



Issue 204 - July 2014

OUR VIEWPOINT



[Insisting on REDD is playing a game already lost for the climate and peoples](#)

REDD promoters are seeking new ways to insist on the same idea. If REDD does not work in forests, why not include agriculture, and call it “Landscape REDD”, as they propose? And if this is not enough, “Blue REDD” –promoted in coastal areas rich in mangrove forests – offers the promise of absorbing much more carbon than inland forests. This WRM bulletin aims to inform about these new trends in REDD.

INCREASING DANGERS: NEW TRENDS IN REDD



[“Blue Carbon” and “Blue REDD”: Transforming coastal ecosystems into merchandise](#)

Promotion of “Blue Carbon” initiatives, also known as “Blue REDD,” is a new trend focused on marine and coastal territories*. This article aims to contribute to a better understanding of this trend, exploring some “Blue Carbon” initiatives or projects that are already under way, and who the actors are behind them. The article also describes and comments on some of the main arguments used by these actors. The main goal is to raise awareness of this new trend and explain why, instead of helping to resolve the climate crisis, these initiatives tend to benefit financial markets.



[REDD moves from forests to landscapes: More of the same, just bigger and with bigger risk to cause harm](#)

UN agencies and the World Bank have begun floating yet another new concept – Landscape REDD. Same idea as REDD, just bigger – and with the potential to do more harm. This new approach attempts to include both forests and agriculture. Instead of tackling the urgent need to reduce overconsumption and export-oriented industrial monoculture production of oil palm and other agricultural commodities, however, Landscape REDD seeks collaboration with the

corporate associations of the agriculture and logging sectors and blames deforestation on traditional forest users.



“Climate Smart Agriculture” – The Commodification of soils in the Global South

The idea of a ‘climate-smart’ agriculture, led by the FAO and World Bank, claims that increasing crop yields mitigate climate change due to the carbon absorbed in the soils while helping farmers to adapt to these changes. The reality however, is strikingly different. A project in Kenya shows how the push for a ‘climate-smart’ agriculture is mainly driven by the economic benefits expected from carbon trading and the seeds provided by the agribusiness multinationals..

PEOPLES IN ACTION

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- [July 26: International Day for the Defense of Mangrove Ecosystems](#)
- [Manifesto of the women of CLOC-Vía Campesina Peru from the First National Conference of Women for Climate Justice in Defense of Mother Earth, toward COP20](#)
- [A step further on the path to an international declaration on the rights of peasants](#)
- [The social pre-summiton climate in Venezuela rejected the false solutions to climate change](#)

RECOMMENDED

- [10 things communities should know about REDD](#), by the World Rainforest Movement
- [Carbon versus food](#), by Friends of the Earth - France
- [REDD-Monitor](#)
- [The So-Called “Green” Economy: the Last Looting Frontier](#), by OtrosMundos Chiapas
- [Colonialism and slavery never left: REDD+ in Asia and Africa](#), by SERVINDI
- [Deforestation, REDD and Takamanda National Park in Cameroon - a Case Study](#), by the FPP

OUR VIEWPOINT

Insisting on REDD is playing a game already lost for the climate and peoples



FIFA is a for-profit organization which, through its leaders and a small group of corporations, merchandises the world's most popular sport, football. FIFA and its commercial partners earn billions of dollars – tax-free - from the organization of the World Cup every four years, but they also generate a number of negative impacts. The construction of stadiums and complementary infrastructure, such as the transport systems required by FIFA, led to the displacement of nearly 200.000 Brazilians. This estimate was disclosed by the organization representing the 12 grassroots committees from the World Cup host-cities in Brazil, which, even now that the tournament is over, is still in the difficult struggle for justice, seeking reparations for some of the violations people were subject to over the last years.

Surprisingly enough, the World Cup is related to forests and REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation). This is because, among the many impacts caused by the World Cup in Brazil, FIFA has announced that it intends to “compensate” for part of the 1.4 million tons of CO₂ emissions generated by the event, in particular those resulting from domestic and international air transport. One way in which FIFA aims to achieve this is through the purchase of carbon emission reduction credits arising from four projects in the voluntary carbon market. One of them is the REDD Project in Purus, in the Brazilian state of Acre, which happens to be one of the projects whose negative impacts were reported last year by WRM and the NGO RepórterBrasil (1). On-site visits showed that the families who supposedly were the project beneficiaries had almost no knowledge about the REDD project despite having to face a series of constraints imposed on their way of life since the project's implementation. Even so, the project was certified by two voluntary certification systems called VCS and CCB. The certification is supposed to guarantee the project's “social and environmental sustainability”.

It is known today that the promoters of mega-events, such as FIFA and other state, corporate or NGO actors, interested in commercializing nature and investing in mechanisms to “offset” emissions, are buying REDD credits and publicising their efforts in order to keep afloat the idea that the system can work. This is happening even though an analysis of REDD demonstrates that it is a false solution to the climate crisis, and the reality on the ground of pilot projects has shown that REDD is not capable of halting deforestation, which poses further problems for local communities.

Moreover, the trend of voluntary markets, where REDD credits are currently sold and

bought, shows that the carbon business is not working very well. According to the annual reports of the information platform “Ecosystem Services” of the initiative *Forest Trends*, the volume of carbon credits in the voluntary market fell by nearly 50% in 2013 compared to 2012. Although the report argues that REDD has had the biggest success in the carbon market, prices are so low (average of US\$3 per credit) that the only projects that will be implemented are those that prohibit shifting cultivation and subsistence agriculture. The devastating impacts of this type of REDD project on the communities that depend on these forms of agriculture are well known. Although the *Forest Trends* report depicts REDD as a success, the market is small and impracticable. To keep REDD afloat, governments are increasingly interfering –using public money– with the objective to save it. One clear example is the significant financial transaction between the German Development Bank KfW and the government of Acre, in Brazil (2).

As the growth prospects of the REDD market are poor, its promoters seek new ways to insist on the same idea. They seem to think that, if REDD does not work in forests, then the proposal of a “Landscape REDD”, including agriculture, in particular the carbon “stored” in the crops and soils, may succeed in attracting new investors. And if the amount of carbon that forests and the “landscape” can “store” is not considered large enough, “Blue REDD” –promoted in coastal areas, rich in mangrove forests – offers the promise of absorbing much more carbon than inland forests. This WRM bulletin aims to inform about these new trends in REDD.

July also marks the “International Mangrove Action Day.” RedManglar International, which supports and works with the communities that depend on mangroves, affirms, especially on this Day, that the defence of mangroves is essential for ensuring the food sovereignty of these communities, threatened by exploitation and the privatization of their lands by companies. RedManglar advocates that mangroves should not be included in REDD programmes and/or other initiatives of the so-called “green economy”, in the light of evident violations of the rights of local populations generated by these programmes, which in any case do not represent a real solution to climate change. To confront the privatization implied by REDD programmes, RedManglar advocates the need to promote, support and ensure the collective management of fishing and coastal communities’ territories (3).

In order to defend these communities that are under threat, now also by REDD projects, we need to confront the power of corporations and put pressure on the governments that support REDD. To that effect, important advances were made in Geneva, Switzerland, in late June, for all the organizations committed to this struggle: despite the attempts of the Northern governments to prevent it, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) approved a resolution to create an intergovernmental working team to discuss an international legally binding instrument to regulate, in international human rights law, the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises (4).

The game has not been won yet with that decision but it is a “great goal” against the interests of large corporations and their allies.

(1) http://wrm.org.uy/pt/files/2014/01/Consideracoes_sobre_um_projeto_privado_de_REDD_no_Acre.pdf and also <http://reporterbrasil.org.br/2013/12/projetos-de-carbono-no-acre-ameacam-direito-a-terra/>

- (2) <http://www.forest-trends.org/vcm2014.php>
(3) <http://redmanglar.org/sitio/>
(4) <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/G14/064/48/PDF/G1406448.pdf?OpenElement>

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INCREASING DANGERS: NEW TRENDS IN REDD

“Blue Carbon” and “Blue REDD”: Transforming coastal ecosystems into merchandise



1.- What is a “Blue Carbon” project?

Finding out more about “Blue Carbon” leads to the discovery that it is closely related to REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, see more information [at the WRM website](#)), a proposal that has been promoted for years in terrestrial tropical forests in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Blue Carbon refers to carbon stored in coastal ecosystems, mainly in mangroves. This storage occurs naturally, especially by CO₂ absorption by plants that live in water. According to “Blue Carbon” promoters, coastal ecosystems rich in plants, such as mangrove forests, seagrass meadows and intertidal saltmarshes, sequester large amounts of atmospheric carbon and store it in their sediments and soils.

Blue Carbon projects that are already under way are usually developed within a definite area of mangrove forest, and propose its conservation and/or restoration. As in the REDD projects in terrestrial forests (see WRM Bulletin 184), their supporters seek to show that, with an additional financial incentive, carbon emissions can be reduced or the carbon stored in the project area can be increased. First, an inventory is usually made of the amount of carbon that would be “stored” in the project area over a given period of time. To do this, calculations are carried out to try to predict the amount of carbon in the area at the

beginning and at the end of the project. According to REDD logic, it is also necessary to predict how much carbon the project area would hold in the future, in the *absence* of the project. The amount of carbon emissions that the project would presumably “save” - and can sell as “carbon offsets” – is derived from these calculations. The results of these calculations are very inexact (1). Following the logic of the carbon market, the buyer of these “offsets” would have the right to continue to emit the same amount of CO₂ that the project claims to “store.” In practice, there is no reduction of CO₂ emissions because the carbon supposedly “stored” in the mangrove area will be emitted elsewhere by the company that buys the “offsets.”

