment option. Many of these investors would like some mature plantations to be included, in order to receive an early return on their investment. Such investors include both development banks – The African Development Bank (AfDB), The European Investment Bank (EIB) and the World Bank together with its commercial subsidiary and member of the World Bank Group, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), as well as private entities such as commercial banks, pension funds, and so-called ‘green investment’ funds, using money from private and public sources.

This wave of investors coming into Africa can be viewed as part of the broader land grabbing process taking place in the global South, but which is targeting Africa in particular in order to access productive land at very low cost. Their main goal is to establish large-scale projects to grow timber, sugar, and other agricultural crops for export to consumer countries. However, land is also targeted for other industrial activities such as mining and for private game ranches for tourism. In eastern and southern Africa, this new wave of foreign land grabbing has brought about programmes such as ProSavana in northern Mozambique.<sup>28</sup>

To facilitate land grabbing by their own companies, countries in the global North have created new financial instruments designed to make investments in foreign land and in infrastructure establishment easier. For example, in 2004 the US government set up the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), which plays a key role in commodifying African farmland and opening it to US-based agri-corporations. MCC has projects in eastern and southern Africa, for example in Madagascar and Mozambique.<sup>29</sup> Institutions like the IMF, the World Bank and other development banks formulate their policies along much the same lines.

In most African countries, there is land that officially belongs to the State but that in practice is owned by local communities that have lived on it for many generations. The way it is used has been determined through customary law by the traditional authorities of these communities. In many countries, local communities, indigenous peoples and supporting NGOs are engaged in joint struggles to obtain official recognition of the customary, collective ownership of land used and occupied by communities.

For that exact reason, it is a priority for foreign donor institutions, such as the MCC, to facilitate access to land for the benefit of foreign companies and their investors. For MCC, traditional land rights are seen as an obstacle to their goal of having secure control over the land areas they would like to see in the hands of investors. According to MCC’s Jolyne Sanjak: “What we’re working with the government on is ensuring that land lease-holds are secure, that the process for expiring the lease and transferring the lease is efficient”. As a result, the possibility of obtaining secure lease-holds has driven many investors to apply for concessions. In Mozambique for example, several million ha of prime land have passed into the hands of companies and investors in recent years, including for growing tree plantations.<sup>30</sup> However, the issue is not just about access to land for tree plantations. Foreign timber companies and investors in tree plantation projects and agribusiness clearly want access to not just any, but to land in Africa with the best agricultural potential. Markus Grulke, executive director of the

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<sup>28</sup> <http://wrm.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section2/prosavana-plan-in-mozambique-is-out-and-threatening-peasants-land>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.grain.org/article/entries/4501-the-great-food-robbery-a-new-book-from-grain>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.grain.org/article/entries/4501-the-great-food-robbery-a-new-book-from-grain>

plantation management company Unique, which has partnered with the agricultural investment firm Finance in Motion to create the Arbaro (investment) Fund, recently stated: “we are looking at investments where maximum timber growth per hectare can be achieved. In the tropics the limiting factor is rainfall and soil conditions. We are only going into regions that have annual rainfall of 1,200mm”.

When governments facilitate access to the most fertile lands by giving investors land leases or concessions, they exempt them from the need to invest part of their money in buying land, and this encourages them to occupy even more land from which they can increase their profits even further. According to Grulke, “We have learned in [recent] years that [land-lease models] are also positive for returns. We have had very good experience in land-lease models... With leases you may have access to great land that is not for sale. This means that the creation of economic value and impact is much higher because you are planting a much larger area with the same amount of money. Your mitigation of carbon and production of timber is also much higher with the same amount of investment capital”<sup>31</sup>.

The aforementioned Arbaro fund, aiming for a total amount of EUR 200 million, has already secured EUR 50 million from the European Investment Bank, and plans to invest this in tree plantations in Africa and South America.

### ***The Global Solidarity Forest Fund: Making a profit, or eradicating poverty?***

*Among the new investors in tree plantation projects in Africa are some actors that have historically played a major role in activities around charity work and poverty eradication, not in private business activities: Churches. An example is the Global Solidarity Forest Fund (GSFF), based in Sweden and created by the Diocese of Vasteras, the Lutheran Church of Sweden, with the participation of the Norwegian Lutheran Church Endowment. However, the main investor (57%) of the 100 million US\$ Fund was the non-church Dutch Pension Fund, ABP. (1)*

*The GSFF partnered with the Anglican Church in the province of Niassa in Mozambique, the Harvard-owned Diversified International Timber Holdings LLC, and the Danish Forestry Fund, in the tree plantation company Chikweti, in Niassa. The Anglican Bishop of Niassa chaired the company for a period. (2)*

*Chikweti promoted its monoculture tree plantations as being socially beneficial, but then instead of it being praised for eradicating poverty, the company was denounced for its negative impacts on the local peasant communities. (3) Perhaps because of this situation, GSFF transferred all of its Mozambique assets to the Norwegian-owned company Green Resources (GR) in 2014, with GR taking over the tree plantations that had previously been managed by Chikweti.*

*Note: It was later reported that Green Resources was experiencing “negative cash flows”, and the Phaunos Investment Fund had therefore decided to sell its “high risk” 14% stake in Green Resources. (4) The news report: “Norwegian forestry firm’s losses mount after Mozambique acquisitions” (5) reveals much about Green Resources’ financial situation.*

(1) [www.fian.org/fileadmin/media/publications/PR - 2012.10.16 - Tree plantations Niassa Mozambique.pdf](http://www.fian.org/fileadmin/media/publications/PR_-_2012.10.16_-_Tree_plantations_Niassa_Mozambique.pdf)

(2) <https://www.svenskakyrkan.se/default.aspx?id=1139326>

(3) [www.wrm.org.uy/oldsite/bulletin/161/Mozambique.html](http://www.wrm.org.uy/oldsite/bulletin/161/Mozambique.html)

(4) [www.phaunostimber.com/content/uploads/2014/04/PHAUNOS-Annual-Report-Dec-2015-FINAL-PRINTED.pdf](http://www.phaunostimber.com/content/uploads/2014/04/PHAUNOS-Annual-Report-Dec-2015-FINAL-PRINTED.pdf)

(5) <http://zitamar.com/norwegian-forestry-firms-losses-mount-mozambique-acquisitions>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.agriinvestor.com/12595-2/>



## **Some key actors in tree plantation expansion**

The deliberately confusing FAO forest definition, and its misleading “forest cover” figures, makes the FAO a relevant, but also an irresponsible contributor to the complex and perverse mix of drivers that are behind plans for the expansion of tree plantations in eastern and southern Africa.

For example, systematically defining tree plantations as a “type of forest” disguises the true extent of national and global deforestation. It also helps to appease countries that never had forests, or have already lost all of their forests, because it allows them to claim that they are creating or increasing their “forest cover”. Under the recently approved “Paris Agreement”, which is now the official United Nations response to the climate crisis<sup>32</sup>, tree plantations are also classified as “forests” with the potential to temporarily store carbon sequestered from the atmosphere. This provides an incentive to create more “forest cover” with tree plantations, also erroneously called “planted forests” in the jargon of the FAO. But this is promoting a false solution to the climate crisis, which will cause many new problems for communities in Africa, including the devastation of the natural environment, when tree plantations invade their territories.<sup>33</sup>

Another key group of actors that promote and have a direct financial interest in tree plantation expansion globally, are international ‘forestry’ consultancies, mainly from countries in the global North with established wood-based industries such as Finland, Sweden, Germany and the USA. Indufor and Pöyry from Finland, for example, help identify ‘new markets’ and ‘assist’ national governments in drawing up their national ‘forest plans’ that often have a strong emphasis on new tree plantations<sup>34</sup>.

For example, in 2011 Pöyry produced a “Review on industrial forest plantations in Africa”, which is for sale to interested buyers for about US\$ 11,000. This report reveals “what countries have good potential for expanding plantation development” and also “what countries are currently ‘hot spots’ for plantation development”. Although it will be costly to access the details, the introduction publicised on-line reveals 3 key purposes for plantations that investors could explore if they plan to invest in Africa:

- The “good potential to develop local markets for wood products”;
- Pöyry’s view of Africa as “potentially an important future source of biomass for the European bioenergy sector”;
- And Pöyry’s assessment of Africa as “ideally placed to supply the Asian log and pulpwood markets”.

Buying Pöyry’s report will give access to information on “incentives/subsidies that might be available to plantation developers” in the selected countries. All of the eastern and southern African countries discussed in this briefing are profiled in Pöyry’s study as countries with potential for tree plantation development<sup>35</sup>.

Agencies and/or ministries for development co-operation of the governments of the same Northern countries as the consultancy companies mentioned before, including Finnfund (Finland), NORAD (Norway), SIDA (Sweden) and DIFID (Denmark), are often also active in helping countries to establish ‘good local conditions’ for establishing tree plantations. For

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<sup>32</sup> Because it is based on the belief that the climate crisis is just an issue of too much carbon in the wrong place: the atmosphere (see also in <http://wrm.org.uy/actions-and-campaigns/the-climate-and-forest-crises-cannot-be-solved-with-number-games-and-false-solutions> )

<sup>33</sup> <http://wrm.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section1/new-forests-for-africa-a-nice-slogan-for-promoting-industrial-tree-plantations>

<sup>34</sup> Overbeek W, Kröger M, Gerber J.F. 2012. [An overview of industrial tree plantation conflicts in the global South. Conflicts, trends, and resistance struggles. EJOLT Report No. 3, p.100](#)

<sup>35</sup> [http://www.poyry.com/sites/default/files/africanplantationforestry\\_-\\_june2011-lfwp-br.pdf](http://www.poyry.com/sites/default/files/africanplantationforestry_-_june2011-lfwp-br.pdf)

example, in Tanzania a Finnish funded governmental programme was launched in 2013 to promote private sector investment in tree plantation projects in the country.<sup>36</sup> However, merely three years later, this activity has been recognised as inappropriate, having the potential to cause problems that needed to be assessed urgently<sup>37</sup>.

### **Reasons why tree plantation projects are promoted**

A recent paper<sup>38</sup> on tree plantation development globally, called attention to the trend of setting up industrial tree plantations for multiple uses, aimed at new and additional opportunities, probably as a way to deal with the effects of the global economic crisis. In keeping with this trend, a tree plantation project could be used both to generate carbon credits for sale to Northern polluters<sup>39</sup>, as well as to produce timber for sale in local markets. Alternatively, the wood from plantations could be used for pulp production, or exported to Europe as woody biomass for energy production. In line with this trend, investors in eastern and southern African tree plantation projects often mention more than one purpose or product to promote their plantations, thereby hoping to expand the options to increase profits from their projects.

