



REDD+ and the Underlying Causes of Deforestation and Forest Degradation



November 2013

Global Forest Coalition

Editing: Ronnie Hall

Executive summary

The aim of Global Forest Coalition's 'Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation through Addressing the Underlying Causes' programme has been to analyse the underlying causes of forest biodiversity loss in five important forest countries; and to integrate the results of this analysis into national processes to develop strategies to reduce deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) and other relevant national forest conservation policies. The programme included the organisation of at least ten national workshops on REDD+, and the underlying causes of forest loss and REDD+, in Brazil, Colombia, Tanzania, Uganda and India. Additionally, it included an analysis on the underlying causes of forest loss and to what extent they are being addressed by REDD+ at the global level, which was also discussed at an international civil society workshop during the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 and various other workshops and side events.

Key underlying causes identified in the 2010 report 'Getting to the Roots: Underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, and drivers of forest restoration,' included: persistently high demand for wood; spiralling demand for land for plantations and other forms of agriculture; conflict over land tenure; industrialisation, urbanisation and infrastructure; poor central planning, lack of political will, and inadequate capacity; economic poverty and a lack of alternative livelihood options; neoliberal economic policies locking in unsustainable rates of consumption and poverty; and climate change.

Our overall conclusion from this multi-year project must be that whatever the professed intentions of governments engaged in developing REDD+ programmes and projects, there is little evidence of any real progress towards addressing these underlying causes of deforestation or forest degradation, including in the countries in question.

While there have been some small changes in the right direction — with respect to some governments paying more attention to what the underlying causes actually are in their countries, and in terms of at least paying lip service to the idea of transparency and consultation — the overall picture is still shockingly bleak. Governments may be 'busy' with REDD+, but many of them are playing the fiddle while the forests burn. Most are still ignoring the need to actually *do* something about the underlying causes of deforestation, even though these are, to put it frankly, getting worse. In particular, new and expanding underlying causes of deforestation include increasing global consumption of meat (with consequences for the amount of land needed to grow crops for animal feed); and the burning of wood on an industrial scale in place of fossil fuels.

This and the fact that the focus on REDD+ is manifestly diverting funds away from other forest conservation and management options, means that these underlying causes are continuing to wreak havoc on the world's forests.

Furthermore, this failure to address both direct drivers and underlying causes is still being compounded by poor governance, including corruption, conflicts between national and local authorities, and insufficient resources and institutional capacity — all of which serve to increase the power and influence of the private sector on an ongoing basis (as does REDD+ itself). There is an inherent problem with the design of REDD+ as a mechanism that financially rewards individual countries or projects for their performance in reducing emissions from forest loss in this respect. Even *ex ante* payments (payments to develop policies rather than payments that are only made once the policies have proven to be successful) do not address the fact that most underlying causes have a transboundary

dimension, and the REDD+ mechanism does not provide any incentives to address transboundary drivers of forest loss, including in particular commodity-related drivers that can only be addressed through demand-side measures. This also means that there are no incentives provided by the REDD+ mechanism to address international leakage caused by underlying causes like commodity production that can simply move to other countries if they are restricted in a REDD+ country.

Some governments continue to have a cavalier approach to the concerns of their peoples, communities and environment, as illustrated by the fact that most of them are consistently sending out mixed messages about their concern for people and the environment, while actively and assiduously promoting the very economic sectors that drive deforestation and cause hardships for forest-dependent peoples and communities in the first place.

Continued uncertainty about land tenure continues to be a major cause of conflict and violence; and this, together with escalating land grabbing, has significant impacts for forests as well as people. There are also a number of dynamics — stemming primarily from the complexity of REDD+ and its deliberate ‘built-in’ appeal to private finance — that make it a highly risky venture, especially from a community point of view. This includes a lack of legally binding definitions and safeguards with respect to REDD+ at the national level. Furthermore, some governments have introduced legislation or policies that are specifically intended to promote market-oriented mechanisms and/or promote the ‘flexibilisation’ of the domestic economy and labour force, which are also having worrying social impacts.

In addition, the challenge that under-resourced countries face when it comes to communicating information about deforestation, its underlying causes, proposed solutions and their impacts on communities is being massively underestimated.

Finally, one of the most notable conclusions of this project is that while some countries have seemingly responded to civil society’s demand for more transparency and consultation with respect to REDD+, this opening up only really extends to organisations that support the concept in the first place; and as often as not it may be a written ‘commitment’ that applies in theory, rather than practice, seemingly to meet external intergovernmental demands.

A new and extensive strategy to conserving the world’s forests is urgently needed. It must look far beyond the limited approach of conserving ecosystems and carbon, and take into account the rights, needs and positive role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and especially the women within those communities, and the survival of their cultures. Markets and speculation — the hallmark of most REDD+ projects — cannot be allowed to determine the future of our forests and the peoples traditionally inhabiting or dependent upon them. REDD+ is simply not designed to address the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation and it cannot be relied upon as a means of conserving forests.

Contents

1. Introduction.....	5
2. The Underlying Causes of Deforestation and Forest Degradation.....	10
3. Case Studies	
I. Brazil.....	20
II. Colombia.....	31
III. India.....	38
IV. Tanzania.....	52
V. Uganda.....	62
4. Conclusions.....	70
5. Recommendations.....	78

Citation: Hall, R. (ed.), 2013. *REDD+ and the Underlying Causes of Deforestation and Forest Degradation*. Global Forest Coalition, Asuncion, Paraguay.

Case studies elaborated by: Camila Moreno for Nucleo Amigos da Terra-Brazil (Brazil), Diego Cardona for Censat Agua Viva (Colombia), Souparna Lahiri for Equations and the All Indian Forum of Forest Movements (India), Wally Menne for the Timberwatch Coalition and Envirocare (Tanzania) and Kureeba David Mutsitsa for the National Association of Professional Environmentalists (Uganda).

Design: Isis Alvarez and Simone Lovera

Photo front page: Forest loss in Colombia. Photo: Censat Agua Viva

1. Introduction

We all rely on forests, directly or indirectly, knowingly or unknowingly. For those living in or near to forests, they are veritable life support systems, providing food, medicines and construction materials, as well as shade, shelter, and spiritual and cultural sustenance.¹ Forests also play a vital role in regulating local climatic conditions, triggering the rainfall that feeds into our streams and rivers.² But forests matter to everyone as well: the world's greatest forests in the Amazon and the Congo river basins in particular — play a particularly vital role in determining global weather patterns. Their depletion can only escalate the already unfolding climate change crisis. All of this is now well known and understood, in both academic and government circles.³

We also know what the immediate drivers of deforestation and forest degradation are. Agriculture is clearly the main culprit. Recent research reveals that 80% of the world's deforestation is caused by clearing land to grow food, either commercially or for subsistence purposes. Commercial agriculture is thought to be responsible for two thirds of the deforestation taking place in Latin America; and commercial and subsistence agriculture are each responsible for roughly one third of Africa's deforestation, with fuelwood collection and charcoal production also being key drivers. Clearing forests for mining, urban expansion and infrastructure development are also culprits; and an estimated 70% of forest degradation is caused by timber extraction and logging operations.⁴

Why is it, then, that we are struggling to contain the twin scourges of deforestation and forest degradation? If we know what the problem is, surely the solution must lie within our grasp?

The problem is that the factors that actually determine the drivers themselves — known as the 'underlying causes' — are complex, interlinked and politically loaded.

Underlying causes vary from country to country and are examined more extensively in the 2010 GFC report, *Getting to the Roots: Underlying Causes of Deforestation and Forest Degradation, and Drivers of Forest Restoration*, which summarizes the findings of 22 national multi-stakeholder workshops. But generally they include high demand for industrially produced food and animal feed products, and demand for wood, whether felled legally or illegally, for construction, furniture-making and charcoal. The latter demand is partly being met by an ongoing expansion in monoculture plantations, but these are often planted in place of felled forests, even though they have minimal carbon sequestering potential and little or no biodiversity, but high irrigation and chemical input requirements. It seems obvious that until these excessive demands are reduced, the supply of timber and food commodities, legal or illegal, is unlikely to stop.

The human need for food, fibre and fuel forms an important underlying cause of forest loss as well, although it normally becomes a major driver of forest loss when these commodities are produced for national and international markets only. In this light it is important that Indigenous people and communities who use and manage forests resources sustainably can continue to do so (and indeed secure a legal right to their territories, not just the right to continued access); and that those using forest resources unsustainably for want of better

¹ http://www.un.org/en/events/iyof2011/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Fact_Sheet_ForestsandPeople.pdf

² http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/Deforestation/deforestation_update2.php

³ <http://www.criticalcollective.org/?publication=forests-in-a-changing-climate>

⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/65505/6316-drivers-deforestation-report.pdf

options, including people living in cities, can be provided with alternative sources of income and affordable renewable fuels.

Another underlying cause that is just as corrosive relates to the way in which different countries operate, their political cultures. In particular, weak governance, poor planning, and corruption mean that even the best of policies, regulations and enforcement may make little difference in reality. Inter-departmental rivalry, with trade and economics ministries and departments trumping those responsible for social and environmental welfare, is also a serious governance failure, and one that is not confined to under-resourced countries.

Poor governance also extends to a failure to consult and involve peoples and communities in decisions that impact on their futures. At its most extreme, this disconnect between those with political or financial power and the rest of a population results in violent clashes over land and forest resources, with forest-dependent communities frequently being forced off their territories at gunpoint, or having to leave because their homes have been burnt down.

Perhaps the most intractable of these are governments' short-sighted focus on ramping up economic activity and growth seemingly at any cost, which has resulted in what can only be described as a blinkered approach to the over-riding need to reduce demand, consumption, and waste (thereby reducing demand for food, fuel and timber products); and parallel but undue priority being given to international trade in commodities and ramping up commodity exports, even in the face of local economic collapse in the face of transnational competition, and shockingly persistent levels of hunger as land for subsistence farming is lost.

Sadly, there is evidence to suggest that these underlying causes are being augmented by developing global dynamics, including a rapid increase in the number of people eating meat, and an industrial-scale return to the age-old but highly inefficient and polluting practice of burning wood as a primary source of fuel. These two factors are expected to ramp up deforestation and associated land grabbing, and are also considered in more detail below.

Furthermore, the underlying causes can shift over time — including as a result of implementing 'solutions' such as REDD+ that may be economically convenient but turn out to be sub-optimal or even damaging in their own right. REDD+ refers to the Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) *plus* the conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries. REDD+ is aimed at the mitigation of climate change and was first introduced as a discussion item in the agenda of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2005. REDD+ basically consists of developed countries providing economic incentives to a wide range of actors in developing countries to increase their interest in preserving and maintaining standing trees, with a view to preventing deforestation and forest degradation.^{5,6}

However, there are serious concerns that REDD+ may encourage the replacement of natural forests with lifeless monoculture plantations, disadvantage forest-dependent peoples and communities; and fail to deliver on its objectives because of methodological problems including 'leakage' – the transfer of damaging activities to non-forest areas.

⁵ Lederer, M. (2011) From CDM to REDD+ - What do we know for setting up effective and legitimate carbon governance? Ecological Economics, Vol. 70, No. 11, pp. 1900-1907

⁶ Melick, D. (2010) Credibility of REDD+ and Experiences from Papua New Guinea. Conservation biology, Vol.4, No.2, pp. 359-361

Despite the fact that a few years have passed since REDD+ was introduced to the UNFCCC agenda, there is still a lot of uncertainty about its development and implementation, and the negotiations about REDD+ are still ongoing. They are extremely controversial.

Some of the current contentious issues that surround the development and implementation of REDD+ are:

- 1) How to measure the initial levels of stored carbon and how to monitor changes in those levels in order to establish payments that are consistent with achievements.
- 2) How payments will be made.
- 3) How to implement REDD+ programmes at the national level, and
- 4) The participation, integration and coordination of the multiple stakeholders involved in REDD+ programmes and pilot projects, especially those groups that might be potentially vulnerable such as local communities and indigenous people.⁷

Another contentious issue is the potential generation of co-benefits. It has been commonly presumed that a successful reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation would automatically generate some co-benefits⁸ such as the enhancement of biodiversity conservation and/or local communities' livelihoods. While this may be true in some cases,⁹ it has also been pointed out and proven through pilot projects (eg. in Papua New Guinea) that REDD+ does not always generate co-benefits, but can instead be a source of risk for environment and society.¹⁰

Due to the identification and recognition of the risks associated with REDD+, decisions regarding pilot projects and policy development should now include 'safeguards.' These safeguards are meant to avoid negative effects or undesirable consequences such as inter-ecosystem leakages (eg. conversion of non-forest peatlands), biodiversity loss, or the deterioration of local communities' livelihoods as a result of the development of REDD+ activities. However, these safeguards are quite broad and national governments have to interpret and decide how to implement them.

In addition, putting a price on the carbon stored in forests does not mean that the causes that are leading to forest loss and hence the real roots of the problem, will be adequately addressed. To implement REDD+ effectively and in order to mitigate climate change and protect forests, it is fundamental to address the causes of forest loss. Although this may seem self evident, it is an issue that is often 'forgotten', by the time national REDD+ programs are developed, while international negotiations on this issue have not led to any substantive agreement.

There is a wide range of underlying causes of forest loss and although some of them are widespread (including, for example, the lack of recognition of the land and tenure rights of local communities and indigenous groups, commodity demands, illegal activities, and corruption and lack of political will) these causes can vary in each country and even within a

⁷ Peskett, L & Brockhaus, M. (2009) Cuando REDD+ se traslada al ambito nacional: Panorama de las realidades, oportunidades y desafios. Angelsen, A. (Ed.) La implementacion de REDD+: 115 Estrategia nacional y opciones de politica. Center for International Forestry Research, Bogor, pp. 26-4

⁸ Pistorius T., Schmitt, C. B., Benick, D. & Entenmann, S. (2010) Greening REDD+: Challenges and opportunities for forest biodiversity conservation. Policy Paper, University of Freiburg, Germany

⁹ Busch, J., Godoy, F., Turner, W. R. & Harvey, C. A. (2011) Biodiversity co-benefits of reducing emissions from deforestation under alternative reference levels and levels of finance.

Conservation letters, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 101-115

¹⁰ (Pistorius et al., 2010).

country.

Therefore, in order to avoid forest loss it is not only important to address the underlying causes, but also to do it from a national perspective, paying attention to the specific realities and roots of the problem in each country. It is also important to bear in mind that some underlying causes of forest loss may be triggered by international processes such as demand for timber and non-timber products and the expansion of the agriculture frontier due to increasing levels of consumption of certain internationally traded commodities (such as meat).

Consequently, REDD+ and other measures aimed at halting deforestation and forest degradation in order to protect forests and mitigate climate change will most likely fail unless efforts and financial flows are focused on tackling the real roots of the problem. The first step in each country needs to be adequate identification, understanding and knowledge about the underlying causes of forest loss.

Indeed, there is growing concern that the market-oriented 'solutions' that many governments are proposing as a means of stopping the deforestation onslaught are somewhat akin to sticking one's finger in a dyke. Measures such as forest carbon offsetting and performance-based payments in general are extraordinary complex, risky, and open to corruption. Perhaps as a result, they are failing to take off in the way governments had anticipated. There are also concerns that they can themselves trigger yet more deforestation and forest degradation (especially in view of the fact that the United Nations considers tree monocultures to be the equivalent of forests, and its 'solutions' to deforestation thus condone the indirect or even direct replacement of forests with lifeless plantations). Communities are also suffering greatly from so-called solutions that exclude them from their traditional lands, making the land-grabbing phenomenon even worse.

It is these latter two aspects of the deforestation and forest degradation debate – new and escalating underlying causes, and the extent to which REDD+ is able to address these underlying causes are the primary focus of this new report from the Global Forest Coalition's program on the underlying causes of forest loss. It also considers the extent to which countries are or are not implementing REDD+ processes; and whether or not they are engaging with all the key stakeholders likely to be impacted by such policies.



Pig farm in China. Production of soybeans and other feedstock for the intensive livestock industry is a rapidly growing driver of forest loss. Photo: Brighter Green

Box 1. Brief description of the ‘Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation through addressing the underlying causes’ programme

The ‘Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation through Addressing the Underlying Causes’ programme is a joint programme of the Global Forest Coalition and five of its national member and partner groups: Nucleo Amigos da Terra (Brazil), CENSAT Agua Viva (Colombia), Timberwatch (Southern Africa), the National Association of Professional Environmentalists (Uganda), and EQUATIONS in collaboration with the All Indian Forum of Forest Movements (India). The aim of the programme has been to analyse the underlying causes of forest biodiversity loss in five important forest countries and to integrate the results of this analysis into national processes to develop strategies to reduce deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) and other relevant national forest conservation policies.

The programme included the organisation of at least ten national workshops on REDD+, and the underlying causes of forest loss and REDD+ in Brazil, Colombia, Tanzania, Uganda and India. It also included an analysis on the underlying causes of forest loss and to what extent they are being addressed by REDD+ at the global level. The report aims to complement existing analysis on the underlying causes of forest loss — both academic and multi-stakeholder analyses — by providing a description of national REDD+ processes, and analysing the extent to which REDD+ mechanisms are able to address these underlying causes at the national level.

The starting point of the organizations that have contributed to this report is that deforestation and forest degradation cannot be effectively controlled and stopped until the underlying causes are themselves addressed. This necessitates a very specific understanding of how underlying causes are operating in different regions, countries and territories; and of the extent to which proposed solutions such as REDD+ may in fact be contributing to the problems they are supposed to resolve.

The implementation of REDD+ is obviously going to be different in different countries, including because of a variable approach to the current status of and developments relating to the implementation of forest management policies, differing institutional architecture and different approaches to engaging with stakeholders, especially forest-dependent peoples and communities. One common factor that is definitely emerging, however, is that REDD+ is developing very slowly, much more solely than had been anticipated by its supporters. Even in countries such as Uganda and Brazil, governments are only now at the stage of selecting REDD+ pilot projects. This may be related to a collapse in investor confidence in carbon markets following governments’ failure to agree binding emissions reductions targets; and concomitant caution on the part of the implementing developing countries.

However, there is considerably more variability with respect to the REDD+ Readiness activities, and these are therefore considered in some detail in the country case studies, as are changing trends in drivers and underlying causes. A key practical outcome of this variability is that some groups in this study have focused on their government’s implementation of REDD+ Preparedness programmes; whilst others (such as Tanzania, for example) have looked to developing their own solutions-oriented agenda instead.

2. The Underlying Causes of Deforestation and Forest Degradation

From its inception this multi-year programme has sought to analyse the specific underlying causes driving deforestation and forest degradation in the countries participating in the project. Key underlying causes identified in the 2010 report 'Getting to the Roots: Underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, and drivers of forest restoration,'¹¹ included: persistently high demand for wood; spiralling demand for land for plantations and other forms of agriculture; conflict over land tenure; industrialisation, urbanisation and infrastructure; poor central planning, lack of political will, and inadequate capacity; economic poverty and a lack of alternative livelihood options; neoliberal economic policies locking in unsustainable rates of consumption and poverty; and climate change.

At the same time, and on a rather more positive note, Getting to the Roots identified the following as powerful drivers and incentives for forest conservation and restoration: indigenous people's cultural and religious commitments to being the custodians of Mother Earth; local communities' knowledge and practices with respect to conserving forests and biodiversity; the protection and promotion of livelihoods; the protection of forests as a means of conserving water supplies; the transition to agroecology and agroforestry; curbing corruption and strengthening forest protection; and raising awareness and improving communities' organizational capacity.

Three years after publishing Getting to the Roots, however, it has to be observed that while there have been some small changes in the right direction — with respect to some governments paying more attention to what the underlying causes actually are in their countries, and in terms of paying lip service to the idea of transparency and consultation — the overall picture is shockingly bleak. Governments may be 'busy' with REDD, but they are playing the fiddle while the forests burn. They are still ignoring the need to actually *do* something about the underlying causes of deforestation, even though these are, to put it frankly, getting worse. At the same time the prospects for REDD+ itself do not look good as there is no agreement in sight about who or what would finance REDD+ once the readiness phase is over and countries are declared "ready" for REDD+. Carbon markets and other forms of private sector finance are unlikely to play a major role in REDD+ financing until at least 2020, if ever, and public finance has been highly disappointing. As REDD+ has been designed as a mechanism that would pay for results-based performance in the area of forest conservation, this lack of certainty about who will actually pay for these results basically renders the entire mechanism meaningless.

With respect to underlying causes, the following key points emerged as part of our assessment:

(1) Governments are still doing little or nothing to address the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation.

The country case studies found that governments are mainly seeking to address deforestation and degradation through REDD+ and similar market-oriented mechanisms, rather than through alternative approaches that actually address the underlying causes of these problems. At best it can be observed that some governments, have begun to invest

¹¹ Getting to the Roots: Underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, and drivers of forest restoration, Global Forest Coalition, December 2010, <http://www.globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Report-Getting-to-the-roots1.pdf>

time and effort in analysing what the underlying causes applying in their respective countries actually are, using REDD+ Readiness funding. This includes the Ugandan and Colombian government.

In Colombia, for example, it is recognised that the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development has moved forward in terms of its focus on determining the six main causes of deforestation in Colombia more specifically. These are expansion of the agricultural frontier; mining; infrastructure construction; fires; illicit crops; and over-logging. Also there has been movement on identifying the geographical focal points where deforestation is concentrated in Colombia.

There is no evidence or mention of moves to reduce demand for and the consumption of commodities.

(2) New underlying causes and trends are also emerging, including a shift to using wood fuel on an industrial scale and the increasing consumption of meat.

Far from dealing with the existing underlying causes, changing demographics and economic policies are exacerbating some of the underlying causes of deforestation. In particular, emerging international trends include increasing global demand for bioenergy, as most recently exemplified by an alarming shift towards the use of wood for energy on an unprecedented industrial scale; and the rapidly escalating consumption of meat, with its concomitant impacts on forests — land is cleared to farm cattle and grow crops for animal feed.

In Brazil, for example, more than 153,000 square miles of Amazonian rain forest has been cleared since 1988, an area larger than Germany. With the resulting increase in arable land, Brazil has helped feed the growing global demand for commodities, such as beef and soybeans (one of the key products used to make animal feed).¹² Cattle ranching and soy farming have historically alternated as the main drivers of deforestation in Brazil, depending on their respective market prices.¹³ The agribusiness sector currently corresponds to about 23% of Brazilian GDP;¹⁴ and according to recent estimates by FAO, Brazil will supply around 40% of the global increase in global food production by 2050.¹⁵

Box 2. Yet another threat to the world's forests: the expansion of industrial livestock farming

Expanding industrial livestock farming, along with an increasing demand for the resources needed to grow the grain and oil meals used to feed livestock (which are mainly produced from soybeans and corn), is placing intense pressure on the environment. This is affecting some of the world's most vulnerable ecosystems and human communities. The global

¹² <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138849/jeff-tollefson/a-light-in-the-forest>

¹³ From Forest to Fork, How cattle, soy and sugar are destroying Brazil's forests and damaging the climate, Sergio Schlesinger, Friends of the Earth Europe, 2010,

¹⁴ <http://www.estadao.com.br/noticias/impreso,agronegocio-deve-garantir-metade-da-expansao-do-pib-1077756,0.htm>

¹⁵ José Graziano da Silva, a Brazilian, is the current FAO director general. Statement by Alan Bojanic (FAO). <http://sna.agr.br/2013/10/alan-bojanic-ate-2050-brasil-deve-responder-por-40-do-crescimento-na-producao-mundial-de-alimentos/>

livestock industry is, according to the FAO, “probably the largest sectoral source of water pollution,” and one of the key agents of deforestation.

Each year, more than 60 billion animals are raised for human consumption. Meat and dairy production already uses 30% of Earth's land surface, 70% of agricultural land, and accounts for 8% of the water humans use, mostly to irrigate feed crops. Some estimates project that the global production of meat will double by 2050, which could mean increasing the number of animals used each year in the food industry to 120 billion. This prediction has serious implications for the continued—and escalating—impacts that industrialized animal agriculture has on the Earth.

With respect to climate change, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that 18% of global greenhouse gas emissions can be attributed to the world's livestock sector. The industrialisation of the meat industry is also amplifying public health issues across the globe. In China, now the world's largest producer and consumer of animal products, diet-related chronic disease is now the most common cause of death.

Research published in 2012 estimates that agriculture is estimated to be the direct driver of 80% of the world's deforestation. In Latin America, the continent with the highest deforestation levels, the growth of large-scale cattle ranching is the primary driver of forest loss, threatening indigenous communities, including communities living in voluntary isolation in the Amazon rainforest, the Gran Chaco, and other major forests. Over half of all life on earth is found in tropical forests, which now cover only 7% of the world's surface. This paints a grim picture for the future of Earth's species, both human and animal. Furthermore:

- 10% of the world's plant and animal species that face some degree of threat are experiencing habitat loss based on livestock production.
- According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA), the most important drivers of biodiversity loss are habitat change, climate change, invasive alien species, overexploitation, and pollution. Livestock production and intensification contributes to all of these drivers.
- Of the world's thirty-five biodiversity ‘hotspots,’ containing the highest levels of endemic species that have lost 70% or more of their original habitat, twenty-three are affected by livestock production.

