

# Climate Chronicle

from COP15  
CRITICAL NEWS & CLIMATE JUSTICE PERSPECTIVES

Issue 3. Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> December 2009

## Climate technologies: a leap into the unknown

*A new “technology mechanism” could reward untested techniques that damage the climate, warns **Oscar Reyes***

What’s green-sounding, blurry and potentially dangerous? “Environmentally sound technology” is the less than amusing punchline, with the lack of any definition of the Copenhagen negotiations’ latest buzz phrase creating a risk that a new technology framework could be exploited for dangerous geo-engineering projects.

“There is an emerging agreement that countries want to see a new technology mechanism emerge from this process” said Yvo De Boer, UNFCCC Executive Secretary, on Thursday. But concerns are mounting that many technologies that will be fast-tracked through this new system are risky and untested. This has the potential to compound the climate crisis.

“On top of being the victims of the climate crisis, we don’t want to become guinea pigs for new unproven technologies or for old hazardous technologies such as nuclear power, with the excuse that more technology is needed to fix the climate,” said Ricardo Navarro from Friends of the Earth International. “It is totally irresponsible that negotiators are discussing the development and transfer of technologies without any mechanism to filter which ones can be useful,” added Navarro.

### Backing up political failure

The failure of industrialised countries to offer anything close to the emissions reductions commitments required to avert catastrophic climate change has stimulated a flurry of activity in recent months in the arena of new technologies to “rescue” the planet.

From ocean dumping of urea through to simulated volcanic eruptions, the spectrum of geo-engineering projects alone spans a spectrum from commercial misadventure to sci-fi fantasy. Geo-engineering is gaining increased legitimacy within the UNFCCC process, with the UK Royal Society hosting three side-events on the issue in Copenhagen, following its recent warning that this could become “the only option left to limit further temperature increases” in a context where the political process fails to tackle climate change.

Geoengineering proponents include industry-friendly climate skeptics such as Bjorn Lomborg, who claims that a large technical fix skirts the need for action on emissions reductions. Others are less convinced, however, with over 160 civil society groups issuing a statement in favour of the precautionary principle that we “Look Before We Leap”. The declaration alerts governments to the absence of any environmental and social assessment mechanisms in the draft Copenhagen agreement on technology, and claims that the current approach poses grave threats to human health, human rights, rural livelihoods, diverse ecosystems and climate stability.

“Fighting climate change with geoengineering is like fighting fire with gasoline,” explains Silvia Ribeiro from the ETC Group, an international technology watchdog. “Proposals such as dumping tonnes of iron in our oceans or injecting sulphates in the stratosphere to reflect sunlight are extremely dangerous. They could worsen existing problems, like ozone depletion and drought in sub-Saharan Africa, and their impacts will be felt in countries and by people who won’t even have a chance to say what they think of these ideas.”

“Whatever technology agreement comes out of this meeting must not just become a funding mechanism for venture-capital-backed green-washing exercises”, said Chee Yoke Ling from Third World Network. “In the context of the carbon trade, ‘environmentally sound technologies’ are often more hype than heft. We need an agreement that will facilitate access to truly environmentally sound technologies and clean energy and that will not result in the global expansion of bad ideas. Governments already recognise the principle of prior assessment in the international Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. We need even stronger rules in an agreement on climate technology”, she added.

The “Look Before You Leap” statement can be found at [www.etcgroup.org/en/node/4956](http://www.etcgroup.org/en/node/4956)



## The World Bank and Eskom : Banking on climate destruction

*Is the South African government serious about climate change? Ask the World Bank!*

groundWork, South Africa’s leading environmental justice NGO is joined by South Africa’s foremost climate change NGO, Earthlife Africa (Jhb), and the Friends of the Earth International Chair, in the Copenhagen release of groundWork’s new report investigating the \$5-billion dollar World Bank loan to Pretoria for future fossil fuel development. This would be more than double the Bank’s global lending for renewable energy, and represent the largest single loan ever made by the Bank to any African country.

Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> December 1  
2:00 to 12:30 hrs  
Asger Jørn, Hall H, Bella Center



The World Bank, deeply involved in climate negotiations and financing as it is, is not the institution to support the drastic change in the direction that’s required. And the South African government’s own assumptions are not in fact very different from the Bank’s. The new build is, after all, a home-grown idea. It was nurtured in an economy that is based on cheap labour and cheap energy. For big industrial users, but not for people, it provides the cheapest power in the world. This is the competitive advantage that has made the country one of the world’s most carbon intensive economies.

Energy for whom? Climate destruction for whom?

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# CDM draft text misses the point

The draft text on guidance relating to the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), out yesterday, displays a startling lack of appreciation for some of the most fundamental flaws within the offsets regime. The lack of environmental and social integrity, which the CDM has thrown up in projects around the world, is absent. The emphasis is rather predominantly on issues of governance including streamlining, efficiency, consistency and regional distribution, as a commentator notes.