Promoters of “Blue Carbon” initiatives hope that in future the carbon markets will generate money for their projects. Therefore, they lobby hard for “Blue Carbon” schemes to be included in an international agreement on REDD at the annual United Nations climate conferences in the framework of UNFCCC, known as the climate change COPs. The governments of Costa Rica, Tanzania, Indonesia and Ecuador have already included mangroves in their national REDD policies (2).

2.- Arguments used by promoters of “Blue Carbon” or “REDD Blue” and responses

Promoters of “Blue Carbon” use a series of arguments to defend this idea. Here we present some of the main arguments and try to answer them.

- Argument 1: Coastal ecosystems are capable of absorbing a great deal of carbon, more even than terrestrial forests, and the available scientific knowledge to measure that is sufficient.

According to the “Blue Carbon” Portal web site (3), *“The rates of carbon sequestration and storage are comparable to (and often higher than) the sequestration rates in carbon-rich terrestrial ecosystems such as tropical rainforests or peatlands.”* The site also claims that: *“Unlike most terrestrial systems, which reach soil carbon equilibrium within decades, deposition of carbon dioxide in coastal ecosystem sediment can continue over millennia.”* A recent report released by the UNEP, IOC-UNESCO, IUCN and FAO suggests that *“as much as 7% of carbon dioxide (CO₂) reductions required to keep atmospheric concentrations below 450 ppm [the level that the majority of scientists think will provide a 50% chance of maintaining global warming within the limit of two degrees] can be achieved by protecting and restoring mangroves, salt marshes and seagrass communities, to the order of half that expected to be achieved by REDD [in terrestrial forests].* Therefore, “Blue Carbon” promoters claim that it is *“a transformational tool in effective global natural carbon management”* (5).

Promoters also state that *“Scientific understanding of carbon sequestration and potential emissions from coastal ecosystems is now sufficient to develop effective carbon policy, management, and conservation incentives for coastal Blue Carbon”* (6).

Response to Argument 1:

In the first place, “Blue Carbon” projects are based on the logic used to calculate the amount of carbon stored (or emissions saved) that is used in REDD projects for terrestrial forests. These calculations are unreliable. Estimates of the amount of carbon at the start of

a project are approximate, and estimates of the carbon “stored” at the end of the project are rather subjective. Furthermore, scientists face considerable difficulty in efforts to understand carbon storage mechanisms. According to Gabriel Grimsditch, a programme officer with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) marine and coastal ecosystems branch, “*considerable uncertainty surrounds these estimates and the level of understanding of carbon storage in coastal ecosystems*” (7).

This uncertainty is reflected in the descriptions used in the studies and projects about the amounts of “Blue Carbon” that would be stored. On the one hand, the Blue Carbon Initiative says the rates of carbon sequestration in mangrove forests “*are about two to four times greater than global rates observed in mature tropical forests*” (8), whereas Fundación Neotrópica, which is developing a pilot “Blue Carbon” project in Costa Rica, says that mangroves “*store up to five times as much carbon as tropical forests*” (9).

At the same time, materials promoting “Blue Carbon” make few references to the way climate change already in progress affects, and will affect, oceans and coastal ecosystems and the vital functions they fulfil. It is known that increasing uptake of CO₂ - present in the atmosphere at higher levels than previously – by oceans has turned ocean waters more acidic. In the long term the potential impacts of higher carbon levels in the ocean could interfere not only with the oceans’ capacity to sequester CO₂ but could also trigger the reverse process, so that the oceans would actually emit carbon. There is still a lack of research and understanding into these processes, indicating far greater uncertainty around what will happen in the future to the places now referred to as “Blue Carbon”. However, all these uncertainties did not prevent some absurd initiatives from being carried out.

Examples of absurd “Blue Carbon” projects

On the premise that “one of the most promising places to sequester carbon is in the oceans,” the U.S. Department of Energy’s Centre for Research on Ocean Carbon Sequestration, in Berkeley, has studied direct injection of carbon dioxide to a depth of 1,000 metres or more, either directly from shore stations or from tankers trailing long pipes at sea. Another technique studied is “fertilisation” of the oceans with iron nanoparticles to stimulate carbon fixation by phytoplankton (10). In 2007, an intergovernmental scientific committee warned that iron fertilisation of ocean surfaces – as an attempt at commercial carbon sequestration - has “*environmental risks and lacks scientific evidence of effectiveness.*” The statement was triggered by news that the company Planktos Inc. was about to dump 100 tons of iron nanoparticles over a 10,000 km² stretch of Pacific Ocean, with the goal of selling carbon offsets (11).

Argument 2: Coastal ecosystems are being rapidly destroyed because of bad management

Due to the allegedly extraordinary capacity of these ecosystems for sequestering and storing carbon, “Blue Carbon” promoters claim that conservation is vital because if they are destroyed, enormous amounts of carbon would be released into the atmosphere. They present data showing that coastal ecosystems are being rapidly destroyed, at an annual rate of up to 7%, which would mean that most could be lost within two decades. Degradation of these ecosystems is attributed to “*unsustainable natural resource use practices, poor watershed management, poor coastal development practices and poor waste management*” (12).

Response to Argument 2:

The first thing that stands out is the “Blue Carbon” promoters’ vague and dubious description of the causes of rapid destruction of coastal ecosystems, like mangrove forests. Their loss is basically attributed to “poor management.” However, RedManglar International – a network of organisations in Latin America that supports communities dependent on mangroves – has a very different analysis. According to the network, most Latin American countries have already lost between 60 and 80% of their mangroves. RedManglar mentions the following causes: changes in land use, concentration of land ownership, industrial shrimp farming, the salt production industry, tourism mega-projects, dams, agroindustrial monoculture of African palm and sugarcane, oil and gas extraction and the construction of highways, large ports and naval shipyards (13). Practically all these causes are related to the projects and activities of big corporations in coastal ecosystems, benefiting above all these same groups of companies, and harming the local communities that live in and depend on these ecosystems.



Argument 3: Coastal ecosystems have a high monetary value due to the value of their “ecosystem services,” and recognising this can ensure their conservation

The Blue Carbon Portal says that, apart from carbon sequestration, coastal ecosystems “*have a high value because of the number of services they offer.*” According to U.N.

agencies, the monetary value of these “environmental services” is as high as 25,000 billion dollars a year. Coastal ecosystems, they say, are useful for adapting to climate change, protecting people against “*coastal erosion, storms and flooding.*” They also say they “*provide food from fishing, as well as a habitat for fish fry to grow,*” and that these areas can improve water quality, provide income from tourism, and supply construction materials and ingredients for medicines (14).

Response to Argument 3:

In the first place, what stands out is the huge financial value – 25,000 billion dollars a year – attached to “ecosystem services” provided by coastal territories. But if the companies responsible for the destruction of these ecosystems learned of this price tag, would it change their practices?

English author George Monbiot says that the recent phenomenon of putting a price on nature, in this case the mangrove forests, does not imply that their immense value and importance was previously unknown. In his view, profoundly unequal power relations are much more influential in determining the fate of coastal ecosystems:

“Even if we didn’t have a number to slap on them, we’ve known for centuries that mangrove swamps are of great value for coastal protection and as breeding grounds for fish. But this has not stopped people from bullying and bribing politicians to let them turn these forests into shrimp farms. If a hectare of shrimp farms makes USD 1,200 for a rich and well-connected man, that can count for far more than the USD 12,000 it’s worth to downtrodden coastal people.

Knowing the price does not change this relationship: again, it’s about power” (15).

In practice, putting a financial value on forests and transforming “ecosystem services” into assets or titles with financial value, that can be sold on the financial markets, has simply ensured the continuation of CO2 emissions by polluting industries, as well as providing benefits to other actors involved in these markets: companies, consultants, certifiers, financial institutions and large conservation NGOs. Many of these, with the support of governments and the United Nations, are involved in “Blue Carbon” promotion initiatives.

The value of mangroves to communities and nature in general

Mangrove ecosystems harbour a great number of fish, snail, shellfish and crab species, which in many cases are the staple foods of the communities and peoples of the mangroves. Medicinal plants are also found there.

Channels through the mangroves are a means of transport and communication between people in the communities, who use canoes and boats to get about and

transport products without altering or polluting the surroundings.

Mangrove roots form an interwoven tangle that functions as a nursery and natural shelter for a great variety of fish, molluscs and crustaceans. Mangroves are also essential to the spawning, feeding, shelter and reproduction of 75% of tropical species in coastal ecosystems and are habitats for local and migratory bird species. Because of these and other reasons, many mangroves are included in the RAMSAR Convention for the protection of wetlands, as wetlands of international importance.