The production of and trade in animal feeds based on commodities such as soybeans also has a particularly devastating impact on deforestation in countries like Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay.¹⁶ Animal feed is purchased internationally, low cost being the highest priority, no matter what the ecological impacts are. These include the clearing of land for crops and the use of fossil fuel-based and often toxic pesticides and fertilizers that pose risks to human health and wildlife populations. China purchases nearly 50% of the world's soybeans sold for use as domestic animal feed. This includes large quantities from the US, Brazil, and other countries in the Americas. Increasing demand for grain and oil- and fish-meals to sustain the growing global livestock population means that more of the planet's surface will have to be converted to cropland to grow food for farmed animals, not people.

Due to the corporate take-over of food production, the small farmer running a family farm is

¹⁶ From Forest to Fork: How cattle, soy and sugar are destroying Brazil's forests and damaging the climate, Sergio Schlesinger, Friends of the Earth Europe, 2010, <http://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/publications/FromForestToFork.pdf>

rapidly giving way to the large-scale, factory farm model. This is particularly prevalent in the livestock industry, where thousands, sometimes millions, of animals are raised in inhumane, unsanitary conditions. Almost all of the growth in production of livestock is occurring within the industrial system, not among small operations or local farms.

Intensification of animal agriculture also means that “the livestock sector enters into more and direct competition for scarce land, water, and other natural resources,” according to the FAO. This, of course, has a significant impact on the prospects for ensuring equity and sustainability globally, along with broad-based prosperity for the world’s people. “You could even feed 8 billion [people], maybe you could feed 9 billion,” UN Population Fund advisor Michael Herrmann says of the current global food system, but adds that “a large share of the food we produce does not actually end up as food on our plates;” instead it’s used as animal feed. Globally, about 98% of soy meal (which is created by crushing soy beans) is used as feed for farmed animals.

Small-scale, integrated, agro-ecological farming systems and traditional pastoralism provide alternatives that are much better for the planet. They also sustain social and cultural values, and respect the role of women in food production. Moreover, agro-ecological agriculture and pastoralism play important roles in ecosystem-based climate change mitigation and adaptation. For all these reasons, respecting the territorial and land rights of pastoralists and other Indigenous Peoples and peasants, and actively supporting their production systems is one of the most important and urgent responses to climate change.

Government subsidies that currently support the expansion of industrial-scale livestock and feed operations should be ended and the ‘externalities’ that animal agriculture generates — such as riverine and marine pollution, contamination of soil and groundwater, land degradation, and greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) — should be paid for, in full, by the industry and/or specific facilities that cause them.

It will also be necessary to change consumption and production patterns that promote waste and unnecessary consumption by a minority of humankind, while hundreds of millions still suffer hunger and deprivation. Also required will be energy systems that do not harm the environment or remove land from food production; some of these may be successfully based on local resources and technologies. Political openness, especially in policy-making, ought to be encouraged as well, so that voices questioning intensive animal farming and promoting sustainability and equity can be heard.

Peasant farmers all over the world have demonstrated that genuine sustainable agriculture is possible, and can actually contribute to cooling the planet. In addition, Indigenous and Community Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCAs) play a very important role not only in the conservation of biodiversity (an estimated 22% of the Earth’ terrestrial lands are managed by Indigenous peoples and local communities), but also in sustaining the livelihoods, traditions, and cultural survival of these peoples and communities. Pastoralist peoples often manage extensive areas using biocultural approaches and management techniques that have conserved and used the biodiversity of these often fragile lands in a sustainable manner for centuries.

Source: *Brighter Green & GFC, 2013. [Livestock Farming, Communities, Biodiversity and Climate Change](http://globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/FINAL-version-livestock-briefing-Oct-ENG.pdf) - <http://globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/FINAL-version-livestock-briefing-Oct-ENG.pdf>*

Foreign direct investment in agriculture, to produce both food and bioenergy/agrofuels, is clearly on the rise too. In Tanzania, for example, over 4 million ha of land has been requested by foreign investors in recent years (although as of the end of 2010, only 70,000 ha had been formally leased). This is leading to increasing concern about 'landgrabs,' which is also borne out in Tanzania: research has revealed a lack of accurate information, and secrecy about a number of investments, making it extremely hard for Tanzanians to debate the issue and almost impossible for affected populations to claim their rights and engage in land lease. There are serious flaws in the way community consultations are being carried out.¹⁷



Failed Jatropha plantation SUN Biofuels in Tanzania. Photo: Timberwatch

¹⁷ Oakland Institute country report, Tanzania, http://www.oaklandinstitute.org/sites/oaklandinstitute.org/files/OI_country_report_tanzania.pdf 2011

Box 3. Wood bioenergy and energy sovereignty

As the impacts of climate change are becoming clearer, and patently inescapable, the call to slow fossil fuel consumption and develop alternative 'renewable' and more 'secure' sources of energy is becoming ever more strident, and increasingly reflected in policymaking. Unfortunately, the alternatives promoted are not always better. Burning wood for industrial and commercial-scale electricity and heat is emerging as a favoured alternative energy source that poses serious threats to forests, ecosystems, biodiversity and people.

Burning wood for industrial- and commercial-scale electricity and heat is heavily supported by mandates and subsidies for renewable energy. According to the International Energy Agency, wood currently contributes only about 3.3% to total global primary energy, but it nonetheless poses disproportionate and serious threats to forests, ecosystems, climate, biodiversity and human rights.

All forms of bioenergy require vast areas of land for their production - no other form of energy requires as much land to be converted to generate a unit of electricity. As a result, expanding demand for biofuels is contributing to a wave of 'green land grabs' around the globe, and growth in demand for wood bioenergy is providing new markets for industrial tree plantation growers.

Some are specifically being developed for export to Europe, where demand is particularly high and import-dependent. European demand for wood pellets is currently being met largely from the southern USA and British Columbia in Canada, and these regions are already experiencing serious deforestation and biodiversity losses. Other regions are already being eyed for future wood pellet supplies.

Wood bioenergy is also a central part of the broader push for a 'bioeconomy' with plant biomass serving as a substitute for petroleum and fossil carbon sources — not only for generating electricity, heat and transport fuels, but also for manufacturing a much broader array of chemicals, plastics and other materials. This planned transition would require major advances in biotechnology, synthetic biology, nanotechnology, and more, in addition to unimaginable quantities of biomass. Investment is already being poured into research on engineered and synthetic microbes that can convert biomass into useable chemical and fuel precursors, as well as developing genetically modified crop and tree varieties suitable for use in bio-refineries and other bioeconomy applications. A long history of tree biotechnology research has focused on speeding growth as well as reducing the lignin content of wood (to access sugars in cellulose more easily for conversion to fuels and chemicals), and on expanding the range of fast growing tropical species like eucalyptus.

However, burning wood for electricity and heat does not face the same technological hurdles that some other bioeconomy applications face; it therefore represents a more immediately escalating threat, especially since it is being presented as a 'clean' and renewable energy source.

It is anything but. Carbon emissions measured at smokestacks from wood bioenergy facilities are up to 50% worse than even coal (because wood is less energy dense and burns inefficiently, meaning that more carbon is released per unit of energy generated). Furthermore, wood bioenergy is often used to enable ongoing coal use because it is commonly used in conjunction with coal ('co-firing' biomass) rather than as an alternative.

Burning wood also generates a range of other toxic air pollutants, including fine particulates and volatile organic compounds. Further impacts include emissions and damage resulting from logging and transportation; soil disturbance; impacts on hydrological cycles; direct and indirect land conversion; and air pollution. Overall, wood bioenergy ranks among the worst of energy choices in terms of its climate impacts.

Sustainability standards are presented as a way of avoiding harm from expanding wood bioenergy. Yet there is very little reason to suppose that biomass production can be made sustainable. Fundamentally, the scale of demand for wood is already unsustainable, and adding a huge new additional demand for bioenergy cannot be made sustainable. Ultimately this industrial profit-oriented approach, which demands the progressive privatisation and commodification of people's land and energy resources, is a 'false' solution that many have signed up to because they think there is no alternative. But this is not true.

Energy sovereignty provides a viable alternative to the top down, corporate controlled, destructive forms of extraction that have already laid waste to so many landscapes and communities and become the targets of protests worldwide. With growing awareness, a movement towards 'energy sovereignty', supporting community-scaled, locally owned and operated energy production to satisfy basic needs rather than fuel endless economic growth, is building. One does not have to look too far to find inspiring examples of energy sovereignty. For example, small-scale farmers and rural workers' movements in the south of Brazil, in Rio Grande do Sul, are resisting the corrupting and destabilising agrofuels 'fever' that has overtaken their country by choosing — very deliberately — to generate their own renewable energy for their own use and for local consumption.

The future of wood bioenergy remains uncertain. A large number of facilities have experienced fires and explosions, and others have faced financial and regulatory uncertainty issues. The largest coal conversion project, the UK's Tilbury facility, recently abandoned its biomass conversion plans. On the other hand, as the impacts of climate change become increasingly evident, pressures to use 'biosequestration' techniques for climate geoengineering could mount. Among those are 'BECCS' (bioenergy with carbon capture and storage) and biochar (carbon-rich charcoal added to soils). Both have been advocated as means of reducing atmospheric CO₂ in spite of a lack of evidence that they could ever be effective and serious concerns that supplying the vast quantities of biomass needed to do this would only worsen matters.

*Source: Smolker, R., 2013. Wood Bioenergy: Green Land Grabs for Renewable Energy, Biofuelwatch and Global Forest Coalition, Asuncion.*¹⁸

(3) The failure to address both drivers and underlying causes is still being compounded by poor governance, including corruption, conflicts between national and local authorities, and insufficient resources and institutional capacity — all of which serve to increase the power and influence of the private sector. REDD+ is exacerbating this dynamic.

In Uganda for example, weak governance is a key issue. Forestry policies are not adequately enforced, due to corruption and a lax approach to authorising investments (with investors' interests being prioritised). Furthermore, 70% of land is privately owned, and this, combined

¹⁸ <http://globalforestcoalition.org/2812-wood-bioenergy-green-land-grabs-for-renewable-energy>

with weak governance, has generated a situation in which the government is unable to control private sector practices, and shows a lack of control over resource use permits and felling licences. Implementation of policies such as those related to REDD+ is extremely slow.

Conflict between local and federal authorities concerning forest resources and deforestation has been particularly evident in Brazil. For many years, the Government of Brazil opposed the inclusion of forest protection in UNFCCC climate change negotiations, pushing hard for quantified emission reduction commitments from developed countries, whilst defending its sovereignty over its own natural resources, and recognising methodological flaws in solutions that relate to forests (such as problems with monitoring and carbon accounting).¹⁹ Furthermore, Brazil has managed to significantly reduce its deforestation rates using its own national budget.²⁰ It was therefore not likely that Brazil would support REDD+ as a potential new mechanism for leveraging funds by accessing carbon markets and creating offsetting alternatives,²¹ which would certainly erode its sovereignty over its own forest resources. Official support for addressing reduced emissions from deforestation was through the voluntarily-based Amazon Fund, which had been proposed at COP 13 in Bali in 2007 and was operational in the country from 2009 onwards.²² However, Brazilian local authorities, in the shape of the Amazon Governors' Forum (representing sub-national authorities in charge of the 'Legal Amazon') took a very different view. Sub-national authorities saw REDD as an economic opportunity, and wanted to secure a 'fair share' regarding compensation for REDD-type achievements in their states.²³ They thus exerted considerable pressure for the national position on REDD+ to be amended.

(4) Ongoing uncertainty about land tenure continues to be a major cause of conflict and violence; and this, together with escalating land grabbing, has with significant impacts for forests as well as people, and needs to be resolved as an urgent priority, ensuring that communities retain their rights to territories.

The recognised dynamic of land grabbing is getting worse rather than better, with reports that land grabbing — the mass acquisition of agricultural lands by transnational companies, leading to displacement and disenfranchisement²⁴ — is escalating globally.²⁵

For example, in Uganda disputed property rights and land and resource tenure are identified as a key underlying cause of forest loss and degradation.²⁶ Because of the state's bias in favour of inward and domestic investment strategies, the communities are being marginalised to the extent that the *majority* of communities in areas where these projects are being implemented have lost their land, including forests and other resources, to investors. Many projects introduced in Uganda are associated with community violations. The

¹⁹ http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0034-73292012000300009

²⁰ http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0034-73292012000300009

²¹ Viana, Virgílio M (org). (2009) *REDD and Climate Change Task Force-Report*. Brasilia, [http://www.fas-amazonas.org/pt/useruploads/files/relatório_i_força_tarefa_\(eng\).pdf](http://www.fas-amazonas.org/pt/useruploads/files/relatório_i_força_tarefa_(eng).pdf)

²² http://www.amazonfund.gov.br/FundoAmazonia/fam/site_en/Esquerdo/doacoes/

²³ Viana, Virgílio M (org). (2009) *REDD and Climate Change Task Force-Report*. Brasilia, [http://www.fas-amazonas.org/pt/useruploads/files/relatório_i_força_tarefa_\(eng\).pdf](http://www.fas-amazonas.org/pt/useruploads/files/relatório_i_força_tarefa_(eng).pdf)

²⁴ <http://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/1241>

²⁵ <http://www.economist.com/node/18648855>

²⁶ REDD and Sustainable Development — Perspective from Uganda, IIED, 2010, <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G02774.pdf>

Kalangala oil palm growing project, for example, has led to deforestation and land grabbing.²⁷ Similarly, communities have been evicted from Kboga and Mubende districts to make way for a forest project:²⁸ at the moment the communities are living on the periphery of the forest.²⁹ In the Kikonda forest reserve communities have been evicted for a forest project.³⁰ During the eviction of the Batwa indigenous communities from Semliki forest reserve, 120 community members were resettled on only an acre of land without any piece of land where they could grow crops.

*“The first time they came they told us that we should vacate our homes. We declined. The second time they came with the police. We saw them take a matchbox from their pockets. They lit our houses and burned them down.”*³¹

Furthermore, land tenure conflicts are aggravated by the very different dynamics operating within Western and traditional systems of land ownership and use. Simply recommending the application of a Western system of landownership can make conflicts over territorial access even worse (as well as proving culturally corrosive) if that private ownership replaces previous collective community-oriented forms of land allocation.

Thus the Ugandan land grabbing described above is exacerbated by the fact that there is much dispute and conflict over the issue of landownership in Uganda, which has a dualist system employing both ‘traditional’ and ‘Western’ forms in use.³² The latter is increasingly being favoured by the government,³³ to the great detriment of the people living on lands selected for protection or investment.

Land grabbing for forest carbon offset plantations is also a significant cause of land grabbing in other African countries. In neighboring Tanzania, for example, it was noted that there is also a great likelihood that REDD+ projects will impact negatively on food security as a result of land grabbing³⁴ for REDD+ and other climate change ‘mitigation’ projects which displace communities and lead to increased competition for the remaining land that is suitable for food production. Restrictions on community access to REDD+ project areas will also reduce community access to the wild animals and plants that provide a large part of peoples’ needs for traditional foods and medicines.

Similarly, Brazil is plagued by the need to resolve the serious land ownership problems that are at the heart of its socio-environmental conflicts. In 2008, it was estimated that “53% of the land in the Legal Amazon did not possess any land ownership definition,” including private land where legal violations are suspected, areas legally considered devoid of allocations, and possessions without legal acknowledgement.³⁵ Uncertainty generates disputes over land ownership: the Pastoral Land Commission revealed that in the last 13 years, 3,268 conflicts occurred over land in the Legal Amazon, with one third occurring in the Amazon state of Pará.³⁶ Between 2003 and 2012 there were 10,836 land related disputes across Brazil.³⁷

Even in India, with its formal policy deferring to Gram Sabhas — local village authorities — with respect to decisions about local forest matters (as enshrined in India’s Forest Rights

²⁷ Land, Life and Justice: How landgrabbing in Uganda is affecting the environment, livelihoods and food sovereignty of communities, FoEI, April 2012, <http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs/2012/land-life-justice/view>

²⁸ <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/land-and-power-the-growing-scandal-surrounding-the-new-wave-of-investments-in-l-142858>

²⁹ <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/video/2011/oct/06/uganda-international-land-deals?fb=ative>

³⁰ <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/video/2011/oct/06/uganda-international-land-deals?fb=ative>

Act), the reality is still that there has been a systematic and brazen assault on ‘adivasi’ land. Independent land, community land, land use systems, land management systems, and customary rights are all being violated as well. Land is being grabbed not only through the Land Acquisition Act but also directly.

(5) The challenge that large under-resourced countries face when it comes to communicating information about deforestation, its underlying causes, proposed solutions and their impacts on communities is also being massively underestimated.

The case studies in this report show that a further piece of the jigsaw that is missing in practice — even though it may be formally recognised as part of REDD preparation processes — is a real understanding of the communication difficulties that arise in vast under-resourced countries like Tanzania and Uganda, that have largely dispersed rural populations. It is extremely difficult to communicate information about deforestation, its impacts, the solutions that governments may be proposing, and the way in which communities may be affected by those solutions. Where civil society sectors are weak the situation is exacerbated, meaning that communities are even less likely to be able to provide informed opinions about what they think should or should not be done with respect to their lands and forests (assuming that their input is actually sought in the first place).



Community meeting in Guna Yala, Panama. Photo: Indigenous Peoples Biocultural Climate Change Assessment Initiative. See: <http://ipcca.info>

³¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/video/2011/oct/06/uganda-international-land-deals?fb=native>

³² Conflict in Uganda’s land tenure system, Africa Portal, as accessed 10 October 2011, <http://www.africaportal.org/articles/2012/05/14/conflict-uganda's-land-tenure-system>

³³ Conflict in Uganda’s land tenure system, Africa Portal, as accessed 10 October 2011, <http://www.africaportal.org/articles/2012/05/14/conflict-uganda's-land-tenure-system>

³⁴ See article: Tree planting project threatens food security, Sommerauer, as accessed 9 October 2013, <http://forestindustries.eu/de/content/tree-planting-project-threatens-food-security>

³⁵ <http://www.oecoamazonia.com/en/articles/9-artigos/118-a-lenta-definicao-de-quem-e-dono-da-amazonia>

³⁶ <http://www.oecoamazonia.com/en/articles/9-artigos/118-a-lenta-definicao-de-quem-e-dono-da-amazonia>. This article is dated January 2011.

³⁷ <http://www.cptnacional.org.br/index.php/component/jdownloads/finish/43-conflitos-no-campo-brasil-publicacao/316-conflitos-no-campo-brasil-2012?Itemid=23>

3. CASE STUDIES

I. Brazil

By Camila Moreno for Nucleo Amigos da Terra-Brasil

Introduction

Across the world, complex social and market forces are driving the conversion of vast swathes of rain forests into pastureland, plantations, and cropland, but the most extreme deforestation has taken place in Brazil: since 1988, more than 153,000 square miles of Amazonian rain forest has been cleared, an area larger than Germany. With the resulting increase in arable land, Brazil has helped feed the growing global demand for commodities, such as soybeans and beef.³⁸ The agribusiness sector currently corresponds to about 23% of Brazilian GDP.³⁹ According to recent estimates by FAO, Brazil will supply around 40% of the global increase in food production by 2050.⁴⁰

National REDD+ process

Initiatives concerning a regulation for a REDD+ mechanism in Brazil can be traced back to mid-2009, when the first draft legislation concerning 'certified emission reductions from deforestation and degradation' was proposed in Congress. At the time, the draft bill (PL 5586/2009) was meant to create a basic legal framework for a subsequent national REDD+ policy. The proposal was fast-tracked through the House of Representatives (in less than five months), with a view to approving it before the UNFCCC COP-15 summit in Copenhagen, when a potential decision regarding an international REDD+ mechanism and its funding sources was expected to be agreed, as part of a larger climate deal.

This draft legislation envisioned a REDD+ mechanism that included market-based finance within its financing options, entitling negotiable units (representing carbon credits) to property owners keen to access economic compensation for preserving their forests.⁴¹

However, as the REDD+ debate was in its early stages among the broader constituency of civil society organisations, the process concerning this draft legislation did not include the views of groups such as indigenous peoples, riverine communities, rubber tappers, peasant and small farmers. These groups were either unaware of the process or simply not consulted about it at that time.⁴²

The main force behind this draft bill was not the federal government but the Amazon Governors' Forum, which was created in 2008 with the specific intention of lobbying at the federal level with a unified regional position with respect to the Amazon (despite the great diversity of local realities).⁴³ Aiming to influence the country's negotiation position at COP-15

³⁸ <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138849/jeff-tollefson/a-light-in-the-forest>

³⁹ <http://www.estadao.com.br/noticias/impreso,agronegocio-deve-garantir-metade-da-expansao-do-pib-1077756,0.htm>

⁴⁰ José Graziano da Silva, a Brazilian, is the current FAO director general. Statement by Alan Bojanic (FAO). <http://sna.agr.br/2013/10/alan-bojanic-ate-2050-brasil-deve-responder-por-40-do-crescimento-na-producao-mundial-de-alimentos/>

⁴¹ Proposed by MP Lupércio Ramos, PMDB party, Amazon state. Draft bill text and timeline at:

<http://www.camara.gov.br/proposicoesWeb/fichadetramitacao?idProposicao=441407>

⁴² For a chronicle on this process see: NAT - Amigos da Terra Brasil (2010) REDD y el futuro de los bosques: una opción por el ambientalismo de mercado? <http://www.natbrasil.org.br/publicacoes.html>

⁴³ <http://www.theREDDdesk.org/fr/node/3621>

concerning its engagement in a future REDD+ mechanism, the Governor's Forum launched a report containing the recommendations of its Task Force on REDD+ and Climate Change.⁴⁴ The report was produced with technical support from some national NGOs (FAS, IPAM, IDESAM and others) and some international ones (CI, EDF, and Forest Trends/The Katoomba Group).⁴⁵

It is also relevant to note that REDD+ like proposals debated since 2005 in the context of the UNFCCC follow the idea of 'compensation for avoided deforestation', a concept originally launched back in 2003, with an acclaimed Brazilian paternity.⁴⁶

Considering the location of the remaining forest cover in Brazil, as well as the main deforestation frontiers, the Amazon Governors' Forum was a key strategic coalition, as it represented sub-national authorities in charge of the 'Legal Amazon', an administrative region that includes the states of Acre, Amazonas, Amapá, Mato Grosso, Maranhão, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima and Tocantins, representing 61.2% of the Brazilian territory, and covering 5,217,423 km². In addition, Brazil has the largest area of tropical forest cover in the world, and more than 60% of the Amazon rainforest lies within Brazil's borders.

At COP-15 in Copenhagen, Brazil announced its official goal of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 36-39% by 2020.⁴⁷ At the time Amazon deforestation and land use change made up to two thirds of its total emissions,⁴⁸ meaning that these issues would have to be addressed one way or another. However, since the early history of the UNFCCC talks, Brazil had opposed the inclusion of forest protection in the climate negotiations. It was not likely that it would support REDD+ as a potential new mechanism for leveraging funds by accessing carbon markets and creating offsetting alternatives – as recommended by the Governors' task force report.⁴⁹ Official support for addressing reduced emissions from deforestation was through the voluntarily-based Amazon Fund, which had been proposed at COP 13 in Bali in 2007 and was operational in the country from 2009 onwards.⁵⁰

Those lobbying around the Amazon Governors' Forum aimed to exert pressure for a change in the country's negotiating position, as Brazil was a key player regarding the adoption of any REDD+ scheme at the international level. Sub-national authorities saw it as an economic opportunity, and wanted to secure a fair share regarding compensation for REDD+-type achievements in their states.

However, the design of the REDD+ mechanism, its features (ie whether it was market-linked or not, and whether it involved 'offsetting' or not), and its adoption at the international level as part of global climate policy, would mean major changes for the future of people living in forest areas and the economic and territorial rationality that rules those areas. So, to understand the complexity of the issues concerning drivers of deforestation and the

⁴⁴Viana, Virgílio M (org). (2009) REDD and Climate Change Task Force-Report. Brasília, DF.

http://www.fasamazonas.org/pt/useruploads/files/relat%C3%B3rio_i_for%C3%A7a_tarefa_eng14.12_2.pdf

⁴⁵The Katoomba Group was partner organizing a major event in early 2009 with the Governors Forum to debate Avoiding Deforestation in the Amazon through PES Markets. Agenda, presentation and documents at: http://www.katoombagroup.org/event_details.php?id=26

⁴⁶ Santilli, M. et al. (2005) Tropical deforestation and the Kyoto Protocol: an editorial essay. In Climate Change 71: 267-276; Moutinho, P. & Schwartzman, S (eds). (2005) Tropical Deforestation and Climate Change. Brasília: IPAM e Environmental Defense (EDF).