Developing “standardised methods for baseline scenarios”, for instance, may prove to be a consistently elusive target as project developers attempt even more fraudulent counter-factual or hypothetical claims to justify illegitimate projects. The text also calls for the CDM Executive Board (EB) to adopt an “independent technical assessment” for the registration and issuance of certified emissions reductions without regard for the fact that the EB has already had an independent verifier, SGS, who was recently suspended for fudging the calculations. Moreover, carbon accounting itself may be regarded as a ‘false science’ without any real merits for proving real emissions reductions, environmental skeptics argue.

In the broader purview, it is important to note that there is disjuncture between the track of the negotiations in which developing countries are pushing for the exclusion of offsets as a claim on actual domestic cuts by developed countries. This is compared to the discussion on CDM contained in the text which emphasizes improved regulation and better distribution of projects as a way to resolve controversial aspects of the CDM. Despite this, according to the Chair of the contact group for CDM in a meeting preceding the text on 9<sup>th</sup> December, there is a resounding endorsement of the CDM from the plenary.



Rumours have been crashing around the media of fundamental splits between Southern countries in the Copenhagen negotiations. The reality is a rather more prosaic difference over a technical procedure. The Pacific island state of Tuvalu had proposed that a “contact group” (informal negotiating session) be started on a new legally binding Protocol that could include deeper emissions cuts. Some larger developing countries, including India and China, objected – fearing that this may open up space for the consideration of new Protocol proposals from other countries, including Japan and Australia, which would shift a considerable burden of obligations onto them and effectively bury the Kyoto Protocol.

Tuvalu (which is not a member of the G77, the main Majority World country grouping), China and India all support the Kyoto Protocol. And while the tactics differed, their fundamental demands for more significant commitments to emissions reductions and finance from industrialised countries remained consistent.

Far less widely reported was the fact that it was the EU, along with the US, which blocked the hearing of Tuvalu’s proposal on a new Protocol, leading to a temporary suspension of the talks.

## The “split” that wasn’t a chasm

### INTERVIEW

## Waste not, want not CDM

*Wastepickers make great savings to the environment by limiting the amount of waste that could end up at landfill sites, Mohan Nanavare of Maharashtra, India talked to Lushendrie Naidu at the Bella Centre yesterday.*



### What are some of the actions that you are taking in Copenhagen?

We have come to share with everyone a global experience and position. After speaking to waste pickers from all over the world, we have realised that the levels of pollution have increased very much over the years.

### How does CDM and carbon trading affect your livelihood?

We as waste pickers, collect the material for recycling, leading to a zero waste action. But, on the other hand, landfill waste is what is needed for the CDM projects that lead to more carbon emissions. Instead of going for a zero waste approach with the recycling that we do, the government is opting to burn the waste for landfill gas.

Our livelihoods are at stake because these CDM projects are taking away the money that we as waste pickers would have been receiving for our waste materials. Also, we have been responsible for reducing emissions since the waste that we collect is used for recycling. Instead of the money being used to fund these projects, it should rather be used to pay us waste pickers.

### What outcomes would you like to see in Copenhagen?

We would like to put forward our demands to the Indian delegation that has come here. Our hope is that the funding that is made available for carbon trading be given to the waste pickers as it is us who are reducing emissions through our recycling efforts.

### What are some of the actions that you take at home?

I belong to an organisation of trade unions that has about 6 000 members. These unions form a united front for the waste pickers and keep us safe from forms of exploitation and police brutality. These unions help to bring about justice for the waste pickers and their overall upliftment. They have also been instrumental in lobbying for various schemes with the municipal corporations, like health insurance. This amount is not very large but it is sufficient to sustain us.

### Give us some background information about yourself?

I come from the state of Maharashtra in India, a country of many different cultures and languages. I am part of the occupational group in India whose livelihood comes from waste picking. This form of work has been going on for generations in my family. I’m the fourth generation of waste pickers.

Before industrialisation, I worked in agriculture. When my family began waste picking, we started with waste from slaughtered animals, like the hide and bone remains. The hide would be used for leather and the bone was used to make porcelain. Then, when industrialisation began we collected waste of a different kind. There was always a need for recycling but now the material content has changed.



# The answers are not blowin' in the wind

**Betina Cruz Velásquez** of Isthmus of Tehuantepec (Oaxaca, Mexico) is part of a growing resistance to wind farms set up by transnational corporations in the global South. She spoke to **Mary Lou Malig** and **Cecilia Olivet** about how these farms are displacing Indigenous communities from their lands.

## What solutions do you propose to solve the climate crisis?

I hope that the solutions to climate change are bottom up, built from the experiences of a global movement of those excluded and affected by climate change. I do not place my hopes in Copenhagen, but in the international movement that fights for real solutions.

In our communities, we do not have high levels of energy consumption and that does not mean we do not live well, because we do. So the calls for more energy production are false. But, even if there is a need for new sources of renewable energy such as wind power, we have to make sure that it is based on the needs of the people and not imposed by the needs of the market and transnational corporations (TNCs). We have been accused of not wanting development, without understanding that what we want is a different kind of development from what is being imposed upon us.