### **Plantations for timber (saw logs) or energy (fuelwood/charcoal)**

According to a 2013 study of the US-based investment group, the Global Environment Fund (GEF)<sup>40</sup>, “there are two major components to wood consumption in Africa: fuel wood and industrial round wood”. It estimates total annual consumption of wood in Africa to be around 700 million m<sup>3</sup>, of which 75 million m<sup>3</sup> is used for industrial products, with the remainder (625 million m<sup>3</sup>) being burned as fuel wood or as charcoal, more than in any other continent. Furthermore, according to the GEF, both uses are set to increase in the near future. At present, most of the wood being consumed comes from native woody vegetation, including forests.

Several investors in tree plantation projects in eastern and southern Africa state that their plantations will supply saw logs for furniture or timber for firewood, for both domestic and export markets. This is the case with the Norwegian owned Green Resources (GR) company, which has tree plantations and a sawmill in Tanzania, ‘carbon offset’ tree plantations in Uganda, and also claims to be involved in charcoal production in Mozambique<sup>41</sup>.

Companies such as GR that push both eucalyptus and pine plantations, often claim that their activities reduce pressure on native forests. However, the opposite is more often true. In Mozambique, after almost 10 years of investment in and expansion of eucalyptus and pine tree plantations, native forests continue to be destroyed for the extraction and export of high value timber from species other than eucalyptus or pine. The timber is often illegally logged and exported to China.<sup>42</sup> In turn, tree plantation expansion has also been denounced as a direct and indirect cause of deforestation. For example, according to affected local communities, tree plantation expansion in the Niassa province of Mozambique has destroyed large areas of forest. A villager of the Micoco community in Niassa, referring to Chikweti, one of the main companies then active in the region, declared: “They are knocking down trees and everything else that is on our land”.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Jacovelli, P.A. 2014. The future of plantations in Africa. *International Forestry Review* Vol16(2)

<sup>37</sup> See <http://drp.dfcentre.com/project/timber-rush-private-forestry-village-land>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.tni.org/en/collection/flex-crops>

<sup>39</sup> For information on carbon credit projects in Africa, see <http://wrm.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section1/uganda-carbon-plantations-generate-benefits-for-foreign-investors-and-certifiers-while-communities-pay-price-of-displaced-livelihoods>

<sup>40</sup> [www.globalenvironmentfund.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/GEF\\_Africa-will-Import-not-Export-Wood1.pdf](http://www.globalenvironmentfund.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/GEF_Africa-will-Import-not-Export-Wood1.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.greenresources.no>

<sup>42</sup> <http://wrm.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/forests-in-mozambique-face-extinction>

<sup>43</sup> <http://wrm.org.uy/books-and-briefings/an-overview-of-industrial-tree-plantations-in-the-global-south-conflicts-trends-and-resistance-struggles>

Besides, many Africans who make a living from collecting firewood and making charcoal are not allowed to enter the companies' tree plantations, and this leads to conflicts when people try to collect firewood in areas they could access before the plantations arrived. To secure their livelihoods, they have no alternative but to increase pressure on other forest areas.

### **Plantations for pulp and paper production**

Wood is the main raw material used in paper production. Just as ITPs have expanded more rapidly in the global South than in the North over the past two decades, so have polluting pulp and paper mills followed much the same trend. Multinational pulp and paper corporations have closed down their expensive to operate older mills in the North, and built new and bigger ones in the South. However, these new pulp mills export most of their production to industrialised regions where per capita consumption is much higher, i.e. countries in the global North. A typical example is Sappi's SAICCOR and Ngodwana pulp mills in South Africa that convert wood from tree plantations to produce over a million tonnes of "chemical cellulose" (dissolving pulp) fibre yearly for export. China has imported more pulp in recent years, although part of this is to supply its growing urban population. Even so, much of the increase in the use of pulp and paper in China is due to demand for packaging from its manufacturing sector, to wrap products for export, as well as producing sanitary products and viscose fabrics for the clothing industry, again to a large extent in order to meet demand from consumers in the global North.

But the escalating trend of new and expanding pulp plantations and mills in the global South has not yet materialised in eastern and southern Africa, apart from in South Africa. It has been concentrated more in South America and Asia. Among the 11 countries under the scope of this report, only 4 have pulp mills, most originally built during the mid-1900s. South Africa has 10 pulp mills, mostly owned by multinational companies Sappi and Mondi. Sappi's Usutu mill in Swaziland was built about 65 years ago, but was moth-balled in 2010 and sold in 2014.<sup>44</sup> Kenya has only one pulp and paper mill, part of the Pan African Paper Mills (PPM) group and partly owned by the government of Kenya (33.4%), the Orient Paper Company of India (24%) and the World Bank's IFC (29%). There is only one small paper mill in Tanzania, Mufindi Pulp and Paper, which was originally established with World Bank funding of US\$60 million in 1986, but then sold in 2004 to the Rai Group from Kenya in for just US\$1 million.<sup>45</sup>

One reason for this situation is that new pulp mills needs 50,000 to 100,000 ha of tree plantations near to the mill to ensure a continuous supply of 'fresh logs'. According to the GEF study<sup>46</sup> mentioned before, about 64% of tree plantations in Africa are considered to be of poor or fair quality, and not highly productive. Moreover, building new pulp mills – that always tend to be bigger than the older ones - requires an increasingly bigger investment of several billion US\$, which is much more than the cost of setting up tree plantations. This also requires that a company obtains guarantees from the country government involved before deciding to go ahead with such a large investment. Guarantees usually provide for financial incentives and subsidies, facilities for importing machinery and to export the products, as well as good infrastructure (roads and port facilities), which few countries in Africa can offer.

Besides facing the obstacles mentioned above, a new pulp mill in Africa would also have to compete with those already established in other countries in the global South, such as Brazil and Chile in South America, and Indonesia and China in Asia, where companies supported by national governments are also keen to increase their production capacity. Existing mills have often been designed in a way that facilitates future expansion at the same location.

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<sup>44</sup> <http://www.observer.org.sz/news/64036-swazis-buy-usutu-forest-for-e1-billion.htm>

<sup>45</sup> [http://www.lesprom.com/en/news/Tanzanias\\_Mufindi\\_Paper\\_Mills\\_in\\_full\\_production\\_35141](http://www.lesprom.com/en/news/Tanzanias_Mufindi_Paper_Mills_in_full_production_35141)

<sup>46</sup> [http://www.globalenvironmentfund.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/GEF\\_Africa-will-Import-not-Export-Wood1.pdf](http://www.globalenvironmentfund.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/GEF_Africa-will-Import-not-Export-Wood1.pdf)



Another factor that makes it difficult for pulp mill projects to start expanding plantations in this region, is that since the economic crisis in 2008 in the US and Europe, demand for pulp and paper has declined, and thus negatively affected new investment plans.<sup>47</sup>

But this does not mean that Africa will not be targeted for further expansion of its pulpwood plantation area. It could very well, for example, supply pulp mills elsewhere, by exporting wood chips. Companies in Chile initially exported wood chips for pulp production in other countries, before building their first pulp mill. Nowadays, part of South Africa's timber production is also exported in the form of wood chips, mainly to Japan, which has a big paper and packaging industry but relatively few forests or tree plantations due to its limited land area.

For now, it appears there is only one new pulp mill planned for eastern and southern Africa, the World Bank (IFC) supported project in Mozambique (see country information) of the Portuguese company Portucel. The project is still in the initial phase of trying to establish tree plantations, and if it is built, the mill is only expected to start production by 2025<sup>48</sup>. However, it is expected that Green Resources will try to obtain finance for its own pulp mill in Mozambique, otherwise try to join forces with another local plantation company. It states on its website: "Green Resources believes Nacala is a very good location for a future pulp mill and expects significant wood chipping and/or pellet production to start well ahead of a pulp mill."<sup>49</sup>

However, the local group Justiça Ambiental – Ja! (Friends of the Earth Mozambique) is resisting Portucel's plans for a pulp mill, and recently released a report titled "**Portucel – the Process of accessing Land, and the rights of communities**". To access the report in Portuguese: "*Portucel - O Processo de acesso à Terra e os direitos das comunidades*" go to [https://issuu.com/justicaambiental/docs/portucel\\_com\\_graficos\\_novos](https://issuu.com/justicaambiental/docs/portucel_com_graficos_novos)



*An unprotected (unfenced and unguarded) polluted effluent pond, with eucalyptus pulpwood plantations in the background. This is at the Mpact (formerly Mondi Packaging)<sup>50</sup> pulp and paper mill (FSC-C117980) near the town of Piet Retief in Mpumalanga province, South Africa.*

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.cepi.org/taxonomy/term/26>

<sup>48</sup> <http://en.portucelmocambique.com/Portucel-Mocambique>

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.greenresources.no/Plantations/Mozambique/Lurio.aspx>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.bdlive.co.za/business/industrials/2016/05/24/mpacts-profit-warning-sends-share-plunging>

## **Tree plantations as sinks for carbon dioxide emissions**

The idea of creating ‘carbon sinks’ has been driving tree plantation expansion in eastern and southern Africa for more than two decades, in response to the opportunity to make easy money by generating and selling so-called carbon credits. The planting of trees is included as a form of climate change mitigation under the CDM (Clean Development Mechanism) of the Kyoto Protocol, as agreed in 1997 under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This was supposedly to help counter the climate change crisis, but it was mainly intended to help satisfy the interests of Northern countries and companies that preferred not to actually reduce their industrial carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. They chose to rather invest in the so-called “clean development mechanisms” (also known as ‘false climate solutions’), e.g. the large-scale planting of trees in countries of the global South. Clearly, this was seen as a much cheaper alternative to physically reducing their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions at home.

Besides, companies that invested in such projects probably also expected an improved public image from the ‘positive’ and ‘green’ activity of planting trees in Africa. However, the outcome has been just the opposite: For example, in 1994 one of the first carbon-offset tree plantation projects was set up in Uganda by the Dutch FACE foundation (now called Face the Future). Covering 25,000 ha at the edge of the Mount Elgon National Park, this project resulted in severe human rights violations. Local people were expelled from the area and lost their livelihoods; and the project was denounced as a form of neo-colonialism.<sup>51</sup>

Despite the social and environmental violations by this ‘pioneering project’, similar carbon plantation projects continued to be set up in Uganda and other African countries over the following years. Examples are the UK New Forests Company, also in Uganda<sup>52</sup>, as well as the aforementioned Norwegian company Green Resources (GR)<sup>53</sup>, which with financial backing from the Norwegian government (Norfund) and the IFC, established thousands of ha of poor quality tree plantations on community land in southern Tanzania, and then boasted on its website that it is “one of the first companies globally to receive carbon revenue from its plantation forests”.<sup>54</sup>

Up till now, carbon markets have been a financial failure, and as a consequence carbon credit prices have stayed low. The expansion of this type of tree plantation has therefore been far less rapid than their promoters would have hoped. The slow rate at which these projects have advanced is largely due to human rights violations at community level being publicly exposed; which shows the importance of giving visibility to such conflicts.<sup>55</sup> The violations of people’s rights clearly show that what matters most to the owners of such projects are the trees and the carbon stored in their wood, not the affected land or local people. On the contrary, affected local communities are often perceived as a threat to achieving the objectives of the project.