Mangroves are natural shock-absorbers that take the impact of extreme weather phenomena like storms, tsunamis and hurricanes. Mangrove roots protect coasts and shores of territories subject to tides and flooding. The effects of these natural phenomena are increasing as a result of climate change. Mangroves also have an important role in controlling erosion along the banks of channels and estuaries. Mangrove root systems also function as dykes, retaining the sediments arising from tide action or rivers and contributing to keeping the channels sediment-free. Mangroves are often called the kidneys of the earth, and they definitely act as purifiers of water pollution so that it does not reach the sea.

Mangroves have a direct value for local populations, who have traditionally got their daily sustenance from this ecosystem as artisanal fishers and gatherers of shellfish, crabs and prawns. The mangroves are their source of food security and family maintenance. Moreover, the ecosystem is a vital social and cultural reference for local communities. The mangroves traditionally determined their life, their sense of belonging and their identity. Finally, some communities have developed ecotourism activities, so that national and foreign visitors can enjoy the flora and fauna, scenery and recreational activities in these areas, as well as learn about the ecosystem's problems. (*Source: [RedManglar International](#)*)

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3.- Some “Blue Carbon” initiatives and their promoters

In 2009, a French transnational company, Danone, together with IUCN (16) and the RAMSAR Convention(17), initiated the restoration of 4,700 hectares of mangroves in Casamance and Sine Saloum, Senegal. It also started a mangrove recovery project covering about 6,000 hectares in the Sundarbans, India. The company reported that approximately 23 million euros will be invested to generate between 6 and 11 million tons of carbon offsets a year for a period of 23 years (18). The company can use the offsets to “compensate” for its own emissions, or can sell them on the carbon markets.

The methodology for calculating mangrove carbon storage was developed by IUCN, RAMSAR and the Dutch consulting firm Sylvestrum. According to Bernard Giraud, Danone’s vicepresident for sustainability, *“It will have a very significant impact on local communities and will stimulate companies to make corporate-level investment and grasp new carbon offsetting opportunities in coastal regions.”* Danone, which has annual sales of 17 billion euros and a presence in more than 120 countries, plans to reduce its carbon emissions by 30% and “offset” the rest by what it calls an “innovative” strategy. That strategy includes these mangrove restoration projects in coastal areas, because according to the company, these ecosystems are capable of *“sequestering large volumes of carbon”* (19). However, preservation of these areas will not reduce the major pollution caused by this transnational company, which is one of the 10 most polluting companies on the planet (20).

-As early as 2009, UNEP and Grid-Arenal (21), a Norwegian organisation that collaborates with UNEP, together with FAO and the UNESCO international oceanographic commissions, wrote a report on the “critical role” of oceans and ocean ecosystems in maintaining climate, with the goal of stimulating an agenda on the role of oceans in international climate negotiations. The study suggests creating a *“blue carbon fund”* as well as *“mechanisms to allow the future use of carbon credits for marine and coastal ecosystem carbon capture and effective storage as acceptable metrics [measurement methods] become available”* (22).

-In 2010/2011 the Blue Carbon Initiative was formed, a global initiative focused on climate change mitigation that works for *“restoration and sustainable use of coastal and marine ecosystems.”* It is an initiative of IUCN, Conservation International and IOC-UNESCO (23). There are two major working groups, one scientific and one for policy.

In 2011, the policy working group of the Blue Carbon Initiative met in Switzerland to draw up a *“Blue Carbon Policy Framework.”* The report of the meeting states that *“The ‘Policy Framework’ aims to facilitate, where possible, full integration of Blue Carbon activities in existing processes of international and financial policies.”* The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is mentioned as the foremost international forum, as well as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The document highlights the importance of *“integrating Blue Carbon activities fully into the international policy and financing processes of the UNFCCC as part of mechanisms for climate change mitigation”* (24). Other participants in the meeting in Switzerland included universities, the World Bank, the governments of the United States and Ecuador, and NGOs like MARES/Forest Trend and Wetlands International (25).

-Another initiative is the Blue Carbon Portal, created by UNEP and Grid Arenal. The web

site calls itself a “*home for the international blue carbon community*” and explicitly says that “*it serves as a platform to share experiences and information, helping us to connect and coordinate activities and initiatives. All blue carbon professionals are invited to participate in the Portal’s development*” (26).

-Consulting firms that already certify REDD carbon offsets for terrestrial forests are planning to enter the new market for “Blue REDD” / “Blue Carbon” projects. Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) already has a carbon accounting method, approved in January 2014 under its “*sustainable grassland management*” programme, to quantify “*the greenhouse gas benefits of wetland restoration and creation activities*” (27).

-Several foundations, and even businesses like Total, a French oil transnational company, which has long financed conservation activities by large environmental NGOs, are also now involved in financing “Blue Carbon” activities. Other financial partners are government and aid agencies in countries that emit large amounts of CO₂ and are seeking efficient ways of “offsetting” these emissions, for example the German government.

It is remarkable that none of the communities that have conserved their coastal ecosystems for generations are included in leading any of these initiatives.

The role of communities in conservation of coastal ecosystems

For centuries, coastal areas and especially mangrove forests have been the traditional territories of communities of artisanal fishers, *campesinos* (small farmers), indigenous peoples and other traditional communities like those of Afro-descendants (in the case of Latin America).

These communities have defended their territories because their physical and cultural survival is rooted in them, and many of their past and present struggles worldwide have been and are against destructive projects imposed from the top down. It is thanks to these struggles that many mangroves are protected areas in the world today, and many others are being restored by the efforts of local communities to reforest them.

The essential role of women in the defence and protection of mangroves deserves to be highlighted. Women, particularly, are involved in the daily activities of fishing, gathering and shucking shellfish, snails and crabs and other species that make up an important part of their families’ diet. The effects of displacement of local populations and the destruction of their coastal ecosystems affect women’s lives disproportionately,

because of the loss of the sources and opportunities for maintaining their families. (Source: [RedManglar International](#))



4.- Priority activities of “Blue Carbon” promoters

- Research

The Blue Carbon Portal on the internet lists over 30 “Blue Carbon” initiatives worldwide, most of them in Asia and Africa (28). The vast majority are research projects to investigate methods of measuring carbon in mangroves and other coastal ecosystems as well as their capacity for carbon sequestration. This research is focused on supporting and improving methodologies for developing “Blue REDD” projects, in order to integrate “Blue Carbon” into obligatory and voluntary carbon markets. There are also many studies under way on other “ecosystem services.”

Some research examples presented on the Blue Carbon Portal are:

- a research project in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, that claims its results will serve as a “*feasibility assessment*” for “Blue Carbon” use in the carbon market. Project investigators are also studying the “*potential*” of other “ecosystem services” in coastal areas.
- a research project in Pakistan, Vietnam and Sri Lanka working on a mechanism “*enabling investors to responsibly promote mangrove conservation/restoration, carbon emissions reduction and sustainable development through the provision of funding to local communities.*” Its main aim is to facilitate financing so that small areas of mangrove, considered non-viable, can enter “*obligatory or voluntary markets.*”
- a project in Africa, being conducted in Cameroon, Guinea, Congo and the Democratic

Republic of the Congo, is studying “*the economic values of ecosystem services (including carbon) of the mangroves of the western central Africa region*” to make the case for “*the inclusion of mangrove forests in REDD+*” and in voluntary carbon schemes.

- *Demonstration projects*

“Blue Carbon” promoters also emphasise incentives for demonstration activities, through projects that seek to convince the UNFCCC that “Blue Carbon” should be included in a new climate agreement, or specifically in a REDD agreement. These demonstration projects have different characteristics, but frequently they have a “community” component, intended to show the benefits of “Blue Carbon” for the communities that depend on coastal ecosystems. However, what these projects do not show is that they do not contribute to reductions in the CO₂ emissions that are responsible for global warming. On the contrary, beneath their positive image they hide the fact that these same projects are used to justify companies’ continued CO₂ emissions. One example is the demonstration project carried out by Fundación Neotrópica in Costa Rica.

The Fundación Neotrópica “Blue Carbon” community programme

The Neotrópica Foundation in Costa Rica is carrying out a “Blue Carbon” community programme. The foundation has succeeded in recruiting sponsors involved in CO₂ emitting activities to invest in the project, for example the Volkswagen and Ford automobile companies. According to available information, the foundation identified suitable communities to participate in the project in the southern region of Costa Rica. They argue that the mangroves there are under a lot of pressure and are therefore at risk of destruction. Community organisations participating in the project are organised into what are known as “local implementation units,” which carry out the mangrove reforestation work. The project also includes community training and environmental education as part of its activities. About 100,000 seedlings have been planted (29).

COECOCEIBA-Friends of the Earth Costa Rica, an NGO, while not disputing the importance of supporting community activities for the restoration of the mangroves, has questioned this project in terms of the logic behind it. COECOCEIBA explains that Volkswagen invites owners of their vehicles to donate a certain sum towards tree planting, with the goal of restoring and conserving mangroves in the region where

the “Blue Carbon” project is being implemented. In this way, through this project Volkswagen would be “offsetting” the CO₂ emissions from the cars it produces. Therefore COECOCEIBA argues that the project ultimately becomes a “greenwash” for transnational companies responsible for global warming, as if Volkswagen cars were now “neutralising” their emissions through the restoration of mangroves (30).