## What do you think of the market-based solutions being presented to solve the climate crisis?

The wind farms in Mexico have been presented as part of the so-called Clean Development Mechanism and are receiving subsidies under this scheme. However, the fight against climate change cannot be achieved by mercantilising (commodifying) our lives, since this has been one of the root causes of climate change in the first place. In order to solve the climate crisis, the projects for renewable energy, either wind power, solar, geothermic among others, cannot be seen as just business.

To achieve real solutions to the climate crisis it is not enough to start producing renewable energy. We also need to address the excesses in energy consumption, particularly in the North. We cannot continue with energy production to cover these excesses at the expense of using the land meant for cultivating our food.

## Why are you resisting a renewable energy project?

With the pretext of advancing renewable energy, big corporations are occupying our land with windmills. Agriculture, particularly corn growing, is the essence of our region, and will be completely displaced by the wind farm projects.

The government, as well as the companies, argued at the time that these projects would bring employment and development to the region. Instead, people are losing their land and the energy produced is not destined to benefit the Mexican people. Furthermore, none of the investment stays in the country. The companies indicate

they will invest three billion US dollars, of which 78 per cent will be invested in purchasing wind turbines in Germany, Spain or Denmark. The rest of the 22 per cent will be used to install the turbines and a mere 1 per cent will be allocated for the development of the region.

Also, the development of wind power does not mean that other polluting sources of energy will be excluded, such as hydroelectric plants. In fact, just the opposite is happening, with discussions about the installation of a new nuclear plant in Mexico.

These are the reasons why we are demanding an immediate moratorium on the wind farm projects. We have not been properly consulted and the wind farm projects were realised through abusive land lease contracts obtained by TNCs which have violated international agreements that demand local consultation for these projects.

These experiences have led us to believe that we need to carefully analyse what the energy alternatives are as well as the solutions to climate change. The real solutions must be thought through in an integral way. We cannot cover one hole while drilling three others at the same time.

## What is the situation faced by your community?

TNCs saw an opportunity to produce wind power on our land. Most of the companies that arrived are of Spanish origin, including Endesa, Union Fenosa, Preneal, Iberdrola, Acciona and Gamesa, but there are also companies from France, Switzerland, Germany and Italy. These windmill parks are part of the Plan Puebla Panama launched in 2001.

The corporations, colluding with the Mexican government, manipulated the poor, largely non-Spanish speaking Indigenous Peoples of my community, into signing tenancy contracts that in practice meant giving up their lands for up to 30-years for a ridiculously low amount of money. The Indigenous landowners receive 150 pesos (around eight Euro) per hectare per year. They also receive a one-time payment of 1 000 pesos (around 50 Euro) if they sign the contract. These agreements were presented to our people in Spanish when in most cases they only speak *zapoteco* and cannot read Spanish.

The agreements were also misleading because the companies promised that the owner could keep cultivating the land. However, the contract includes, among others, the restriction that crops that grow more than 2 metres cannot be planted (corn can grow to more than 2 metres). By contrast, the company faces no restrictions in the use of the land. The contracts are for 30 years but they can be automatically renewed for another 30 years and only the company can terminate the contract.

These leases represent a new form of feudalism. The companies are in control of thousands of hectares. For example, in the town of San Mateo del Mar, they were aiming to rent 4,000 hectares, while the total land of the town is 7,000 hectares. This is a complete lack of respect to our way of life. They act as if we are commodities that can be bought.

## What are your strategies of resistance?

Facing this threat, we started to organise ourselves. In my town, Juchitón, we formed an Assembly in Defence of the Land and the Territory. Then we joined other groups that reject this kind of wind farm project and formed the Frente de Pueblos del Istmo en Defensa de la Tierra (Front of Peoples of the Isthmus in Defence of the Land). Together, we started an awareness-raising campaign in the areas where the wind farms are based.

As part of our campaign, we organised occupations of land and legal demands to nullify the land lease contracts. Up to now, we have won around 200 cases. The companies, due to the mobilisation and the lawsuits, agreed to revoke the contracts of the landowners who presented demands against the investors, thus releasing people from these draconian contracts.

Our lands have been inherited and they are considered communal, therefore they cannot be subjected to private contracts. At the moment we are starting to put together an appeal to the Agrarian Tribunal asking to respect communal lands and demanding that the companies get out of our territories. This will be a tough battle since the government of Oaxaca is known for defending the corporations and terrorising the communities.

## How did you get involved in the struggles for social justice?

I come from a *zapoteca* community, with a majority Indigenous population. Our life revolves around corn. For us, corn is the main source of food, but corn is also present in most of our every-day life rituals. Without corn, we would die. I joined the struggle to maintain our right to farm when TNCs took an interest in our land. I am now part of the Assembly in Defence of the Land and Territory of Juchitón.