A report published by Timberwatch in 2011 describes the negative social and environmental impacts of Green Resources’ carbon sink tree plantation project at Idete in southern Tanzania.<sup>56</sup> Considering this, and how rapidly Green Resources has managed to expand its controversial tree plantation operations into several sub-Saharan countries, also raises critical questions concerning the real intentions of its institutional investors, e.g. Norfund<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> [http://wrm.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Place\\_Store\\_Carbon.pdf](http://wrm.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Place_Store_Carbon.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> <http://wrm.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section2/uganda-new-forests-company-fsc-legitimizes-the-eviction-of-thousands-of-people-from-their-land-and-the-sale-of-carbon-credits>

<sup>53</sup> <http://carbonmarketwatch.org/engos-and-scientists-challenge-the-swedish-energy-agency-stop-supporting-false-climate-change-solutions-in-uganda/>

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.greenresources.no/News/tabid/93/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/3/Green-Resources-First-CDM-Registration-in-Uganda-and-Tanzanian-VCS-Sales-Agreement.aspx>

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.pambazuka.org/governance/unclean-development-mechanism>

<sup>56</sup> [http://timberwatch.org/uploads/TW%20Tanzania%20CDM%20plantations%20report%20low%20res%20\(1\).pdf](http://timberwatch.org/uploads/TW%20Tanzania%20CDM%20plantations%20report%20low%20res%20(1).pdf)

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.norfund.no/eastern-africa/green-resources-article342-319.html>

## **Tree plantations for biodiesel or for woody biomass fuel**

In 2009, the European Union (EU) decided that member countries should comply to a 20% renewable energy target by 2020. Between 2006 and 2010, *Jatropha curcas* plantations were among the first bioenergy plantations set up in the region in response to and in anticipation of this demand for biodiesel in the EU. *Jatropha* plantations were established in Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar and Swaziland to produce biodiesel from *jatropha* seeds<sup>58</sup>. However, nearly all of these projects failed, and in the end, the subsidies from the EU benefited only those who received the funds directly, such as project developers and consultants.

Most of the alternative 'green' energy needed in the EU is expected to come from burning woody biomass. Europe does not have enough trees planted in its own land area to meet this demand, so it is now importing increasing amounts of woody biomass, mostly from the southern US, which still has large areas of forest and tree plantations. This means that up till now the increasing demand for woody biomass from certain countries in the EU has not yet been a strong driver of tree plantation expansion in eastern and southern Africa.

However, Africa could still be potential exporter of woody biomass to Europe if demand increases, and North American tree biomass resources are depleted. Once again, Brazil and other more established timber producing countries and regions would most likely out-compete African countries for the biomass market in Europe. Perhaps the coastal countries in eastern and southern Africa that are relatively closer to China and the Asian region in comparison to South America will have a competitive advantage for meeting future demand from Asia.

## **The threat of 'forests for Africa' and 'reforestation' plans**

The 'Paris Agreement' negotiated in December 2015 in France opened the door for several false solutions to the climate change crisis. Among these is the aforementioned mechanism for attempting to store carbon temporarily in trees, by setting up industrial tree plantation projects. Meanwhile, industrialised countries can continue to increase their CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gas emissions by burning fossil fuels, whilst aggravating climate change for some time. The concept of 'reforesting' the world, and especially the African continent, with millions of trees, gained a prominent place in some of the parallel events at the UN climate conference. It was said that Africa would have "the largest restoration opportunity of any continent"<sup>59</sup>.

The most ambitious 'reforestation' plan announced in Paris was the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100), which is supposed to mitigate climate change and on top of that benefit the African people. It claims that 100 million ha of 'deforested' and 'degraded' lands in Africa can be restored by 2030. This scheme aims to complement (1) the Bonn Challenge, a commitment to restore 150 million ha around the world by 2020; (2) the New York Declaration on Forests, which builds on and extends the Bonn Challenge to 350 million ha by 2030; and (3) the African Resilient Landscapes Initiative (ARLI), to promote integrated landscape management with the goal of adapting to and mitigating climate change<sup>60</sup>.

Since the 1960s, the World Bank has been actively promoting new tree plantations in eastern and southern Africa and globally, and it is the biggest funder and one of the main proponents of top-down international "reforestation" plans. The Bank announced that it will provide AFR100 with US\$ 1 billion in institutional investments in 14 countries by 2030. This will be complemented by Germany's federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) that will provide financial support for the structure of the AFR100 initiative. FAO is also

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<sup>58</sup> <http://www.recommon.org/eng/land-grabs-madagascar-voices-ground-2013-report-launch>

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.wri.org/our-work/project/AFR100/about-afr100>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.wri.org/our-work/project/AFR100/about-afr100>



one of the key partners in the project, as well as the World Resources Institute (WRI). The private funders are mainly finance capital investment companies like the Dutch Sustainable Forest Investments (SFI)<sup>61</sup>. The total amount committed by private funders would be around US\$ 540 million<sup>62</sup>. To date, commitments from African governments in terms of areas to be “restored” by the programme total 41 million ha in 13 countries, including several of those under the scope of this briefing: Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique Malawi and Uganda.

The World Bank and the FAO, as well as other partners of AFR100, also led an overly ambitious plan very similar to the AFR100 more than 30 years ago. It was called the Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP)<sup>63</sup>. The TFAP was a failure, and one of the reasons for this was strong resistance from local communities in reaction to the strong push by the TFAP for monoculture tree plantations. AFR100, with the same actors involved, and formulated around objectives that are very similar to those of the TFAP, carries the risk that it will also be another huge incentive for large-scale industrial tree plantation expansion as a way to achieve its ‘restoration’ targets. Once again, it would be for the benefit of investors and tree plantation companies, and bring many problems and human rights violations for communities.

In April 2016, along similar lines, the World Bank launched its 2016 to 2020 Forest Action Plan (FAP) focused on what is called “sustainable forestry” and “Forest-Smart interventions”. The FAP is a guide for other World Bank forest-related programs like its Program on Forests (PROFOR)<sup>64</sup> and Forest Investment Program (FIP)<sup>65</sup>. It states that “globally, about 2 billion ha of degraded forest land could be restored to functional, productive ecosystems that help fight climate change”. A few lines further on, it calls for “increasing investments in planted forests”. This hints at how the World Bank sees “functional” and “productive ecosystems”. It then states that it aims to be “working in partnership with the private sector to make their business models forest-smart”, adding later that the commercial arm of the Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), “can partner with responsible private sector investors...”, encouraging more of what is called “responsible investments in large-scale commercial reforestation”.<sup>66</sup>

## **REDD+ and the Green Climate Fund (GCF)**

For the 2015 UNFCCC COP21 climate negotiations in Paris, countries publicly submitted their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC), outlining the greenhouse gas reduction targets that each country would voluntarily commit to achieving in the post-2020 period. Mozambique made reference in its INDC<sup>67</sup> to a national REDD+ strategy as a way to mitigate the effects of climate change. By adopting a forest definition in their REDD+ strategy<sup>68</sup> that is very similar to, and based on the FAO’s ‘one-size-fits-all’ forest definition, Mozambique's national REDD+ strategy opens the door to “planted forests”– read monoculture tree plantations – for carbon sequestration, as an opportunity to attract climate funding. For example, through the Green Climate Fund, one of the main funds, established by governments, money will be available to finance mitigation and adaptation activities.<sup>69</sup>

The ‘No REDD in Africa Network (NRAN)<sup>70</sup> is a group of concerned NGOs and individuals working to expose the harsh realities of REDD+ in terms of the ways in which it will cause

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.wri.org/our-work/project/AFR100/impact-investors#project-tabs>

<sup>62</sup> <http://www.cp-africa.com/2015/12/07/10-african-couche-the-afr-100>

<sup>63</sup> <http://wrm.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section1/tropical-forestry-action-plan30-the-fao-and-the-world-bank-are-at-the-center-of-another-false-solution-to-the-forest-crisis-redd-and-climate-smart-agriculture>

<sup>64</sup> [www.profor.info](http://www.profor.info)

<sup>65</sup> <https://www-cif.climateinvestmentfunds.org/fund/forest-investment-program>

<sup>66</sup> <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/pt/2016/04/26229494/forest-action-plan-fy1620>

<sup>67</sup> [http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/Mozambique/1/MOZ\\_INDC\\_Final\\_Version.pdf](http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/Mozambique/1/MOZ_INDC_Final_Version.pdf)

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.redd.org.mz/uploads/Relat%C3%B3rios/25.pdf>

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.ciel.org/green-climate-fund-dos-and-donts-the-case-of-redd>

<sup>70</sup> See the NRAN website for more information: [www.no-redd-africa.org](http://www.no-redd-africa.org)

harm to local communities and damage ecosystems without doing anything to prevent climate change. They believe that REDD, like CDM “afforestation and reforestation” is a fake solution.

### **Certification as a perverse incentive for tree plantation expansion**

The main motivation for timber companies to be certified is that ‘responsible’ investors in tree plantation projects usually require a ‘green’ certificate assuring the ‘quality’ of the investment for marketing purposes. Only then will such investors be willing to put money into a plantation project because such certification provides a kind of ‘proof’ that the investment is a ‘good one’.

Although certification audits are performed by supposedly independent third parties known as ‘certification bodies’, the company hired to carry out the audit and to certify the plantation is paid directly by the plantation company seeking certification, which raises questions regarding the impartiality of the certification bodies approved by FSC. Experiences of so-called “forest certification” throughout the region have shown that the practice of certifying forests or tree plantations (‘fake forests’) as “responsibly managed forests” by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), has invariably served to legitimise the negative impacts of existing tree plantations, and to justify establishing new and larger tree plantations<sup>71</sup>. New tree plantations displace local communities or wildlife, destroy farmland or natural habitat, and deplete the soil and water resources needed to sustain future generations of food farmers and people living in the cities.<sup>72</sup> The FSC has certified about 14 million ha of such plantations worldwide.<sup>73</sup>

Besides endorsing the destructive conversion of natural habitat, cultivated fields and livestock pastures, the certification of tree plantations by FSC also legitimises ‘management practices’ that are used to deliberately harm or destroy natural flora and fauna. For example, after trees have been planted, toxic herbicides are used to eradicate biodiversity rich native vegetation that might compete with the plantation trees for water and nutrients. This also exposes the soil to erosion and the loss of biological carbon. Chemical pesticides are also applied to control insects and rodents that might eat the young trees after their natural food has been poisoned. But even worse is the killing of larger mammals such as baboons, which are eradicated by shooting, trapping or setting poisoned baits. In South Africa and Zimbabwe, thousands of highly intelligent baboons, which are closely related to humans, have been murdered by tree plantation companies. Despite opposition to this practice, and a complaint submitted to FSC International by the South African NGO GeaSphere<sup>74</sup>, the killing has continued.<sup>75</sup>

Case studies and articles illustrating the negative effects of certification have been published, but some large ‘conservation’ NGOs still collaborate with the FSC and timber companies in promoting tree plantations that cause harm to biodiversity and local communities. An example of this is the partnership between WWF and Mondi to promote the establishment of extensive so-called “New Generation Plantations” (NGP), which are really no better than the average existing tree plantation in South Africa, which can hardly be considered acceptable.<sup>76</sup> Instead of attempting to address the negative impacts of industrial tree plantations, certification by the FSC and similar schemes has become a green-washing campaign to market plantation timber by promoting its products as being “environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable”. This has allowed the tree plantation industry to win undeserved approval and support from national governments and agencies of the United Nations such as the UNFCCC, the FAO and the World Bank.