5.- How can coastal ecosystems be conserved?

Mangroves really are among the most threatened tropical forests in the world. What still remains of the world’s mangroves is the fruit of the global presence and struggle of women and men in thousands of communities, who have conserved them because their survival depends on them and coastal ecosystems in general. Their destruction affects women in particular.

With the “Blue Carbon” trend, NGOs, consultants and companies are arriving in these communities with the discourse that mangroves should now be preserved, especially for the carbon they contain. But the new “Blue Carbon” trend is unlikely to save them or mitigate the climate crisis in general. In the first place, “Blue Carbon” promoters do not clearly identify the causes of the destruction of mangroves and coastal ecosystems. Often, these causes are summarised in their analyses as the result of poor management, and therefore they do not prevent large companies from continuing to invade and destroy mangrove areas in the world. In the second place, because of the logic of carbon markets and other “ecosystem services,” every time an area is preserved a company is given the right to continue its CO₂ emissions or destroy another area of comparable biodiversity elsewhere. The market logic of “offsetting” pollution or destruction has no room for communities. Destruction of coastal ecosystems is not remediated and the root causes of the destruction are not dealt with.

Communities are absent from all “Blue Carbon” publicity material. Local people live in the coastal ecosystems, but they were never concerned to know whether their territories contained a lot or a little carbon or whether they offer “ecosystem services,” and they were even less concerned about the price of these services. They do not tend to express in monetary terms the value that the mangroves, on which they depend for their livelihood, have for them: they tend to say that price is incalculable. However, although they are not responsible for the high CO₂ emissions arising from burning oil, gas or coal, which are the main factors responsible for global warming, these communities feel the impacts of climate change in their daily life.

As demonstrated by the experience of REDD projects in terrestrial forests, “Blue Carbon” initiatives which are also imposed from the top down tend to interfere profoundly with the life of these communities and to cause more problems than benefits. Focused on the issue of carbon, “Blue Carbon” projects necessarily imply the imposition of a series of

restrictions on the communities' way of life, and loss of control over their territories, in order to assure the financial markets that the carbon – converted into paper “assets” or environmental “titles” – stays “properly stored” in the forests.

In spite of the fact that many pilot projects, carried out by NGOs with the support of large companies, pride themselves on their community component, these same communities had long since discovered, without needing to hear about “Blue Carbon” projects, the importance of defending their fishing and gathering territories. Women and men have worked for years to restore the mangroves destroyed by business activities, in order to guarantee their future and their control over these areas.

The emphasis of demonstration and research projects on putting mangroves on the global carbon markets, only postpones the necessary structural transformations of the production and consumption model based on burning fossil fuels. These changes are essential for humanity to have the opportunity to keep global warming within certain limits, and so ensure the future survival of mangroves and coastal ecosystems in general and that of the communities that depend on them. The new “Blue Carbon” trend, by not proposing these changes, is another false solution to the climate crisis, as well as being a way to maintain and strengthen the power of companies and financial markets, while hiding their responsibility for major environmental destruction and proposing that these companies and markets become part of the supposed “solution.”

This article also shows the importance of fighting for the conservation of coastal ecosystems, but as part of the resistance and struggle of the communities who live there, recognising their fishing and gathering territories. This could be decisive in helping to reverse the present history of invasion and extraction in these areas for the benefit of the large companies that are responsible for the destruction of coastal ecosystems. National governments and international bodies – especially the United Nations – should support the communities and their demands, instead of business interests and “Blue Carbon” initiatives.

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Notes:

- (1) <http://wrm.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/10AlertsREDD-eng.pdf>
- (2) Conservation International and IUCN, “Blue Carbon Policy Framework”, 2011.
- (3) http://bluecarbonportal.org/?page_id=2944
- (4) UNEP/FAO/UNESCO/IOC/CSIC/Grid Arendal, “A Blue Carbon Fund: the ocean equivalent of REDD for carbon sequestration in coastal states”. Flyer
- (5) Conservation International and IUCN, “Blue Carbon Policy Framework”, 2011.
- (6) Ibid
- (7) <http://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1465&context=sdlp>
- (8) <http://thebluecarboninitiative.org/category/about/blue-carbon/>
- (9) <http://www.neotropica.org/article/carbono-azul-comunitario/>
- (10) <http://www.lbl.gov/Science-Articles/Archive/sea-carb-bish.html>
- (11) <http://www.etcgroup.org/fr/node/641>
- (12) UNEP/FAO/UNESCO/IOC/CSIC/Grid Arendal, “A Blue Carbon Fund: the ocean

equivalent of REDD for carbon sequestration in coastal states”. Flyer

(13) Information provided by RedManglar

(14) UNEP/FAO/UNESCO/IOC/CSIC/Grid Arendal, “A Blue Carbon Fund: the ocean equivalent of REDD for carbon sequestration in coastal states”. Flyer

(15) <http://www.monbiot.com/2013/09/18/pricing-the-priceless/>

(16) IUCN – International Union for Conservation of Nature: an international environmental organisation made up of governments, industries, international bodies and civil society organisations.

(17) The RAMSAR Convention is an intergovernmental treaty established in 1971 that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

(18) http://bluecarbonportal.org/?dt_portfolio=livelihood-fund-reforestation-projects

(19) www.danone.com<http://downtoearth.danone.com>

(21) <http://www.grida.no/about/>

(22) <http://www.grida.no/publications/rr/blue-carbon/>

(23) Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

(24) Conservation International and IUCN, “Blue Carbon Policy Framework”, 2011.

(25) Ibid.

(26) <http://bluecarbonportal.org/>

(27) <http://www.v-c-s.org/methodologies/methodology-coastal-wetland-creation-v10>

(28) http://bluecarbonportal.org/?page_id=668#marker29

(29) <http://www.neotropica.org/article/carbono-azul-comunitario/>

(30) <http://coecoceiba.org/se-enojaron-en-casa-presidencial/>

[index](#)

REDD moves from forests to landscapes: More of the same, just bigger and with bigger risk to cause harm



In the late 1980s, the FAO and the World Bank launched their first large programme to halt forest loss. It was called *Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP)*. A report for WRM in 1990 showed that "*the Tropical Forestry Action Plan is fatally flawed. Far*

from curbing forest loss, the Plan will accelerate deforestation." Little change to the analysis from some 24 years back would be required to make it applicable to REDD, REDD+, and probably soon, landscape REDD. The landscape REDD approach attempts to include both forests and agriculture, and remains as top-down and condescending towards forest-dependent communities and collaborative with the corporate associations of the agriculture and logging sectors as the FAO and World Bank's failed Tropical Forestry Action Plan of the 1980s. Deforestation and the emissions from it will continue, and in the process landscape REDD will cause a lot of harm by vilifying forest-dependent communities and those who produce the majority of the world's food – small scale farmers. But it need not be that way if instead government action focused on leaving fossil fuels in the ground and phasing out industrial agriculture – the cause of the large majority of emissions in the land use sector. REDD is the smokescreen to hide inaction on these pressing challenges.

Since the 2007 climate summit in Bali, Indonesia, UN climate negotiators have discussed how to reduce forest loss – or more precisely, how to reduce the emissions caused when forests are destroyed - under a concept called REDD, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (see [WRM website section on REDD](#) and [10 Things Communities Should Know About REDD](#)). Soon, REDD became REDD+, and climate negotiators were talking not just about avoiding forest loss but also about "*the conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries,*" – in other words, how to include the logging and industrial tree plantations industry in any potential future carbon revenue stream. In parallel to the UN talks, hundreds of millions of euros began to be spent on consultants preparing methodologies, entrepreneurs and conservation NGOs implementing REDD plans, pilot initiatives and model projects, and another set of consultants certifying that the methodologies the first consultants had developed were applied. When the REDD project salesmen arrived in the forest, forest dependent communities and indigenous peoples were given many promises of benefits and employment but got mainly harassment, restrictions on the land use that provides their livelihood and blame for being responsible for deforestation. While those practising traditional forest use, and who often defended the forest against outside destruction, were vilified, the real drivers of forest loss continued unabated, and so did emissions. This pattern has been documented in a large number of reports (see the [WRM website for a selection](#)).