Mary Lou Malig, [www.focusweb.org](http://www.focusweb.org) and Cecilia Olivet, [www.tni.org](http://www.tni.org) were part of the Trade to Climate Caravan, [www.climatecaravan.org](http://www.climatecaravan.org)



Betina Cruz Velásquez



# Tree Plantations - the Ultimate False Solution?

*While it would seem that debating the merits or otherwise of Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) has taken centre stage in some climate circles, there is also good reason to be concerned about the potential use of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) as a tool to source additional finance for “sustainable forest management” (SFM) in the form of monoculture tree plantations. Wally Menne of Timberwatch tells of the range of problems with existing tree plantations.*

Throughout the world, wild forests are being systematically eradicated or converted to single species, even-aged timberlands. Although biodiversity concerns are normally built into management policy, they are usually discarded in deference to the bottom line of timber company profit statements. At the same time, the rights of forest dependent communities are undermined, partly through forced displacement to slum settlements near cities. When Indigenous and traditional communities lose access to subsistence resources from forests that they previously used sustainably, there is increased pressure from competition in other areas, and this in turn creates conflict between groups and individuals.

Generally wild forests, tree plantations and ‘production forests’ are not easy to tell apart. This difficulty becomes more pronounced when there are no clear definitions or accurate terms to guide forest workers, academics, politicians or civilians. The problem of inadequate definitions and terminology continues to plague forest policy negotiations, while providing loopholes for timber industry interests to exploit forests even more aggressively. With the destruction of forests through over-exploitation,

comes the opportunity for the timber industry to replace forests with vast alien monocultures.

Plantations are considered as forests by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), despite lacking nearly all the biotic elements of genuine forests that support and sustain human communities. The global timber industry is also targeting other ecosystems for establishing more tree plantations, in particular biodiverse grasslands in countries such as South Africa, Uruguay, Australia, China, India and Tanzania.

Even Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) forest certification is failing to deliver on its promises. Instead of reducing pressure on forests, FSC has effectively become a marketing tool for the timber industry, protecting and enhancing the image of so-called ‘legal’ timber operations. While the FSC forest scheme was originally intended to protect forests, it has since found favour as a dishonest means to justify the destruction of millions of hectares of grasslands, effectively transferring control and ownership of productive land away from local communities, into the hands of large multinational corporations.

The FSC is controlled in part by some of the most destructive forest logging and tree plantation companies on the planet. Many help to launder vast amounts of wood from illegal logging and monoculture tree plantations, sometimes using the FSC system to legitimise businesses that supply this timber to the major consumers of wood and wood-products in the industrialised world. Some large international NGOs, including WWF and Greenpeace, are also involved in the FSC, rubberstamping a system that encourages the forest destruction and degradation now being targeted by the UNFCCC for its negative effect on climate.

Certification of plantation carbon sinks as CDM projects remains elusive, due mostly to concerns about the impermanence of tree plantations. They are converted

into disposal items such as toilet tissue, cigarette filters and baby napkins, but are also often wiped out by wildfires and diseases. Human induced drought, soil erosion, nutrient loss and other factors like community anger, all contribute to an increased likelihood of plantations going up in smoke, thereby actually increasing the emission of greenhouse gases that they were meant to reduce in the first place.

A Norwegian company called ‘Green Resources Ltd’ leads the charge by Northern polluters to destroy grasslands in Africa by converting them to plantations. Local communities seem to have little say about the decisions that are taken to alienate their traditional farming, grazing and hunting areas. These agreements enable foreign ‘colonial’ interests to take ownership of the land.



Blessing Karumbidza and Wally Menne of Timberwatch have produced a preliminary report, funded by the Siemenpuu Foundation, about how the plantation activities in the southern highlands of Tanzania of ‘Green Resources Ltd’ impacts on local communities, economy, and affected ecosystems. The company hopes to receive 400 000 CDM carbon credits from the project, which will plant eucalyptus and pine trees in about 6 500 hectares of biodiverse grassland. The carbon credits will be supplied to the Norwegian government.

The report can be downloaded at : [www.timberwatch.org](http://www.timberwatch.org)





# CARBON MARKET CRIMES (CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE)

A Photo Essay by Tamra Gilbertson

On display at the KlimaForum until 18 December 2009



## REDD on the Kampar Peninsula Sumatra, Indonesia

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) schemes are among the most controversial within the climate debate. It assumes that deforestation is a result of the low economic value that is placed on intact forests, and that providing money for conservation to forested countries in the South will help to protect them. This concept is challenged by many Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and forest communities, who warn that putting a price on forests will encourage further land grabs by large companies and governments – something that is already experienced in some REDD pilot projects. They say that the real drivers of deforestation are major construction, mining, logging and plantation developments.

Several REDD schemes are already underway, some hosted by the UN and the World Bank, others in response to bilateral agreements between countries. A number of countries, private conservation funds and voluntary offset projects have started their own REDD funds, positioning themselves to reap the profits of a new global climate agreement.