⁴⁷ http://www.cgee.org.br/publicacoes/REDD_english.php

⁴⁸ According to 2009 data; the profile of country's emissions has changed significantly since then, towards lesser emissions from deforestation and greater participation of energy sector.

<http://tassoazevedo.blogspot.com.br/2012/11/estimativas-de-emissoes-de-gases-de.html>

⁴⁹Viana, Virgílio M (org). (2009) REDD and Climate Change Task Force-Report. Brasília, DF.

[http://www.fasamazonas.org/pt/useruploads/files/relat%C3%B3rio_i_for%C3%A7a_tarefa_\(eng\).pdf](http://www.fasamazonas.org/pt/useruploads/files/relat%C3%B3rio_i_for%C3%A7a_tarefa_(eng).pdf)

⁵⁰ http://www.amazonfund.gov.br/FundoAmazonia/fam/site_en/Esquerdo/doacoes/

development of sustainable, locally-based economic alternatives, a thorough process was demanded by a large coalition of civil society representatives.

In order to express a greater diversity of voices and a grassroots-based vision for the region, the Belém Letter Group, a broad coalition of Brazilian social movements, peasant groups, extractivists, riverine communities, national labour unions, NGOs, local communities, women's groups, students and others, addressed a letter to the Brazilian government vehemently opposing the inclusion of REDD+ as a market-based mechanism and as an offset alternative available to Annex I countries in the forest-related debates at the climate talks in Copenhagen.⁵¹

This action was a watershed in terms of defining, at an early stage, two very different positions on REDD+ within the spectrum of civil society in Brazil. The process that has unfolded in the country over the last four years has engaged civil society in those groups that support the REDD+ mechanism and has actively helped to build sub-national frameworks, voluntary socio- and environmental safeguards, and voluntary carbon projects, etc.⁵² On the other hand there has been a national mobilisation by those groups that oppose, criticise and discuss alternatives to REDD+, who also tried to start a parallel dialogue on alternatives with the Ministry of Environment, although this has not so far been successful.

To date, Brazil has not yet approved federal legislation setting a legal background for REDD+. In 2010, the earlier draft bill on REDD+ (PL 5586/2009) had to be dropped, as the member of parliament who proposed it was not re-elected (a procedure determined by House of Representatives rules). The text was presented again by a new proponent, in the following year, under draft legislation PL195/2011, and was reformulated to include contributions from civil society and members of parliament.⁵³

The draft bill concerns the “*creation of a national system for reduction of emissions from deforestation and degradation, conservation, sustainable forest management, maintenance and increase of forest carbon stocks.*”⁵⁴ Despite its exclusive, highly technical content, the proposal has been discussed among civil society organisations and amendments where made.⁵⁵

Brazil is also discussing but has not yet approved legislation regarding ‘payment for environmental service’ schemes (PES) (currently being discussed in congress under draft legislation PL 792/2007). An important difference between the two is that while the REDD+ bill proposes a national REDD+ system, with the nature of a state-led environmental program (although it can have markets as one of the financing options), the PES bill creates mechanisms for the private contracting and transaction of units and credits, where the State

⁵¹The position/founding statement can be found at: <http://grupocartadebelem.wordpress.com/about/>

⁵² Despite the lack of a national and international definition of the mechanism, but envisioning a contribution to some standard guidance for the proliferation of forest carbon credits projects, specially in indigenous lands in the Amazon, a group of NGOs took the charge (proposed originally by Forest Trends/Katoomba Group) of carrying out a national consultation process regarding a proposal for ‘Socio and Environmental Safeguards for REDD+’ supported by civil society and the private sector. Latter presented at COP 16, in Cancun, the voluntary guidelines became an international reference process. <http://REDDsocioambiental.org.br/>

⁵³ Proposed by MP Rebecca Garcia, PP party, Amazon state. Draft bill and timeline at: <http://www.camara.gov.br/proposicoesWeb/fichadetramitacao?idProposicao=491311>

⁵⁴ ‘Cria o sistema nacional de redução de emissões por desmatamento e degradação, conservação, manejo florestal sustentável, manutenção e aumento dos estoques de carbono florestal’.

⁵⁵ See critiques at: <http://grupocartadebelem.wordpress.com/projetos-de-lei/>. For an analysis and suggestions regarding a REDD+ national strategy see: Moutinho, P. et al. (2011) REDD in Brazil: A focus on the Amazon: Principles, criteria and institutional structures for a national program for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation –REDD. Brasília: Centro de Gestão e Estudos Estratégicos. At: http://www.cggee.org.br/publicacoes/REDD_english.php

acts as overseeing authority, and can also engage as an economic agent in the negotiation, support and implementation of those contracts, under a Federal PES Program.⁵⁶



Forest in the Mata Atlantica ecosystem in southern Brazil.
Photo: I. Alvarez.

Since 2010 efforts are also under way to build a national strategy for REDD+. During 2010 a consultation process got underway and its preliminary findings and ‘road map’ were delivered to the Secretary General’s Office (Casa Civil) in November, in an effort to guarantee continuity as a new administration took over the federal government (and its staff).

In 2011, the first year of President Dilma Rousseff’s mandate, not much was moved forward regarding the earlier ‘road map’. An inter-ministerial committee was established by the Brazilian government, headed by the Environmental Ministry (MMA, Ministério do Meio Ambiente) with the mission of formulating a National REDD+ Strategy (ENREDD).⁵⁷ The participation of civil society in this process has been mainly by those NGOs participating in the ‘REDD+ Observatory’ (Observatório do REDD+),⁵⁸ who are supporters of the REDD+ mechanism.⁵⁹ In September 2012 a preliminary version of ENREDD was presented to sub-national states and to civil society and this has since been serving as the basis for discussion. How the mechanism will be implemented when it is finally approved is not yet clear. The government, through the Ministry of Environment, has stated its intention to have the national REDD+ strategy (ENREDD) ready by the time of COP 19 in Warsaw, but this seems unlikely.

The main unresolved issues within the definition of a legal framework for REDD+ at the national level concern the share of compensation for the efforts of sub-national entities (provinces and municipalities) and other actors (private owners, indigenous peoples, etc) within a national REDD+ scheme; and the inclusion — or not — of market-based finance.

⁵⁶ <http://grupocartadebelem.wordpress.com/projetos-de-lei/>

⁵⁷ http://www.mma.gov.br/estruturas/smcq_climaticas/_arquivos/gex_REDD+_141.pdf

⁵⁸ <http://www.observatoriodoREDD.org.br/site/>

⁵⁹ For information about such meetings see:

<http://www.mma.gov.br/REDD/index.php/component/weblinks/?task=weblink.go&catid=17:publicacoes&id=144:implementacao-das-salvaguardas>

However, while there is no framework at the federal level so far, at the sub-national, jurisdictional level, some Brazilian states have already approved legislation on both REDD+ and PES.⁶⁰ According to a study that analysed existing PES-related legislation, in Brazil at least eight states (Santa Catarina, Paraná, Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Acre, Amazonas and São Paulo) have passed state regulation for Payment for Environmental Services (by specific legislation or through inclusion in climate legislation); and three of them include REDD+ activities (Acre, Amazonas and São Paulo).⁶¹

Other activities carried out at the state level included the development of Plans for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation (Planos de Prevenção e Controle ao Desmatamento), which include other biomes (such as the Cerrado) and are associated with expanded observational monitoring (PRODES, DETER, DEGRAD).

Proposals to Address the Underlying Causes of Forest Loss in Brazil and their relation to REDD++

On 20-23 November 2011 a national seminar on 'REDD+ and PES versus the Commons' was held in Brasília, the federal capital. It was attended by 80-100 delegates, representing a diversity of social movements, organisations, unions and networks that constitute the Belém Letter Group. The seminar was organised by the coordinating committee (Friends of the Earth/NAT, FASE and Terra De Direitos) with local support from Rede Brasil and INESC. It was preceded by a capacity building workshop and two full days of panels and debates, which generated a range of outputs from criticism to the proposition of alternatives, and a panel with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Relations and the Ministry of Environment. The seminar was also followed by a round in Congress to disseminate its findings to key Members of Parliament. The positions decided at the seminar were also sent in a letter to key governmental officials so as to inform their negotiating position before the forthcoming COP in Durban in 2011.

Countering PES and the structuring of a new 'green' market through the privatisation of the commons, the main findings of the seminar emphasised the need to support 'real' alternatives based on the empowering of peoples, traditional communities and family agriculture. Recognising the predominant role of agribusiness as a driver of forest loss in Brazil they also highlighted the need to facilitate the management and control of territories and social technologies, enabling communities to maintain and protect their livelihoods, and conserve and restore ecosystems and food sovereignty. To this end, it was observed that there is a need to develop structural public policies (políticas públicas estruturantes) supporting the livelihoods and sectors historically responsible for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable production.

Accordingly, these must include public policies that promote sustainable land reform, as part of agricultural policy, including recognition of traditional knowledge and the fact that the production of agrochemical-free healthy food is a result of a specific mode of production, peasant and family agriculture. Such policies should address the challenges of ensuring family farmers earn fair prices for products produced on family farms and dedicated 'extractivist reserves' where forest products are collected. Some of these challenges are

⁶⁰ The first and more comprehensive is at the state of Acre. The law nº 2.308/2010 establishes the State System for Environmental Services Incentives (Sistema Estadual de Incentivo a Serviços Ambientais); the system has three main programs, on carbon, biodiversity and water. This law is being contested at local level as there was no proper public consultations and affected populations were not included.

⁶¹ <http://www.imazon.org.br/publicacoes/livros/marco-regulatorio-sobre-pagamento-por-servicos-ambientais-no-brasil-1>

already addressed, although in an incipient way, through the Program for the Acquisition of Food (Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos-PAA) and the National Program for School Food (Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar (PNAE)). Beyond the acquisition of food and seeds, it is important to provide effective support for the commercialisation of such production.

Policies should also provide for the structuring of participatory research and contextualised and qualified technical assistance, to improve techniques, quality and quantity with respect to extractivist production. Agroecology should not be considered as a market niche but as a mode of production for peasant and small-scale agriculture.

There is also an urgent need for public policies that address the territories as an integrated system, recognising definitive land tenure for communities, and guaranteeing access to essential services such as education, health, housing, culture and other public services.

Finally the conclusions of the debates of the seminar pointed to the need to reject:

- proposals contained in the draft bills PL 195/2011, PL 792/2007 and changes to the Forest Code that erode local sovereignty over territories and create the right to unlimited access to the territories under contracts.
- the transformation of the historical demands of local populations, organisations and movements, into market mechanisms.
- any legislation or public policy that entails the trading of rights.
- the financialisation, and submission to market logic, of agroecology and agroforestry system programmes and policies.
- proposed changes to the Forest Code, which would enable the agribusiness sector, which is responsible for the majority of the country's deforestation, to benefit from REDD++ and PES mechanisms through forest clearance as well as conservation and restoration efforts.
- the 'flexibilisation' of many legal frameworks, including constitutional ones, relaxing them and rendering them more 'business-friendly,' which represents a serious social setback and a violation of human rights. For example the PEC 215 (a proposed constitutional amendment) intended to give exclusive competence to the legislature with respect to titling indigenous land, *quilombola* territories and protected areas.
- the reduction of ecosystems and their environmental functions to market categories.
- policies that focus on incentives or compensation for environmental services that entail the possibility of privatising the commons, and lead to the fragmentation of biodiversity by creating various components, assets and services to be sold in the market, as is intended for carbon, water, pollination, scenic beauty and others.
- erosion of the autonomy of indigenous peoples and local communities and the ways in which they interact and manage their territories, with respect to the contractual compromises with project owners and developers that REDD+, PES and similar projects necessitate.

In addition there is a need to:

- alert movements about new legal and political measures and norms that have been imposed on people's territories, which challenge local communities' customs and livelihood strategies, generating criminalisation and conflict (as is the case with the public polices for agricultural credit and insurance that reject traditional 'criollo' seeds).

- denounce the current stagnation and setback of structural public policies aimed at supporting peasants and small-scale farmers, indigenous peoples and traditional communities.
- reaffirm the right to an equitable environment as a constitutional right, not to be conditioned by private contracts and private finance.

Key findings of the 2012 Rio Peoples' Summit workshop

At the People's Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 2012, the Belém Letter Group organised an international workshop attended by more than 300 participants: 'Facing the instruments and false solutions of green capitalism: resisting territorial impacts and institutional strategies for the mercantilisation of nature' ('Enfrentando as falsas soluções do capitalismo verde: resistindo aos impactos territoriais e as estratégias institucionais de mercantilização da natureza').

During this activity, a series of testimonies depicting both the national context (in countries such as Uganda, Colombia, Mexico, Philippines, Indonesia, and the United States) and the international context revealed the true extent of the paradigm change that is occurring in almost all countries as far as policies that entail the commodification and financialisation of nature are concerned.

Through working groups and debates, it was possible to exchange views, perspectives and knowledge, as well as strengthening networks and organisations campaigning at the international level, and deepening the shared understanding of how these instruments affect people's way of life and work. In addition, strategies and commitments regarding the next steps needed in order to build a deeper common and shared analysis were considered, so that they could be integrated into the three methodological axes of the People's Summit and delivered at the People's Assembly.

The national cases presented described the way in which economic mechanisms designed to compensate for environmental impacts, including REDD+ and other forest management projects, have already affected local people's lives, including indigenous peoples, activists, public officials and family farmers. In theory, such projects contribute to sustainable use of forest, but in practice they limit subsistence and impose rules on hunting and the cultivation of food staples, resulting in a (dis)incentive to stay in the territory and forcing young people to leave for the cities.

Other notable systemic problems include the lack of transparency in carbon transactions: the need to involve lawyers, local authorities and international NGOs that act as brokers or mediators and that may have vested financial interests in project outcomes; the fact that the large amounts of money involved and the complexity of these projects favours corruption; and the reality that land grabbing and financial investments are major drivers behind increasing peasant insecurity regarding land tenure, and generating new conflict dynamics.

Other proposals focused on supporting community-based public water management, in which populations have sovereignty over their water sources; and exposing the risks of mechanisms that erode the autonomy of people over their land and natural resources.

Mechanisms aiming to green the economy, such as REDD+, were identified not as a solution or a path towards transition, but on the contrary, as a way of allowing the 'brown economy' to continue, driving a 'flexibilisation process' by creating profitable mechanisms and trading rights systems.

Comparative analysis between the recommendations on how to address the underlying causes of forest loss, and the actual REDD+ policies and proposals

The organisations that have gathered under the umbrella of the Belém Letter Group share a common view on the unrealistic expectations that have been built up around the use of market-based mechanisms to address deforestation. This view was reinforced during the seminar (in 2011) and the workshop (in 2012).

The REDD+ process and its pace, as has been emphasized in the recommendations above, must be seen as part of the wider context in which powerful commercial interests are at play. A stand-alone consideration of the specific advances or challenges of the mechanism does not and cannot describe the larger picture within which it is supposed to deliver ‘results’. Considering the major changes underway with respect to the creation and implementation of market mechanisms as a means of conservation and of transferring power over the environment to economic interests, forest-related issues have reached the center of the political agenda in Brazil.

In 2009, a special committee of the Chamber of Deputies was created to review the proposals for the reform of the Forest Code — a strategic, and longed for demand of the powerful and influential agribusiness and land owners’ lobby.

The changes proposed, which would weaken the most important environmental legislation in the country concerning land use, the Brazilian Forest Code, gave rise to an unprecedented national popular mobilization regarding forest and deforestation, as well as international notoriety in the run up to the Rio +20 conference.⁶²

The subject escalated in tension and importance across the country, and only reached its conclusion in late 2012, when President Dilma Rousseff vetoed some of the proposal’s most controversial points. However, the changes still guaranteed victory for the ‘ruralista’ interests (agribusiness and land owners). As was foreseen, these changes have in practice reduced the areas of private land that are under environmental protection (called ‘legal reserve’). Landowners can now count forests along rivers and hillsides as part of their ‘legal reserve’. Previously these zones — where forest preservation is mandatory — were additional to the 50% or 80% requirement, according to the region.⁶³

The changes to the Forest Code also allowed the creation of ‘environmental reserve quotas’ (CRA’s, ‘cotas de reserva ambiental’) by those owners who exceed the requested minimum under environmental protection (this ranges between 50% and 80% of the natural vegetation cover in the Amazon region and 20% to 35% in other biomes). In this way they can gain a form of ‘currency’ to be negotiated with those other land owners falling short of compliance with the law, who can then buy their way out of trouble.⁶⁴

However, the new forest code also requires landowners to participate in a registry, whereby they declare their holdings — including the geographical coordinates — to the government. This registry will enable authorities to distinguish between legal and illegal deforestation more effectively and track compliance with environmental regulation, setting a basis for Measuring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) activities. Landowners who fail to register will not be eligible for agricultural loans or other assistance from the state.

Overall, though, the changes to the Forest Code ended up significantly reducing environmental protection (thus affecting the collective right to a healthy environment),

⁶² <http://oglobo.globo.com/economia/rio-20-conference-2012/new-forest-code-puts-brazilian-government-in-bind-on-the-eve-of-rio20-4818288>

⁶³ <http://news.mongabay.com/2012/1019-brazil-forest-code-finalized.html>

⁶⁴ <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/60b19182-42ef-11e2-a3d2-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2h12xe2qy>

including by expanding the area of 'legal deforestation' and allowing the trading of rights (to deforest), thus paving the way for incorporating market-based REDD+-like activities — all as explicitly rejected in the seminar's recommendations.

Another key challenge identified in the workshop and seminar — in terms of addressing deforestation in the Amazon and in other biomes in Brazil — is the need to resolve the serious land ownership problems facing the country, which are at the roots of its socio-environmental conflicts. In 2008, it was estimated that "53% of the land in the Legal Amazon did not possess any land ownership definition," including private land where legal violations are suspected, areas legally considered devoid of allocations, possessions without legal acknowledgement.⁶⁵ Uncertainty generates disputes over land ownership: the Pastoral Land Commission revealed that in the last 13 years, 3,268 conflicts occurred over land in the region, with one third occurring in the Amazon state of Pará.

Deforestation, resulting from the advance of monocultures and of policies that favour agribusiness, combined with a development model based on the predatory exploitation and export of natural resources, can only be avoided if the land issue is appropriately addressed through a Land Reform that includes sustainable territorial reorganisation measures. As part of this territories occupied by traditional peoples and communities and by native peoples must be legally recognised.⁶⁶

In early 2009 'Terra Legal' ('Legal Land'), a federal programme to donate and redistribute an estimated amount of 68 million hectares of national land in the Amazon was announced. Distributing and securing the right to property was purported to be a key measure that would help to avoid deforestation, and is part of the wider strategic plan, according to the vision for the region laid out in 2008 in the Sustainable Amazon Plan (PAS).⁶⁷

To address the needs of 'land reform, continued social unrest, deforestation, and climate change', President Lula de Silva enacted Provisional Measure 458/2009, which later became Law 11.952.09: 'Legal Land: Accelerated Regularisation of Title to Land in the Legal Amazon' ('Terra Legal: Regularização Fundiária Acelerada na Amazônia Legal').⁶⁸ This measure triggered major concerns and significant criticism from different groups within society.⁶⁹ This major land ownership policy consisted of a package of measures to boost the government-backed redistribution of land and aimed (in theory) "to establish rules for those who have lived and cultivated national land without being its legal owners."⁷⁰ However, after four years of

⁶⁵ <http://www.oecoamazonia.com/en/articles/9-artigos/118-a-lenta-definicao-de-quem-e-dono-da-amazonia>

⁶⁶ <http://www.REDD-monitor.org/2009/10/15/brazilian-social-and-environmental-movements-reject-carbon-trading/>

⁶⁷ 'The Sustainable Amazon Plan (PAS), established by the federal government in partnership with the states of Amazonia, was created with the aim to define guidelines for sustainable development in the Brazilian Amazon, proposing strategies and lines of action that aim for the social, economic and environmental development of the region. Thus, it prioritizes the generation of employment and income for populations that live in the forest through the implementation of new and sustainable economic activities in the region and reduction of social inequalities. The Plan has five lines of action: (1) sustainable production with innovation and competitiveness, (2) environmental management and land-use planning, (3) governance, social inclusion and citizenship, (4) implementation of infrastructure for development, and (5) the establishment of a new economic standard. These actions should lead to the construction of technical and economic bases for sustainable development, as well as solving the territorial irregularities existing in various parts of the Amazon'. At: http://www.mma.gov.br/estruturas/sca/_arquivos/plano_amazonia_sustentavel.pdf

⁶⁸ Lei No. 11.952, de 25 de junho de 2009, Col. Leis Rep. Fed. Brasil, dez. 2009 (Braz.), available at http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2007-2010/2009/lei/11952.htm

⁶⁹ <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2009/06/04/brazil-land-reform-or-deforestation-boost-for-the-amazon/>

⁷⁰ The program means to legalize land possessions of up to 15 fiscal modules (FM). The FM serves as a parameter to classify the estate's size and considers the diversity of local factors. In the Amazon, the maximum FM is of 100 hectares. Therefore, Terra Legal would grant land titles to estates of up to a maximum of 1,500 hectares. Estates of up to 1 FM will be donated, and those between 1 and 4 FM will be sold with a discount or 'symbolic price' and those that exceed 4 up to 15 FM will be sold as per market prices with credit for start paying

supposed implementation and a year away from its conclusion in 2015, the programme has not been able to present its results — very little has been officially announced as having been achieved⁷¹ (although the programme had recently announced the donation of 952 thousand hectares to environmental protection in the Amazonas state⁷²).



Brazil Amazon plantations. Photo: Terra de Direitos

Final recommendations

Key players and interests in the country have included REDD+ as a strategic agenda item in their discourses and demands, envisioning it as a major market opportunity within Brazilian climate policy and a key element in the transition to the green economy. Furthermore, the expectations that have been generated around REDD+ have dramatically altered the debate over alternatives in Brazil, and the future of local communities and indigenous territories, as well as public policies, in the Amazon. The interface with the international climate negotiations in the UNFCCC and their impact at the domestic level reveal that there is deep reform

in 20 years. <http://www.oecoamazonia.com/en/articles/9-artigos/118-a-lenta-definicao-de-quem-e-dono-da-amazonia>

⁷¹ <http://www.oecoamazonia.com/en/articles/9-artigos/118-a-lenta-definicao-de-quem-e-dono-da-amazonia>; Under pressure, a bidding to contract temporary consultants, with no stability in the function and more prone to political and electoral pressure are being hired by the federal government

<http://candidoneto.blogspot.com.br/2013/05/terra-legal-patina-e-mda-vai-contratar.html>

⁷² <http://www.mda.gov.br/porta/serfal/>; http://www.mda.gov.br/porta/serfal/noticias/item?item_id=14305787

process underway aimed at the 'flexibilisation' of current environmental policy and related regulations.

This flexibilization brings with it a structural shift introducing the use of compensation mechanisms and nature 'offsets' as payments for environmental services, prioritising these over the guarantee of rights.

It is worrisome that government programmes and public policies are currently being influenced by and tending towards the adoption of such a 'pragmatic' paradigm shift in environmental policies, paving the way to make the expansion of the 'offset logic' technically and legally viable by legitimatising compensations, emphasising market-based solutions as pragmatic options, and as a way of solving the conflicts inherent in development projects. This is resulting in deep impacts on and the transformation of ecosystems, territories, people's and local livelihoods.

When REDD+ was included into the Bali Road Map at COP-13, the Brazilian government announced the creation of the Amazon Fund, which was legally set up in 2008 and became operational in 2009. The Amazon Fund has focused on raising donations for non-reimbursable investments in an effort to prevent, monitor and combat deforestation, and promote the preservation and sustainable use of forests in the Amazon Biome (it is regulated under the terms of Decree N.º 6,527, dated 1 August 1 2008.)⁷³ The Fund is managed by the BNDES, the Brazilian Development Bank, which also undertakes to raise funds, facilitate contracts and monitor support projects and efforts.

Fundraising for the Amazon Fund is linked to the 'reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases from deforestation,' that is, it is conditional upon the reduction of the annual deforestation rate. Based on emission reductions data calculated by the Ministry of the Environment and attested to by the Technical Committee of the Amazon Fund (CTFA, in Portuguese), BNDES is authorised to raise donations for the Amazon Fund and to issue certificates recognising the contribution of the donors to the Fund. Each certificate identifies the donor and the amount of their contribution to the effort to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. These certificates are nominal, non-transferable and do not generate rights or credit of any nature.