That deforestation continues at alarming speed despite all the money and words spent on REDD should not come as a surprise. The focus of REDD on carbon has diverted attention away from the direct and underlying causes of deforestation – violation of forest peoples' tenure rights and customary land use, industrial agriculture and monoculture plantations, cattle ranching, commercial logging, extraction of minerals, gas and oil, large-scale infrastructure (1) and the associated development model that relies on ever-growing consumption. At an international seminar on 'REDD+ Implementation and Sustainable Forest Management' in Tokyo, Japan, in early 2014, Donna Lee, the former lead negotiator on REDD for the USA mentioned the example of a country that "*spent over \$50 million to use fancy remote sensing techniques [...] to try to get very precise measurements of land-cover change; spending a lot of money on carbon assessments [...]. However, they did not really actually know what they were planning to do to actually reduce emissions [from deforestation].*" (2) In a major study on REDD, the Center for International Forestry

Research, CIFOR, found that where REDD+ initiatives aim to reduce forest loss, they are "encountering major challenges whose root causes lie outside their project boundaries". (3)

Some 16 years ago, many of the same governments now discussing REDD at the UN climate talks met at the Underlying Causes (of tropical deforestation) initiative supported by the UN's IPF, the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests. For this initiative, governments had already committed inter alia to "*prepare in-depth studies of the underlying causes at the national and international levels of deforestation and forest degradation and to analyse comprehensively the historical perspective of the causes of deforestation and forest degradation in the world, and other international underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, including transboundary economic forces.*" (4) In proposal 29c of the IPF's Proposals for Action, on land tenure and benefit sharing, governments agreed to "*formulate policies aiming at securing land tenure for local communities and indigenous people, including policies, as appropriate, aimed at the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits of forests.*" Many NGOs and governments prepared in-depth studies on the drivers of forest loss, though government policies aiming at securing land tenure for local communities and indigenous peoples rarely passed from word to action. In its report to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development in 2000, the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) (5) presented the decisions taken at its fourth session. Based on the conclusions from a five-day global workshop in January 1999, hosted by the government of Costa Rica, on the Underlying Causes of Deforestation and Forest Degradation, paragraph 58 of the IFF report states that: "*To overcome major obstacles when addressing the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, IFF stressed the importance of policy consistency inside and outside the forest sector. Furthermore, it emphasized the need for effective policy coordination for addressing underlying causes of deforestation, which are often interrelated and social and economic in character, and include poverty; lack of secure land tenure patterns; inadequate recognition of the rights and needs of forest-dependent indigenous and local communities within national laws and jurisdiction; inadequate cross-sectoral policies; undervaluation of forest products and services; lack of participation; lack of good governance; absence of a supportive economic climate that supports sustainable forest management; illegal trade; lack of capacity; lack of enabling environment, at both the national and international levels; and national policies that distort market and encourage forest lands conversion to other uses, including in low forest cover lands. It was further noted that the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation as well as the approaches to deal with them are often country specific and therefore vary among countries.*" (6)

That the UN climate meetings have discussed REDD for more than five years now as if they were the first ever to have discovered that tackling deforestation requires looking at the drivers outside the forest demonstrates an astounding lack of institutional learning, or maybe even an inability to learn.

World Bank pioneers another false solution

True to its 'doing without learning' approach (the Bank claims to be 'learning by doing') and its 'pioneer role' in promoting false solutions to climate change, the World Bank, along with

UN agencies like FAO has begun floating yet another new concept – landscape REDD. Same idea as REDD, just bigger – and with the potential to do more harm. For a while, the expression used at the UN climate negotiations was REDD++, with the second + indicating that in addition to logging and industrial tree plantations, emissions from land use for agriculture and benefits for agribusiness would also be considered. References to agriculture and climate change increased, and FAO and others began to talk about 'climate-smart' agriculture (see article on 'climate-smart agriculture' in this bulletin and at [FAO's website](#)). The World Bank picked up the term, talking for example in relation to REDD+ finance about how *"Through higher yield production, climate resilient crops and increased carbon capture, Climate-Smart Agriculture can help the world produce the food it needs to prevent hunger."* (7)

But the term REDD++ proved too abstract. *"For too many people, REDD is just an abstract financing tool. But landscapes – which include the fields and the farms, the ranchers and farmers – those are things that people can see. If we tell them that we're preserving the landscape, and that REDD is just one tool to help us pay for it, that they understand,"* Indonesian Deputy Minister at the time, HeruPrasetyo, stated in December 2013. In June 2012, the World Bank's vice president and special envoy for climate change, Rachel Kyte, already wrote about *"Landscape Approaches to Sustainable Development"*, reporting on the Agriculture and Rural Development Day that took place during the Rio+20 conference – the same conference that replaced 'Sustainable Development' with the 'Green Economy' (see [WRM Bulletin 179](#)). Rachel Kyte quoted the then-CIFOR Director, Francis Seymour, who was also at the Agriculture and Rural Development Day: *"The landscape approach is a way that we can improve agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods while also addressing threats to forests, water and biodiversity."* Chris Lang of REDD-Monitor also wrote about Seymour's statement: *"How to explain CIFOR's enthusiasm for "landscapes"? In March 2012, REDD-Monitor interviewed Seymour. In a wide-ranging interview, she didn't mention the word "landscape" once. When I asked her about the Forest Days (8) she didn't hint that a change might be in the pipeline. There are 59 posts on CIFOR's Forest News Blog that are filed under "landscapes". Obviously this is a subject that CIFOR considers to be important. But only two of the posts were written before June 2012 and Kyte's announcement that "we need to be coming to 'Landscape Days'".* As Donna Lee, former lead negotiator on REDD for the USA said at the international seminar mentioned above: *"We go through these flavors. I feel like now the flavor is sustainable landscapes. You hear about this a lot at the World Bank, amongst donors; everyone is talking about sustainable landscapes."*

By 2013, the World Bank was not just talking up the 'landscape REDD' idea, but it had also been given the funding to advance landscape REDD on the ground. At that year's UN climate meeting in Warsaw, Poland, three countries - Norway, the United Kingdom, and the USA - together committed US\$280 million to the "BioCarbon Fund Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes". The BioCarbon Fund is a public-private partnership, housed in the World Bank, *"that mobilizes finance for activities that sequester or conserve carbon emissions in forest and agricultural systems"*. (9) Ecosystems Marketplace, an internet platform promoting trading in ecosystem services and a strong promoter of including forests into carbon markets, wrote from the UN climate meeting in Poland: *"You couldn't escape it if you attended year-end climate talks in Warsaw this year. After all, Indonesian Deputy Minister HeruPrasetyo talked about it incessantly, as*

did World Bank Vice President Rachel Kyte. Peter Holmgren, who heads the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), built the two-day Global Landscapes Forum around it, and the United States, United Kingdom, and Norway launched the Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes (ISFL) to make it a reality. Even official negotiators meeting under the auspices of the under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held a two-day workshop on it. The "it" is the "landscapes approach" to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from fields, farms, and forests." (10) Agriculture was on the way in, forests on the way out at the UN climate talks.

As with all such new flavours, this one required preparation. In an April 2012 document labelled "Brief Note for External Discussion", the government of the USA indicates its willingness to contribute to a fund with the objective to: *"Facilitate the implementation of national REDD+ strategies by developing the enabling environments necessary to source more sustainably-produced commodities at scale."* As 'expected results', the document mentions among others that *"The implementation of well-designed, large-scale integrated programs of this type should lead to the establishment of a better enabling environment for sourcing sustainably-produced commodities, improving conditions for farmers while facilitation the achievement of sustainability commitments made by companies."* The document contains an imaginary example of what action such a new funding mechanism might support (see box below). The last paragraph is particularly worth noting – perhaps even more so in conjunction with the article in this bulletin about the World Bank's push in Kenya for 'climate-smart agriculture', and when comparing the imaginary example with the approach that will be taken by the BioCarbon Fund Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes.

Indicative Example of an Integrated Program

Agrolandia is a medium-sized country with an economy that is largely dependent on the natural resource sector. The Fronteria region is an area of rapid agricultural expansion for a number of commodity crops; this expansion is associated with a high deforestation rate. Both large plantations and smallholders exist in the region. Land tenure is unclear, concessions overlap, and government presence is limited. Addressing deforestation associated with agriculture in this region is a focus of Agrolandia's REDD+ strategy.

A Funding Avoided Deforestation integrated grant program here might include the establishment of a land registry, registration of properties, mapping of concessions, and adjustment of titles where necessary. The grant could support the identification and mapping of underutilized cleared land in Fronteria, with land swaps for concessions within primary forest. Technical support could be provided to the rural development bank to design loans which rewarded producers following specific sustainability criteria such as maintaining high forest cover, with preferential loan terms. An agricultural extension service might be established to provide farmers with training on high value agroforestry crops, best management practices, and conservation measures. The program might cover the incremental costs of redirecting a planned road from Fronteria to the port away from the forest, so as not to spur new forest clearing. Support might be given to the national government to develop a subnational reference level and MRV system for Fronteria, as an interim step towards a national system. The government of Agrolandia might commit to the establishment and staffing of a national protected area to formally protect the remaining forest in the region, and increasing their enforcement of existing environmental regulations, as an in-kind contribution.

Complementary financing might be sought from the IFC to support the large plantations in the region in achieving certification and improving access to export markets. The Overseas Private Investment Corporation might finance a project to improve genetic stocks for small and medium farmers, allowing them to increase yields without expanding the agricultural footprint. The Millennium Challenge Corporation might provide funding for processing facilities for smallholders, increasing their value added and improving livelihoods.

This example is purely indicative, and programs will vary greatly depending on the country context. All examples of investments or support used here do not imply a commitment.