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<sup>71</sup> <https://fsc-watch.com>

<sup>72</sup> [www.globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/LIFEASCOMMERCE-CERTIFICATION.pdf](http://www.globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/LIFEASCOMMERCE-CERTIFICATION.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> [http://wrm.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/FSC\\_consultation\\_and\\_complaints\\_procedures.pdf](http://wrm.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/FSC_consultation_and_complaints_procedures.pdf)

<sup>74</sup> [www.geasphere.org](http://www.geasphere.org)

<sup>75</sup> [www.geasphere.org/baboon-issue/3-2011-01-11-baboon-damage-problem-in-fsc-certified-plantations/file](http://www.geasphere.org/baboon-issue/3-2011-01-11-baboon-damage-problem-in-fsc-certified-plantations/file)

<sup>76</sup> [www.mondigroup.com/PortalData/1/Resources/newsroom/NGP\\_Media\\_Release\\_170614.pdf](http://www.mondigroup.com/PortalData/1/Resources/newsroom/NGP_Media_Release_170614.pdf)

## **5. Community struggles against tree plantations**

Although the drivers of tree plantation expansion in Africa and the different purposes for which the plantations might be used may be many, the impacts on communities are often very similar, as most companies use the same model of large-scale, most often eucalyptus plantations, and also often apply identical strategies and tactics to promote their projects in eastern and southern Africa.

### **The loss of lands and livelihoods, and impacts on food sovereignty**

One of the main challenges for communities in the region under the scope of this report is – in the context of the broader land grabbing process - to secure and to maintain control over the lands on which they depend, and which they use according to customary practices. This is especially true in eastern Africa where about 75% of the population lives in rural areas<sup>77</sup>. Most often, their livelihoods are dependent on the food they themselves are able to produce.

With national governments facilitating access for tree plantation and finance capital companies to fertile land, the impacts on people's livelihoods can be immediate and disastrous, leading to the displacement of entire communities. According to a September 2011 report by Oxfam, "The New Forests Company and its Uganda plantations", the Ugandan National Forestry Authority (NFA) granted licences for concession to the New Forests Company (NFC) in 2005 and then started to remove the inhabitants, which it claimed were 'illegal encroachers'. This took place by February 2010 in Mubende and between 2006 and July 2010 in Kiboga. Oxfam's research estimates that the number of evictees was 22,500, although that figure could be substantially higher.<sup>78</sup>

In cases where companies did not physically expel families from their homes, they often restrict access to their agricultural lands and forests, yet deny that this happens. In Nampula province in Mozambique, for example, companies such as Green Resources, operating under the name Lurio Green Resources, claim publicly that they only plant eucalyptus trees on "low-value grassland or degraded forestland." Yet villagers who have been directly affected affirm without exception that the company is planting on arable land, land that families were or are using for growing their food, or are planning to use as fields, the so-called 'machambas'. People say that in recent years, when eucalyptus plantations were established on community land by the company, local food production decreased<sup>79</sup>.

One tactic companies use to facilitate access to "machambas", is offering jobs. In the Ile district of Zambezia province in Mozambique, villagers in the area where pulp and paper company Portucel is promoting ITPs<sup>80</sup>, were offered a job by the company in exchange for their 'machamba'. Villagers report that the company offered to pay about US\$ 60 per month. But the work was only to clear their own 'machamba', prepare the land for planting eucalyptus seedlings, and after planting, to look after these seedlings during the initial growth phase. After that, villagers reported that the company had fired them, though they had expected the job to be permanent. As a result, they remained 'fenced in' by eucalyptus plantations, without work or land on which to grow their food.

A villager in Nampula province participated in a programme promoting soybean production. But Lurio Green Resources only provided the initial seeds, later extracting an extra 20% from

<sup>77</sup> [http://www.geohive.com/earth/pop\\_urban.aspx](http://www.geohive.com/earth/pop_urban.aspx)

<sup>78</sup> [www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/cs-new-forest-company-uganda-plantations-220911-en.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/cs-new-forest-company-uganda-plantations-220911-en.pdf)

<sup>79</sup> Notes from a field trip by WRM to Mozambique in collaboration with Justiça Ambiental, 2015

<sup>80</sup> Part of their plan to set up 60,000 ha of eucalyptus plantations - authorized by the Mozambique government, <http://ifcextapps.ifc.org/ifcext/spiwebsite1.nsf/78e3b305216fcd8a85257a8b0075079d/641968a1f67cea1185257d6200735d53?opendocument>



the farmers. For example, those who received 20 kg of soybean seeds had to return 24kg to the company after the harvest. The villager explained that no one in the community eats soy, because it's not part of their traditional diet. Instead, the soy produced is sold to the poultry industry. However, this farmer felt discouraged because his income had decreased due to the price of soy having dropped significantly since the project started. At the same time, Green Resources was not providing any support to help him market his produce.

### The loss of water caused by tree plantations

Another challenge for communities that successfully resisted being displaced, and remain in their homes after their lands are invaded by tree plantations, is that at some point they will suffer great water scarcity. This usually happens after a few years, as the plantations grow bigger and consume relatively more water, especially during the dry season. The ongoing drought in the southern African region has further aggravated the impact of tree plantations on surface and groundwater resources. A tactic used by companies to appease affected communities is, for example, to promise to give them boreholes.

Another serious impact that is intrinsically linked to the industrial monoculture model of large-scale tree plantations is the effect of the application of toxic agricultural chemicals. This includes especially herbicides and insecticides, used to prevent competing plant growth, or to kill ants and other insects or fungi that might harm plantation trees. Such poisons pose a serious health threat to workers who apply them, even if they use protective clothing, although this is often not the case. They can also harm wild animals and livestock that drink contaminated water from streams and around ITP areas, as well as local people, who also use contaminated water from wells and boreholes for washing, drinking and cooking.

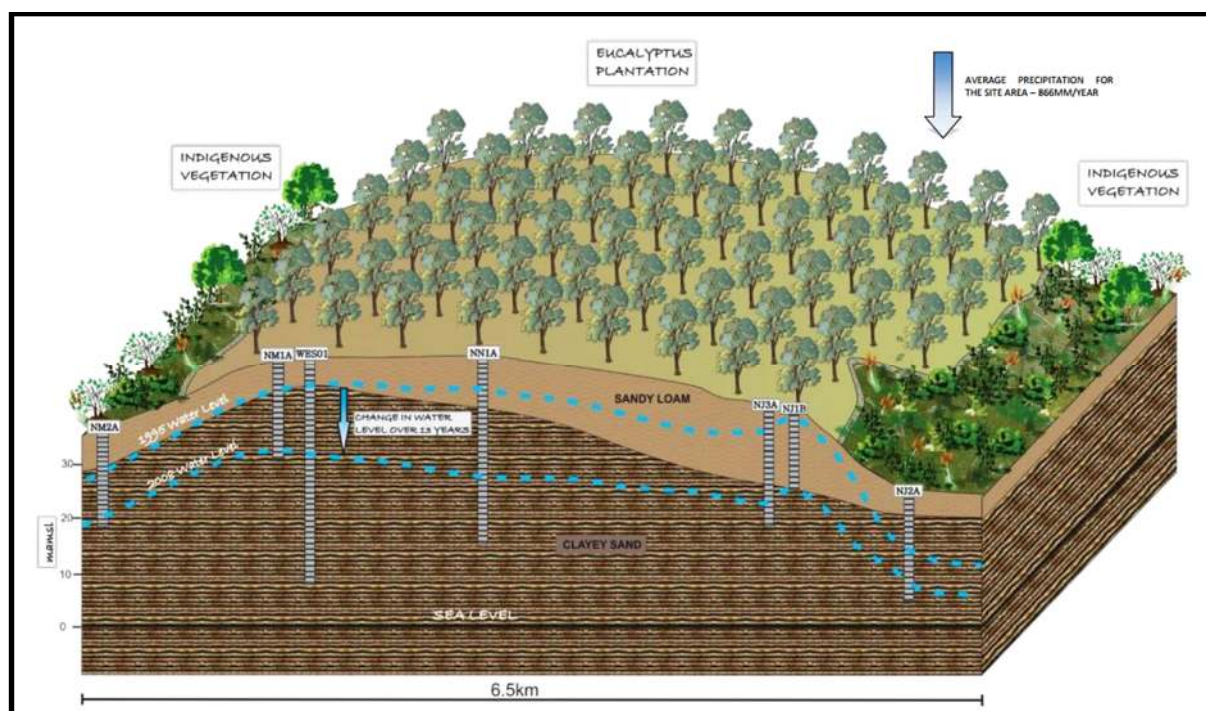


Diagram illustrating the impacts of eucalyptus tree plantations on groundwater in comparison with adjacent indigenous vegetation (Source: Brites, C.M. and Vermeulen, D. The environmental impacts of groundwater on the St. Lucia Wetland.)<sup>81</sup>

<sup>81</sup>[http://gwd.org.za/sites/gwd.org.za/files/02%20C%20Brites\\_Environmental%20Impacts%20of%20the%20groundwater%20on%20the%20St.%20Lucia%20Wetland\\_Article\\_2013.pdf](http://gwd.org.za/sites/gwd.org.za/files/02%20C%20Brites_Environmental%20Impacts%20of%20the%20groundwater%20on%20the%20St.%20Lucia%20Wetland_Article_2013.pdf)

One of the countries where people have suffered most from depleted water resources is South Africa. The testimony of Mrs. Ziqubu from Sabokwe village describes a common situation in communities that are neighbours of ITPs:

*“The thing is that we compete for water with these plantations. They use up a lot of water. I remember when we got here in 1996; the stream close to our garden was running perennially because the eucalyptus trees were not here. This piece of land from here to the road up there was grassland. The company feared that we would plant our crops and build our houses on that land so they quickly planted it to trees. Since then, water has become scarcer. The stream is drying up. The land, which we had to drain because it was swampy, has become very dry. We used to dig very small wells to water the reclaimed land. Now we have to dig deeper and we get the water from far away. Water for drinking has also equally become scarce”.*<sup>82</sup>

The experiences of communities have been illustrated by scientists too. The diagram above depicts the results of groundwater monitoring in the eucalyptus plantations of Mondli/SiyaQhubeka at Nyalazi on the western shore of Lake St Lucia, South Africa, which are also in a World Heritage site. Over 13 years, the groundwater level beneath the plantation dropped between 10 and 16 metres, compared to only 4.5 to 7.3 metres beneath adjacent indigenous vegetation, which would have been affected by the lower groundwater beneath the plantation.