The Amazon Fund is an example of a potential tool to contribute to financing important programmes and activities that address deforestation and its alternatives, although it is not without its flaws. Proper civil society participation is still a challenge,⁷⁴ and the capacity of a bank such as BNDES, with a record of financing projects that have significant negative social and environmental impacts to manage conservation projects is also the subject of controversy.⁷⁵ Moreover, it is also important that the Fund maintains its original nature, so that while it functions under 'results based' contributions, it does not serve either to fund 'REDD+ readiness' or issue any type of credit or transferable rights.

It is vital to guarantee the right to explore and propose alternatives to REDD+ and PES mechanisms, and not to exclude actors seeking or promoting alternatives from meaningful debate regarding the future of one of the planet's most crucial ecosystems.⁷⁶

⁷³ http://www.amazonfund.gov.br/FundoAmazonia/fam/site_en/Esquerdo/doacoes/

⁷⁴ <http://deolhonofundoamazonia.ning.com/>

⁷⁵ <http://www.plataformabndes.org.br/site/>

⁷⁶ <http://www.fase.org.br/v2/pagina.php?id=3893> Arguments and proposals of Alternative Visions to PES and REDD+ were carried along the year 2012 for member of the Belém Letter Group and compiled in this publication (in Portuguese).

II. Colombia

By Diego Cardona for CENSAT Agua Viva-Colombia

Introduction

In Colombia the state agency responsible for the implementation of REDD+ is the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS by its acronym in Spanish) through the Department of Forests, Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the Climate Change Directorate, and in coordination with the National Planning Department (DNP by its acronym in Spanish). It is assisted by other ministries such as the Interior Ministry, for consultative issues.

In 2010, a timetable was established for the implementation of REDD + in the country, on the basis of the UNFCCC Cancun agreements. REDD+ is included in the environmental component of the 'Environmental Sustainability and Risk Prevention' section of the 2010-2014 National Development Plan, which is the current government's main development plan; and in CONPES 3700, which is a document focused on the articulation of (macro) policies and actions. This was followed by the preparation of Colombia's R-PIN and R-PP proposals, under the guidance of and with funding from the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF),⁷⁷ and supported by parallel activities under the UN-REDD programme.⁷⁸

As of September 2013 the country is in the final stages of an iterative process, with the final draft of the R-PP still to be approved and submitted.⁷⁹ As part of this process, various activities that correspond to its later stages have been implemented, including the readiness phase (early implementation) and forest monitoring and petitions for participation. The country has adopted a sub-regional approach, arguing that there are numerous difficulties to be addressed due to the diversity of actors involved and the physical configuration of the territory.

The funding for the preparation of Colombia's national REDD+ strategy comes from the FCPF, UN-REDD,⁸⁰ the national government of Colombia, and others, including the US Agency for International Development (USAID) (which funds the BIOREDD+ project⁸¹), the Embassy of the Netherlands, the Moore Foundation, the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), the Cooperation Agency of the German government (GIZ), and bilateral agreements.

Official data from MADS show that there are 51 REDD+ 'early initiatives' (projects) in the country: 46 are at the project idea stage, four are at the project design stage and one is at the project implementation and monitoring stage.

It is important to note that the process for the implementation of REDD+ in Colombia is based on the direct causes of deforestation (deforestation drivers) that have been identified. It does not address (at least not explicitly) the underlying causes of deforestation in the country. It also lacks a legal framework and a national policy to guide, regulate and set the necessary limits and controls regarding the implementation of REDD+.

As mentioned, the guidance and precepts laid down by the UN-REDD Programme and the World Bank FCPF have been adopted. This occurs despite the fact that other funders have provided a higher proportion of the financing.

⁷⁷ <http://forestcarbonpartnership.org/colombia>

⁷⁸ <http://www.un-redd.org/Newsletter39/ColombiaRPPValidationWorkshop/tabid/129672/Default.aspx>

⁷⁹ <http://www.un-redd.org/Newsletter39/ColombiaRPPValidationWorkshop/tabid/129672/Default.aspx>

⁸⁰ <http://www.un-redd.org/Newsletter39/PBAApprovesUS4MillionColombia/tabid/129665/Default.aspx>

⁸¹ <http://bioredd.org/s/QUIENES-SOMOS>

The way in which the UN-REDD procedures are imposed on countries is also evident in Colombia. With respect to Colombia's UN-REDD proposal, for example, the process required to obtain approvals from the stakeholders has been dealt with in just one national workshop, when it is obvious that the adoption of a strategy of this nature and scale demands a long, complex, and inclusive discussion. This non-inclusive aspect of the UN-REDD program, which ignores accepted local processes for building consensus and agreements, is found not only in Colombia but also in other countries in the region, such as Panama. This is why in February 2013, the National Coordinator of the Indigenous Peoples of Panama (COONAPIP), decided to withdraw from the UN-REDD programme: it does not guarantee respect for the rights of indigenous peoples, or the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in all stages including programme implementation.⁸²

Furthermore, despite the fact that the government is taking political, institutional and financial measures to implement REDD+, it is, at the same time, also creating policies (which are prioritised in the National Development Plan) to promote and facilitate the very same economic activities that have been identified as being among the leading causes of deforestation and degradation in the country: that is, mining, infrastructure construction and the expansion of the agricultural frontier through the promotion of agribusiness and monocultures — even within forest reserves. This clearly contradicts the official goals of REDD+.

The process is also marked by a distinct lack of capacity and little political will on the part of state institutions with respect to focusing on the requirements that the implementation of the REDD+ initiative demands. This can be appreciated at the micro level, which has been characterised by delay and failure to meet deadlines on the delivery of information on the status of implementation of projects, even though they are established by law.

Lack of capacity or political will is also demonstrated by the fact that the strategy put in place does not have the necessary scope and pace — indeed it is evident that the market is moving much faster than the government's policy and strategy. In addition, the participation of communities that may be affected by REDD+ has been limited, and 'consultations' have not had the character or status to allow a real discussion about the core of the programme; instead they have served to legitimise an imposed strategy.

In this regard, it is important to be clear about the existence of the 'Mesa REDD+' (REDD+ Roundtable) in Colombia, because sometimes there is confusion about its functions and objectives. The Mesa REDD+ is an ad-hoc space that mainly consists of large conservation NGOs promoting REDD+ projects such as Conservation International, WWF, Fundación Natura, The Nature Conservancy, and Fondo para la Acción Ambiental y la Niñez.⁸³ It meets together with members of the Colombian government (eg officials from MADS, and USAID, which helped to found it). Collectively they discuss and provide inputs. However, the Mesa REDD+ does not constitute a decision-making body and is not in any way representative; this is why MADS is working on another national roundtable proposal with the aim of creating a larger and more representative arena. MADS has also created other roundtables to work with communities, such as the Amazonian Indigenous Roundtable on Environment and Climate Change (MIAACC) (which they recognise is not yet strong enough but it functions as an advisory group).

⁸² Resolution N°2 – 2013 COONAPIP. 25 February 2013.

⁸³

http://www.minambiente.gov.co/documentos/DocumentosBiodiversidad/bosques/redd/boletines/boletin_04_archivos/300413_mesa_redd.pdf

Furthermore, Colombia's national strategy does not address the main obstacles and risks associated with REDD+ that were identified by some UN consultants such as high levels of corruption in pilot countries; the leakages of deforestation to non-project area; and the possible provision of incentives or rewards to those who are most responsible for deforestation. During the REDD+ meeting with delegates from the government in September 2013, it was mentioned that the issue of corruption was now included in the latest version of the R-PP, filling a gap that has persisted since the initial design, and highly relevant given the increased perception of corruption in Colombia.⁸⁴

Finally, a major problem with Colombia's REDD+ implementation strategy as currently designed, makes it much harder to use other forest and jungle management options, such as those promoted by the Global Forest Coalition. These include the recognition of the rights and territories of indigenous peoples and other forest peoples, and community management of forest, including through recognising peasant and community reserves that already exist in the country.

Proposals to address the underlying causes of forest loss in Colombia, and their relationship with REDD+

After a period of three years it is now clear that Colombia's national process has been based on the adoption of and adherence to guidelines imposed by external agents such as the UN-REDD Programme and the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, instead of designing a clear, comprehensive forests policy that responds to the needs and characteristics of the country and its population.

Key conclusions of CENSAT's 2011 workshop with communities focusing on concerns about:

- The framework for REDD+ readiness (R-PP) which provides for the participation of key groups with territorial rights over the country's forests, including indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants. However, such participation has not been full and effective, and has not aimed at establishing conditions that will fully guarantee and respect their rights.
- The presence of an unflagging interest in the commercial benefits of creating and consolidating a Voluntary Market for Greenhouse Gas Mitigation, involving stakeholders like financial institutions (such as the Inter-American Development Bank) and conservation organisations (such as Fundación Natura), the Stock Exchange of Colombia and the Colombian Business Council for Sustainable Development – Cecodes.⁸⁵ The latter includes companies in sectors identified by MADS as drivers of deforestation and degradation, such as the mining, oil and agro-industrial sectors.
- The REDD+ rush is effectively creating a situation in which forest-dwelling communities are under siege, and overwhelming expectations have been created. This has been driven by private consulting firms seeking to sign contracts or grants of power, a situation that forms a clear risk to communities due to the lack of a defined framework for the implementation of these projects in the country and the high degree of misinformation.

84 http://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/activity/is_carbon_finance_fair_and_effective (p29 and 30)
<http://www.redd-monitor.org/2008/12/05/risk-the-fatal-flaw-in-forest-carbon-trading/>, REDD-Monitor, 2008. EN: Transparency Internacional. Global Corruption Report: Climate Change. 2011.

85 Cecodes is compound by 59 companies of the mining, agro-industrial, energy, forest, manufacture, construction and financial sectors, among them, Ecopetrol, Holcim, Anglogoldashanti, Smurfit Kappa, Fedepalma, Indupalma, Cémex, Bancolombia, Argos y Alpina. For more information see véase www.cecodes.org.co

- The lack of a policy that effectively addresses deforestation and guarantees the rights and autonomy of the indigenous peoples and afro-descendant and peasant communities that inhabit the forest and jungle areas in Colombia.

A second workshop on REDD+ and the underlying causes of forest loss in Colombia was organised on 24 September 2013 in Bogota. The workshop included government representatives as well as NGOs.



Agroecology School in Santander, Colombia. Photo: Fundaexpresión

Some key conclusions of the workshop were that REDD+ is not a public policy, despite the fact that the Colombian government has adopted a series of measures for the implementation of REDD+, including: institutional reforms, seeking funding and resources, technical studies and the construction of a political process to give legitimacy to the proposal. REDD+ fails to fully address the historical and structural causes of deforestation and degradation of forests, and it does not properly consider the needs and rights of the people recognised as

inhabiting those forests. A genuine public policy should meet the needs of the whole population in relation to the problem that it seeks to solve, and that, for the Colombian case, includes the recognition of territorial sovereignty, guarantees of permanence with respect to territories, and putting a stop to the extractive deforestation model, which leads to the loss and degradation of thousands of hectares of forests each year. These responsibilities, eminently responsibilities of the state, are being left to the 'voluntary' market and the free trade of 'emissions' rights.

In particular, the absence of a national policy and legislation on REDD+ creates significant risks because the implementation of projects may end up in the violation of territorial sovereignty and the rights of forests peoples for the sake of the financial speculation and profit. It is important to note that those reasons were fundamental to the decision of the General Attorney of Brazil who decided to sue international companies that signed REDD+ contracts with indigenous peoples in Brazil,⁸⁶ — precisely because there are no REDD+ policies and regulations currently in place in the country.

Furthermore, there is a yawning gap between the government's development and conservation policies, and this gap will prevent the achievement of targets relating to the reduction of deforestation and forest degradation. This can clearly be seen in Colombia's National Development Plan, which contains a raft of policies and growth-oriented measures based on the exploitation of natural resources. Priority is given to extractive practices such as oil extraction, mining, agro-industry, and hydropower, even in conservation areas such as national parks, forest reserves or moors. In addition, measures aimed at protecting the

86 <http://www.dw.de/brasil-vai-processar-empresas-que-fecharam-contratos-de-carbono-com-%C3%ADndios/a-15914327>

natural heritage, territories and the human populations that inhabit them, are weak or based on the precepts of the green economy, in which profit is more important than protection.

There is also a distinct lack of harmony between different state agencies responsible for creating and implementing relevant policies, sometimes manifest as a lack of political interest in the forest sector crisis. It seems that many actions of the government are led by their strategic interest in the proceeds of REDD+ financing and income from 'green' markets, in which forests have become a tradable commodity.

Particularly worrying is the legal limbo that has been created with respect to the implementation of REDD+ in relation to the mandatory application of the process of 'free, prior and informed consent', which is recognised as applying to all indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants in Colombia. There is no defined process or clear instances of its application by the responsible national authority, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, nor have clear instances of FPIC been identified. It seems that there is no great interest or definitive approach emanating from the Ministry of Interior either (where the guidelines for implementation of this process are supposed to be issued).

Overall, the emphasis on market solutions and/or payments for environmental services makes it effectively impossible to promote and implement any alternative strategies intended to bring about the conservation of forests and forest management.

Comparative analysis between the workshop recommendations on how to address the underlying causes of forest loss and current REDD+ proposals

It is recognised that the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development has moved forward in terms of its focus on determining the six main causes of deforestation in the country more specifically. These are: expansion of the agricultural frontier; mining; infrastructure construction; fires; illicit crops; and over-logging. There has also been movement in so far as identifying the geographical focal points where deforestation is concentrated in Colombia. These are the Caquetá department, in the direction of the mountain range to the Amazon, the South Pacific and the northern foothills of the Andes Mountains in Colombia.

However, after more than three years preparing for REDD+ in Colombia, a process which has been underway since 2010, it is still noticeable that the underlying causes of deforestation are not being addressed in practice. This situation has serious implications and consequences, in the sense that it is simply not possible to achieve the goal of reducing or eliminating deforestation and forest degradation in the country if a number of root (underlying) causes are not being seen as part of the problem that has to be solved. As stated years ago, during the development of this project of tracking and monitoring REDD+ in five countries, the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation have to be identified, linked and addressed to find a solution for the same.

Colombia does not yet have a comprehensive forest policy that addresses the underlying causes and defines frameworks and controls for strategies such as REDD+. On the contrary, the government is busy creating and promoting policies that are antagonistic to their own governmental REDD+ plan, with an emphasis on extractivism in the mining, oil and agribusiness sectors, and with special emphasis on jungle regions — even though they were protected by previous laws such as the forest reserves created by the second law of 1959.

In other words, in the case of Colombia, policy inconsistency and lack of inter-and intra-state institutional coordination are also acting as underlying causes for deforestation and forest degradation.

In 2011, the 1444 Act⁸⁷ gave the President of the Republic powers to reorganise the ministries, and to reassign duties and responsibilities between the entities and agencies of the national public administration as well as responsibilities between these agencies and other state agencies. This led to the reorganisation of the former Ministry of Environment, Housing and Territorial Development, creating the current Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS) instead. Subsequently, Decree 3570 of 2011⁸⁸ assigned to MADS, among other functions, responsibility for incorporating environmental factors into goods and services markets, creating an office for green and sustainable business, thus explicitly creating an orientation towards a green economy.

That same decree also allows MADS to modify the national reserve areas, including by reducing their size. Resolution 0928 of 2011 adds to this, stating that it is possible to grant mining or oil licences in areas of forest reserve. This makes clear the government's intention to continue with 'grey' or 'brown' economic models, which are based on extractivism, in areas that the government itself has previously proclaimed should be preserved.

Lack of state/institutional capacity also constitutes an underlying cause of deforestation, and is expressed in the lack of a detailed and defined protocol for free, prior and informed consent, which would facilitate the application of that principle. It is irresponsible to assume an attitude of 'learning to implement REDD+ by practicing its application', since this would mean that all 51 projects so far started as 'early initiatives of REDD+' would probably be maintained even if they circumvented due process or violated rights such as FPIC. Collectively this would create an increased risk of violating sovereignty and the guarantee that has been provided for traditional cultures and livelihoods. The role of and need for the State to regulate in this respect cannot be denied; it needs to be carefully and swiftly defined *before* the development of planned activities, not afterwards.

In particular the State should act as a guarantor with respect to the clarity of process. This has certainly not happened so far as one can see in light of the enterprises and private persons that are increasingly gaining access to and momentum within Colombia's forested territories. These actors are offering communities seemingly highly profitable projects, without even having complied with the basic requirements and regulations in place. This phenomenon of 'selling oxygen' attracts the interest of communities, even though the promises of income and money could actually be false. MADS has acknowledged this, issuing a series of communiqués. But this has not had any real impact on the situation.

Thus there has been a proliferation of legally-dubious unequal contracts ('contratos leoninos') presented to community representatives by companies and private consultants, who put pressure on those representatives to sign the contracts even though they know very little about the contents of the contracts or what they are really signing away. In this way, corporate lawyers and their delegates take advantage in order to appropriate representative and decision-making powers over peoples' territories, and their heritage, as well as the forest carbon.

In the context of the current implementation of REDD+ it is paramount to maintain space for a broad-based consideration of REDD's market-based nature, and its location in highly sensitive territories such as the Colombian Amazon and Pacific regions, which are areas recognised for their important biodiversity. This could ignore or even violate the rights over this heritage that many local peoples currently hold.

87 Colombia. 2011. Ley 1444/2011. Diario Oficial de Colombia, de 04 de mayo de 2011, p. 6.

88 Colombia. 2011. Decreto 3570 de 2011. [Diario Oficial de Colombia núm. 48205, 27 de Septiembre de 2011](#), p.27.

Final recommendations

It is essential that consideration is given to the full range of underlying causes of deforestation and degradation in Colombia, both direct and underlying. This will require a response based on integrated and effective policies that are not impeded by the interests of the market, as has been described above.

The state must provide ways and means of guaranteeing the conservation and protection of territories with titles given to different communities as well as empty lots with forest cover. This is especially the case in those instances where the state itself is responsible for deforestation and degradation by: giving titles to private persons who then establish monocultures or other types of agroindustry; providing mining concessions to mining and oil companies; and building infrastructure with extensive direct and indirect impacts.

It is essential to address and establish clear procedures to resolve the conflicts created by the overlap between protected areas and collective territories and 'resguardos' (communal landholdings where the land can be used but not sold), taking into consideration the implications for the social, cultural, spiritual and policy dimensions.

The first step, which should be implemented immediately, is the establishment of a moratorium on the signing of contracts for REDD+ projects on behalf of local communities (indigenous, afro-descendant and peasants), due to their vulnerability in light of the described framework. This is ratified by the 'Defensoría del Pueblo' referring to the constitutional court's decision 004 and 005⁸⁹ in relation to indigenous and afro-descendants, respectively.

This recommendation is also based on the experiences of countries like Brazil that are taking legal action because of possible harm to its peoples when signing REDD+ contracts in the absence of appropriate policies and regulations for these kinds of projects.

A new and extensive strategy to conserve Colombia's forests is needed. It must look far beyond the limited approach of conserving ecosystems and carbon, and take into account the needs of peoples and communities and the survival of their cultures. Markets and speculation — the hallmark of most REDD+ projects — cannot be allowed to determine the future of Colombia's forests and traditional peoples and whether or not they remain, evolve and thrive. REDD+ cannot be the only alternative to forest conservation.

It is also important to recognise community management and conservation initiatives that can already be found in the country. These are present in different regions and different ecosystems, from Andean forests to mangroves, and are often extremely efficient in terms of forest management and conservation, and adaptation to climate change. This is the case with the fisher/peasant communities of the lower Sinú region, for example, who were recently given the Climate Change Award in Colombia for services to climate change adaptation.⁹⁰ This recognition is a good way of supporting the actions that the country's peasants can take, but they need support and the creation of suitable conditions, given that this segment of society has a lower degree of recognised collective rights.

It is critical to acknowledge that family and peasant agriculture can provide the answers and proposals that are needed in the effort to confront climate change and maintain life on the planet. To this end, it is important to invigorate the process for giving collective territory titles and 'resguardos' to indigenous and afro-descendant communities. There is a need to make available the means that will help communities achieve an autonomous role and for their environmental authority to be real and effective.

89 Auto 004 y 005 de enero 26 de 2009. Magistrado ponente Manuel José Cepeda Espinoza. Corte Constitucional

⁹⁰ <http://fahrenheit64.blogspot.com/2013/04/asprocig-gana-premio-nacional.html>

III. India

By Souparna Lahiri for Equations and the All India Forum of Forest Movements

Introduction: India's REDD Strategy

India advocates a comprehensive approach to REDD, referring to the 'REDD+' approach. This has been promoted by India and others as a means of compensating countries for the conservation and sustainable management of forests, and increasing forest cover, as well as 'reducing deforestation.' The basic principle of this approach is that one unit of carbon conserved is equal to one unit of carbon added (through reforestation, for example).

In its submission to the UNFCCC in 2009, the Government of India has described this approach:

"In respect of REDD, host countries clearly have legal rights to maintain, or clear fell their forests. In case of clear-felling, the forest carbon services of the felled area are lost, through emissions of forest carbon, while the host country realizes the incremental economic benefits from clear felling. In the event of reduction in rate of deforestation, there is a reduced flow of carbon emissions from felled forest, while the host country loses the incremental economic benefits from clear felling. In respect of the remaining forest area at any time, a stock of forest carbon is maintained and not emitted, but the host country encounters direct and opportunity costs of keeping the area under forest."⁹¹

According to a Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) note, "India's Forests and REDD+" published in November 2010, India's REDD strategy takes exactly this approach, including both the sustainable management of forests (SMF) and afforestation and reforestation (A&R).

Institutional Architecture For REDD+

The REDD+ programme in India is a joint collaboration between the MoEF, the Government of India and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), a private initiative. The programme is mainly implemented by TERI.

A Technical Group has been set up to develop methodologies and procedures to assess and monitor REDD+ actions, and a National REDD+ Coordinating Agency is being established. A National Forest Carbon Accounting Programme is also being institutionalised. MoEF has also included the "Implementation of Green India Mission" (GIM) in its REDD+ strategy note.

In an assessment of key parameters of REDD Plus Readiness, conducted by TERI in 2009⁹², the proposed institutional set up included (1) a REDD Cell in the MoEF; (2) a support network of Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) institutions to provide research; (3) the Forest Survey of India (FSI) and the National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA) to undertake forest assessments; and (4) specialised institutions like the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and the Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM).

⁹¹ Climate Change Negotiations, India's Submission to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (p21), August 2009, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India, New Delhi, <http://moef.nic.in/downloads/home/UNFCCC-final.pdf>

⁹² Is India ready to implement REDD PLUS? A preliminary assessment, The Energy and Resources Institute, 2009, New Delhi, http://www.teriin.org/events/docs/1_India%20REDD%20Ready.pdf and <http://moef.nic.in>

The TERI assessment also proposed that the State Forests Departments coordinate the implementation of REDD projects and facilitate the distribution of revenues in the respective states. According to TERI, “Though FPCs [Forest Protection Committees], created under the JFM [Joint Forest Management Programme], with the help of Panchayats, appear best suited to implement REDD Plus in large part of the country, traditional institutions will be much more effective in some regions like the north eastern states.”

Subsequent developments in institutionalising the REDD Plus programme indicate that the Gram Sabhas⁹³ were considered as one of the implementing bodies at the local level: “The Gram Sabha will be the central body under which the the JFMCs [Joint Forest Management Committees] will be constituted, for conservation, protection and management of forests, with benefit sharing from forests on the principle of sustainable harvests as laid down in the management plan of the respective area within their jurisdiction. The FD [Forest Department] shall provide technical guidance to the Gram Sabha, and also monitor implementation of the management plan.”⁹⁴

The Design of REDD+ In India

India is of the view that the Reference Level (RL)/Reference Emission Level (REL) needs to be fixed in an open and transparent manner following the procedure agreed by the Parties for the purpose. However, “in the absence of an agreed RL/REL at the international level, 1990 can be adopted as the baseline for REDD+ projects in India.”⁹⁵

With respect to safeguards, the same Policy Brief of 2012 states that:

“In India, there are safeguards already in place to protect the customary rights and traditions of tribes, forest dwellers, and other local communities. Policy and legal instruments exist in the form of Joint Forest Management programmes, the Forest Rights Act, and the Biological Diversity Act, whose provisions ensure the rights of local communities and enable them to be key players in the local-level governance of natural resources. After successfully involving communities in the protection and management of forests, Joint Forest Management (JFM) has recently been integrated into a more democratic organization of local governance, the Gram Sabha. JFM is evolving into JFM+ by involving the livelihood concerns of forest dependent communities along with protection and management of forests. The Forest Rights Act has further strengthened the legal framework in the country for safeguarding the rights of tribal and other forest dwellers. India will also adopt, as appropriate, the modalities of the system as would be agreed in the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA) for providing information on internal safeguards to the UNFCCC, including ensuring participation of local communities, and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services.”⁹⁶

⁹³ Local village-level self-government bodies in forest areas and Schedule V areas according to the respective Acts.