Also in preparation for 'landscape REDD' in October 2013, the Government of Norway, through its International Climate and Forest Initiative, convened the REDD Exchange "in

order to facilitate learning and knowledge sharing on REDD+."What would they be talking about in this exchange? "In particular, the Exchange facilitated discussions on the landscape approach within the framework of REDD+, commodity supply chains relevant for REDD+, analysis concept and methodology development for REDD+ implementation, jurisdictional approaches, and finance." (11)

Norway's development cooperation agency, NORAD, also financed a project called 'Reduced Emissions from All Land Use'. The project conducted a report in 2013 called 'Towards a Landscape Approach for Reducing Emissions', which documents lessons and experiences "*from exploratory work on landscape approaches towards emission reductions, the results of which aim to support actors in Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), agriculture and climate smart landscapes.*" (12)



Landscape REDD and the Green Economy

"Increasing public and private investments in REDD+ would create productive, profitable, and sustainable landscapes that sequester and store more carbon and will enable enhanced delivery of environmental services – the heart of a Green Economy," writes UNEP's International Resource Panel Working Group on REDD+ and a Green Economy. (13)

Corporations whose demand for agricultural commodities causes massive greenhouse gas emissions from both forest loss and fossil fuel use – and is destroying peasant agriculture, their territories and health around the globe - are among the strongest promoters of the shift from REDD to landscape REDD and 'climate smart agriculture'. "*This is exactly the type of initiative that we are delighted to support. We need to find new forms of public-private partnership to address global challenges such as deforestation,*" the World Bank quotes Paul Polman, the chief executive officer of Anglo-Dutch multinational consumer goods company, Unilever, about the BioCarbon Fund Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes.

Unilever has also teamed up with other corporate commodity food companies in the Consumer Goods Forum, "*a collaboration of 400 retailers, manufacturers, and service providers with combined annual sales of over US\$3 trillion*". Brazilian research institute

IPAM cites Unilever as a prominent private sector participant in a *"consortium of organisations, commodity roundtables (Roundtable on Responsible Soy, Bonsucro/sugar cane, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil and more recently the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef)"*. According to IPAM, the consortium *"aims to build bridges between agricultural commodity roundtables and REDD+ financing,"* stating that *"synergies between REDD+ and roundtable standards show that there is a potential for REDD+ to contribute to market transformation for agricultural commodities."* (14) A 2014 publication by staunch carbon markets advocates Forest Trends elaborates that *"a key ambition is to move from improving sustainability at the individual farm level to the landscape level to reduce costs and secure supply and, from a REDD+ perspective, to ensure that certification tools are associated with GHG mitigation outcomes."* (15) (See [WRM's website on certification](#) for how this tool is used to help advance corporate expansion of industrial plantations at the cost of small scale farming and rural economies).

One topic is absent in all of these initiatives, however: the urgent need to reduce overconsumption and export-oriented industrial monoculture production of oil palm and other agricultural commodities that Unilever and other international food corporations trade internationally, with all the consequences for forests, forest peoples and the climate that this trade causes.

Rather than supporting small farmers whose agriculture feeds the world with less than a quarter of all farmland, (16) and calling for action to tackle the severe problems this corporate model of industrial agriculture and plantation forestry causes, the World Bank sees these corporations as its strong allies. *"Engagement and support of the private sector therefore lies at the core of the new BioCarbon Fund initiative. In fact, corporations such as food and health products giant Unilever, Mondelez, and Bunge have been deeply involved from its inception, spearheading a new model of engagement,"* the World Bank writes. (17)

How closely REDD and the landscape approach are intertwined is also shown in a project carried out by the conservationist NGO, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), funded with a grant from the Government of Norway, and support from USAID, UK Prosperity Fund, Mafrig, Walmart, Cargill, the Amazon Fund, and the Ann Ray Charitable Trusts, under a programme titled 'Sustainable Landscapes in Brazil and Indonesia.' The São Félix do Xingu REDD+ Pilot Program in Brazil *"is developing a model for sustainable, low-carbon development across more than 9 million hectares in the Amazon. This model helps to register all of the municipality's landowners to comply with Brazil's Forest Code, and assists ranchers to increase cattle production on their existing pasture land."* (18)

And TNC is not the only NGO promoting landscape REDD in Brazil. *"Corporate Practises linked to biodiversity are good business"*, writes Conservation International (CI) when they launched the 'TEEB for Business Brazil' report in March 2014. One of their partners in the project was Monsanto. The multinational agrochemical corporation has been aggressively promoting soya plantations, the use of pesticides and genetically engineered seeds and continues to cause controversy. According to Monsanto Brazil's Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, Daniela Mariuzzo, *"This initiative is in line with Monsanto's mission of improving the daily live of farmers and support them in producing more and better, and in a sustainable way [..]"* (19). CI's

report is notable for its absence of references to the effective approach the government of Brazil used to reduce deforestation before REDD came along – law enforcement and strengthening enforcement agencies while linking access to agricultural credit to demonstration of compliance with the law. REDD and initiatives like 'TEEB for Business Brazil' have provided space for this approach to be swapped for a new flavour, one that is likely more to the taste of the corporate sectors that have thus far profited immensely from deforestation. That new trend aims to “*transform environmental legislation into tradable instruments,*” as Pedro Moura Costa, founder of the Brazilian environmental stock exchange Bolsa Verde Rio de Janeiro, BVRio, and previously founder of carbon trading firm EcoSecurities, explained when announcing the BVRio. (20)

Brazil's agricultural sector is preparing for the possible new revenue stream that they hope landscape REDD may provide. JBS, the world's largest beef processor; Grupo Andre Maggi, a top trader of soy and corn; Marfrig, a global processor of animal protein; and the local arm of food giant Bunge Ltd, have all entered a program to develop new guidelines to measure emissions from the agricultural sector. The benefits? “*The companies which adopt the Protocol's directives and tools for [greenhouse gas] accounting will have some competitive advantages. [...] To understand the operational risks and reputation risks; to identify opportunities to reduce emissions; [...]; to anticipate to a potential carbon market*” Internationally, major commodity traders are already familiarising themselves with the carbon market, with multinational commodity firms Vitol, Bunge and Shell Trading active in the trading of carbon credits from the now largely dysfunctional Clean Development Mechanism. (21) Márcio Nappo, the Sustainability Director of JBS, is also making sure the focus of the debate over landscape REDD and 'climate-smart agriculture' will not be on the actual deforestation caused by expansion of the industrial agricultural frontier. He prefers to talk about 'solutions' – particularly the kind that allow his company to continue business-as-usual: “*The big discussions about carbon dioxide emissions will not be around transport and deforestation, but around soil management for agriculture.*” His solution? Intensifying industrial scale agriculture: “*With the integration of Agriculture-Cattle-Forestry, we will produce meat and grains on the same property making the most of the land-use in a highly productive way and fulfilling the goals of the Forest Code*” (22)

Also in Brazil, a conference 'Scaling Up Sustainable Commodity Supply Chains', held in March 2014 at Iguazu Falls, brought together “*major corporations in the cattle and soy industries, policy makers, financial institutions, deforestation experts, and civil society organizations to identify challenges and discuss potential solutions to shift towards sustainable, low deforestation commodities.*” The agenda suggests that they neither discussed how to reduce international agricultural commodities trade and instead enable food sovereignty through strengthening peasant agriculture and community rights to the land, nor how to halt expansion of tree and crop plantations, that continue to not only destroy forests but also livelihoods of those who depend on forests.

Some who were involved in REDD seem to be willing to taking a second look. “*On some ways we can do fancy models, but at the end of the day these local communities actually know what they need. It seems as though that is the starting point,*” Donna Lee commented at the Tokyo seminar mentioned earlier. That insight has evidently not reached the architects of landscape REDD at the World Bank's BioCarbon Fund and elsewhere. The

landscape REDD idea they are putting into place will be applying the same model, be based on the same flawed analysis and thinking that has already been tried and been failing with REDD, has failed in the UN's IPF, then IFF, then UNFF since the late 1990s, and failed in the FAO and World Bank's Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP) (23) before that. In 1990, Marcus Colchester and Larry Lohmann wrote about the TFAP that it was *"fatally flawed. Far from curbing forest loss, the Plan will accelerate deforestation."* Little change to the analysis from some 24 years back would be required to make it applicable to REDD, REDD+, and probably soon, landscape REDD.

The outcomes of landscape REDD will therefore likely not differ much from those of TFAP or REDD. The approach remains as top-down and condescending towards forest-dependent communities and collaborative with the corporate associations of the agriculture and logging sectors as the FAO and World Bank's failed Tropical Forestry Action Plan in the 1980s. Deforestation and the related emissions will continue, and in the process will cause a lot of harm by vilifying forest-dependent communities and those who provide the staple foods that feed the world – small scale farmers.

The result for small scale farmers? Likely the same as for forest-dependent communities and swidden cultivation under REDD: promises of benefits that will turn into even more precarious conditions of production and vilifying of peasant farming while the large agroindustry corporations pass the blame down the supply chain and their biotechnology partners offer genetically engineered (GE) seeds suited for 'climate-smart' no-till farming (see article in this bulletin on 'climate-smart' agriculture).