In Kenya, due to problems experienced with eucalyptus plantations, in 2009 the Minister of Environment, John Michuki, ordered the removal of eucalyptus trees from wetlands and banned their planting along rivers and watersheds. At the same time, the late Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai called for a ban on planting alien tree species, in particular eucalyptus, while experts from the Kenyan-based International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) also raised the alarm about the “thirsty” nature of eucalyptus<sup>83</sup>.

Often overlooked in the water debate is that pulp mills also take large amounts of fresh water, which is why they are usually situated on or near rivers or lakes. Water polluted by the wood pulping process (effluent) is then disposed of into rivers, lakes or the ocean, with obvious negative consequences for both aquatic and marine organisms including fish. This in turn undermines local communities who depend on these water sources for consumption as well as on fishing and harvesting marine resources for a part of their livelihoods. For example, the Portucel pulp mill is planned to be built at Mocuba in the Zambezia province of Mozambique, where the Licungo River is utilised extensively by local people for various purposes.



*The Licungo River is a vital source of sustenance for people living along its banks. Its waters provide for cooking, bathing, livestock needs, etc. and catching fish of course.*

<sup>82</sup> <http://wrm.org.uy/books-and-briefings/a-study-of-the-social-and-economic-impacts-of-industrial-tree-plantations-in-the-kwazulu-natal-province-of-south-africa>

<sup>83</sup> <http://wrm.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section2/mounting-pressure-against-eucalyptus-in-kenya-described-as-the-water-guzzler/>

## **Partnerships with business – outsourcing log production**

Offering ‘partnerships’ to community members is a tactic used increasingly by companies to counter communities’ complaints that they receive no benefits from the tree plantations that have invaded the lands where they used to grow their crops. Even the jobs offered by the company are often temporary and poorly paid, as mentioned above.

Green Resources’ project in Nampula province, Mozambique, (Lurio Green Resources) has offered ‘partnerships’ in ‘sustainable timber and charcoal’ projects, to villagers who must plant eucalyptus trees on their lands. This project is supported by the European Union. (See below)



*This Green Resources sign reads: “Sustainable production of wood and charcoal project. Co-financed by the European Union and Lurio Green Resources”*

A group of participants in this scheme explained that they had joined because of the promises the company had made: It had said that they would become rich and that they could continue to grow food crops between the rows of eucalyptus trees. They were assured that if 80% of the eucalyptus seedlings they planted survived, they would receive a solar panel to give access to electricity. However, people now feel frustrated. Although most trees did survive and many people received a solar panel, some panels no longer work. As for being allowed to grow food among the eucalyptus trees, a woman villager explained how when she had planted cassava there it didn’t develop well, while eucalyptus kept growing and growing. She observed that eucalyptus trees had caused the soil to dry out, compromising the growth of the cassava. She now wonders how she would be able to grow enough food for her children<sup>84</sup>.

## **Impacts of tree plantations on women**

The already severe impacts of ITPs on communities in Africa are more severe for women. This is due to the fact that it is the women in African rural households who perform tasks such as collecting water and producing food, as testified by the women mentioned earlier in this chapter. According to research data, in many African countries women provide 70% of field labour, supply 90% of domestic water, and are responsible for producing 60 - 80% of the food

<sup>84</sup> <http://wrm.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section1/the-farce-of-smart-forestry-the-cases-of-green-resources-in-mozambique-and-suzano-in-brazil>



consumed and/or sold by the family. They account for 100% of food processing, 80% of food storage and transportation, and 90% of the labour for preparing the soil before planting<sup>85</sup>.

Despite figures like these that show the importance of women being able to sustain their families by cultivating the land, their land rights are far less secure than those of men. For example, in Tanzania, only 1% of women have legal land titles, and if women have work on the tree plantations, they carry a 'double burden', while earning far lower pay. This includes being responsible for supplying food and water, and caring for their children, while spending much of the day in the plantations.<sup>86</sup>

### **'Forest' certification schemes**

Another challenge for tree plantation-affected communities is that in spite of all the negative impacts that timber companies cause, the companies can still obtain certification for their plantations as being 'sustainable', in other words, not causing or resulting in ecological harm, and not violating the rights of local communities.

When communities engage in a "forest certification" process, they usually find when interviewed by auditors, or perhaps at public hearings, that in spite of their criticism of the negative environmental and social impacts of ITPs, their concerns and the evidence of the impacts of plantations they provide do not present an obstacle to certification. The main reason for this inequity between communities on the one hand, and companies and their certification bodies on the other, is the capacity of certain stakeholders to influence the process more than others and thus to determine the outcomes. Nevertheless, the FSC considers all 'stakeholders' to be equal in the process, which, for example, contradicts the fact that Green Resources has its tree plantations in Mozambique certified by FSC in spite of their obviously harmful impacts, as confirmed by the numerous villagers' complaints to a representative of WRM during a field visit in 2015.<sup>87</sup> A similar situation was experienced by Timberwatch researchers when visiting Green Resources' tree plantation projects in southern Tanzania in 2010.

A glaring example of why it appears there is nothing that can be done to prevent a tree plantation company from obtaining FSC certification, is that of the aforementioned UK-based New Forests Company in Uganda. In 2011, an OXFAM report denounced that between 2006 and 2010, 22,000 people had been evicted from their lands in the districts of Kiboga and Mubende as a result of New Forests' plantation project, which was FSC-certified. In reaction to the evictions, the FSC declared in 2010: "the company has followed peaceful means and acted responsibly".<sup>88</sup>

### **The isolation of communities**

One of the biggest challenges for communities in Africa that are forced to deal with industrial tree plantations on their lands is to avoid being isolated and to find support for strengthening their resistance struggles. Civil society groups and social movements are seldom active in the rural areas where plantation companies invade community lands. At the same time, what can be very helpful is for affected communities to find ways to make their struggles visible, and to connect with other communities that have experienced the same situation.

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<sup>85</sup> <http://wrn.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section1/new-crossroads-same-actors-the-green-economy-of-the-powerful-voices-of-resistance-of-women>

<sup>86</sup> <http://wrn.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section1/new-crossroads-same-actors-the-green-economy-of-the-powerful-voices-of-resistance-of-women>

<sup>87</sup> <http://wrn.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section1/the-farce-of-smart-forestry-the-cases-of-green-resources-in-mozambique-and-suzano-in-brazil/>

<sup>88</sup> <http://wrn.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section2/uganda-new-forests-company-fsc-legitimizes-the-eviction-of-thousands-of-people-from-their-land-and-the-sale-of-carbon-credits/>

For example, a 2009 visit by a delegation from Brazil to several districts in northern Mozambique where communities had started to experience the invasion by tree plantations, made a huge difference for these communities. The leader of a black Brazilian community with 30 years of experience of the impacts of tree plantations, and active involvement in a struggle to reclaim their lands, shared his experiences in more than 10 communities over 2 weeks.

This was followed by two peasant leaders from Mozambique visiting Brazil to learn about the impacts of decades of large-scale eucalyptus plantations on the local peasants in Brazil, and also about the ongoing struggles of communities to regain the control over their land and to again start producing 'life' on their lands, which means food, not eucalyptus. They also shared their experience of organising the peasants and the Mozambican delegation, in its turn, shared the experience of peasant struggles in Mozambique.<sup>89</sup>



*Community members in remote parts of rural Mozambique, such as these residents of a village in Niassa province, were happy to receive members of NGOs from South Africa as visitors.*



*New tree plantations displace the livestock of local communities from their former grazing areas, and also cause 'localised droughts' that reduce availability of water and edible plants.*

<sup>89</sup> The visits were facilitated in 2009 and 2010 by the international secretariat of the WRM, in collaboration with UNAC in Mozambique and the Via Campesina and traditional communities in Brazil.

## **6. Concluding remarks**

On the issue of tree plantations in Africa, industry-allied consultancy companies, development banks and researchers tend to make the claim that African countries are desperately in need of alternative sources of timber – especially sawn timber and fuelwood or charcoal - because most populations are growing fast and becoming increasingly urbanised. They argue that many African countries might even need to import timber in future.

The solution they present is that if countries want to save their forests from logging, then they should promote industrial tree plantations. To those concerned about negative impacts caused by tree plantations, the response is usually that it is a problem of ‘management’ and they argue that if governments facilitated more private sector involvement, plantations could be better planned and managed, and thus gradually reduce these impacts. This is more or less the same message in the propaganda used by the main companies promoting tree plantations in Africa. However, reality on the ground shows that it is not a problem of ‘management’ - the devastating impacts on local communities and the natural environment continues no matter how good the managers might claim to be, or even if the plantations have been FSC certified!

It cannot be denied that there is an existing, and increasing, need for fuelwood and sawn-timber in Africa. However, the small-scale planting of suitable native trees will benefit communities by providing many useful items and services, for example, timber for building homes and protecting water sources. Nevertheless, this briefing raises critical questions about proposals from the World Bank, consultancy companies and industry-biased researchers for their way forward: Expanding, corporate owned, profit-driven, large-scale tree monocultures, usually of ecologically harmful and invasive alien tree species like eucalyptus.

Experiences of top-down and profit-driven “afforestation” and “reforestation” projects in the global South – and the AFR100 appears to have many of the same characteristics – show that, at the end of the day, such projects mainly benefit foreign companies, investment funds and consultants, while the majority of especially rural communities living in and around areas affected by tree plantation expansion tend to be left without sufficient land, food and water. When deprived of the basic needs required for their survival, impoverished rural people are often forced to relocate into unhealthy informal ‘squatter’ settlements near to towns or cities.

The present trend of expanding tree plantations in eastern and southern Africa shows, once again, the urgent need for a different people-friendly process for the “restoration of lands”, not driven by corporate profit or corruption, but led by local communities and implemented in ways that they believe are needed in order to improve their livelihoods and well-being, whilst protecting the environment and ensuring their access to resources. Moreover, community land that has been invaded by tree plantations should be given back to communities. There are examples from Brazil, Thailand and Indonesia, where tree plantations have been re-converted to a land use defined by the interests and priorities of, and controlled by the local community.

Large-scale industrial tree plantations have already taken a significant amount of prime land in eastern and southern Africa, impacting negatively on water, soil and biodiversity resources. If such ITPs expand further, so will their destructive footprint spread over ecosystems and communities, forcing wildlife and people onto marginally productive land in drier areas. Far from being a ‘green’ activity, tree plantations are actually, like mining, an extractive industry.