⁹⁴ Ridhima Sud *et al*, Institutional Framework for Implementing REDD+ in India, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, TERI, Norwegian Embassy, 2012, http://moef.nic.in/assets/FP_Discussionpaper_18022013.pdf

⁹⁵ Jitendra Vir Sharma *et al*, International REDD+ architecture and its relevance for India, Policy Brief, Ministry of Environment and Forests, TERI, Norwegian Embassy, 2012, New Delhi, http://www.teriin.org/projects/nfa/pdf/Policy_Brief_International_REDD.pdf

⁹⁶ *Ibid*

In 2012 the Government of India also highlighted the following, through its reports, consultations and deliberations:⁹⁷

- That “capacity has to be built for all officials at all tiers of forest governance, supporting institutions and local forest dependent communities, on various issues ranging from general awareness about forest policies and programmes to the benefit-sharing mechanism under REDD+, MRV [Measurement, Reporting and Verification], and social and environmental safeguards.”⁹⁸
- That India will be “Undertaking pilot REDD+ projects that would help generate valuable experience before REDD+ is fully operationalized at the national level. Pilot projects will also help field-testing of the methodologies and provide important learnings, which can address research gaps, help refine SFM methodology and provide policy inputs for large-scale design of REDD+ projects. This would help build technical capability and also help identify barriers to operationalizing REDD+. It is therefore, imperative that at least one pilot study be undertaken in each state of the country. The pilot projects will be undertaken with the help of village-level Forest Resource Committees at Gram Sabhas, Van Panchayats and JFMCs, among others.”⁹⁹
- That there is a requirement for an investment of “INR 90 billion (US\$ 2 billion) every year for ten years” to implement ambitious programmes like the National Afforestation Programme (NAP) and the National Mission for a Green India (GIM) to “add 2 million tonnes of carbon incrementally every year and post 2020, the forest and tree cover will add at least 20 million tonnes of carbon every year.”¹⁰⁰
- The possible establishment of links with the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) of the World Bank and UN-REDD programmes “to access adequate financial resources necessary to build capacity of communities and forest officials for the implementation of REDD+. The Government of India may also explore the possibility of attracting funds from voluntary markets and carbon trading under REDD+.”¹⁰¹

The Identification Of REDD+ Pilot Projects and ‘REDD Readiness’

In 2011-12, the REDD+ Cell with the MoEF in collaboration with TERI identified five pilot project sites in Musoorie (Uttarakhand), Renukoot (Uttar Pradesh), Sunderban (West Bengal), Angul (Odisha) and Chindwara (Madhya Pradesh) forest divisions; and in 2012 it initiated pilot studies in Nagaland, Gujarat and Rajasthan.¹⁰²

Consultation reports prepared by TERI¹⁰³ indicate that preliminary project site-level consultations — on REDD+ and its benefits for the forest dependent communities and modalities of design and implementation of such projects at the village level — were organised in 2012 in: Delakhari, Chindwara, Madhya Pradesh (7 April 2012); Jereng village, Angul, Odisha (12 May 2012); and Gadarwa forest village, Sonbhadra, Uttar Pradesh (2

⁹⁷ Also proceedings of regional level consultations on preparedness of REDD Plus held at Agra (3-4 February 2013), at Bangalore (23 January 2013), at Kohima (9 February 2013), at Bhopal (8-9 November 2012), at New Delhi (23 March 2012) available at <http://moef.nic.in>

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² Arabinda Mishra, J V Sharma, India’s Readiness on REDD PLUS, TERI, 2012 available in <http://moef.nic.in>

¹⁰³ Meeting of REDD+ at Delakhari, Chindwara, Madhya Pradesh, Proceedings of Angul Workshop and Proceedings of Renukoot Workshop available at www.teriin.org/projects/nfa/pdf/

March 2012). They were organised in collaboration with the MoEF, the REDD+ Cell, state forest departments and the respective forest divisions. The reports also indicate that the discussions were mostly held in the presence of JFMC and VSS¹⁰⁴ members. However, there is no mention of the participation of the Gram Sabha and whether or not rights had been settled under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006 in the various project villages.

The key issues that emerged out of the consultations can be summed up as follows:

- The mandate of Green India Mission¹⁰⁵ and REDD+ are more or less similar except for the fact that carbon may be traded under REDD+. The State Governments may thus assign the responsibility of REDD+ to the cell dealing with Green India Mission within the state. The programmes of the Green India Mission may be dovetailed with REDD+ projects.
- The projects under REDD+ may be undertaken at JFMC/VSS level, particularly with respect to the assessment of baselines, the additionality of carbon and potential leakages of deforestation or forest degradation from protected to non-protected areas. The methodology should be as simple as possible, so that JFMC/VSSC and forest officials can easily understand and execute it at the local level.
- Rural development schemes such as MNREGA¹⁰⁶ etc. may be linked with JFMCs/VSSs to strengthen their efforts and reduce dependency on forests and their resources.
- Assessment of carbon in REDD+ pilot projects may be included in the working plans.

The consultation reports also state that the REDD+ pilot projects and studies will be funded by the Norwegian Government.

India's REDD+ project also includes national and regional consultations on REDD+ Readiness involving state forest departments, implementing NGOs and forestry experts, and institutions primarily targeting awareness generation and capacity building.

In 2012 and 2013, these official consultations were held in New Delhi (March 2012); Bhopal (November 2012); Nagaland (February 2013); Bangalore (January 2013); and Agra (February 2013). These consultations were led by MoEF who invited selected participants; they did not invite a single forest group, community group or social movement. On the very important issue of forest governance and REDD+, the key points that emerged from this discussion were that:

1. Responsibility for forest governance should rest exclusively with the Gram Sabha through Community Forest Management Committees (CFRMCs) where rights to Community Forest Resources (CFR) under the Forest Rights Act 2006 have been recognised. If JFMCs exist in such areas, they may be merged with CFRMCs.
2. Where Community Forest Resources have not been recognised, JFMCs shall be sub-committees of Gram Sabha. This institutional arrangement should be formally regularised by the state governments. (This is in spite of the fact that Gram Sabhas have legislative support from the Forest Rights Act, but JFM and JFMCs do not; the communities themselves are totally opposed to JFM.)

¹⁰⁴ Van Suraksha Samity, Hindi for Forest Protection Committee

¹⁰⁵ National Mission for a Green India, Government of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests, undated, http://www.naeb.nic.in/documents/GIM_Brochure_26March.pdf

¹⁰⁶ Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, <http://nrega.nic.in/netnrega/home.aspx>, as accessed 7 October 2013.

3. States should hold consultations and come up with appropriate models of governance applicable in their area.
4. The role of the Forest Department in these models should largely focus on monitoring, provision of technical support to the Gram Sabha, and the protection of forests through legal instruments.



Chalkhad village where forests are for generations governed by the Munda tribal community of Jharkhand under the Mundari Khutkatti System, India. Photo: S. Lahiri

5. Forests may supplement the income of the people living in and around them, through minor forest produce and other benefit-sharing mechanisms but cannot be a complete source of livelihoods. Other sectors should come forward to provide livelihoods to the forest dependent communities to avoid unsustainable harvesting from the forest and to alleviate poverty.
6. Capacity building of communities as well as front line staff in the state Forest Departments is critical in this regard.

Other points that arose in the course of deliberations were that:

- If JFMCs become a part of the Gram Sabha, decisions will be based on broader considerations and may not represent the concerns of the forest-dependent communities (especially when forest users are a small part of the overall population). Such issues should be raised in the Gram Sabha meetings so that the benefits accrue to the forest dependent people.

- The forest governance in NE states — Van Panchayats in Uttarakhand and Jharkhand — is already people-centric. Officials argue that only ‘minor adjustments’ are required such as the representation of women and a mechanism for benefit sharing.¹⁰⁷
- Quantitative data on livelihood dependence on forests is needed.

For the northeastern region, the deliberations in the Nagaland consultation highlighted the following issues:

- Forest governance is largely people centric in most of the NE states, particularly in forests owned by the community/village council. The government-owned forests are managed through a mechanism of JFM.
- The role of the Forest Department should be focused on monitoring, technical support to the community, and the protection of forests through legal instruments.
- No single model of forest governance can work in all NE states. There is a need to develop governance models on the basis of relevant local customary laws, and special provisions in the constitution of India exist to this end.
- Capacity building of communities as well as front line staff in the state forest departments is essential.
- As the NE region has around one fourth of the country's forest cover and people's lives are more directly focused on the forests, there is a need to create significant economic opportunities through focused forestry-based livelihood programmes.
- There is a need for greater convergence of developmental programmes at the local level to address various drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.
- Increased control of jhuming (shifting cultivation) together with the provision of better livelihood alternatives would help to regenerate forests.
- Forestry research in the NE region needs to be strengthened. So do efforts to improve productivity and the sustainable harvesting and efficient utilisation of forest products including non-timber forest products (NTFPs) such as bamboo; combined with better marketing to enhance the income of local communities engaged in conservation and sustainable forest management.

Analysis of the Green India Mission

The Government of India and the MoEF has put in place a National Mission for a Green India (Green India Mission or GIM) as part of the country's National Action Plan for Climate Change. GIM has a budget of Rs 46,000 crores (approx. US\$ 10 billion) over a period of ten years. The overarching objective of the Mission, as described by the government, is to increase forest and tree cover across five million ha and improve the quality of forest cover in another five million ha. As part of its mission GIM aims to improve ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, biodiversity and hydrological services, and to improve the forest-based livelihoods and income of about three million forest dependent households.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Proceedings of Regional Level Consultation on Preparedness for REDD Plus held at Agra on 3-4 February, 2013, Prepared for Ministry of Environment and Forests, TERI available at <http://moef.nic.in>

¹⁰⁸ Green India Scheme, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=93975> and India's Forests and REDD+, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, New Delhi, 2010, <http://moef.nic.in/downloads/public-information/REDD-report.pdf>

However, the true impact of any policy is shaped not by its ambitious rhetoric but by its institutional structure. In reality, GIM does not stand for what it professes with respect to forest communities. It does not support decentralised governance or the rights of communities, nor does it have any demonstrable mechanism for channeling incentives to forest communities as mandated in UNFCCC REDD.

For example, GIM's focus on the eco-restoration of degraded open forests is likely to impact on forest people who have already shifted or been forced to move away from dense forests to open forests that had been, until now, considered uneconomic.¹⁰⁹ Forest communities extract fuelwood, fodder, and small timber from these forests and graze their cattle. But the Green India Mission targets these areas for large-scale afforestation programmes with fast growing native species and closure to grazing on a rotational basis, thereby preparing the ground for displacing the forest communities from the last of these forest areas and depriving them of their habitat and livelihood options.

Furthermore, regarding moderately dense forest cover the GIM document says, "these forest/ecosystems are subjected to degradation on account of recurrent fire, unregulated grazing, invasive species, shifting cultivation and illicit felling etc." [5.2 a)]¹¹⁰ This conjures up a scenario where the axe is going to fall on the forest communities – to make them stop grazing, to prevent shifting cultivation and to blame them for illicit felling of timber. At the same time, however, the GIM document does not address large-scale commercial deforestation.

With respect to governance, the MoEF and the forest bureaucracy define their concept of decentralised governance as including revamped Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) under the Gram Sabha and the revamped Forest Development Agency (FDAs), as part of the implementation machinery. The GIM also pitches for legal standing for the JFMCs under the Gram Sabha in the Forest Rights Act. But the Forest Rights Act has no provisions for including JFM and JFMCs or other such bodies that do not emanate out of the decision-making process of the Gram Sabhas. JFM has no legal standing under the FRA and the participatory regime that it represents is very different from that promoted and facilitated by the FRA.

Undermining the FRA 2006 and the provisions providing community rights to forest resources in the post FRA regime, the GIM effectively works to unleash market forces in Indian forests, circumventing the all important issue of community rights concerning access to and ownership of the forests and its resources, and who governs the forests.

During 2011-12, a budget of Rs. 200 crores (Rs. 2 billion or approx US\$45 million) was indicated for the country and detailed arrangements were under discussion.¹¹¹ Rs.49.94 crores (Rs. 500 million or about US\$11 million) was released to 21 States for carrying out preparatory activities under the GIM,¹¹² and each state was to submit a budget for about Rs. 20 crores (Rs. 200 million or about US\$ 4.5 million), prioritising their planned activities.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Souparna Lahiri, Exploring the Road to REDD in India, *REDD Realities*, published by Global Forest Coalition, December 2009

¹¹⁰ National Mission for a Green India (Under the National Action Plan on Climate Change, Draft submitted to Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change, Ministry of Environment and Forests, 2010, <http://moef.nic.in/downloads/public-information/GIM-Report-PMCCC.pdf>

¹¹¹ According to the GIM Advisory 1.1, issued on November 21, 2011 by the Ministry of Environment and Forests

¹¹² This information was released by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, on May 22, 2013 by its Minister, Smt. Jayanthi Natarajan in the Rajya Sabha.

¹¹³ The rate of exchange use is R1 = US\$0.022371, www.x-rates.com historic lookup for 1.1.2011.

It was, however, stated that a part of the GIM's programme would be funded by convergence from other schemes/plans as well.

To fulfill the reform agenda of the GIM, the Advisory also recommended that the states should take action to give legal status to the JFM Committees as Committees of the Gram Sabha in the Panchayati Raj Act, and to revamp State Forest Development Agencies.

Mobilising financial resources for GIM and REDD+

Financial resources will be provided by the MoEF for the next two plan periods at the rate of Rs.1,000 crores (about US\$225 million) annually, and additionally through the convergence of various schemes (with existing budgets) – MGNREGS (Rs.1500 crores), the CAMPA¹¹⁴ Fund¹¹⁵ (Rs.300 crores), the National Afforestation Programme (NAP) (Rs.80 crores), the Integrated Forest Management Scheme (Rs.20 crore), the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy Resources (Rs.200 crores), the XIIIth Finance Commission Grant (Rs.200 crores), the Integrated Watershed Management Programme (Rs.200 crores), and the National Clean Energy Fund (Rs.500 crores).¹¹⁶

An additional Rs.500 crore (about US\$113 million) per year during the Mission period is proposed to be spent by CAMPA on activities that are compatible with the GIM, and in accordance with the orders and concurrence of the Supreme Court.

The total GIM budget, including amounts that will come from other existing budgets amounts to Rs.4,500 crores (about US\$1 billion) per annum and gaps, if any, will be met from external resources and other schemes. With respect to REDD,¹¹⁷ India is receiving US\$693.01 million from external sources – even more than Brazil.

Key Recommendations From the National Level Workshop Of November 2010

In 2009-2010 EQUATIONS, in partnership with Global Forest Coalition (GFC), completed a study on the implications and impacts of the current Indian forest legislation, policies and governance, India's implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIPS) and India's compliance on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) – all parameters that are increasingly being used while negotiating and formulating the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) text.

As an important step in this work, EQUATIONS and the National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers (NFFPFW) — now the All India Forum of Forest Movements (AIFFM) — collaboratively organised a workshop titled “REDD Realities in India: Will the forests and forest people survive?” Recommendations and observations from the workshop included the following:

- Policy making in India is highly bureaucratic and is influenced by global processes, with no space for people. The Gram Sabha is simply an implementing body and does not really have a mandate for decision-making. Even our state legislature is unaware of the implications of policies and they are very often passed in ignorance. Therefore,

¹¹⁴ Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority instituted by the Supreme Court of India

¹¹⁵ The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority.

¹¹⁶ According to the GIM Advisory 3.0, issued on January 3, 2012,

¹¹⁷ The www.reddplusdatabase.org compiles information provided by individual funder countries, but the information given on the website is not disaggregated so it is not possible to tell where these promised funds are coming from.

one of the functions of civil society is to unravel the whole arena of environmental policy making and to educate the organs of power and the common masses.

- There has been a systematic and brazen assault on adivasi land. Independent land, community land, land use systems, land management systems, and customary rights are all being violated as well. Land is being grabbed not only through the Land Acquisition Act but also directly. The government is helping the process. CSOs should document how community practices are being eroded by the state and the state agencies.
- There are several peoples' movements in India, which need to be interconnected to act in a synergistic manner. Like-minded international NGOs could put pressure their governments and corporate agencies on issues related to environmental degradation.
- The forest groups and NGOs should submit a report on REDD to the National Advisory Council (NAC), so that they can deliberate on the issue and take appropriate steps.¹¹⁸
- REDD is introducing an opportunity for the state and the corporate sector to co-opt communities while the financial benefits are reaped by corporate agencies.
- The problem that those who are struggling are facing is that there is no single responsible structure or agency and therefore people do not know who to address their criticisms to. There is a need to generate a wider political response as the Green India Mission (GIM) is the first in a series of new trends, and the ideology behind these trends will be consolidated within the next ten years if we do not respond effectively.
- What is happening in the context of GIM in India is part of a larger global political trend strategically focused on controlling the commons. The statements and language used in the GIM document¹¹⁹ are similar to those in the World Bank forest strategy document of 2002-2003, which was a critique of India's Joint Forest Management (JFM) and preceded the Forest Rights Act (FRA).
- REDD has a whole political economy attached to it. The fundamentals of REDD are 'who owns the resources?', 'who controls the resources?' and 'who reaps the benefits?'.
- Especially in the context of the North East, region-specific policies are needed to take into account the shifting cultivation practices in the upland areas. There are also large areas of fallow-land, which the government considers degraded or waste land, but which are put to region-specific use by the communities. There has been an emergence of a tribal elite in the region and the government is engaging only with these elites.
- In Arunachal Pradesh, we need to look at the FRA in the context of maintaining existing rights. It is the community that should decide since the forest department tells the community that if traditional rights are there then there is no need to implement FRA. Furthermore, the forest department is creating national parks at alarming rates and if more and more land comes under FRA, it will be a roadblock for the Forest Department. Also in the context of Arunachal Pradesh biodiversity is an important

¹¹⁸ This report was completed and sent to Dr Ram Dayal Munda, who was a Member of the Indian Parliament and the NAC. He attended this national consultation.

¹¹⁹ National Mission for a Green India, Government of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests, undated, http://www.naeb.nic.in/documents/GIM_Brochure_26March.pdf

issue since it is one of the most biodiverse regions in the country. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is also suggesting the North East region will be used for a pilot project of REDD in India.

- The experiences from the north east, Jharkhand, Orissa, Uttarakhand, where forest communities enjoyed traditional rights over forests, show us that forest can be best preserved, conserved, protected and sustainably exploited if communities receive management rights over their forest resources, and the FRA provides for that.

During 2010 and 2011, several regional and community level workshops on REDD and GIM were organised by the All India Forum of Forest Movements (AIFFM) and EQUATIONS. A regional level and community level workshop was held in the hills and Dooars region of West Bengal; and an eastern regional workshop in Ranchi, Jharkhand. In 2011, an eastern and northeastern level workshop was organized in the Darjeeling Hills and a southern regional workshop was held in Bangalore. The latter discussed the closure of forest land in and around the national parks as another instance of land grabbing and the eviction of forest people from their traditional habitat as well.

In the meantime, several joint statements were issued by national level forest movements, including the AIFFM. These are addressed to the MoEF and condemn REDD+ and GIM, land grabbing and the escalating diversion of forest land for mega development projects without the consent of the Gram Sabha — meaning that these projects are in violation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA).

AIFFM and forest groups also lobbied the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MOTA) to amend FRA rules and issue government orders with a view to facilitating timebound implementation of the FRA and the removal of legal and bureaucratic bottlenecks.¹²⁰ Only 30% of the claims submitted to the FRA have been recognised and recorded, and it is important to note that FRA implementation is weakest in the more forested and biodiverse areas such as in the North East. The state governments have sent their opinion that FRA is not relevant in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur¹²¹ as most of the land is already under the control of the communities. But this control is only customary and there is no legal support backing up the communities' rights.

This year, AIFFM took up the issue and presented their view points on FRA and its relevance in a consultation in Arunachal Pradesh. Importantly, the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) of the MoEF has recently declined forest clearance to the Tipaimukh and Dibang mega hydro power projects on the issues of: non-settlement of rights according to FRA; the absence of Gram Sabha consent; and because of the need to conserve large tracts of biodiversity rich forest land.¹²²

On 21-22 September 2013, in Chandrapur, in the Vidharva region of Maharashtra a civil society consultation was organized which was attended by 45 participants representing the Gram Sabhas formed in the Tadoba Andheri National Park (both core and buffer zones), anti coal-mining and thermal power project groups, and local lawyers who are supporting the forest people, as well as representatives of AIFFM and EQUATIONS.

¹²⁰ For more details and references see Getting to the Roots: Underlying Causes of Deforestation and Forest Degradation, and Drivers of Forest Restoration, Global Forest Coalition, 2010, <http://www.globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Report-Getting-to-the-roots1.pdf>

¹²¹ Status report on the implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (for the period ending 30th June 2013), pg 6-22, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India available at <http://tribal.nic.in>

¹²² Proceedings of the Forest Advisory Committee Meeting Held on 11th-12th July 2013, Government of India Ministry of Environment & Forests (FC Division).

The Vidharbha region has a continuous corridor formed by the Tadoba and Pench National Parks and the tiger reserves bordering Madhya Pradesh. There are also many active and potential coal mines and thermal power projects, mostly on forest land areas, that have displaced or will displace forest communities. Many villages have been displaced and forcibly relocated but the villagers are resisting. The rights of the forest dwellers in the national parks have not been settled, in violation of the FRA; and the tiger reserves have been declared in violation of both the Wildlife Protection Act and the FRA. It is also interesting to note this is the same forest area straddling Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh where GIM pilot projects are reported to have been undertaken.

The participants in the workshop reported that there have been huge land grabs by the forest department, tourism operators and corporations for the establishment of national parks, tiger reserves and their expansion, tourist resorts, coal mining, steel, sponge iron and thermal power plants. affecting both the forest dwellers' land and resources and the non-forest land of forest periphery villages. This is also causing significant forest loss.

The consultation recommended:

1. Documenting the violation of the Wildlife Protection Act and FRA in the national parks and tiger reserves.
2. Studying the issue of land grabbing in and around the national parks and tiger reserves in the name of tourism.
3. *Suo moto* formation of Gram Sabhas in the forest areas.
4. Mobilising support for Gram Sabhas and strengthening them to fight forest loss for coal mines, thermal power projects and other mega development projects proposed in the Vidharbha region.
5. Gathering more information on proposed GIM projects and plantations and mobilising the campaign to disband the Joint Forest Management Committees and Forest Protection Committees.

Underlying Causes Of Forest Loss and the REDD+ Proposals In India

In the earlier submissions that the Indian Government has made about REDD+ in the UNFCCC, the UN Forest Forum and the CBD, it has often referred to Joint Forest Management and Forest Protection Committees in the context of implementing programmes at the local and village level, while they ignored the Forest Rights Act and the role of the Gram Sabhas.

In subsequent documents, we do find mention of the FRA and the Gram Sabhas. In fact, in the REDD+ policy documents prepared by TERI, we can see that they acknowledge the centrality of the FRA and the Gram Sabha. That could be the result of pressure exerted by the forest groups through repeated statements and communications addressed to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the nodal Ministry for the implementation of the FRA, combined with international pressure from civil society organisations and struggles on the ground.

Nevertheless, the forest department, the forest bureaucracy and the conservationists have not yet reconciled themselves to the fact that under the FRA regime, the Gram Sabha, and committees under it and formed by it, are *the* legal decision-making entities with respect to implementing forest programmes. As a result they have now come up with the idea of forming Joint Forest Management Committees under the Gram Sabha and providing legal support for

these Forest Management and Protection Committees. The forest groups are completely opposed to this cover up.

Since 2011, the MoEF and TERI have mainly undertaken capacity-building and awareness generation programmes amongst the forest officials and related agencies, driven by the REDD+ Cell in the MoEF and TERI. However, apart from selecting five pilot project sites no visible, concrete and long-term programme development has been undertaken in the context of REDD+. Furthermore, there is not much documentation available about the pilot sites. A few preliminary site-level consultations have been organised but other than the forest officials only the JFM and Forest Protection Committees were involved. Furthermore, it can hardly be a coincidence that all five pilot sites are in areas where there are no Gram Sabhas and where rights under the FRA have not been settled.

In other words, the REDD+ programme in India has not advanced beyond some consultations, the setting up of REDD+ Cells, and some preliminary studies done by TERI, and ICFRE (on REDD+ methodologies, MRV, forest carbon accounting etc.).

It is also notable that the government aims to dovetail REDD+ and the Green India Mission, seemingly to avail itself of the funds provided to GIM from CAMPA and other sources as mentioned earlier. This also indicates that the Government of India is yet to mobilise sufficient resources for the implementation of REDD+, in spite of significant external contributions. There is no mention as yet of any carbon offset fund to be used.