And the consequences may be felt on land use policies more broadly, as the case of the Forest Code in Brazil showed. Gerson Teixeira, the former president of the Brazilian Association for Agrarian Reform, warned that the introduction of tradable forest restoration credits as were introduced with the revised 2012 Forest Code would pose a great risk to Agrarian Reform in Brazil. The historical instrument of Agrarian Reform has been the expropriation of *latifúndios* that could be shown to be unproductive and thus not fulfilling the constitutionally required social function of the land. The introduction of tradable forest restoration credits created an instrument that could shield owners of *latifúndios* from expropriation for social purposes because these credits would transform unproductive estates into carbon factories and repositories of environmental reserves. This in turn would allow land owners to claim that the land is fulfilling the constitutionally required productive function. *"The possibility to buy carbon credits will turn unproductive latifundia in "carbon factories."* (24) *Landscape REDD and 'climate-smart' agriculture may well further undermine Brazil's Agrarian Reform process - already under intense pressure from agribusiness interests - in those areas where the Forest Code does not apply, in the REDD landscape outside forests.*

The problems are clear, the solutions exist ...and they are very different from the World Bank's Landscape REDD concept

Turning our farmers' fields into carbon sinks – the rights to which can be sold on the carbon market – will only lead us further away from what we see as the real solution: food sovereignty. The carbon in our farms is not for sale!" La Vía Campesina wrote when governments and corporate lobbyists met in Warsaw, Poland to discuss landscape REDD

and 'climate smart agriculture'. (25) They pointed out that while agriculture is a major contributor to climate change, not everybody growing crops shares the same responsibility for the emissions. It is the industrial food system – with its heavy use of chemical inputs, the soil erosion and deforestation that accompanies monoculture plantation farming, and the emphasis on production for export markets which is the main source of greenhouse gas emissions (26), not shifting cultivation and peasant farming (see [WRM bulletin article](#)). By contrast, peasant farming and agroecology, with a focus on food sovereignty are already proving that it is possible to grow food to 'feed the world', and do so producing far fewer emissions than the industrial model of agricultural production of crops for export markets. Pat Mooney of ETC Group sums up why landscape REDD and climate-smart agriculture have little to offer and bear great risks for peasant farming: *"For the world's small farmers, there is nothing smart about this. It is just another way to push corporate controlled technologies into their fields and rob them of their land"*

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Notes:

- (1) See World Rainforest Movement Bulletin 203 of June 2014 for more detail on the role of infrastructure in forest destruction. <http://wrm.org.uy>
- (2) <http://www.ffpri.affrc.go.jp/redd-rdc/en/seminars/reports/2014/02/06/01.html#programnew>
- (3) W. Sunderlin et al. (2014): The Challenge of Establishing REDD+ on the Ground: Insights from 23 Subnational Initiatives in Six Countries. <http://www.cifor.org/library/4491/the-challenge-of-establishing-redd-on-the-ground-insights-from-23-subnational-initiatives-in-six-countries/>
- (4) IPF proposals for action, Proposal 27a and b, see <http://wrm.org.uy/oldsite/deforestation/UC.html>
- (5) The IPF had in the meantime been renamed into Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF), and would later change name to UN Forum on Forests, UNFF. Its effect on tackling forest loss remains elusive, as the continued loss of large areas of forests across the globe demonstrates.
- (6) Report of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests on its Fourth Session (E/CN.17/2000/14). <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/351/79/PDF/N0035179.pdf?OpenElement>
- (7) <http://www.worldbank.org/climatechange>
- (8) Since 2007, CIFOR has been organising an annual meeting called 'Forest Days' on the weekend between the 2-week UN climate meetings. In 2013, these 'Forest Days' were renamed 'Landscape Days' by the new CIFOR director Peter Holmgren, formerly at the FAO.
- (9) <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/11/20/biocarbon-fund-initiative-promote-sustainable-forest-landscapes>
- (10) <http://www.landscapes.org/can-unfccc-accommodate-landscapes-views-warsaw/#.U8rjFfmSwf0>
- (11) <http://climate-l.iisd.org/news/redd-exchange-discusses-landscape-approach-highlights-norways-engagement/>
- (12) <http://www.asb.cgiar.org/report/towards-landscape-approach-reducing-emissions>

[-substantive-report-reducing-emissions-all-ian-0](#)

- (13) UNEP (2014): Building Natural Capital: How REDD+ can Support a Green Economy, Report of the International Resource Panel, United Nations Environment Programme www.ecoagriculture.org/~ecoagric/documents/files/doc_577.pdf
- (14) Amazon Environmental Research Institute (IPAM) (2013): Financing of improved agricultural production can reduce forest losses. Draft. www.norad.no/en/support/climate...forest-initiative.../407556?
- (15) R. Edwards et al. (2014): Jurisdictional REDD+ Bonds: Leveraging Private Finance for Forest Protection, Development, and Sustainable Agriculture Supply Chains.
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- (20) See 'Trade in Ecosystem Services. When payment for environmental services delivers a permit to destroy' for detail on the BVRio and the trading of forest restoration credits as alternative to restoring forest on one's own property under the revised Brazilian Forest Code of 2012. <http://wrm.org.uy/books-and-briefings/trade-in-ecosystem-services-when-payment-for-environmental-services-delivers-a-permit-to-destroy/>
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- (25) Climate Summit: don't turn farmers into 'climate smart' carbon traders! <http://www.grain.org/article/entries/4811-climate-summit-don-t-turn-farmers-into-climate-smart-carbon-traders>
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“Climate Smart Agriculture” – The Commodification of soils in the Global South



In March this year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), an international scientific body tasked with the responsibility of assessing climate change, released its 5th assessment report, mainly focusing on ‘impacts, adaptation and vulnerability’, with a full chapter dedicated to global food security and production systems (1).

The message is clear and the evidence irrefutable: the drivers behind climate change are not only altering the climate at dangerous speed. They also are causing a net global loss in crop yields, with maize and wheat –crops that are heavily relied on as national staples in developing countries -being the most affected. The report works to cement the vast array of information that has been in the public domain for a while regarding the global state of food production systems. With regards to Africa, the findings of the report are nothing but grim. Between 75 and 250 million Africans run the grave risk of being exposed to serious water stress (2), an extremely worrying issue considering that many small-holder farmers in the continent still rely heavily on the availability of rains to aid their food production. Some countries could witness yields from rain-fed agriculture dropping by up to 50% by the year 2020. In addition to this, the expected rising water temperatures will further compromise local food sovereignty for Africans as the obvious result will be dwindling fisheries resources.

Prioritizing the strengthening of agricultural systems of food production than can guarantee the food sovereignty of Africans has never been more urgent. Doing so would also be desirable from a climate perspective. Industrial systems of agriculture, forestry and land-use change (indirect contributions) emit almost half of all global greenhouse gases (GHG), while ecological farming systems, employed mostly by farmers in the South, produce far fewer greenhouse gas emissions and also mitigate against the effects of climate change.

As the climate changes and the food sovereignty and livelihoods of billions, mostly in the Global South is threatened, the Green Climate Fund (GCF), which was founded under the UNFCCC as a mechanism to transfer money from the Global North to the Global South, lies nearly empty with practically no money available to aid developing nations to adapt and mitigate to the effects of climate change. But instead of developed countries remedying this by acting on their historical responsibilities, carbon markets are being aggressively

marketed and pushed by institutions such as the World Bank, as sources of funding for climate change adaptation initiatives, now including the agricultural sector.

The Kenya Agricultural Carbon Project – For whose benefit?

The Kenya Agricultural Carbon Project, funded by the World Bank's BioCarbon Fund and implemented by the Swedish NGO VI Agro-Forestry, is a project targeting approximately 60,000 Kenyan farmers in Western Kenya. The project, which began in November 2010 and is expected to be completed by December 2017, banks on the so-called '**triple win**' for farmers in the Global South: an increase in yields, adapting to the climatic changes, while helping farmers to mitigate climate change by sequestering carbon through 'sustainable farming'. This is what the World Bank and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) are calling 'climate-smart' agriculture.

The full cost of the project is estimated to be US\$1 million and, aside from the main implementing partner, other partners include the French Development Agency and the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture.

In January, the World Bank issued a press release stating that under the Sustainable Agricultural Land Management (SALM) accounting methodology, 60,000 farmers had finally earned carbon credits (5). The press release stated that, "*...for sequestering carbon in soil, thanks to these changed agricultural land management practices. The credits represent a reduction of 24,788 metric tons of carbon dioxide, which is equivalent to emissions from 5,164 vehicles in a year.*"

In addition to the claims regarding soil carbon sequestration due to 'sustainable' farming practices, the World Bank reports that SALM can help increase farmers' yields by 15-20% (6), the evidence of which many of us would like to get a hold of and especially when looking at long-term impacts of the project.

'Climate smart' agriculture, with its exceptionally brilliant name, invites us to envision a world where, rather than being stripped off their agency, small-holder farmers in the Global South can be at the forefront of combating climate change and most importantly, build their resilience, preserve their livelihoods and boost their food sovereignty.

The reality however, is strikingly different. There is no proof that carbon markets have contributed to a decrease in fossil fuel emissions globally but have merely shifted the burden of doing so to countries in the Global South(7). Under the UN climate convention, developed countries are mandated to reduce their emissions and, at the same time, provide technical and financial assistance to poor countries in order to aid their adaptation and mitigation measures. Carbon markets have allowed rich countries not only to continue polluting, but also to benefit financially from their pollution.