And all of this is done in the name of “community development” and/or climate change mitigation, when in reality it has the opposite effect; driving increased industrial production and over-consumption globally. This can only further harm what is left of the natural environment. There are less destructive ways of living, as clearly demonstrated by local communities in the global South that have lived sustainably, and in harmony with Nature, for thousands of years.

**Another world is possible!**



## **Appendix: Countries under review**

### **a) South Africa, Swaziland and Lesotho (south)**

#### **1) South Africa**

There is some uncertainty as to the area of tree plantations in South Africa. According to industry sources there is about 1.27 million ha<sup>90</sup> under industrial timber plantations. However, the area listed in the FAO's FRA2015 report is much larger, at 1.76 million ha of "planted forest" (see table on page 9). There is a similar area (estimated 1.7 million ha) of mostly natural grassland and wetland that has become infested with predominantly alien acacia (wattle), eucalyptus and pine species, which have been allowed to spread from poorly managed or abandoned tree plantations.<sup>91</sup>

Currently the SA Government is aiming for 10,000 ha of new tree plantations to be established per year, for approximately ten years. The main areas targeted are southern KwaZulu-Natal and the northern part of the Eastern Cape Province, aimed at supplying the partly state-owned Sappi SAICCOR cellulose mill with more eucalyptus logs for future raw material needs. For a number of years there has also been talk of a new pulp mill at Mthatha in the Eastern Cape.

The main industry players are:

- **SAPPI Southern Africa:**<sup>92</sup> A multinational with 4 pulp mills in South Africa, plus pulp and paper operations in the US and the EU. Its plantations supply two large (SAICCOR & Ngodwana) and two small (Stanger & Thukela) mills that mainly produce cellulose pulp for export. This amounts to exporting South Africa's water, biodiversity, clean air and soil. Sappi<sup>93</sup> has a timber plantation area of 492,000 ha.
- **Mondi PLC:** Another multinational, with more than 307 000 ha of industrial tree plantations, concentrated in KwaZulu-Natal province, where it has two large pulp and paper mills, at Richards Bay and Durban. Mondi also has large tree plantations in Russia. Mondi has attempted to 'green wash' its operations by partnering with conservation NGOs WWF and WESSA via the "Mondi Wetlands Programme", and WWF's "New Generation Plantations" project.
- **SAFCOL/Komatiland:** This state-owned company focuses on growing pine trees for saw log processing and related activities. In 2013, the group had 187,320 ha of tree plantations on state-owned land. SAFCOL also owns 80% of IFLOMA<sup>94</sup> in Mozambique's Manica province.

Both Sappi and Mondi have tree plantation 'out-grower schemes' that allow them access to community land, paying no rent and with no financial responsibility should the plantations fail. The South African government's financial stakes in SAPPI and SAFCOL are in conflict with its responsibility to regulate the industry properly by enforcing the laws governing water use and environmental impacts. In effect this responsibility has been outsourced to the FSC, but because most certification bodies and their auditors have links to government officials or industry, and as they are paid directly by the companies being audited, it is impossible for them to be fully neutral, and to audit impartially. See relevant reports at [www.geosphere.org](http://www.geosphere.org).

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<sup>90</sup> <http://www.gov.za/about-sa/forestry>

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.timberwatch.org.za/index.php?id=99>

<sup>92</sup> [www.banktrack.org/manage/ems\\_files/download/sappi\\_profile\\_by\\_timberwatch\\_0\\_pdf/sappi\\_profile\\_by\\_timberwatch\\_0.pdf](http://www.banktrack.org/manage/ems_files/download/sappi_profile_by_timberwatch_0_pdf/sappi_profile_by_timberwatch_0.pdf)

<sup>93</sup> <http://www.sappi.com/regions/sa/SappiSouthernAfrica/Sappi%20Forests/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>94</sup> <http://www.panapress.com/South-African-outfit-takes-over-Mozambican-timber-company--13-544306-17-lang2-index.html>

## Other tree plantation operations in South Africa

- **NCT Forestry Co-operative Limited** is a management company that markets timber from private growers as well as its own plantations from a total of 300,000 ha - 21% of tree plantations in South Africa. It also exports logs and woodchips to Asia.
- **Cape Pine Investment Holdings (MTO)**<sup>95</sup> owned by Global Environment Fund, has 53,000 ha of pine plantations on state-owned land in the Western Cape Province.
- **Global Forest Products** - also owned by Global Environment Fund, with a total area of 90,000 ha of tree plantations in Mpumalanga Province.
- **Ramanas Farms** in the Sabie area, of Mpumalanga Province - also owned by Global Environment Fund, has a total of 8,300 ha of tree plantations.
- **Imvelo Forests** - also owned also by Global Environment Fund, has a total of 3,671 ha of tree plantations.

The US-based **Global Environment Fund**<sup>96 97</sup> has acquired a number of the smaller tree plantation operations in South Africa, claiming to improve environmental performance and profitability. Being FSC certified is held up as evidence of 'responsible management'.

- **York Timber Holdings**<sup>98</sup> is based in Mpumalanga Province, and has 60,000 ha of mainly pine plantations, and manufactures pine household utility items.
- **MASONITE Africa Limited**<sup>99</sup>: Was 80% owned by Masonite International until recently being sold to local South African investors. It has 25,000 ha of eucalyptus plantations in KwaZulu-Natal Province.
- **Merensky**<sup>100</sup> with a total area of 69,000 ha of both pine and eucalyptus plantations in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo Provinces. These areas include large tree plantations on leased state land, that were formerly government managed.

## 2) Lesotho

Lesotho is a tiny mountainous country completely enclosed by South Africa. According to the FAO it had approx. 17,000 ha of eucalyptus and pine tree plantations<sup>101</sup> in 2015, most of them state-owned. Some of these plantations were originally established between 1973 and 1987 as part of the Lesotho Woodlot Project to provide fuelwood and construction timber. However, since 2004 the establishment of tree plantations has been actively encouraged in Lesotho by the FAO under its NFP (National Forest Programme) facility<sup>102</sup>, but without success.

### Further reading:

NFP Facility Newsletter – 2011

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/25416-0bc703d8a50aa510032e1fe9609f262c0.pdf>

FOSA Lesotho country study - <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/004/AB589E/AB589E00.pdf>

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<sup>95</sup> [www.capepine.co.za](http://www.capepine.co.za)

<sup>96</sup> [www.capepine.co.za](http://www.capepine.co.za)

<sup>97</sup> <http://globalenvironmentfund.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/GEF-Whitepaper-Timberland-Investment-Emerging-Markets-A-Fresh-Review-Outlook-September-2009.pdf>

<sup>98</sup> [www.york.co.za](http://www.york.co.za)

<sup>99</sup> <http://saforestryonline.co.za/news/masonite-plantations-and-mill-up-for-sale>

<sup>100</sup> <http://www.merensky.co.za>

<sup>101</sup> GLOBAL FOREST RESOURCES ASSESSMENT 2015, UN FAO, Rome, 2015 - <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4808e.pdf>

<sup>101</sup> <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/al550E/al550E.pdf>

<sup>102</sup> <http://foris.fao.org/nfp-facility/public/partnership/100664.do>

### 3) Swaziland

This small country situated between South Africa and Mozambique has an estimated area of 170,000 ha under mainly pine and eucalyptus plantations. As in South Africa, there are also areas that have been invaded by 'escaped' plantation trees, which deplete water resources and destroy biodiversity-rich grasslands.

- **Montigny Investments**<sup>103</sup>: A Swaziland based company that bought Sappi's Swaziland operations in 2014<sup>104</sup>, for 1 billion ZAR, including almost half the tree plantations in west-central Swaziland (55,000 ha) which are growing on Swazi Nation land leased from the Swaziland government, together with the Usutu pulp mill which has not operated since 2010.
- **Transvaal Wattle Growers Co-operative (TWK)**<sup>105</sup>, a South African company, owns Shiselweni Forestry Company Ltd in southern Swaziland, with a total of 12,000 ha of tree plantations.
- **Peak Timbers**<sup>106</sup>, a company previously owned by Mondi now belongs to the Global Environment Fund, and has 31,500 ha of pulpwood and timber plantations and a sawmilling business, all situated around Pigg's Peak.
- **Swaziland Plantations Limited** – Situated south of Pigg's Peak, supplying sawn timber to the South African construction industry.

#### Further reading:

- Swaziland: The myth of sustainable timber plantations  
<http://wrm.org.uy/books-and-briefings/swaziland-the-myth-of-sustainable-timber-plantations>
- Swaziland: The impact of 50 years of industrial forestry  
<https://chrislang.org/2005/01/24/swaziland-the-impact-of-50-years-of-industrial-forestry>
- Swaziland: fires in certified plantations spark national emergency [www.fsc-watch.org/archives/2007/08/28/Swaziland\\_fires\\_in\\_certified\\_plantations\\_spark\\_national\\_emergency](http://www.fsc-watch.org/archives/2007/08/28/Swaziland_fires_in_certified_plantations_spark_national_emergency)
- Timber Plantations in Swaziland:  
<http://wrm.org.uy/oldsite/countries/Swaziland/Plantations.pdf>
- Swaziland accuses Sappi of stealing timber after closing mill  
[www.iol.co.za/business/news/swaziland-accuses-sappi-of-stealing-timber-after-closing-mill-1138624](http://www.iol.co.za/business/news/swaziland-accuses-sappi-of-stealing-timber-after-closing-mill-1138624)
- 3,000 SAPPI JOBS DEAL SEALED  
[www.times.co.sz/news/98037-3-000-sappi-jobs-deal-sealed.html](http://www.times.co.sz/news/98037-3-000-sappi-jobs-deal-sealed.html)

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<sup>103</sup> <http://www.montigny.co.sz>

<sup>104</sup> <http://www.ujuh.co.za/exit-of-sappi-from-swaziland-usuthu-speak-volumes>

<sup>105</sup> <http://www.twkagri.com>

<sup>106</sup> <http://www.globalenvironmentfund.com/peak-timbers>



## **b) Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe (central)**

### **4) Malawi**

As with other colonial projects in the region, from 1930 Malawi was used as a 'guinea pig' for an experiment with Tung nut tree plantations on the Viphya plateau, to supply markets in Europe with Tung oil. However, due to insufficient demand pine trees were planted instead.