Overall there are sharp questions to be asked about whether the Indian government's approach so far will in any way address the drivers of deforestation in India.¹²³ These drivers (as identified in India's REDD+ proposal) include:

- A gap between demand for and the supply of fuel wood, timber and fodder, leading to the unsustainable exploitation of forests and forest degradation.
- Shifting cultivation affecting 10 Mha of forests across 16 states especially in the North East.
- Forest fires, which are calculated to affect 1.45-3.73 Mha of forest area annually. Most of these are man-made to facilitate the extraction of non-timber forest products, generate a good yield of grass, and clear forests for shifting cultivation.
- Increased population growth, which has induced large-scale land use changes for agricultural purposes and the degradation of remaining forests due to over exploitation.
- Impoverished populations depending directly or indirectly on forests for their livelihoods, creating immense pressure on forests and leading to degradation which in turn impacts their livelihoods even further.
- Large areas of forests being diverted for large infrastructure projects.
- People being displaced from village commons without much compensation putting further pressure on forests.
- The declaration of vast tracts of forest lands as state forests without settlement of rights, leading to the alienation of local people from forests and forest management.

Most of the identified drivers of forest loss are the result of poor forest governance and decision-making by the forest departments. However, the issues of encroachment, forest

¹²³Ashish Aggarwal, Soumitri Das, Varghese Paul, Is India ready to implement REDD Plus? A preliminary assessment prepared for COP 15, TERI

degradation, shifting cultivation and forest fires could and should be dealt with by the Gram Sabha and its committees under the FRA regime; and they could yield even better results if the FRA was implemented more effectively. Once rights have been settled and recorded, the issue of encroachment no longer exists since it is clear who the land belongs to.¹²⁴

The workshops organised during 2010-2013 all recognised the centrality of the FRA in future forest governance in India; the power and role of the Gram Sabha in decentralised forest governance; and the participation of the forest rights holders in decision making in forest programmes. However, these factors are still not being explicitly incorporated into India's REDD+ or GIM programmes, though the FRA and the Gram Sabha have both been given lip service.

The consultations and workshops have also discussed the issue of Community Forest Rights and related mechanisms under the Gram Sabha as an effective alternative to the market-based REDD+ proposal. Currently, the REDD+ proposal still depends on a command and control mechanism which is highly centralised in terms of decision-making and aims to use JFM (since its committees include forest department officials), reserving FRA for its documents to manage the issues of rights of forest dwellers and their safeguards.

Furthermore, while the REDD+ proposal does include the issue of forest diversion for mega infrastructure projects as one of the factors of forest loss, it does not address the problem anywhere or recognise that implementation of FRA and the strengthening of Gram Sabha can actually address this problem.

The current limited implementation of the FRA and opposition from the forest department and related agencies in many forest areas, has triggered forest communities and their Gram Sabhas to resist forest diversion by refusing consent — the ousting of Vedanta from the Niyamgiri Hills in Orissa and the resistance to POSCO project are the two best examples. The groups in the North East are increasingly using the powers of the FRA to resist forest diversion and loss of community rights and livelihoods for mega hydropower projects (even where the forest departments are opposing the local implementation of rights under the FRA).

Furthermore, neither REDD+ nor GIM addresses the conflict of interests generated by using funds collected from corporations in lieu of forest loss generated by development projects for afforestation, plantations, and the regeneration and conservation of forests, biodiversity and ecosystems. The funds that are pumped in to implement REDD+ and GIM are from the CAMPA fund which is collected from the Net Present Value (NPV) levied on developers for loss of forest due to diversion for their development projects. Which means that REDD and GIM are funded by the money generated from forest loss!

Final Recommendations:

1. Any forest related programme/proposal undertaken by the Government of India has to be discussed and deliberated with the forest communities and ratified by the Gram Sabhas, respecting their rights to free and prior informed consent.
2. Any conservation or sustainable forest management programme should be implemented by the Gram Sabhas and their concerned committees, with the forest departments, related agencies and other expert bodies giving technical support only.

¹²⁴ The encroachment issue was raised after the passing of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, when people who have dwelt in forests for generations were termed encroachers as they had no legal rights. According to the Forest Rights Act there cannot be any current encroachment – a term used by the Forest Department and conservationists – until the issue of forest rights are fully settled, or in the process of settlement.

3. The Community Forest Rights as recognised by the FRA and the provisions under Section 5 of the FRA can facilitate an alternative regime of forest governance, which should replace both the REDD+ and GIM programmes.
4. Forest conservation cannot be facilitated by carbon offsetting and market-based forestry programmes.
5. The Government of India should immediately take a more proactive role in the full implementation of the FRA to prevent forest loss and land grabbing.
6. International groups and global forest movements should also put pressure on the Indian government to implement the FRA and recognise the centrality of Gram Sabhas in decentralised forest governance.
7. Global civil society organisations should also make sure that no bilateral or multilateral fund is being channeled to the Indian government for any forestry programme – REDD+ or GIM – as long as the FRA is not recognised and the Gram Sabhas are bypassed.
8. The Indian forest groups and movements need to challenge the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 and its element of compensatory afforestation to stop huge forest loss and the resultant land grab from forest and tribal/indigenous and forest dependent communities.



Left: Kurseong - Gulma forest village, community forest map prepared by the villagers themselves, located in the periphery of Mahananda National Park, Darjeeling Hills; Right: Rajabhatkhawa, in the duars region of North Bengal, Rava (tribal community) forest villagers, located close to Buxa Tiger Reserve. Photos: S. Lahiri

IV. Tanzania

*By Wally Menne for Timberwatch Coalition, South Africa and Envirocare, Tanzania*¹²⁵

Introduction

When looking at how the Tanzanian government has responded to the deforestation issue in that country,¹²⁶ it becomes clear that it must be a huge challenge for a developing country with limited skills capacity and financial resources to conserve its vast but as yet relatively unspoiled natural areas. Finding practical ways for local communities to become actively involved in protecting their remaining forests, grasslands and savannah is more important than having formal conservation measures and laws in place. However achieving this will require a comprehensive programme of actions to tackle every aspect of the task, and must involve all sectors of society in a meaningful partnership.

In the past, efforts to address forest loss in Tanzania relied on a rigid regulatory system that involved decentralised policing at the district level. This sometimes led to conflicts between community members and officials over rights of access to forest resources. Due to the great size of the area that has to be covered, and difficulties with communication and transportation, corrupt practices, including illegal logging and trade in timber, have also been a problem. These factors have all contributed to the present high rate of forest loss.¹²⁷

In response to this crisis the Tanzanian government implemented an internal restructuring process that led to the formation of the Tanzania Forest Services (TFS) Agency. This is an autonomous executive body, that has taken over the role of the Forest and Bee-keeping division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT). It is understood that this new authority will be able to exercise greater control over revenue earned from forest resource use permits and tree-related licences, and that this will make more money available for regulatory efforts by the TFS, which in turn should help to reduce illegal logging and unlawful deforestation.

At the same time, Tanzania has engaged in a REDD+ policy development process, funded and to a large extent driven by the Embassy of Norway in Tanzania, as part of Norway's international Climate Change mitigation strategy (which has also included controversial REDD+ funding agreements with Indonesia and Guyana). Tanzania is also one of the countries included in the UN-REDD programme, as well as a participant in the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility 'REDD-readiness' exercise.

An aspect of forest policy and governance in Tanzania that has created significant confusion is that environmentally harmful plantations of alien Eucalyptus and Pinus tree species are also treated as forests. This has most probably been inspired by the inclusive view promoted by the UN FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) that considers monoculture tree plantations to be a "type of forest".¹²⁸ This dubious definition is based on the narrow view that

¹²⁵ This national report is an outcome of a collaborative effort between the Timberwatch Coalition in South Africa, and the Envirocare NGO in Tanzania. Our sincere thanks must go to all who contributed to the process through their support and/or enthusiastic participation.

¹²⁶ See TRAFFIC 2007 report: [Forestry, Governance and National Development: Lessons Learned from a Logging Boom in Southern Tanzania](http://www.traffic.org/forestry-reports/traffic_pub_forestry12.pdf) - http://www.traffic.org/forestry-reports/traffic_pub_forestry12.pdf

¹²⁷ For more on the drivers of forest loss in Tanzania see article: Tanzania's forests under threat, illegal-logging.info, 13 May 2009, http://www.illegal-logging.info/item_single.php?it_id=3364&it=news

¹²⁸ See Planted Forests: Definitions, FAO, as accessed 9 October 2013, <http://www.fao.org/forestry/plantedforests/67504/en/>

all trees, whether in forests or in plantations, are primarily sources of timber or energy, or, as under REDD+ more recently, includes their potential capacity to sequester and store carbon.

This skewed view of industrial timber plantations and forests has distracted attention from the critically important ecological services that real forests provide to the people of Tanzania. These include local climate regulation and water provision, the importance of biodiversity, both in terms of maintaining overall ecosystem health, and in providing much of the food and medicine consumed by Tanzanians. In contrast, plantations of alien eucalyptus or pine trees are sterile monocultures that depend on toxic agrochemicals and severely damage the soil, whilst destroying biodiversity — either by replacing natural vegetation, or farmland, as well as invading adjacent habitat. In addition they usually displace local people¹²⁹ and consume water that would otherwise have provided for the needs of local food farmers, and sustained communities and aquatic ecosystems downstream.

Although there has been a general tendency to blame forest loss on local communities that clear relatively small areas of forest or woodland to plant food crops, the drivers of the large-scale forest destruction that has afflicted Tanzania are mainly external. They are caused largely by logging for timber that is either consumed locally, or exported as logs¹³⁰, sawn timber or charcoal (but less often in the form of value-added end-user products such as furniture). Demand for charcoal as a cooking fuel in densely populated urban areas also plays a significant role in denuding large areas of hardwood trees that are the desired source of timber needed to produce good quality charcoal. Corruption is also a key factor.¹³¹

Another major issue is the increasing demand for food from growing populations in towns and cities, which also contributes to forest loss caused by the clearing of land for crops and grazing. However a major new threat to Tanzania's forests comes from another type of land-use change - the industrial-scale cultivation of crops for the production of agrofuels (also called biofuels) and tree plantation biomass in the form of woodchips or pellets - as alternatives to liquid fossil fuels used in transportation and coal for electricity generation. The intention is for the 'biofuels' that are produced to be exported to consumers in Europe, rather than being used by the local people whose land has been appropriated. This practice has been described as 'green land-grabbing,' and is sanctioned by the national government, as it aims to utilise supposedly surplus or under-utilised land belonging to poor rural communities.¹³²

The central issue is that some social sectors have benefitted from the over-exploitation of Tanzania's forests whilst others, especially forest dependent communities, including indigenous peoples, have suffered due to being deprived of wild resources to which they have had free access for generations. Due to the appropriation of large areas for the planting of industrial crops, they have to move off their traditional land in search of alternative places to live, often moving to unhealthy slums around cities in search of opportunities to support their livelihood needs.

¹²⁹ See article: Tree planting project threatens food security - <http://forestindustries.eu/de/content/tree-planting-project-threatens-food-security>

¹³⁰ See article: TANZANIA: ILLEGAL LOGGING RAGES, BLAMED ON CORRUPTION – <http://www.africanconservation.org/habitat-news/item/tanzania-illegal-logging-rages-blamed-on-corruption>

¹³¹ See article: TANZANIA: ILLEGAL LOGGING RAGES, BLAMED ON CORRUPTION – <http://www.africanconservation.org/habitat-news/item/tanzania-illegal-logging-rages-blamed-on-corruption>

¹³² For more information on exports of agrofuels from Tanzania see Agrofuels in Africa: the impacts on land, food and forests, case studies from Benin, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, African Biodiversity Network, July 2007, http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/docs/ABN_Agro.pdf and Land deals in Africa: Tanzania, Oakland Institute, as accessed 9 October 2013, <http://www.oaklandinstitute.org/land-deals-africa-tanzania>

Project methodology

The overall objective of this project was to help create a better understanding among affected national sectors and stakeholder groups, of the main causes and drivers of processes that have led to the present high rate of forest loss in Tanzania; whilst also encouraging a 'problem solving' approach to exploring alternative resources and finding new solutions. This project has involved ongoing collaboration with staff of the Envirocare NGO in Dar es Salaam, who also provided invaluable logistical support.

During this project's three year duration, two national workshops were held in Dar es Salaam; the first on 23rd September, 2011 and the second on 24th May, 2013. Both were aimed at engaging with a broad range of national stakeholders interested in finding ways to halt forest loss, and involved both policymakers and NGOs, as well as people from affected communities. Relevant information and suggestions were gathered from the participants using written questionnaires, and during group discussions and individual interviews. As far as possible, participants at both meetings were invited from similar interest groups so as to be able to assess any shifts in attitudes between the two workshops.

Supporting information was also gleaned from research reports and media articles relating to local and international processes and events relevant to forest governance in Tanzania. The project also attempted to monitor the country's complicated and rapidly-evolving forest policy landscape.

As REDD+ development in Tanzania has become a controversial issue that tends to create division between stakeholders, it was decided that it would not be emphasised in the workshop programmes in order to avoid lengthy and unnecessary debate around this sensitive issue.

For the purpose of this report, a separate section on REDD+ policy developments and projects in Tanzania will consider why REDD+ could also constitute an underlying cause of forest loss (ie an indirect cause of deforestation and forest deterioration).

Outcomes from the Multi-stakeholder Workshops

The initial workshop held in September 2011 had more than 25 participants including Tanzanian government representatives, NGOs, local news media, church groups, community development organisations and others. After presentations by speakers from local stakeholder groups, participants discussed the causes of deforestation, and then completed the questionnaire.

Separate discussion groups then focussed on the three main issues that had been identified: Governance, Economics, and Community Development; and were tasked with finding ways to solve the problems they had identified. Participants identified numerous underlying or 'root' causes of forest loss including issues related to forest governance, community involvement, and economic factors. Specific concerns were food and energy security, land tenure, demographic trends (urbanisation), farming systems (including large-scale industrial agriculture), export demand driven logging, the harmful impacts of mining activities, poor community education, limited political commitment, a lack of support from government, and the need to control foreign investments that targeted rural community land. Reports back from the groups highlighted the complexity of the problem, and identified a number of possible ways of addressing particular concerns:

Governance

- Harmonisation of laws was needed to avoid misunderstandings.

- Communities should be more aware of the applicable laws/regulations.
- A professional body for foresters should be formed in Tanzania.
- Local NGOs are too quiet and must speak out about the problems.
- The Tanzania Forest Services Agency needs resources and better governance.

Economic

- Biofuel projects that destroy forests and degrade the landscape must be stopped.
- Poverty that causes dependence on charcoal for energy must be overcome.
- Alternative sources of energy are needed to replace unsustainable charcoal.
- The issue of too rapid population growth needs to be addressed.
- All illegal trade in timber must be stopped as Tanzania is losing money.
- Community woodlots and other alternative sources of energy are needed.
- Community-based forest management (CBFM) needs to be promoted.
- Better agricultural systems such as permaculture need to be introduced.
- Effective steps must be taken to counter bribery and corruption.

Community-based

- Access to cheap and clean alternative energy is a major priority.
- Problems with land-grabbing need to be addressed urgently.
- The value of land and natural resources must be fully appreciated.
- Alternatives to unsustainable construction materials are needed.
- Community ownership of forests and land must be resolved.
- The role of women in protecting forest resources must be supported.
- The value of traditional medicine from forest plants must be recognised.

The main aim of the second workshop was to find solutions. It focused on identifying meaningful actions to address forest loss that could involve all Tanzanians, including communities, NGOs, and government officials, in implementing hands-on actions or practical policy interventions.

Overall, responses were positive but some specific issues, mainly around how national forest policies were being implemented by government, were raised as concerns.¹³³

Participants again represented a wide range of stakeholders, including people from rural communities in areas affected by deforestation, various civil society organisations working on conservation, land, gender, energy, human rights and climate-change, and government foresters and officials representing the MNRT. From the enthusiastic discussions that took place it was clear that bringing such a broad-based grouping into a neutral meeting-space allowed for a kind of creative interaction that might not otherwise have been possible.

¹³³ This problem is reflected in the following news article: Kagasheki Vows to Revisit Forest Act to Protect Trees, Tanzania Daily News, 25 May 2013, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201305260043.html>

The afternoon session covered practical steps that could be taken to help overcome the forest loss challenge in Tanzania, focusing on urban forest restoration, adopting new approaches to conservation such as Indigenous Peoples' and Community Conserved Territories and Areas or 'ICCAs'¹³⁴, streamlining forest product trade, and adding forest product value locally.

The working groups came up with the following solutions-oriented objectives:

- Effective law enforcement and good forest resource governance at all levels.
- The development, adoption and promotion of sustainable land use plans.
- Promoting the use of sustainable/renewable alternative energy options.
- Training and empowering local communities to acquire better negotiation skills.
- Developing local livelihoods based on alternative energy and building materials.
- Recognising and strengthening traditional knowledge and the cultural values of forests.
- Developing and empowering local communities to enable local resource management.
- Encouraging multiple uses of forest resources to optimise benefits to communities.
- Promoting and encouraging the use of agroecology and/or conservation agriculture.
- Promoting the use of efficient technology in the processing of forest resources.
- Increasing research on indigenous trees to ensure better use of local species.
- Developing community awareness of global markets to ensure better local prices.
- Strengthening local institutions' capacity and increasing financing for the forest sector.
- Securing fair trade options for and the certification of local forest goods and products.

The main overall conclusions were that the government should review Tanzania's forest governance policy and regulations in order to ensure that the majority of Tanzanians, rather than the current minority, would benefit from forest resources in the long term; and that much greater public knowledge about the importance of trees and forests is needed.¹³⁵

During discussion it was also emphasised that monoculture tree plantations are not forests, and that local botanists and scientists should be recruited to give expert advice to communities and government on the most appropriate forest restoration and conservation measures. Finally, a delightful slogan came out of this discussion: 'Plant the rightful trees in their rightful places, for the rightful use', meaning that locally indigenous trees should be used when restoring forests.

REDD+ a New Driver of Deforestation?

It was originally a widely held view that the basic concept of 'Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries' (REDD), as a mitigation method, would have great potential to reduce the global warming effect of greenhouse gas emissions from industrial activities, through protecting forests that could absorb and store atmospheric

¹³⁴ For more information see: <http://www.iccaconsortium.org/>

¹³⁵ Stakeholders urge government to review forestry policy and regulations, IPP media, 27 May 2013, <http://www.ippmedia.com/frontend/index.php?l=55165>

carbon. However as an effective alternative to actually reducing greenhouse gas emissions at source, REDD+ has been mis-conceived. Because of the inherent uncertainty regarding REDD+'s potential effectiveness in the face of climate change-enhanced forest fires, rapid global population growth, and increased global consumption levels, it should only ever have been considered as a possible way to supplement primary emissions reduction approaches. In other words, it could have been used as a top-up option in addition to direct emission reductions at source and through more efficient energy use, together with conversion to cleaner energy-types such as wind and solar.

At the same time, REDD+ is considered by most of its supporters to be an 'offsetting' mechanism, meaning that environmental damage being caused in one place can supposedly be compensated for in another. Therefore no net improvement in atmospheric carbon levels will be achieved. One important consequence of this is that should a REDD+ project fail, it would actually result in an overall increase in greenhouse gas emissions, together with associated climate damage.¹³⁶ Thus REDD+ effectively reinforces the existing drivers of deforestation, including increased logging, whilst the forest destruction displaced by REDD+ efforts would most likely move into other intact forests somewhere else on the planet.¹³⁷ This is referred to a 'leakage', and it has been a problem¹³⁸ where REDD+ type project proponents have failed to recognise that as long as the global consumption of forest products continues to grow, REDD+ will have less effect on climate change than farting in a thunderstorm.

Was it not the appeal of being able to make REDD+ payments to developing countries that attracted polluting Northern nations wanting to offset their continued carbon emissions that led to forests becoming exploited even further, while governments and communities waited for the great REDD+ miracle to happen? This contradictory situation has allowed logging to increase in many areas, especially where vast oil palm plantations are being established, such as in Indonesia and Cameroon. In the case of Tanzania it may be no coincidence that the rush to grab community land for agrofuel crop plantations (mainly *Jatropha*), as in the case of Sun Biofuels, happened at virtually the same time as the global REDD process was launched! Pro-agrofuel interests even called for *jatropha* and oil palm to receive carbon credits, and this may have raised the perverse prospect of being able to generate even more REDD+ carbon offset credits from future projects to 'reforest' such 'degraded forests'.

Social and ecological 'safeguards' have been promoted by REDD+ supporters to show that damage to local communities, ecosystem health and forest biodiversity by REDD+ projects could be limited. However there is little evidence to date that proposed 'safeguards' will be effective, and together with the MRV (Measurement, Reporting and Verification) that is supposed to validate claims of carbon emission reductions through REDD+ type projects, this issue remains controversial.

Meanwhile, the big REDD+ 'elephant in the room' is the burning question: Where will the anticipated financing needed to make a REDD+ mechanism operational at a global level be obtained from?. Ever since the thirteenth Conference of Parties (COP-13) of the UNFCCC held in Bali in 2007, Norway, the World Bank and other UN agencies have been pushing to establish REDD+ as a key element in the UNFCCC strategy to mitigate climate change. In the

¹³⁶ Protecting carbon to destroy forests: Land enclosures and REDD+, Carbon Trade Watch, April 2013, http://www.redd-monitor.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/redd_and_land-web.pdf

¹³⁷ *Forest Carbon Scam - How Coal and Oil companies are trying to cheat the climate through forest offsets* http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/news/features/carbon_scam151009/

Noel Kempff project is 'saving the forest' by forcing destruction elsewhere – Fred Pearce <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/mar/11/greenwash-noel-kempff-forests>

¹³⁸ Outsourcing Hot Air - Greenpeace

<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/Global/international/publications/forests/2012/REDD/OutsourcingHotAir.pdf>

meantime, enormous amounts of public and private funding have been sunk into a mega-exercise that at best can only be described as an experiment in progress. To add to the problem, due to the recent collapse of carbon markets trading in so-called 'carbon credits' - that are now nearly worthless - it is likely that even in an improved state REDD+ would have little hope of protecting forests, let alone of providing a meaningful response to climate change.¹³⁹

Therefore it must be postulated that REDD+ is in effect undermining, or at least delaying, the implementation of effective and proven solutions to global warming and even to deforestation. By extension, it is necessary to question the motives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and UN agencies such as the World Bank, as well as governments of countries like Norway and the UK, for their insistence on promoting REDD+ as a 'market-based' mitigation measure, when this may well be counterproductive.

REDD+ in Tanzania

Together with several other developing country governments, Tanzania has been persuaded to introduce REDD+ measures intended to address climate change by reducing overall rates of deforestation and forest degradation in the country, even though there is no firm evidence to suggest that this will succeed. REDD+ policies will not necessarily address the real underlying drivers of activities that impact negatively on forests in Tanzania, as identified in the section above. Nor does REDD+ address rampant consumerism in countries like the United States, the biggest per capita contributor to global forest loss and greenhouse gas emissions through both its domestic fossil fuel combustion, as well as the emissions from its 'off-shore' factories in Taiwan and China.



**Baobab Woodland in Southern Tanzania. Photo:
Timberwatch Coalition**

¹³⁹ "When the product is invisible, the cons are endless"

<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/10/the-forest-mafia-how-scammers-steal-millions-through-carbon-markets/280419/>

Another major challenge for Tanzania is obtaining sufficient accurate statistical information about the current state of its forests in order to implement REDD+. It has been addressing this through its national Forest Resource Monitoring and Assessment Programme, which is funded by the Government of Finland and the FAO.¹⁴⁰

In addition, a major draw-back to having REDD-type interventions in Tanzania is that the initiative has not come from the Tanzanian people themselves, but has been imposed by external actors with different (mostly self-interested) agendas. A mid-term REDD project report commissioned by Norway illustrates that REDD+ is a complicated process. It shows that Tanzania is struggling to address many of the issues in question. It states: "A wide consultation process has been implemented through a series of zonal workshops. The target for these consultation exercises has been concentrated among local government staff as well as established NGOs operating in the area. Representation from forest-dependent communities and vulnerable groups has been low."¹⁴¹

There is also a great likelihood that REDD+ projects in Tanzania will impact negatively on food security as a result of land grabbing¹⁴² for REDD+ and other climate change 'mitigation' projects which displace communities and lead to increased competition for the remaining land that is suitable for food production. Restrictions on community access to REDD+ project areas will also reduce community access to the wild animals and plants that provide a large part of Tanzanian peoples' needs in terms of traditional foods and medicines.