The Kampar peninsula of Sumatra once had nearly 700,000 hectares of peat swamp forests and mangroves. Today, 40% of its peatlands have been replaced with monoculture tree plantations. Most of the peninsula has been handed out in a series of logging concessions since the 1970's, with companies cutting canals through the peat to transport logs to the Kampar river. Although logged, the forests retain high biodiversity and support the livelihoods of 33,000 people. The local communities, including the Akit and Melayu Indigenous Peoples, have strong ties and customary rights to the land.

Pulp and paper company, PT Riau Andalan Pulp and Paper (PT RAPP), produces two million tonnes of pulp a year. It plans to double its capacity, which will mean massive expansion of its area of industrial tree plantations. The company is seeking carbon payments through a REDD project that it claims would reduce emissions from the peninsula by about 14 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. Estimate values are at US\$17 million per year.

Local communities have struggled against RAPP for many years. Community leader, Marzuki Effendi, stated, "RAPP blames the villagers for illegal logging, but they keep planting more and more acacia. They build canals to transport the lumber and it drains the peatlands. The people from Petodaan and Kuala Pandote villages resisted for 15 days in 2005, by setting fire and damming this RAPP canal."

PT RAPP has already secured the right to 97,000 hectares of industrial plantation permits. In 2009, the community of Teluk Meranti wrote to the company, pointing out that they depend the land. They have seen the impact of their operations on other communities, and reject their presence on their lands.

Last month, the Indonesian government suspended PT RAPP's activities in Kampar's peatland forests. However, Indigenous Peoples of Indonesia are frequently denied the right to reject government and private sector projects within their territories. With higher financial incentives, Kampar communities are threatened by increased loss of forested lands and their livelihoods.

[www.carbontradewatch.org](http://www.carbontradewatch.org)







# Monsanto : Profits from Poison

*Giant seed and chemicals multinational, Monsanto, is nominated for the Angry Mermaid Award for lobbying for RoundupReady (RR) soy to be considered a “climate-friendly” crop that is eligible for carbon credits and subsidies under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), and for promoting meaningless ‘responsible’ labelling for RR soy which could be used to certify ‘sustainable’ agrofuels. The **organisers of the Award** give us the low down.*

Monsanto claims that genetically modified (GM) crops are both a solution to world hunger and can help tackle climate change. It insists that its RR crops lock carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) into the soil because they can be grown without ploughing, known as ‘no tillage’ or ‘conservation tillage’ agriculture. Ploughing results in CO<sub>2</sub> loss from the soil.

However, RR crops rely on large quantities of herbicides to control weeds. RR soy, which is grown on over 40 million hectares across South America, has severe social and environmental impacts, with increased pesticide use leading to damage to human health and the environment. These vast monocultures of soy have displaced rural and indigenous communities, and replaced valuable forest, resulting in huge CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

## Historical Influence

Monsanto has been an active climate lobbyist since 1998 when it claimed that the U.S. could meet up to 30% of its CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction targets by using ‘no till’ agriculture. It is also pushing for agricultural ‘carbon sinks’. Monsanto was active within the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), contributing to an IPCC Special report on land use, land use change and forestry in May 1999. The lobbying effort paid off: soil sinks became a major bargaining chip for the U.S., which repeatedly threatened not to ratify the Kyoto Protocol unless sinks were included.

## Monsanto’s Lobby Today

The biotech industry remains close to the U.S. government, with President Obama appointing several former Monsanto chiefs and allies to important positions. The company continues to actively lobby in the U.S. and formed alliances with the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to promote ‘no till’

as a climate solution and get CDM eligibility for it. So far, it has been unsuccessful with its ‘no till’ attempts, but in October 2009, a CDM methodology was approved for biodiesel production from crops grown for fuel on marginal lands, allowing agrofuel producers to directly benefit from carbon credits. Monsanto soy is also eligible for credits, if grown on existing plantations and not on newly cleared land.

Monsanto has also been pushing for carbon credits from ‘no till’ in the U.S. Climate Bill, reportedly spending over \$4,000,000 on lobbying activities in the U.S. It contributed to the development of an “agriculture soil carbon standard”, leading to a call on the U.S. Congress to grant valuable offsets for ‘no-till’ farming – a shift that will spur sales of Roundup and RR seeds. This scheme could become law.

Monsanto’s inclusion in the Roundtable on Responsible Soy was a major breakthrough for the company, providing it with an opportunity to claim green credentials for GM soy. Industry critics argue that the label is meaningless, allowing for soy expansion and deforestation to continue. Evidence is growing that the production of RR soy (in combination with no-till practices) leads to more, not less, pesticide use. There is no consensus from civil society in producer countries that these criteria will lead to a ‘responsible’ product.

The RTRS, which includes WWF, has continuously promoted certification of ‘sustainable’ soy biodiesel. WWF is now openly calling for carbon credits for RTRS-certified RoundupReady soy.