- **Raiply Malawi Ltd:** Pine trees for a state-owned plantation of 53,501 ha on the Viphya plateau, as part of Viphya Plywood and Allied Industries (VIPLY) were first planted before 1964, when Malawi obtained independence from Britain. Originally financed by the Colonial (later Commonwealth) Development Corporation (CDC), a part of the VIPLY plantation was later taken over by Raiply<sup>107</sup> from Kenya, with exclusive access to 20,000 ha through a 15-year concession agreement in 1998. The remaining 33,000 ha of pine was reserved for licensed Malawian loggers, but it now appears that this area has been depleted without sufficient replanting taking place, and loggers have now started to encroach onto Raiply's concession area.
- **Citrefine Plantations Ltd<sup>108</sup> trading as Kawandama Hills Plantation<sup>109</sup>** - This is an essential oil producing company that plans to plant eucalyptus and other alien trees in 5,700 ha of mostly remnant virgin grassland with clumps of native trees in a part of the Viphya plateau. The project has been funded by US Aid to the tune of US\$ 309,000 <sup>110</sup>

Long-term ecological damage, droughts and wildfires caused by tree plantations on the Viphya Plateau are typical of CDC projects in the region such as at Bhunya in Swaziland. This is from 'gambling' with experiments using other peoples' natural resources and money.

#### **Further reading:**

<http://www.theafricareport.com/Southern-Africa/logging-and-deforestation-malawis-diminishing-plantations.html>

<http://www.times.mw/k2-billion-lost-in-viphya-plantations/>

<http://www.nyasatimes.com/loggers-encroaches-raiply-timber-concession-area/>

<http://www.sde.co.ke/thenairobi/article/2000201533/the-immortals-from-timber-the-rai-family-became-billionaires>

<https://afrosai-e.org.za/sites/afrosai-e.org.za/files/report-files/Viphya%20Performance%20Audit%20report%20tabled%20in%20Parliament%202%2Dec%202011.pdf>

- FAO FRA 2010 – Malawi

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/al557E/al557E.pdf>

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<sup>107</sup> <http://www.sde.co.ke/thenairobi/article/2000201533/the-immortals-from-timber-the-rai-family-became-billionaires>

<sup>108</sup> <https://www.growafrica.com/organizations/citrefine-plantations-limited>

<sup>109</sup> <http://www.kawandama-hills.com>

<sup>110</sup> <http://newswatchreviews.com/citrefine-plantations-limited-malawi-in-action>

## 5) Mozambique

Mozambique has the highest rate of ITP expansion in the region. According to the FAO<sup>111</sup>, in 2010 the country had a total of 62,000 ha of tree plantations, but by 2015 it had increased to 75,000 ha, mainly eucalyptus and pine. It is estimated that more than half a million ha are under the control of tree plantation companies with government concessions to plant large areas in the coming years. However, there are possible obstacles that could prevent this from happening, including an increase in resistance from affected local communities, and reduced demand from the global North, due to poor financial conditions in industrialised countries.

### Main tree plantation companies

- **Green Resources (GR):** A Norwegian company that from 2005 to 2009, acquired land use concessions for around 264,898 ha in three provinces, Nampula, Niassa and Zambezia. In 2014 GR merged with GSSF to form the biggest plantation company in the country, but it has been reported that GR is having financial problems.
- **Portucel** is a Portuguese pulp and paper company that plans to establish a large pulp mill with World Bank/IFC support. The complete project includes planting up to 356,000 ha of ITPs in the central provinces of Zambezia and Manica. Presently only a small portion of this has been planted.
- **Florestas de Niassa** in north-west Mozambique is owned by the African Rift Valley Corporation. It has 7,000 ha of pine and eucalyptus but plans to plant 60,000 ha.
- **IFLOMA (Indústrias Florestais de Manica)** has 19,000 ha of tree plantations in Manica Province near to the border with Zimbabwe. 80% of IFLOMA belongs to the South African government (Komatiland), and the rest to the Mozambican government.

### Further reading:

- Lords of the Land - Preliminary Analysis of the Phenomenon of Land Grabbing  
<http://www.unac.org.mz/yootheme/widgetkit/LordOfTheLand.pdf>

- Expansion of Tree Monocultures in Mozambique. Impacts on local peasant communities in Niassa Province - <http://wrm.org.uy/books-and-briefings/the-expansion-of-tree-monocultures-in-mozambique-impacts-on-local-peasants-communities-in-the-province-of-niassa>

- Articles published in the WRM monthly bulletin about the impacts on local communities of plantations expansion - <http://wrm.org.uy/browse-by-country/africa/mozambique/#Articles%20from%20the%20WRM%20Bulletin>

- Green Resources lost nearly \$ 70 million in 2 years with Mozambique projects  
<http://zitamar.com/norwegian-forestry-firms-losses-mount-mozambique-acquisitions>

- “o Avanço das Plantações Florestais sobre os Territórios dos Camponeses no Corredor de Nacala: o caso da Green Resources Moçambique”  
[https://issuu.com/justicaambiental/docs/o\\_caso\\_da\\_green\\_resources\\_moc\\_ambi](https://issuu.com/justicaambiental/docs/o_caso_da_green_resources_moc_ambi)

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<sup>111</sup> <http://wrm.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section1/mozambique-industrial-tree-plantations-generate-profits-for-investors-negative-impacts-for-peasant-communities>

## 6) Zambia

Zambia has around 64,000 ha of tree plantations of which 55,000 were established in the Copper Belt region in the 1960s with World Bank and the IDC support.<sup>112</sup> In 2013 the Government launched the National Tree Planting Programme<sup>113</sup> with the aim of planting 20,000 ha of mainly pine and eucalyptus plantations.

It seems that there has been no obligation to restore forests or to replant, but this could soon change if rules to replant with alien plantation trees are introduced. However, this would cause the loss of natural woodland that usually recovers spontaneously over time after logging for timber or charcoal, and local people can still use the land to grow crops, as well as to gather medicinal plants and building materials, which would not be possible after tree plantations have been established.

### Who is promoting plantations in the country?

- The Zambia Forestry and Forest Industries Corporation (ZAFFICO)<sup>114</sup>: A company wholly owned by the government of Zambia. ZAFFICO owned the original 55,000 ha of plantations until the 1990s when it sold 2,000 ha to private owners.

### Further reading:

[http://www.parliament.gov.zm/sites/default/files/images/publication\\_docs/Ministerial%2009th%20Nov%20-%20Wilbur.pdf](http://www.parliament.gov.zm/sites/default/files/images/publication_docs/Ministerial%2009th%20Nov%20-%20Wilbur.pdf)

## 7) Zimbabwe

By 2015, Zimbabwe had 87,000 ha of tree plantations according to the FAO, but local sources give a much higher figure, 168,000 ha<sup>115</sup>. Most of the plantations are of pines and a smaller percentage of around 15% is eucalyptus and wattle.

42% belongs to the State through the Forestry Commission; 54% is owned by private companies and the remainder belong to small private growers including co-operatives.<sup>116</sup>

### Who promotes tree plantations in the country?

- **Border Timbers**<sup>117</sup>: this company controls an area of 28,000 ha, with pines being the main species. The company belongs to the Rift Valley Corporation, an African company with operations in several countries.
- **Allied Timbers**<sup>118</sup> – A state owned company with about 12,000 ha in three areas. Has plans to restructure, and then to expand plantations with a view to increasing exports.

<sup>112</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/projects/P003155/forestry-project?lang=en>

<sup>113</sup> <http://theredddesk.org/countries/initiatives/national-tree-planting-programme>

<sup>114</sup> <http://www.zaffico.co.zm/index.php/2013-06-05-18-35-22>

<sup>115</sup> [http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit\\_g\\_forestry-firms-urged-to-co-exist-with-villagers](http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_g_forestry-firms-urged-to-co-exist-with-villagers)

<sup>116</sup> <http://www.fao.org/docrep/004/AC429E/AC429E04.htm>

<sup>117</sup> <http://www.bordertimbers.com/forestry.php>

<sup>118</sup> <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/2016/03/20/allied-timbers-workers-bear-brunt-of-firms-rot>



## **c) Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda**

### **8) Kenya**

There appears to be little reliable information on the area under tree plantations in Kenya, although the FAO (FRA2015) gives a total of 220,000 ha. According to recent figures, the area of state-owned tree plantations is 125,000 ha. In addition to these there are also state-owned tree plantations under the management of County Councils, the areas of which have not yet been recorded. Privately-owned tree plantations occupy an estimated 150,000 ha. These include those owned by private companies such as Tea Estates, Kakuzi, and tobacco companies (mainly British American Tobacco and Mastermind Ltd) that use the wood as a source of heat for drying tobacco leaves.<sup>119</sup> Mainly pine and eucalyptus species are planted.

#### **Who promotes tree plantations?**

The World Bank has been the main supporter of the establishment of tree plantations in the country and there is currently another project aimed at supporting the Kenya Forest Service. Also active in supporting the tree plantation sector in Kenya is the Finnish Government through the Miti Mingi Maisha Bora (MMMB) project, aimed at providing support to the on-going 'forest sector' reform process. Other supporting partners include the African Development Bank (AfDB), the UN System, e.g. through the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and bilateral donors such as Denmark, the USA and Japan. Most of these funds are given to support general activities, which may include tree plantations.<sup>120</sup>

#### **Further reading:**

- Kenya: The Forest Service to the rescue of eucalyptus

<http://wrm.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section3/kenya-the-forest-service-to-the-rescue-of-eucalyptus>

- Mounting pressure against eucalyptus in Kenya, described as the "water guzzler"

<http://wrm.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section2/mounting-pressure-against-eucalyptus-in-kenya-described-as-the-water-guzzler>

- Wangari Maathai: Shortly before her death Wangari wrote about the connection between "Silent forests" of eucalyptus plantations, and the famine caused by more severe droughts, climate change, and biodiversity loss in Kenya.

See [www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/nov/25/silent-forests-famine-east-africa](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/nov/25/silent-forests-famine-east-africa)

#### **Kenya to plant a 'green dress' the size of Costa Rica**

By Katy Migiro, Reuters, 8 September 2016

"Kenya aims to restore trees and vegetation across almost nine percent of its land mass by 2030", the government said on Thursday, in a bold initiative to combat climate change, poverty and hunger. The 5.1 million ha of deforested and degraded land targeted for landscape and forest restoration is equivalent in size to Costa Rica in Central America. "This program provides the most coherent and systematic effort to restore degraded forests and other landscapes," Kenya's environment minister Judy Wakhungu said at the launch of the project."

<sup>119</sup> <http://www.sifi.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Forest-plantations-and-woodlots-in-Kenya.pdf>

<sup>120</sup> <http://www.finland.or.ke/public/default.aspx?nodeid=46392&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>

## 9) Tanzania

Tanzania has an estimated 290,000 ha of timber plantations. Out of this about 85,000 ha is state-owned. Privately owned plantations cover approximately 200,000 ha.<sup>121</sup>

By the end of the 1990s, the national forest policy was revised and as a result of this process new legislation was adopted (Forest Act nr.14 of 2002) to promote the involvement of the private sector in establishing more tree plantations. The implementation of this new policy was supported by the World Bank

The most important industrial plantation species are pine, cypress, eucalyptus and teak. Most state and private tree plantations are pine, which makes up about 78% of the planted area. By the time the jatropha biodiesel 'gold rush' had ended, many thousands of ha had been planted, but most will probably be abandoned, or converted to other trees or crops.