Generally, in spite of government claims to the effect that it has been done, it would appear that Tanzania is still far from having a workable position on implementing REDD+ from a policy and legislative angle. It also seems that little progress has been made in finding the 'readiness' or support for and acceptance of REDD+ by potentially affected communities on the ground in Tanzania, despite the being a member of the UN-REDD programme, and having started the implementation phase of this programme in July 2013.¹⁴³ Tanzania also sits in on the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility process, but is not in receipt of FCPF funding at present.^{144,145}

Norway's role in promoting REDD+ in Tanzania

Despite previous experiences of Norwegian funding to Tanzanian projects being mis-spent, the government of Norway has used the huge profits from its oil industry (via the Climate Fund) to try to buy the willing compliance of extensively forested countries like Tanzania. In this case it has paid out millions of Krone (1 Euro = Approx. 8 NOK) for projects run by NGOs and other organisations in the country, no doubt with the intention of establishing REDD+ as Tanzania's dominant forest-conservation strategy.

¹⁴⁰ REDD Desk <http://www.un-redd.org/UNREDDProgramme/CountryActions/Tanzania/tabid/1028/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

¹⁴¹ National REDD+ Strategy Development and Implementation Process in Tanzania – Mid Term Review <http://www.norway.go.tz/Global/Final%20Report%20Mid%20Term%20Review%20of%20REDD%20Policy%20Project%2018-4-13.pdf>

¹⁴² See article: Tree planting project threatens food security, Sommerauer, as accessed 9 October 2013, <http://forestindustries.eu/de/content/tree-planting-project-threatens-food-security>

¹⁴³ <http://www.un-redd.org/UNREDDProgramme/CountryActions/Tanzania/tabid/1028/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

¹⁴⁴ <https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/readiness-fund>

¹⁴⁵ More details of Tanzania's REDD+ preparations, as described by the Tanzanian government, can be seen in its FCPF REDD Readiness Progress Sheet, July 2012, http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/forestcarbonpartnership.org/files/Documents/PDF/June2012/REDD%20Tanzania%20Fact%20Sheet_June%202012_0.pdf

At the same time, it has given undeserved credibility to an as yet ineffective climate change mitigation approach, which allows Norway to continue with its expansion of fossil oil and gas extraction by Statoil (Norway's state-owned oil company) operations around the world. Norway's keen interest in promoting REDD+ in Tanzania could also have been influenced by Statoil's stake in recently discovered fossil gas deposits off the Tanzanian coast. Furthermore, Norwegian funded REDD+ pilot projects in the country have not yet produced any hard evidence that REDD+ projects established in the country would be viable in the future.

In the case of the REDD+ funding given to Tanzania by the seemingly philanthropic Norwegian government, it is most likely that this was motivated by the prospect of being able to offset its own national greenhouse gas emissions, as well as promoting the interests of the Norwegian carbon trading business based in Oslo. Another 'mitigation' tactic is to 'export' emissions through business investments in developing countries. In Tanzania, Norwegian owned companies include the 'squeaky clean' Yara Fertiliser,¹⁴⁶ Scancem (now Heidelberg) Cement,¹⁴⁷ and the (not so) Green Resources Ltd., that claims it can generate genuine carbon credits using 'fake forests' to destroy natural grasslands that really do store carbon.¹⁴⁸

Another major challenge to Norway's REDD+ plans has been the problem of its project funding to some NGOs in Tanzania being mis-spent by corrupt or ill-disciplined REDD+ project staff.¹⁴⁹ At least two instances of financial mismanagement had been uncovered within NGOs contracted by Norway to manage individual REDD+ pilot projects.

Conclusion

The GFC report *Getting to the roots* (2010)¹⁵⁰ was used as the point of departure for the current project programme in Tanzania, with the aim of increasing understanding and awareness about the underlying drivers of forest loss and deterioration. The main purpose of the exercise was to increase the possibility of there being positive improvements in national policies affecting the governance of forest and other natural habitat in Tanzania.

During the course of the project, the emphasis moved from identifying causes of forest loss, towards taking a more constructive approach, to assist local stakeholders in identifying more meaningful and effective responses to known drivers of forest loss and deterioration. This approach appears to have helped to achieve a general change in attitude among the various stakeholder-groups. Whereas before there had been few who believed that halting forest loss in Tanzania might be possible, there is now a more positive view that workable solutions can be found and implemented, together with a realisation that it will need far greater co-operation between all stakeholders to achieve the sustained action that will be needed to make the desired changes on the ground. Specific Issues identified include:

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.yara.com/>

¹⁴⁷ See <http://www.framtiden.no/english/industry/norway-s-scancem-in-bitter-land-conflict.html>

¹⁴⁸ See the Timberwatch Report - *CDM Carbon Sink Tree Plantations - A case study in Tanzania*

[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)

¹⁴⁹ This includes corruption within two non-governmental organisations, the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania (WCST), which had close links to the government, and WWF in Tanzania. See articles: *Corruption in Tanzania: President's men took over, Norwegian aid money disappeared*, REDD-monitor.org, 16 July 2013, <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2013/07/16/corruption-in-tanzania-presidents-men-took-over-norwegian-aid-money-disappeared/#comment-932640> and

WWF Tanzania staff in financial scam, Sommerauer, 29 May 2012, <http://forestindustries.eu/de/content/wwf-tanzania-staff-financial-scam>

¹⁵⁰ <http://www.globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Report-Getting-to-the-roots1.pdf>

- Unfair and overly expensive challenges to poor local communities wishing to follow correct and legal procedures when harvesting trees from their own land.
- Corrupt officials who exploit community resources for their own profit by dishing out logging permits to themselves and their friends.
- A lack of efficient transport for communities moving their produce to urban markets.
- Difficulties experienced specifically by women in communities affected by 'land grabs', and especially unfair exploitation as workers, including unequal pay and sexual harassment.
- The slow implementation of policy reform by government sections, and conflicts between national and regional government priorities.
- The limited capacity of NGOs who are unable to support affected communities effectively.
- The lack of consultation with communities, and a failure to provide the correct information regarding their rights, prior to communities signing agreements to part with their land.

All of these issues require urgent attention from both the Tanzanian government and local NGOs, but unless a way can be found to empower local communities — with the knowledge and resources they need to be able to make informed choices, and to be able to defend their right of access to their land and natural resources — the scourge of land-grabbing will continue to undermine their livelihoods.

One solution would be to provide ongoing human and environmental rights education. This would require a national education programme of sharing information via workshops, booklets and videos. More importantly, communities should be able to find ways to develop their own abilities to create self-employment on their own land. The best way to achieve this is by establishing networks for sharing information resources and successful ideas between communities. Community leaders must be aware of global trends that could undermine local communities' sovereignty over land and natural resources. The committed involvement of NGOs and CBOs will be vital in providing a conduit for the flow of information between local communities and international policy processes like REDD+ that could have an enormous impact on their lives.

To conclude, it will be necessary to take a fully integrated approach to addressing forest loss in Tanzania if the situation is ever to improve. Creating more formally protected areas or forest reserves will not be a sustainable solution if local and international demand for forest resources continues to increase.



Left: Charcoal trading is hard work; Right: Participants at 2013 workshop. Photo: Timberwatch.

V. Uganda

By Kureeba David Mutitsa for the National Association of Professional Environmentalists-Uganda

Introduction

Uganda's much depleted forest cover had declined to 15% of Uganda's land surface by 2005, with annual forest loss estimated to be about 88,000 ha per year.¹⁵¹

The 'causes and drivers' of forest loss and degradation in Uganda have been identified as population pressure and rural poverty; agricultural expansion; accelerated biomass energy demands (especially fuel wood and charcoal for domestic energy); timber exploitation; and disputed property rights and tenure of both land and resources.¹⁵²

One key underlying cause linking these seemingly disparate drivers and causes is the issue of weak governance. In particular, Uganda's forestry policies are not adequately enforced, due to corruption and a lax approach to authorising investments (with investors' interests being prioritised). In addition, any queries relating to a project are dealt with by the Office of the President rather than any of the relevant governmental departments. This governance deficit has exacerbated the loss of forests, wetlands and upland habitats.

REDD+ itself is still in the preparatory stage in Uganda. However, one can expect that the current Ugandan government has every intention of moving ahead swiftly with REDD+, once the institutional arrangements and financing are in place, given its ongoing involvement in forest carbon markets, and the fact that it already has numerous similar forest carbon offset projects underway.¹⁵³ These including the UWA-FACE project in Mt Elgon National Park, Bukaleba Forest Reserve, the Mabira Rain Forest, the Luwunga Forest Reserve, and Buliisa.¹⁵⁴ The voluntary carbon offset market allows corporations in developed countries to buy tradable 'carbon offset' credits from projects in developing countries, to offset their own continued pollution. Several carbon trading firms are active in Uganda, with forests and grasslands being replaced by monoculture plantations in order to obtain and sell these credits.¹⁵⁵

Debilitating land grabbing is a common feature of these projects. In the Bukabela Forest Reserve, for example, 8,000 people have been displaced from 13 villages, to make way for 80-100,000ha of pine and eucalyptus plantation.¹⁵⁶ In the Luwunga Forest Reserve some

¹⁵¹ Uganda F-PP,

<http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/forestcarbonpartnership.org/files/Documents/PDF/Apr2011/UgandaRPP%20Submitted%20April%202011.pdf>

¹⁵² REDD and Sustainable Development — Perspective from Uganda, IIED, 2010,

<http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G02774.pdf>

¹⁵³ REDD and Sustainable Development — Perspective from Uganda, IIED, 2010,

<http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G02774.pdf>

¹⁵⁴ Land, Life and Justice: How landgrabbing in Uganda is affecting the environment, livelihoods and food sovereignty of communities, FoEI, April 2012, <http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs/2012/land-life-justice/view>

¹⁵⁵ Land, Life and Justice: How landgrabbing in Uganda is affecting the environment, livelihoods and food sovereignty of communities, FoEI, April 2012, <http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs/2012/land-life-justice/view>

¹⁵⁶ Land, Life and Justice: How landgrabbing in Uganda is affecting the environment, livelihoods and food sovereignty of communities, FoEI, April 2012, <http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs/2012/land-life-justice/view>

20,000 people are reported to have been displaced by the New Forests Company in order to clear forest and replace it with pine plantation.¹⁵⁷

This land grabbing is exacerbated by the fact that there is much dispute and conflict over the issue of land ownership in Uganda, with both 'traditional' and 'Western' forms in use.¹⁵⁸ The government increasingly favours the latter,¹⁵⁹ to the great detriment of the people living on lands selected for environmental protection or investment. Violence may be used to force communities to leave their homes and territories.

"The first time they came they told us that we should vacate our homes. We declined. The second time they came with the police. We saw them take a matchbox from their pockets. They lit our houses and burned them down."

"I think because they wanted us off the land, they used fire to evict us. I had gone to look for herbs (for my sick child) and I returned to find the house on fire. We found my child was already dead. I can't understand how this could have happened."

[These are among] The experiences of people living in an area in Uganda where a forest carbon project has been established by UK-based New Forests Company. The company claims that it has not been involved in any violence and that the evacuation was voluntary and peaceful. (Source: The Guardian, video footage.¹⁶⁰)

Furthermore, the Ugandan government only manages 30% of the gazetted forests (the National Forestry Authority manages 15% and the Uganda Wildlife Authority manages the other 15%). The remaining 70% is privately owned and the harvesting of these forests has never been regulated by the government. As a result these forests are harvested indiscriminately, destroying and degrading what is left of Uganda's forests. The annual estimated rate of deforestation is 2%.

Another underlying factor is the demography of the country. The population growth rate stands at 3.5% per annum, with a population of about 34 million in 2013. This is estimated to reach 50 million by 2020.

Description of the national REDD+ process

Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) financing to develop a REDD Preparation Proposal (RPP) for Uganda was agreed and disbursed in 2010; and the R-PP itself was submitted to the FCPF in May 2012.¹⁶¹

Since the initial approval in 2010, developments have been slow. The main activity has been the development of a Consultation and Participation Plan (C&P),¹⁶² which includes an

¹⁵⁷ Land, Life and Justice: How landgrabbing in Uganda is affecting the environment, livelihoods and food sovereignty of communities, FoEI, April 2012, <http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs/2012/land-life-justice/view>

¹⁵⁸ Conflict in Uganda's land tenure system, Africa Portal, as accessed 10 October 2011, <http://www.africaportal.org/articles/2012/05/14/conflict-uganda's-land-tenure-system>

¹⁵⁹ Conflict in Uganda's land tenure system, Africa Portal, as accessed 10 October 2011, <http://www.africaportal.org/articles/2012/05/14/conflict-uganda's-land-tenure-system>

¹⁶⁰ <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/video/2011/oct/06/uganda-international-land-deals?fb=ative>

¹⁶¹ https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/forestcarbonpartnership.org/files/Documents/Uganda%20FCPF%20Readiness%20Progress%20Sheet_16%20October_2012.pdf

¹⁶² [http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/forestcarbonpartnership.org/files/Documents/PDF/May2012/Uganda%20Appendix%201c%20Component%201c%20Consultation%20and%20Participation%20Plan%20\(Versio%20Final%20May%202012\)_0.pdf](http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/forestcarbonpartnership.org/files/Documents/PDF/May2012/Uganda%20Appendix%201c%20Component%201c%20Consultation%20and%20Participation%20Plan%20(Versio%20Final%20May%202012)_0.pdf)

Awareness and Communication sub-plan (A&C) and a Conflict and Grievances Management sub-plan (C&G).

These documents were developed by a group of consultants, including the Katoomba Group and the World Conservation Union (IUCN),¹⁶³ and were later discussed by the Uganda REDD-plus working group, in February 2012. However key relevant stakeholders — the forest dependent communities and private forest owners — were not adequately consulted.

As part of the process of developing its R-PP proposal for FCPF funding, the government has assessed the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Uganda, and overall land use. A Strategic Social and Environmental Assessment (SESA) Guideline was being prepared by Uganda's National Focal Point but it seems that this has not been published because of funding issues.

Uganda is also involved in the UN-REDD programme, although it does not have a national UN-REDD programme as such.¹⁶⁴

The preparation of Uganda's R-PP was undertaken by the National Forestry Authority. However, since then the REDD+ Secretariat has been shifted to the Forestry Sector Support Department (FSSD), where there is inadequate technical capacity to handle the project. Thus it has not yet taken off. The government is currently waiting for funds from the World Bank to develop its full national REDD+ strategy.

The Mabira Forest has been proposed as a potential REDD+ pilot project by the Katoomba 'Ecosystem Services Incubator.'¹⁶⁵

Recommendations from the 2011 Uganda workshop

Since January 2011, NAPE has been implementing a project addressing the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation in Uganda, with support from the Global Forest Coalition (GFC). In 2011, this has included the organisation of community awareness meetings about REDD+, and a national workshop for civil society local leaders, government officials, academia and forest owners' representatives.

During these meetings, participants raised a number of issues relating to climate change vulnerability and variability, and its relationship with REDD+ strategy development. These issues included social, economic and ecological aspects that need to be addressed if REDD+ is to succeed as a means of combating climate change in Uganda.

In particular, considerable concern was voiced about the government's lack of respect for the rights of indigenous people during the REDD+ process to date. Indigenous groups and women were not participating adequately in meetings at any level, and were therefore missing the opportunity to advance their concerns at the various levels of decision-making.

Furthermore, the government had not completed the climate change policy needed to guide mitigation and adaptation to climate change in Uganda.¹⁶⁶ This policy should elaborate on

¹⁶³ Uganda F-PP, <http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/forestcarbonpartnership.org/files/Documents/PDF/Apr2011/UgandaRPP%20Submitted%20April%202011.pdf>

¹⁶⁴ http://www.un-redd.org/AboutUNREDDProgramme/NationalProgrammes/Partner_Countries/tabid/4648/language/en-US/Default.aspx

¹⁶⁵ For a detailed explanation of this proposal see: REDD and Sustainable Development — Perspective from Uganda, IIED, 2010, <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G02774.pdf>

¹⁶⁶ To update on this, in 2013 the climate change policy has been completed but is not yet implemented.

the polluter pays tax paid on all automobiles, especially old, imported ones. Surprisingly, the money collected in taxes is never ploughed back into addressing the pollution for which the tax was levied.

There was also a lack of information, especially in terms of documentary films, about the REDD+ process, meaning that insufficient information was being provided to both policy makers (for example the Natural Resources Committee of the Parliament) and the wider public. As a result communities cannot make informed decisions.

At the conclusion of the national meeting, participants at the 2011 workshop recommended that the Government of Uganda should:

- Strengthen and coordinate activities related to climate change and REDD+ in the districts (which are administrative units in Uganda). This could be through establishing effective local multi-stakeholder committees to provide appropriate strategic and policy guidance.
- Enhance coordination in the development and implementation of the REDD readiness plan and REDD+ strategy for Uganda so as to ensure the productive involvement and participation of all stakeholders including the private sector, the National Agricultural Research Organisation, academia, the National Council for Science and Technology, the National Forestry Research Institute and other relevant research institutions.
- Decide that the main task of the Climate Change Unit under the Ministry of Water and Environment should be to spearhead, coordinate and implement the Ugandan National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) on climate change. This should promote the development of a national policy and institutional framework that can guide effective responses to climate change impacts in Uganda, at community, local and national levels. The government should also ensure the involvement of the Ministry of Water and Environment, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the Ministry of Local Government, and the Department of Meteorology. This approach would help link climate change, conservation, REDD+ and other mitigation and adaptation measures.
- Undertake and implement environment and climate impact assessments prior to engaging in REDD+ agreements and any other related business.
- Support access to microfinance for farmers and natural resources-dependent communities, because poverty is one of the main drivers of deforestation. This will help to diversify livelihood opportunities for household income generation, especially off-farm activities.
- Involve communities, including women, enabling them to participate in decision-making and the implementation of climate change adaptation initiatives and programmes at all levels, from the grassroots/community level through to national and international levels. It is particularly important to take gender issues into account in REDD+ and climate change dialogues at all levels, because the groups most vulnerable to climate change impacts in Uganda are women and children.
- Encourage the media to participate regularly in community interactions and gatherings to become aware of what is happening on climate change and REDD+ in the communities.
- Ensure active participation at all levels in decision-making and the implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives and programmes, especially at the community level.

- Provide financial support for climate change actions relating to both adaptation and mitigation, as part of corporate social responsibility.
- Ensure that media institutions enhance collaboration and partnership with lead agencies and development institutions working on climate change, to simplify and relay accurate information on climate change to the masses, and to strengthen reporting on climate change events, impacts and related information at community, national, regional and international levels.
- Strengthen partnership and networking on issues of climate change at the local, national and regional levels among key stakeholders.

It was also suggested that:

- Legislators and councillors should enact regulations, legislation, bylaws and ordinances, which will promote and support climate adaptation, but also ensure that budgeted plans have adequate resource allocations to address climate change adaptation and forest management.
- Development partners should mobilise and provide resources to support climate change adaptation actions initiated by all stakeholders at community, local, national and regional levels; and provide specialised technical assistance to key institutions with respect to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Recommendations from the 2013 Uganda workshop

On 3 September 2013, NAPE organized another multi-stakeholder national workshop on measures to address the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation through the enforcement of national environmental laws and the enactment of incentive schemes to reduce deforestation and forest degradation in Kampala. It was attended by 45 participants drawn from government, academia, women's groups, the press, like-minded civil society organisations and communities.

The debate focused on community ownership of forests and wetlands with respect to REDD+ and its meaning to and potential for communities. In Uganda, because of the state's bias in favour of inward and domestic investment strategies, the communities are being marginalised to the extent that the majority of the communities in areas where these projects are being implemented have lost their land, including forests and other resources, to investors.

Participants called on government leaders who attended to respect communities and their resources while introducing REDD+ projects. Many projects introduced in Uganda are associated with community rights violations. The Kalangala oil palm growing project, for example, has led to deforestation and land grabbing.¹⁶⁷ Similarly, communities have been evicted from Kiboga and Mubende districts to make way for a forest carbon offset project:¹⁶⁸ at the moment the communities are living on the periphery of the forest.¹⁶⁹ Similarly in the Kikonda forest reserve communities have been evicted for a forest carbon offset project.,¹⁷⁰ During the eviction of the Batwa indigenous communities from Semliki forest reserve, 120

¹⁶⁷ Land, Life and Justice: How landgrabbing in Uganda is affecting the environment, livelihoods and food sovereignty of communities, FoEI, April 2012, <http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs/2012/land-life-justice/view>

¹⁶⁸ <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/land-and-power-the-growing-scandal-surrounding-the-new-wave-of-investments-in-l-142858>

¹⁶⁹ <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/video/2011/oct/06/uganda-international-land-deals?fb=ative>

¹⁷⁰ <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/video/2011/oct/06/uganda-international-land-deals?fb=ative>

community members were resettled on only an acre of land without receiving a piece of land where they could grow crops.

The meeting also discussed the fact that apart from the investors, there are other causes of deforestation and these include increasing demand for firewood, inefficient charcoal burning and tree monocultures.

Furthermore those few communities making an effort to conserve their natural forests are not given any incentives at all. Incentives should be provided to such communities as these forests play an important role in biodiversity conservation, indigenous herbs conservation, and food security (in terms of fruit tree conservation). Participants suggested that communities conserving indigenous tree species should be given incentives based on the acreage conserved to encourage other communities to conserve natural forests so that biodiversity can thrive. Funds for such a scheme could be provided by the government and sourced from the 'polluter pays' tax on old and inefficient equipment including cars, which emit a lot of polluting gases into the environment.



Oil palm plantations on islands in Lake Victoria, Uganda. Photo: Kureeba David Mutsitsa

Furthermore, if REDD+ must be implemented in Uganda, then incentives should be extended to those people conserving natural tree species, but not to those people or communities or organisations promoting and planting alien species at the expense of indigenous tree species. In other words, plantations should not be regarded as forests eligible for REDD+ incentives. The government should not continue to promote monoculture plantations such as oil palm and pine: this will water down whatever good intentions there may be (if any) with respect to REDD+.

Decisions on any form of investment, whether it be about REDD+, agrofuels or any other monoculture plantation, should always be community-centred and driven. No projects or programmes should be imposed on communities without their Free Prior Informed Consent.

Governance is a very big challenge when it comes to the management of natural resources such as forests. This has resulted in corruption and violence towards indigenous and local people. Many projects introduced in Uganda have been implemented without prior informed consent from communities affected by the projects, and this has resulted in the violation of territorial rights and human rights. This is exemplified by the oil palm project in Kalangala, the eviction of Semliki Batwa indigenous people from the forest, etc.

Big projects, even if they fall under 'positive incentives' categories such as REDD+, do not benefit the poor but the corporations and the middle-men. REDD+ will most likely exacerbate existing tenure conflicts amongst communities intended to benefit from it.

Governance is a very big challenge when it comes to the management of natural resources such as forests. This has resulted in corruption and violence towards indigenous and local people.

Comparative analysis between the recommendations of the workshops on how to address the underlying causes of forest loss, and the actual REDD+ proposals in Uganda

During the 2013 meeting, participants raised the issue of the displacement of communities from their forest territories where they have lived for millennia without destroying the forests. They see REDD+ without people as a "killer move" by the government.

There should be a mandatory policy of free prior and informed consent for any project to take place. It was also suggested that those communities depending on forests that have been evicted should be reinstated on their original territories, including the Batwa who used to live in Semliki forest in Bundibugyo in western Uganda. To date, they have not been reinstated and the land that has been given to them for agriculture is completely inadequate.

The current approach seems to be inclined towards removing communities from the forests to facilitate the implementation of REDD+. Participants pointed out to policy makers that this policy of eviction means that REDD+ can never work. It was also observed that this issue was raised during the 2011 REDD workshop, where policy makers and other stakeholders were present, yet the government is still adamant in its position and looks at indigenous communities and forest dependent communities as encroachers, when actually these people have been part of the forest since time immemorial.

Furthermore, while the government wants to invest in REDD+ projects to reduce emissions, it has been importing old automobiles and levying high taxes inclusive of an environmental tax. Yet this money has never been ploughed back to cleaning the environment — the basis on which the money was levied. This also raises the issue of old machinery that emits a lot of carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide into the environment. The Government of Uganda is importing old machinery, encouraging the reclamation of wetlands for flower farming, and promoting the destruction of natural forests for oil palm and other monocultures such as sugar cane and pine, which are not sustainable. This is all contradictory.

In 2011, we recommended that the government should regulate the expansion of oil palm in forested areas as well as respecting forest dependent communities. But the government is intending to expand oil palm in the islands of the Buvuma district. This is not a good move, given the ecological significance of the natural forests in Buvuma.

Furthermore, indigenous groups and women need to be involved in meetings at all levels to enable them advance their concerns at decision-making levels. The involvement of women in REDD+ has been improved, because the lead person on REDD+ at the moment is a woman and she is trying to work out the modalities of bringing more women on board, regardless of the project failing to take off.

In addition, more documentaries on REDD+ progress need to be shot and distributed and those already filmed need to be shown to policy makers (for example the Natural Resources Committee of the Parliament) and the wider public, so that they can all make informed decisions.