Monsanto was asked to comment on its nomination for an Angry Mermaid Award but did not respond. [www.angrymermaid.org](http://www.angrymermaid.org)



Herbicide resistant soybean crop showing how the GM plant is unaffected by poison that kills all other plants – this is not a good thing, despite the pro-GM lobby’s attempt to prove.

Photo: Wally Meme / Timberwatch / www.timberwatch.org

## ACTION



## System change, not climate change

*A programme of actions organised under the Climate Justice Action (CJA) umbrella kicks off on Saturday with a call to “reclaim power over our future.”*

Climate Justice Action rejects lobbying, and suggests that “unlike many other groups going to Copenhagen this December, we are not calling for ‘leaders’ to sign a deal: the UN process is hurting, not helping.” It singles out carbon trading for criticism.

“We are creating a diverse movement of ordinary people who are coming together globally and locally to create and fight for a social and economic system that is holistic, just and sustainable, and to address the root causes of climate change, whatever the UN decides” read a CJA launch statement

Climate Justice Action will be involved in a series of protests and actions, from autonomous anti-corporate and no-borders actions to larger mass actions, starting with a “system change, not climate change” block on 12 December. On 16 December, CJA members intend to take over the Summit itself and create a Peoples Assembly for Climate Justice.

More information at [climate-justice-action.org](http://climate-justice-action.org)



# REDD: An Indigenous Peoples' Perspective

*Indigenous Peoples movements consider that Reduced Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) is bad for people, bad for politics and bad for the climate. REDD was nicknamed : CO<sub>2</sub>lonialism of forests. The **Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN)** offers a perspective from IP communities around the world.*

REDD is meant to be about protecting forests to reduce greenhouse gas, but it inevitably gives more control of Indigenous Peoples' forests to state forest departments, loggers, miners, plantation companies, traders, lawyers, speculators, brokers, Washington conservation organisations and Wall Street, resulting in rights violations, livelihoods losses, and, ultimately, more forest loss.

The original idea behind REDD was that, because protecting forests is good for the climate, governments, companies or forest owners in the South should be rewarded for keeping them standing. But industrialised-country governments and corporations will pay for the preservation of forests only if they get something in return. What they want is rights over the carbon in those forests so that they can use them as licenses to continue burning fossil fuels – and to continue mining fossil fuels at places such as the Albertan Tar Sands in Canada, the Ecuadorian Amazon, the Niger Delta and the Appalachian mountaintops.

They will get those rights by making deals with – and reinforcing the power of – the people who they regard as having “authority” over the forests, or whoever is willing and able to steal forests or take them over using legal means. These people are the very governments and corporations who have time and again shown contempt for the rights and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples. The result is bound to be new and more extensive forms of elite appropriation of Indigenous and other territories.

Existing REDD projects have already set in motion this transfer of power. REDD cannot be “fixed” to alter these political realities; it can only reinforce them.

## REDD can't be fixed with attempts to detach it from carbon markets

REDD is a component of carbon markets. The money behind it was always going to come mainly from industrialised countries and large corporations looking for more

pollution licenses. REDD could result in the generation of billions of tonnes of demand for

tradable pollution licenses through the Kyoto Protocol carbon markets and the European Union (EU) Emissions Trading Scheme (ETI). If the US's Waxman-Markey or Kerry-Boxer climate carbon trading bills are enacted, billions of tonnes more demand will follow; indeed, the mere prospect of Waxman-Markey has already touched off a REDD land grab in central Africa.

Even the technical structure of REDD reflects its market orientation: REDD posits a numerical climatic equivalence between saving forests and reducing the burning of fossil fuels. This equation is indefensible scientifically.

Assuming REDD is irretrievably linked with carbon markets, then it is likely to divide Indigenous communities from each other – every time a forest dependent community signs a contract to provide

Just Say NO!! to REDD

Don't be an accomplice to putting forests in the carbon markets

## REDD can't be fixed by attempting to ensure that the money “goes to the right place”

REDD proponents often assert that it will channel large sums of money to nature conservation. Leaving aside, for the

moment, the difficulty that any program that accelerates global warming will also accelerate forest destruction, this overlooks the historical lesson that every proposal to solve the problem of deforestation and forest degradation through large sums of money has failed.

Deforestation is caused by *too much* money – in the wrong hands. More specifically, by the disproportionate political power and global political organisational capabilities of forest destroyers. Even if REDD could be reformulated as a plan to make available huge financial rewards for the Indigenous protectors of forests, it does not follow that Indigenous peoples would be able to collect and use the rewards.

Out of 100 REDD pilot projects – almost all of them connected with carbon trading – many are already stained with the blood of the peoples they claim to benefit, involving land grabs, evictions, human rights violations, fraud and militarisation. In Kenya, the Mau forest is being made “ready” for a UNEP-funded carbon offset project by forceful and violent eviction of its inhabitants, including the Indigenous Ogiek People. In Papua New Guinea,

carbon traders are accused of coercing villagers to “sign over the rights to their forests” for REDD.