### Who promotes tree plantations?

- **Tanganyika Wattle Company (TANWAT)** in Njombe District has around 14,500 ha.
- **Green Resources Ltd (GR)** controls 74,000 ha in the Southern Highlands, of which 12,682 ha have been planted. GR is a Norwegian company with other projects in Mozambique, Uganda, and South Sudan. Their tree plantations are intended for multiple uses, from timber to carbon offsets, though they have been criticised for selling dubious carbon credits.<sup>122</sup> In 2011 some of their plantations were certified by FSC.
- **Mufindi Paper** in the Mufindi district. This is the only pulp mill in the country, with an annual capacity of 60,000 tons of Kraft, but there are plans to expand production capacity to 100,000 ton/year. Mufindi Paper has 10,000 ha of eucalyptus plantations.
- **Kilombero Valley Teak Company (KVTC)**, with a land area of 28,000 ha in the Morogoro region in the south of Tanzania. KVTC's main shareholders are the Global Environment Fund from the US which has timber investments in several African countries, and the Finnish Development funds<sup>123</sup>.
- **The New Forest Company (NFC)** is a London-based company with operations also in Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya<sup>124</sup>. In Tanzania the area under the company's control is 14,000 ha but they aim to have around 24,000 ha. They plant trees for temporary carbon storage.
- **SFI Tanzania** is a sisal and tree plantation company, owned by the Dutch company Form International, which is supported by the Netherlands Government<sup>125</sup>. Sisal and timber plantations cover an area of more than 3,000 ha, out of 6,000 ha it controls.

### Further reading:

- Green Resources' carbon plantations in Tanzania. Curse or cure? <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2012/05/02/green-resources-carbon-plantations-in-tanzania-curse-or-cure>

- CDM carbon sink tree plantations in Africa: A case study in Tanzania  
<http://wrm.org.uy/other-relevant-information/cdm-carbon-sink-tree-plantations-in-africa-a-case-study-in-tanzania>

<sup>121</sup> [www.sifi.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Forest-plantations-and-woodlots-in-Tanzania.pdf](http://www.sifi.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Forest-plantations-and-woodlots-in-Tanzania.pdf)

<sup>122</sup> [www.redd-monitor.org/2012/05/02/green-resources-carbon-plantations-in-tanzania-curse-or-cure](http://www.redd-monitor.org/2012/05/02/green-resources-carbon-plantations-in-tanzania-curse-or-cure)

<sup>123</sup> <http://kvtc-tz.com>

<sup>124</sup> [www.unepfi.org/fileadmin/events/oversize/2010Joburg\\_Sullivan.pdf](http://www.unepfi.org/fileadmin/events/oversize/2010Joburg_Sullivan.pdf)

<sup>125</sup> [www.forminternational.nl/form-ghana/#sthash.U8LHAZGs.dpuf](http://www.forminternational.nl/form-ghana/#sthash.U8LHAZGs.dpuf)

## 10) Uganda

As in Tanzania and Kenya, government policies in Uganda changed to promote private business involvement in tree plantations. The National Forestry Authority (NFA) Plantation Strategy was adopted in 2005, reserving 200,000 ha of the Central Forest Reserves (CFRs) for tree plantations. 50,000 ha should be planted by NFA and 150,000 ha by private growers.

The Saw-log Production Grant Scheme (SPGS) started as a joint initiative between the Government of Uganda and the European Union (EU), and was later joined by the Government of Norway. It was intended to support private tree growers. During the first phase of the project there was an increased interest in tree planting in Uganda<sup>126</sup>. Through the SPGS, the NFA and the private sector have been the main tree planters during the period 2005-2010. By the end of 2010, the country had total of 62,230 ha of plantation forests. NFA had a total of 14,140 ha (23%) while the private sector owned 48,090 ha (77%). However, the latest FAO reports give a figure of 60,000 ha for 2015. Main trees grown are *Pinus caribaea* (for saw logs) and *Eucalyptus grandis* for poles.

### Who promotes tree plantations in Uganda?

- **New Forest Company:** Has around 21,500 ha of carbon offset tree plantations in three areas (two Central Forests Reserve areas - and one private area) in Mubende, Kiboga, Kyankwanzi and Bugiri Districts. The company has created conflicts with local communities. Soon after the company was certified by the FSC, more than 22,000 people were evicted from their lands by the New Forest Company.
- **Green Resources Ltd:** They are planting in two CFR areas - Bukaleba and Kachung – and they have around 10,000 ha of mainly invasive eucalyptus plantations certified as “responsibly managed forests” by FSC. There is a scandal brewing over the sale of ‘non-existent’ CDM carbon credits to be obtained by Green Resources from its Kachung project, to the Swedish Energy Agency (SEA).<sup>127</sup>
- **Global Woods:** Was established by a German fund, but now owned by the US -based GEF. Of their 12,182 ha in Kikonda CFR, 8,000 is planted to pine and eucalyptus.<sup>128</sup>
- **Nile Plywood Ltd** in South Busoga has planted 1,500 ha of pine plantations.

### Further reading:

- Global Woods’ plantations in Uganda: Trees versus food  
[www.redd-monitor.org/2016/01/08/global-woods-plantations-in-uganda-trees-versus-food](http://www.redd-monitor.org/2016/01/08/global-woods-plantations-in-uganda-trees-versus-food)
- The New Forests Company and its Uganda plantations – Oxfam case study  
[www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/cs-new-forest-company-uganda-plantations-220911-en.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/cs-new-forest-company-uganda-plantations-220911-en.pdf)
- The Darker Side of Green - Plantation Forestry and Carbon Violence in Uganda  
[www.oaklandinstitute.org/sites/oaklandinstitute.org/files/Report\\_DarkerSideofGreen\\_hirez.pdf](http://www.oaklandinstitute.org/sites/oaklandinstitute.org/files/Report_DarkerSideofGreen_hirez.pdf)
- Ugandan farmers kicked off their land for New Forests Company’s carbon project  
<http://www.redd-monitor.org/2011/09/23/ugandan-farmers-kicked-off-their-land-for-new-forests-companys-carbon-project>

<sup>126</sup> [www.sifi.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Forest-plantations-and-woodlots-in-Uganda.pdf](http://www.sifi.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Forest-plantations-and-woodlots-in-Uganda.pdf)

<sup>127</sup> [www.redd-monitor.org/2016/03/11/ngos-call-for-the-swedish-energy-agency-to-cancel-carbon-credit-purchase-from-green-resources-monoculture-plantations-in-uganda](http://www.redd-monitor.org/2016/03/11/ngos-call-for-the-swedish-energy-agency-to-cancel-carbon-credit-purchase-from-green-resources-monoculture-plantations-in-uganda)

<sup>128</sup> [www.globalenvironmentfund.com/global-woods](http://www.globalenvironmentfund.com/global-woods)



d) (east)

11) Madagascar

The latest FAO figures (FRA2015) suggest that the area of tree plantations in Madagascar is about 312,000 ha. However, the estimated area in 2000 was much higher at nearly 350,000 ha, of which 150,000 ha were eucalyptus plantations established in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>129</sup>. Trees planted include eucalyptus, acacia, casuarina, pine and other broadleaved species<sup>130</sup>.

For 2005, the FAO<sup>131</sup> reported the area of tree plantations to be 140, 980 ha, eucalyptus plantations 150, 397 ha, and “thickets” of 1756, 919 ha, presumably including some areas of invasive alien trees which had spread from abandoned or mismanaged plantations.

Madagascar has a history of controversy over the planting of eucalyptus<sup>132</sup>, which was first planted by French settlers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. “Much of Madagascar's original native forest has been replaced with *Eucalyptus*, threatening biodiversity by isolating remaining natural areas such as Andasibe-Mantadia National Park”.<sup>133</sup>

Who promotes new tree plantations?

- **Mada Woodlands:** A Norwegian company with experience of plantation management in the Nordic countries. It has plans to establish 50,000 ha of eucalyptus and acacia plantations in the Sofia Region, for the production of timber and carbon credits<sup>134</sup>.
- **WWF Madagascar:** This international NGO strongly supports the planting of alien tree plantations<sup>135</sup> as a way to hopefully take pressure off forests that are being depleted as a result of timber being used by local people for charcoal production, and cleared for planting crops. Their website states that 800,000 acacia and eucalyptus trees have been planted. Although this represents an area of only approximately 1,000 ha in total, it would probably be made up of hundreds of smallish woodlots, planted over a wide area, that could also create environmental problems in the future, as they spread.

Further reading:

- **Land grabbing in Madagascar: echoes and testimonies from the field – 2013**  
[www.recommon.org/eng/land-grabs-madagascar-voices-ground-2013-report-launch](http://www.recommon.org/eng/land-grabs-madagascar-voices-ground-2013-report-launch)
- **Challenges of forest governance in Madagascar**  
<https://www.umich.edu/~ifri/Publications/R051-31.pdf>
- **Andrew Lees - 20 years after his last mission to Madagascar -**  
<http://www.theecologist.org/campaigning/2625160/andrew-lees-20-years-after-his-last-mission-to-madagascar.html>

<sup>129</sup> <http://www.wildmadagascar.org/overview/plantations.html>

<sup>130</sup> <http://www.wildmadagascar.org/overview/plantations.html>

<sup>131</sup> <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/al556f/al556f.pdf>

<sup>132</sup> <http://ur-forets-societes.cirad.fr/content/download/4468/35947/version/1/file/BFT323-No+to+the+Eucalyptus+war+in+Madagascar.pdf>

<sup>133</sup> <http://eol.org/pages/29916/overview>

<sup>134</sup> <http://www.recommon.org/eng/land-grabs-madagascar-voices-ground-2013-report-launch>

<sup>135</sup> <http://www.wwf.mg/?202480/900000-trees>



*The World Rainforest Movement (WRM) facilitates, supports and reinforces struggles against deforestation and land grabbing in countries with forests and forest-dependent communities. WRM also exposes and opposes international initiatives and policies that are presented as solutions to halt or to reverse deforestation, but that in reality fail to conserve forests, and ignore the demands and analysis of forest communities about the underlying causes of forest loss.*

For more information, visit [www.wrm.org.uy](http://www.wrm.org.uy)



*The Timberwatch Coalition (TW) is an alliance of civil society organisations and individuals concerned about the negative social and environmental effects of industrial tree plantations in southern Africa and beyond. Timberwatch works to increase awareness of these harmful impacts, and encourages communities to oppose plantation expansion in their regions. TW also opposes false solutions to problems like deforestation and climate change, such as carbón offsets, emissions trading, biofuels, and tree plantation certification schemes.*

For more information, visit [www.timberwatch.org](http://www.timberwatch.org).