Final recommendations

- Uganda should change its investment strategies such that investment in monocultures is not done at the expense of natural forests, which sequester carbon dioxide in much greater quantities than plantations.
- Uganda should strengthen its sustainable energy development strategy, including by reducing taxes on and subsidising energy items such as gas, hydropower, solar etc. Because of high taxes, communities in both rural and urban areas have resorted to the unsustainable use of firewood for domestic, institutional and many other purposes. This is continuously endangering forests as the majority opt for the cheaper energy option, which is firewood and charcoal.
- Although the government now recognises the presence of indigenous people, this recognition needs to be put into practice. Representatives should be nominated to represent their views at all levels of development. Also, the issue of gender integration in the decision-making processes should be upheld and encouraged at all levels.
- The government should make information on REDD+ available to all including the forest dependent communities and other stakeholders. In the event that REDD+ is implemented in Uganda, it must take into account and respect the land/territorial rights of indigenous and local communities.
- There should be free prior informed consent from communities before REDD+ project are implemented. REDD+ projects must not be forced on communities.

4. Conclusions: Does REDD+ contribute to addressing the underlying causes of forest loss?

Although REDD+ has been promoted as a 'win-win' solution to deforestation and climate change our case studies show that there are still numerous reasons to suppose that it is likely to be anything but. Anybody considering in engaging or investing in a REDD+ project should consider the following concerns that have emerged.

- (1) To start with, and as predicted in our 2010 report 'Getting to the Roots: Underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, and drivers of forest restoration,' REDD+ approaches are doing little or nothing to address the underlying causes of deforestation.**

This is *the* key problem with the overall REDD+ approach – it is based on a very thin neo-liberal economic theory about the need to compensate opportunity costs of forest conservation without addressing the true roots of the problem, and so far shows no signs of doing so. In addition, there are enduring concerns about leakage (that the problem will simply move to non-project areas, unless underlying causes are addressed).

For example, in Colombia it was observed that, “after more than three years preparing for REDD+ in Colombia, a process which has been underway since 2010, is still noticeable that the underlying causes of deforestation are not being addressed in practice. This situation has serious implications and consequences, in the sense that it simply is not possible to achieve the goal of reducing or eliminating deforestation and forest degradation in the country if a number of root (underlying) causes are not being seen as part of the problem that has to be solved.”

The authors of the report also observe that, “It is important to note that the process for the implementation of REDD+ in Colombia is based on the direct causes of deforestation (deforestation drivers) that have been identified. It does not include (at least not explicitly) the underlying causes of deforestation in the country.”

Similar conclusions were drawn by the authors of the other country case studies.

In addition, REDD+ and similar market-based mechanisms are inevitably hostage to the vagaries of supply and demand, and mismatches between them, which is another reason why they cannot be considered as reliable and effective mechanisms for dealing with underlying causes. The 'supply' of standing trees can be affected by a whole host of factors including better prices being achieved for alternative non-forest products, the impact of forest fires, and illegal logging. Similarly, demand for forest carbon credits is variable, especially without consistent demand being created by governments at the international level, including by agreement on national emissions reductions commitments.¹⁷¹

- (2) There are also a number of dynamics — stemming primarily from the complexity of REDD+ and its deliberate 'built-in' appeal to private finance — that make it a highly risky venture, especially from a community point of view. This includes a lack of legal definitions and safeguards at the national level.**

¹⁷¹ <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2013/09/30/conservation-internationals-desperate-sos-call-to-bail-out-redd/>

It is self-evident that the main beneficiaries of investor-oriented projects are likely to be investors, but the devil is definitely in the detail when it comes to market-based mechanisms.

REDD+ and similar schemes revolve around contractual obligations that distribute risk. Those who are unaware of this or cannot interpret legal documents are likely to find themselves saddled with a disproportionate amount of that risk.

For example, REDD+ projects are risky simply because they are long-term commitments regarding standing trees that are prone to forest fires, disease, and illegal logging (especially in remote areas). In addition, communities dealing with particularly unscrupulous investors may find themselves signing away their rights to their land and forests for considerably longer than any REDD+ project might last.

For better or worse, REDD+ implementation is also happening very slowly and this is creating a two-track dynamic in some countries, an unpalatable mix of inflated and unrealistic expectations being created amongst communities, combined with a lack of legal safeguards. Some private investors are clearly determined to move ahead whether or not suitable laws and safeguards are in place.

In particular, the absence of a national policy and legislation defining REDD+ and its limits in certain countries can create significant risks because the implementation of projects may end up in the violation of territorial sovereignty and the rights of forests peoples, simply for the sake of the financial speculation and profit. Colombia exemplifies these dynamics. The REDD+ 'rush' has effectively created a situation in which forest-dwelling communities have been under siege, and overwhelming and often unjustified expectations have been created. At the same time the country lacks a legal framework and a national policy to guide, regulate and set the necessary limits and controls regarding the implementation of REDD+.

This siege has been driven by private consulting firms — often referred to as 'carbon cowboys' — seeking to sign contracts with indigenous Peoples and local communities. There has been a proliferation of legally-dubious and highly unequal contracts ('contratos leoninos') presented to community representatives by companies and private consultants, who put pressure on those people to sign the contracts even though people know very little about the contents of the contracts and what they are really signing away. In this way, corporate lawyers and their delegates have been taking advantage of uninformed communities in order to appropriate representative and decision-making powers over communities' and peoples' territories and heritage, as well as the forest carbon.

Particularly worrying is the legal limbo that has developed with respect to the implementation of REDD+ in relation to the mandatory application of the process of 'free, prior and informed consent', which is recognised as applying to all indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants in Colombia. There is no defined process or clear instances of its application by the responsible national authority, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS), and it seems that there is no great interest or definitive approach emanating from the Ministry of Interior either (where guidelines for implementation of this process are supposed to be issued).

The Colombian case study also observes that it is irresponsible to assume an attitude of 'learning to implement REDD+ by practicing its application', since this would mean that all 51 projects so far started as 'early initiatives of REDD+' would probably be maintained *even* if they circumvented due process or violated rights such as the right to consultation.

Collectively this would create an increased risk of violating sovereignty and the guarantee that has been provided for traditional cultures and livelihoods. The role of and need for the state to regulate in this respect cannot be denied; such aspects need to be carefully and swiftly defined *before* the development of planned activities, not afterwards.

Brazil's progress with respect to developing REDD+-related laws has been slow at the national level as well, for a number of reasons, including changes within government. Whilst the Brazilian government has stated its intention to have a national strategy in place before the beginning of COP-19 in Warsaw at the end of 2013 this seems unlikely. The main unresolved issues at the national level concern the share of compensation for the efforts of sub-national entities (provinces and municipalities) and other actors (private owners, indigenous peoples, etc) within a national REDD scheme; and the inclusion — or not — of market-based finance.

However, once again it seems that in Brazil the pressure is on from below, with local authorities in Brazil jumping ahead to introduce legislation promoting REDD+ in spite of these national-level concerns. At the sub-national, jurisdictional level, it seems that at least eight states (Santa Catarina, Paraná, Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Acre, Amazonas and São Paulo) have passed state regulation for the Payment for Environmental Services (by specific legislation or through inclusion in climate legislation); and three of them include REDD activities (Acre, Amazonas and São Paulo).¹⁷²

However, it is also important to note here the decision of the General Attorney of Brazil to sue international companies that signed REDD contracts with indigenous peoples in Brazil,¹⁷³ — precisely because there are no REDD+ policies and regulations currently in place in the country. The recommendation from FUNAI (Brazil's government foundation dealing with indigenous concerns) is clear: it asks indigenous leaders not to enter into contracts to offset carbon credits, because of the lack of regulation in Brazil.

(3) However, some governments have already introduced legislation or policies that are specifically intended to promote market-oriented mechanisms and/or promote the 'flexibilisation' of the domestic economy and labour force.

This process is being driven forward by influential corporate interests and conservation organisations, who stand to benefit from the use of market-mechanisms as environmental tools. For example, in Colombia, there is unflagging interest in the commercial benefits of creating and consolidating a voluntary market for greenhouse gas mitigation, involving a range of stakeholders that includes financial institutions (such as the Inter-American Development Bank) and conservation organisations (such as Fundación Natura), the Stock Exchange of Colombia, and the Colombian Business Council for Sustainable Development – Cecodes.¹⁷⁴ These include companies in sectors that have been identified by MADS as drivers of deforestation and degradation, such as the mining, oil and agro-industrial sectors.

¹⁷² <http://www.imazon.org.br/publicacoes/livros/marco-regulatorio-sobre-pagamento-por-servicos-ambientais-no-brasil-1>

¹⁷³ <http://www.dw.de/brasil-vai-processar-empresas-que-fecharam-contratos-de-carbono-com-%C3%ADndios/a-15914327>

¹⁷⁴ Cecodes is compound by 59 companies of the mining, agro-industrial, energy, forest, manufacture, construction and financial sectors, among them, Ecopetrol, Holcim, Anglogoldashanti, Smurfit Kappa, Fedepalma, Indupalma, Cémex, Bancolombia, Argos y Alpina. For more information see véase www.cecodes.org.co

Box 4. Weakening Brazil's Forest Code

In Brazil, mechanisms aiming to 'green' the economy, including REDD, have been identified not as a solution or a path towards transition, but on the contrary, as a way of allowing the 'brown economy' to continue, driving a 'flexibilisation process' that creates profitable mechanisms and trading rights systems.

For example, a special committee of the Chamber of Deputies was created in 2009 to review the proposals for the reform of the Forest Code — a strategic, and longed for demand of the powerful and influential agribusiness and land owners' lobby. The changes proposed, focused on weakening the Brazilian Forest Code as the most important environmental legislation in the country concerning land use. This gave rise to an unprecedented national popular mobilisation against forest and deforestation, as well international notoriety in the run up to the Rio + 20 conference.¹⁷⁵ The subject escalated in tension and importance across the country, and only reached its conclusion in late 2012, when President Dilma Rousseff vetoed some of the proposal's most controversial points.

However, the changes still guarantee victory for the 'ruralista' interests (agribusiness and land owners). As was foreseen, these changes have in practice reduced the areas in private land that are under environmental protection (called 'legal reserve'). Landowners can now count forests along rivers and hillsides as part of their 'legal reserve'. Previously these zones — where forest preservation is mandatory — were additional to the 50% or 80% requirement, according to the region.¹⁷⁶

The changes to the Forest Code also allowed the creation of 'environmental reserve quotas' (CRAs or 'cotas de reserva ambiental') by those owners who exceed the requested minimum under environmental protection (which ranges between 50% and 80% of the natural vegetation cover in the Amazon region and 20% to 35% in other biomes). In this way they can gain 'currency' that can be traded with other landowners falling short of compliance with the law, who can effectively buy their way out of trouble.¹⁷⁷

However, the new forest code also requires landowners to participate in a registry, whereby they declare their holdings — including the geographical coordinates — to the government. This registry will enable authorities to better distinguish between legal and illegal deforestation and track compliance with environmental regulation, setting a basis for Measuring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) activities. Landowners who fail to register will not be eligible for agricultural loans or other assistance from the state.

Overall, though, the changes to the Forest Code still ended up significantly reducing environmental protection (thus affecting the collective right to a healthy environment), including by expanding the area of 'legal deforestation' and allowing the trading of rights (to deforest), thus paving the way for incorporating market-based REDD-like activities.

Furthermore, Colombia's recently created Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS) has been given specific responsibility for incorporating environmental

¹⁷⁵ <http://oglobo.globo.com/economia/rio-20-conference-2012/new-forest-code-puts-brazilian-government-in-bind-on-the-eve-of-rio20-4818288>

¹⁷⁶ <http://news.mongabay.com/2012/1019-brazil-forest-code-finalized.html>

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/60b19182-42ef-11e2-a3d2-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2hl2xe2qy>

factors into goods and services markets, creating an office for green and sustainable business, and explicitly creating an orientation towards a green economy. The same decree also allows MADS to modify the national reserve areas, including by reducing their size. Resolution 0928 of 2011 adds to this stating that it is possible to grant mining or oil contracts in areas of forest reserve. This clearly demonstrates the Colombian government's intention of continuing with 'grey' or 'brown' economic models, which are based on the extractivism, even in areas that the government itself has previously proclaimed should be preserved.

In India the same perverse mechanisms — implemented in the name of the environment — can be observed. The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) fund, is being used to fund afforestation including through the Green India Mission, but is financed by means of a levy placed on project developers. This levy, the Net Present Value (NPV), allows developers to offset the damage they have caused, and is based on the area of forest diverted for non-forest purposes. The overall impact of this is that NPV is legitimising megaprojects and associated landgrabbing in India.

(4) Even where national REDD+ strategies have not yet been agreed upon, the existence of similar forest carbon projects and initiatives is a good indicator of what those REDD+ strategies might look like.

India's Green India Mission (GIM), for example, focuses on a centralised afforestation effort, ignoring the rights of Gram Sabhas' that are already set out under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), and discounting their ability to deal effectively with many of the drivers of forest destruction in a locally appropriate way. Furthermore, the five REDD+ pilot sites so far selected are all in areas where there are no Gram Sabhas and rights under the FRA have not yet been settled.

There are sharp questions to be asked about whether the Indian government's approach will in any way address even the immediate drivers of deforestation in India. Most of these drivers are actually the result of poor forest governance and decision-making by Indian forest departments. However, the issues of encroachment, forest degradation, shifting cultivation and forest fires could and should be dealt with by the Gram Sabhas and their committees under the FRA regime, which would be more effective. Furthermore, once the mandated settlement of rights is over, and rights have been recorded, the issue of 'encroachment' would no longer exist.

Uganda's approach to REDD+ is similarly worrying. The national REDD+ strategy itself is still in the preparatory stage but one can expect that the current Ugandan government has every intention of moving ahead swiftly with REDD+, once the institutional arrangements and financing are in place, given its ongoing involvement in forest carbon markets, and the fact that it already has numerous similar forest carbon projects underway.¹⁷⁸ These include the UWA-FACE project in Mt Elgon National Park, Bukaleba Forest Reserve, the Mabira Rain Forest, the Luwunga Forest Reserve, and Buliisa.¹⁷⁹ As a result of this carbon trading firms are active in Uganda, with forests and grasslands being replaced by monoculture plantations

¹⁷⁸ REDD and Sustainable Development — Perspective from Uganda, IIED, 2010,

<http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G02774.pdf>

¹⁷⁹ Land, Life and Justice: How landgrabbing in Uganda is affecting the environment, livelihoods and food sovereignty of communities, FoEI, April 2012, <http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs/2012/land-life-justice/view>

in order to obtain and sell these credits.¹⁸⁰

Debilitating land grabbing is a common feature of all these projects. In the Bukabela Forest Reserve, for example, 8,000 people have been displaced from 13 villages, to make way for 80-100,000ha of pine and eucalyptus plantation.¹⁸¹ In the Luwunga Forest Reserve some 20,000 people are reported to have been displaced by the New Forests Company in order to clear forest and replace it with pine plantation.¹⁸²

Participants in the 2013 Uganda workshop pointed this out to policy makers, remarking that this policy of eviction means that REDD+ can never work. It was observed that this issue was raised during the 2011 REDD+ workshop, where policy makers and other stakeholders were present as well. Yet the government is still adamant in its position that indigenous communities and forest dependent communities are encroachers, even though these people have been part of the forest since time immemorial.

The Ugandan communities observed that they see “REDD+ without people as a killer move by the government.”

(5) While some countries have seemingly responded to civil society’s demand for more transparency and consultation with respect to REDD+, this opening up only really extends to organisations that support the concept in the first place; and as often as not it may be a commitment that applies in theory, rather than practice, seemingly to meet external intergovernmental demands.

Indeed, it has been observed that the guiding criteria for REDD+ generally seem to be based on the interests of potential investors, and designed to meet the dictates of intergovernmental organisations such as the UN-REDD Programme and the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, instead of designing a clear, comprehensive forests policy that responds to the needs and characteristics of various countries and their populations.

To take just one example, Colombia’s framework for REDD+ readiness (R-PP) supposedly provides for the participation of key groups with territorial rights over the country’s forests, including indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants, but such participation was not been full and effective, and has not aimed at establishing conditions that will fully guarantee and respect their rights. With respect to Colombia’s UN-REDD proposal, the process required to obtain approvals from the stakeholders has been dealt with in just one national workshop, when it is obvious that the adoption of a strategy of this nature and scale demands a long, complex, and inclusive discussion.

In Brazil there has been a very divided dynamic. Those agencies that are supportive of Brazil have certainly been included in consultation processes. But those that have tried to establish a parallel set of discussions with government on alternatives to REDD+ have been rebuffed.

¹⁸⁰ Land, Life and Justice: How landgrabbing in Uganda is affecting the environment, livelihoods and food sovereignty of communities, FoEI, April 2012, <http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs/2012/land-life-justice/view>

¹⁸¹ Land, Life and Justice: How landgrabbing in Uganda is affecting the environment, livelihoods and food sovereignty of communities, FoEI, April 2012, <http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs/2012/land-life-justice/view>

¹⁸² Land, Life and Justice: How landgrabbing in Uganda is affecting the environment, livelihoods and food sovereignty of communities, FoEI, April 2012, <http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs/2012/land-life-justice/view>

- (6) Governments continue to have a cavalier approach to the concerns of their peoples, communities and environment, as illustrated by the fact that most of them are consistently sending out mixed messages about their concern for the environment, deliberately and assiduously promoting the very economic sectors that drive deforestation in the first place, even though they clearly conflict with the need to address deforestation.**

For example, whilst professing concern for Uganda's forests, the Government of Uganda is importing old machinery, encouraging the reclamation of protected wetlands for flower farming, and promoting the destruction of natural forests for oil palm and other monocultures such as sugar cane and pine. They have ignored civil society calls (as delivered through the workshops under this project in 2011, for example) to regulate the expansion of oil palm in forested areas and to respect forest dependent communities. Instead the Ugandan government only seems to be interested in expanding oil palm in places such as the islands of the Buvuma district. This is not a good move by the Ugandan government, given the ecological significance of the natural forests in Buvuma.

In Colombia there is also a yawning gap between the government's development and conservation policies. The Colombian government has adopted a series of measures for the implementation of REDD+, including: institutional reforms, seeking funding and resources, technical studies and the construction of a political process to give legitimacy to the proposal. But it does not yet have a comprehensive forest policy that addresses the underlying causes of deforestation and guarantees the rights and autonomy of the indigenous peoples and afro-descendant and peasant communities that inhabit the forest and jungle areas in Colombia.

At the same time, however, the Colombian government is investing considerable time and effort in creating and promoting policies that are antagonistic to such purposes. This can clearly be seen in Colombia's National Development Plan, which contains a raft of policies and growth-oriented measures based on the exploitation of natural resources. Priority is given to extractive practices such as oil extraction, mining, agro-industry, and hydropower, even in conservation areas such as national parks, forest reserves or moors. In addition, measures aimed at protecting the natural heritage, territories and the human populations that inhabit them, are weak or based on the precepts of the green economy, in which profit is more important than protection. In other words, in the case of Colombia, policy inconsistency and lack of inter-and intra-state institutional coordination are acting as key underlying causes for deforestation and forest degradation.

Box 5. Non-market based approaches to addressing the underlying causes of forest loss, and forest conservation

Market mechanisms have proven to be a highly problematic source of funding for climate change mitigation and adaptation in terms of equity, efficiency and environmental and social effectiveness whilst also resulting in unintended negative consequences. Happily there are many non-market based approaches to addressing deforestation and forest degradation that have been shown to work, not only from an environmental perspective, but from a social, cultural and economic viewpoint as well.

Addressing the drivers of forest loss by eliminating perverse incentives, as recommended by the Conference of the Parties to the Biodiversity Convention (CBD), is a pre-condition for any policies and mechanisms that aim to reduce deforestation and forest degradation. As the 193 Parties to the CBD have recognized *“eliminating, phasing out or reforming incentives, including subsidies, harmful for biodiversity will make positive incentive measures for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity more effective and/or less costly.”*¹⁸³ This recommendation is particularly relevant for climate policies that include perverse incentives leading to forest loss, like bioenergy policies.

In this respect, the CBD COP specifically recognizes *“that some incentive measures can be significant drivers of biofuels expansion, in certain circumstances, [and] invites Parties and other Governments to evaluate these measures using the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, in the context of the Convention’s cross-cutting issue on incentive measures, taking into account national socio-economic conditions.”*¹⁸⁴

Another non-market based approach to reducing forest loss that has proven to be highly effective is the recognition of Indigenous peoples’ and local communities conserved territories and areas (ICCAs). As the Coordination of Indigenous Peoples from the Amazon Basin (COICA) has pointed out, Indigenous territories are *“full life territories to cool the planet”*.¹⁸⁵ ICCAs were recognized or otherwise supported in at least eight decisions of the 11th Conference of the Parties to the CBD. Not only do they form an approach to forest conservation that is at least as effective as the formal establishment of protected areas, but they are far more sustainable from the social, cultural, economic, and financial points of view, protecting ancient cultures and sustainable livelihoods while not requiring a permanent external flow of funding in terms of compensation or protection payments. Rather, they require formal legal recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to their territories, land tenure systems, autonomous governance systems and biocultural conservation approaches. In the words of Marcial Arias, Indigenous focal point to the Global Forest Coalition: *“Instead of wasting money on doubtful and unstable carbon markets, with modest financial support one could secure the rights of Indigenous Peoples to their lands and territories and support sustainable community management of forests.”*¹⁸⁶

Source: GFC, ICCA Consortium & Econexus, 2013. [Non-market-based Approaches to Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation](http://globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Non-Market-Based-Approaches-to-Deforestation-final.pdf) - <http://globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Non-Market-Based-Approaches-to-Deforestation-final.pdf>

¹⁸³ <http://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/COP-11/cop-11-dec-30-en.doc>

¹⁸⁴ UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/XI/27, see <http://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/COP-11/cop-11-dec-27-en.pdf>

¹⁸⁵ <http://www.coica.org.ec/index.php/es/noticias/107-la-ruta-hacia-territorios-de-vida-plena-coica-en-la-cumbre-de-cambio-climatico-2>

¹⁸⁶ Marcial Arias, Latin American focal point of the Global Forest Coalition. Personal communication, March 2013

5. Recommendations

A new and extensive strategy to conserve the world's forests is needed. It must look far beyond the limited approach of conserving ecosystems and carbon, and take into account the needs of peoples and communities and the survival of their cultures. Markets and speculation — the hallmark of most REDD+ projects — cannot be allowed to determine the future of our forests and the peoples traditionally inhabiting or dependent upon them. REDD+ cannot be the only alternative to forest conservation.

Specifically, Global Forest Coalitions and its project partners recommend the following:

- i. The underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation need to be acknowledged, identified, and addressed. It must be realised that reducing unsustainable levels of demand for agricultural commodities and wood is an absolute and over-riding priority, and that this will mean constructing fair and sustainable economic policies that are not dependent upon agribusiness, monoculture plantations, mining and oil extraction, or the development of unnecessary infrastructure. Local economic, social and environmental rights and priorities cannot be sidelined by the development of export-led industries.
- ii. Forest funding needs to be channelled into the most effective and equitable solutions available. These solutions may not be as costly as REDD+ and other 'market-oriented solutions'. Rather they require responses based on integrated, coherent and effective national sustainable development policies that are not impeded by the interests of the market.
- iii. There needs to be an absolute sea change in the way all governments approach consultation with affected people. It is not acceptable to simply write it into an R-PP or similar document, it is something that has to happen in practice, and in an inclusive manner, and it cannot be rushed. Forest-dependent indigenous peoples and local communities, including women and specific groups like small farmers, are best placed to both advise on and implement forest conservation and management, since they have generations of experience of this, and their dependence on and cultural links to forests creates strong non-monetary incentives. These groups should be recognized as rightsholders that should have a far stronger say in forest policy development than stakeholders that are merely driven by their commercial interests in forests or forest conservation.
- iv. Land tenure disputes have to be resolved, taking in mind the need to acknowledge and respect Indigenous territories and community and other traditional forms of land tenure. It is essential to address and establish clear procedures to resolve the conflicts created by the overlap between protected areas and collective territories, taking into consideration the implications for the social, cultural, spiritual and policy dimensions. An immediate first step should be the establishment of a moratorium on the signing of contracts for REDD+ projects on behalf of not properly informed local communities.
- v. It needs to be recognised that family and peasant agriculture can provide the answers and proposals that are needed in the effort to confront climate change and maintain life on the planet. To this end, it is important to invigorate the process for giving collective territory titles and 'resguardos' to indigenous and afro-descendant communities. It is also necessary to make available the means that will help communities achieve an autonomous role and for their environmental authority to be real and effective.



Livestock in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia. Photo: I. Alvarez

This report was made possible through the financial support of Swedbio and Artists Project Earth. The views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the donors.



**Global Forest
Coalition**