## REDD can't be fixed with attempts for projects to require the “Free Prior Informed Consent” (FPIC) of affected communities or compliance with the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) or other codes or principles

Many countries do not even recognise the existence of Indigenous Peoples, let alone their rights, so neither the principle of FPIC nor UNDRIP will protect them. Neither are considered legally binding by the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC nor by any state except Bolivia. The right to FPIC has already been violated in REDD pilot projects and in preparatory plans in several countries. Other internationally-recognised principles such as the standards urged by the World Commission on Dams have similar limitations.

The International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC) was explicit at the Bali

climate negotiations in 2007: “REDD will not benefit Indigenous Peoples, but in fact will result in more violations of Indigenous Peoples' rights. It will increase the violation of our human rights, our rights to our lands, territories and resources, steal our land, cause forced evictions, prevent access and threaten indigenous agricultural practices, destroy biodiversity and cultural diversity and cause social conflicts. Under REDD, states and carbon traders will take more control over our forests.”

In Poznan in 2008, the IIPFCC demanded an immediate suspension of all REDD initiatives and carbon market schemes.



Photos: Tamra Gilbertson





# REDD, REDD+, REDD++, REDD and bacon, sausage and spam ...

*The basic concept of Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) is simple: governments, companies, local people and/or Indigenous Peoples in the South should be rewarded for protecting their forests instead of cutting them down. The devil is in the details. And there are an awful lot of details in REDD, says Chris Lang.*

Forests were excluded from the Kyoto Protocol, as we all know, because it's very difficult to measure how much carbon is stored in them. Even if you could measure the carbon, it's very difficult to know whether the carbon is going to stay in the forests, and for how long, or whether the trees will burn down as the planet heats up. Then there's the problem that if we stop deforestation in one area, how on earth do you stop the loggers from going somewhere else given that demand from Northern overconsumption hasn't just gone away?

Forests came back into the UNFCCC in 2005 at COP11 in Montreal, when a group of countries led by Papua New Guinea introduced an idea called REDD. Two years later, at COP13 in Bali, REDD had morphed into REDD+.

The 'Bali Action Plan' Calls for: "Policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions

from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.

In other words, REDD+ has added more details with new REDD devils hiding away in them:

- 'conservation' sounds good, but the history of the establishment of national parks includes large scale evictions and loss of rights for Indigenous Peoples and local communities;
- 'sustainable management of forests' would include subsidies to commercial logging operations in old-growth forests, indigenous peoples territory or in villagers community forests;
- 'enhancement of forest carbon stocks' could result in conversion of land (including forests) to industrial tree

plantations, with serious implications for biodiversity, forests and local communities. According to the UN, a "forest" is any area bigger than 500 square metres with crown cover of 10 per cent and trees capable of growing two metres high. Industrial plantations and even clearcuts are included in this definition.

Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the forest, along came REDD++. The second plus refers all land uses. No, really - everything. By now the devils are positively swarming with glee.

Just to give an idea of how crazy this is, here is the Ugandan SBSTA negotiator, Xavier Nyindo Mugumya, speaking to the pro-carbon trading website, Ecosystem Marketplace (<http://bit.ly/7G5Pye>) during COP14 in Poznan last year, "Generally, we think the science is OK." Well isn't that nice to know? But that's not all Mugumya had to say, "The problem is that we don't have specificity of which science is suitable for deforestation and which science is suitable for degradation and which science is suitable for other areas like conservation and sustainable management of forests." So adding in every emission from every time anyone digs up a weed in their back garden, as REDD++ would presumably have to do? Easy peasy.

There are a few other suggestions on the menu at Copenhagen: REDD, sausage

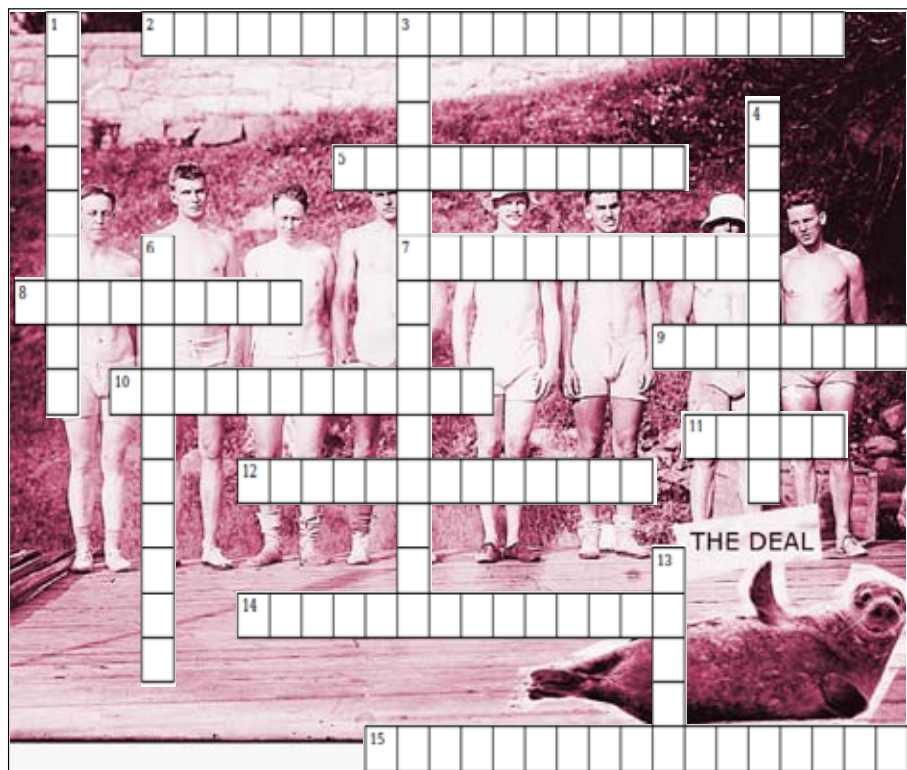
and bacon; REDD and spam; REDD, bacon and spam; REDD, bacon, sausage and spam; spam, bacon, sausage and spam; spam, eggs, spam, bacon and spam; and spam, sausage, spam, spam, spam, bacon, spam, tomato and spam. Oh, I'm sorry. That's a Monty Python sketch. Obviously, the UN climate negotiations are nothing like Monty Python.

The trouble is that REDD is not funny. REDD-type projects are already having major impacts on local communities and Indigenous Peoples. While REDD proponents such as the Nature Conservancy (TNC) are very friendly with massively polluting companies, they ignore the rights and needs of local communities. A TNC project in Guaraquezaba, Brazil, for example, creates carbon credits for General Motors, Chevron and American Electric Power. The project has destroyed local people's livelihoods by not allowing them into the forest. TNC doesn't seem to care. The carbon idea is not really tangible to people in the community, Miguel Calmon, TNC's director of forests and climate in Latin America told Investigative journalist Mark Schapiro.

While Guaraquezaba is just one project, it exposes REDD as simply a means to help polluting corporations to "offset" their emissions. And there are a huge number of polluting companies looking to 'offset' their emissions. REDD could trigger the biggest land grab of all time.

Chris Lang is an activist and researcher. He currently runs the REDD-Monitor website [www.redd-monitor.org](http://www.redd-monitor.org)

## CLIMATE CROSSWORD by Beatriz Martinez



### ACROSS

- 2 First and largest carbon market institution in North America.
- 5 A deep chronic sense or state of insecurity and dissatisfaction arising from unresolved problems or unfulfilled needs, often felt by Majority World delegates at the UN climate negotiations.
- 7 Variability among living organisms on the earth, including within and between species and within and between ecosystems.
- 8 Mother Earth amongst many Andean Indigenous Peoples.
- 9 Expected to rise by between 18 cm to 59 cm by 2100 according to the 2007 Third Assessment Report by the IPCC.
- 10 Critical point in an evolving situation that leads to a new and irreversible development.
- 11 Official constituency within the climate change process under the auspices of the UNFCCC with a highly developed casino spirit.
- 12 International agreement linked to the UNFCCC which was adopted on 11 December 1997 and entered into force on 16 February 2005, and which many fear is under death threat.

- 14 Obligation and responsibility that industrialised countries of the North have with the South for the exploitation of their natural goods, and the damage they have caused to livelihood and life on the planet.
- 15 Climate change in Danish.

### DOWN

- 1 The art or practice of conducting international relations, as in negotiating alliances, treaties, and agreements.
- 3 Sudanese chairperson of the G77 plus China grouping of 132 countries.
- 4 Collecting and reprocessing a resource so it can be used again.
- 6 Draft 'political declaration' leaked during the Copenhagen negotiations that tries to make sure the rich get richer.
- 13 Name and author of the grim report on the economics of climate change commissioned by the British government.

Answers from Monday, 09 December 2009 **ACROSS:**  
1.Desertification 4. Industrial 5. Nisse 7. Via Campesina  
9. Annex I 10. Mitigation 11. CCS 12. Water Vapour  
**DOWN:** 1. Drought 2. Corporate have 3. Limousine  
4. IPCC 6. Glacier 8. Biomass

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CARBON  
TRADE  
WATCH

Carbon Trade Watch promotes a critical analysis of the use of market-based mechanisms as a means of dealing with climate change. It is a project of the Transnational Institute.

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The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) is a pan African policy-oriented research organisation that focuses on human security issues in Africa. The ISS Corruption and Governance Programme runs a project that focuses on the governance of climate change.



Earthlife Africa is a non-profit organisation in South Africa that seeks a better life for all people without exploiting other people or degrading their environment. Earthlife Africa seeks a just transition to renewable energy and a low-carbon economy.



The Centre for Civil Society aims to advance socio-economic and environmental justice by developing critical knowledge about, for and in dialogue with civil society through teaching, research and publishing. It is part of the School of Developing Studies of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.



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Design and layout : Ricardo Santos

Printer : Dansk-AvisTryk