Focusing on the immense carbon sequestration abilities of small-holder farmers in the Global South is in many ways suicidal. The Kenya Agricultural Carbon project does not tackle the system and structural causes of climate change. Even if those farmers adapt and mitigate as best as they can, developed countries are still maintaining high levels of emissions nationally. And because climate change is directly attributed to fossil fuel emissions, putting undue focus on accounting for land emissions - which is imprecise,

costly and ineffective, rather than focusing policy and praxis efforts on transitioning to a fossil-free world, is really the nail in the coffin for those farmers and the billions supported by the work that they do.

Also, the project's focus on hybrid seeds –a strong focus being on Maize, a staple in the region and country at large- and agro-chemicals, supplied by one of the multi-national agri-business companies, Syngenta, is highly questionable. Farmers are encouraged to move from native varieties, to hybrid maize varieties with increased inputs. Syngenta presumably stands to make up profits (along with other hybrid seed sellers), while binding small-scale farmers to be dependent on and harvest according to a carbon-focused and corporate controlled approach for long periods. Shefali Sharma, from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, stated when reviewing the project two years ago that, *“a “high” technology, high input, high cost seeds and herbicides are eager to be decision-makers in the design of such projects. Improving food security under climate change means much more than increased corn yields and richer soils. It also means that farmers are able to diversify their harvests to manage against climate-change induced risk to crop failure, that they are better able to predict impacts on their harvests and make planting choices to effectively meet their (and their country's) adaptation and food security needs, in the short and the long- term. Insisting that farmers dedicate scarce resources to carbon accounting, rather than comprehensive efforts to address these urgent adaptation and food security needs is bad policy and poor use of very limited funds”* (8).

The focus should rather be on ecological farming methods based on respect of indigenous local farming knowledge, protection of ecosystems, and preservation of biodiversity. Keeping the control of food in local hands, has proven to increase yields and most importantly, is a sure way for farmers to effectively adapt and mitigate to climate change.

There is currently no compliance market for soil carbon. Yet, according to the given estimates, Kenyan farmers on this project are set to earn between US\$2 and US\$5 per hectare per year, and while the exact figure still remains unclear, it is obvious that there is practically nothing to be earned from this project. Soil carbon credits are currently sold in voluntary markets, which are unpopular and also extremely small compared to the compliance markets, and therefore stand no chance to provide the billions of dollars needed to enable farmers in the Global South to effectively adapt. So, here we see that the statements concerning the huge potential of carbon offsets to provide finance for African agriculture begin to crumble.

But perhaps the biggest elephant in the room is the undeniable fact that carbon sequestered in soils is temporary and not permanent (9). A report released by the NGO FERN also challenges the long-held assumption that fossil-based carbon emissions can be negated or 'offset' by increasing or simply protecting the storage potential of the terrestrial eco-system (10) – which is exactly what the Kenya Agricultural Carbon Project (KACP) is premised on.

In September 2014, the UN's Secretary General is expected to launch the 'Global Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance' in New York, USA, on the sidelines of the climate summit which the Secretary General has called for and which will involve heads of states from all over the world. This new Alliance is being considered precisely "to capture the momentum

and interest on CSA [climate smart agriculture] and transform it into a coordinated mechanism" (11). The alliance will include actors such as food producers, processors and sellers; the future of small-holder farmers is to be thrust into a value-chain that has little regard for their welfare or the climate crises they face, but that is keen on growing the agri-business and carbon trading conglomerate.

This will no doubt serve to completely legitimize the continued extraction of fossil fuels and emissions of greenhouse gases by developed countries, while dedicating the badly needed resources to expand the carbon market charade. This stands as a real threat to millions of small-holder farmers and citizens in the Global South to lose their livelihoods, face hunger and confront the effects of climate change.

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Advocacy and Communications Coordinator, African Biodiversity Network,

Notes:

- (1) http://ipcc-wg2.gov/AR5/images/uploads/WGIIAR5-Chap7_FGDall.pdf
- (2) <http://www.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/advance-briefing-ipcc-report-climate-impacts-45439.pdf>
- (3) <http://cdkn.org/2013/04/the-current-climate-of-agriculture-in-the-unfccc/>
- (4) <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/climatechange/publication/turn-down-the-heat-climate-extremes-regional-impacts-resilience>
- (5) <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2014/01/21/kenyans-earn-first-ever-carbon-credits-from-sustainable-farming>
- (6) <http://www.v-c-s.org/news-events/news/kenya-first-earn-carbon-credits-sustainable-farming>
- (7) http://www.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/climate_justice_brief_8.pdf
- (8) <http://www.iatp.org/documents/an-update-on-the-world-bank%E2%80%99s-experimentation-with-soil-carbon>
- (9) http://www.dhf.uu.se/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Climate-Development-and-Equity_single_pages.pdf
- (10) <http://www.fern.org/misleading-numbers>
- (11) <http://www.fao.org/climate-smart-agriculture/85725/en/>

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PEOPLES IN ACTION

Final statement from the Global Campaign Dismantle Corporate Power and Stop Impunity

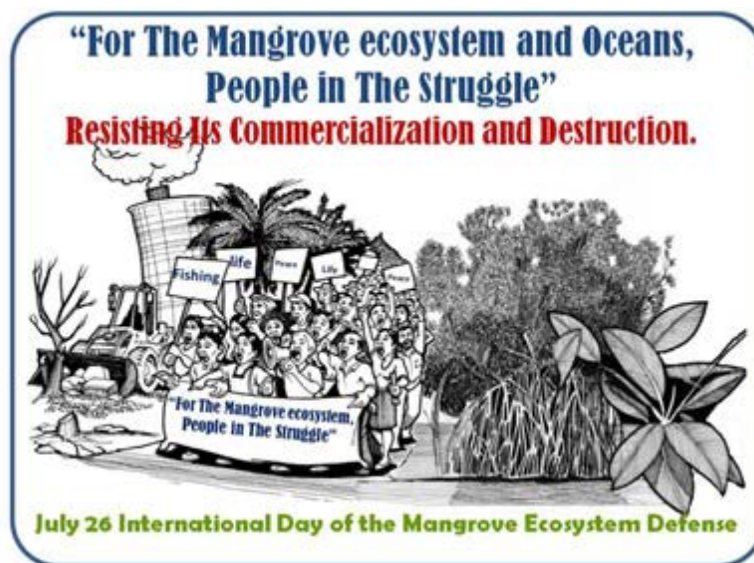


Regarding the week of mobilization to stop corporate crimes and impunity, social movements demand access to justice for those affected by human rights violations and ecological crimes committed by corporations!

See declaration in English: www.stopcorporateimpunity.org/?p=5964

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July 26: International Day for the Defense of Mangrove Ecosystems.



Mangrove peoples and communities have a close bond with mangroves, fishing and the seas. Mangroves and the seas are wholly interconnected natural elements, as is the life of marine coastal peoples. That is why this July 26 the slogan for the celebration of International Day for the Defense of Mangrove Ecosystems is: Mangroves and the Sea. People's Struggles to Resist Commodification and Destruction. See the call in Spanish: http://redmanglar.org/sitio/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=336:ipor-el-manglar-y-el-mar-pueblos-en-la-lucha&catid=45:dia-del-manglar&Itemid=49

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Manifeto of the women of CLOC-VíaCampesina Peru from the First National Conference of Women for Climate Justice in Defense of Mother Earth, toward COP20.



In the global level, we energetically reject “false solutions” to global warming. Climate negotiations have become a great marketplace, creating tools and mechanisms to clean up the image of the most polluting countries and companies, such as the “Clean Development Mechanism” (CDM) or REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation). These tools allow the capitalist system to continue to consume the natural resources that belong in common to all humanity.

See Manifiesto in Spanish:

<http://viacampesina.org/es/index.php/temas-principales-mainmenu-27/mujeres-mainmenu-39/2200-manifiesto-de-las-mujeres-de-la-cloc-via-campesina-peru-en-el-marco-del-i-encuentro-nacional-de-mujeres-por-la-justicia-climatica-en-defensa-de-la-madre-tierra-hacia-la-cop20>

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A step further on the path to an international declaration on the rights of peasants



On June 27th, the UN Human Rights Council Assembly passed a resolution authorizing the continuation of the process of drafting an international declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. The declaration project originated with the Via Campesina, and it is the fruit of ten years of work on the part of this international movement which is comprised of more than 164 organizations in 73 countries.

See press release in English:

<http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/main-issues-mainmenu-27/human-rights-mainmenu-40/1634>

[-a-victory-on-our-path-to-an-international-declaration-on-the-rights-of-peasants](#)

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The social pre-summiton climate in Venezuela rejected the false solutions to climate change



The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela called on movements and social organizations from around the globe to gather in the Margarita Island, on July 15-18, to prepare their

participation in the social pre-summit on climate change, which will be organized by the UN, for the first time, as proposed by the government of Venezuela, on November 4-7 in the same Island. The final Declaration, which will be the basis for creating proposals towards the UN climate talks and to deliver to the ministries at the pre-summit, establishes a common platform to confront climate change, highlighting the urgent need to change the political, economic, social and cultural system that has generated it.

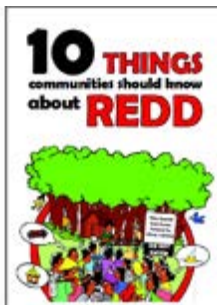
The Declaration strongly rejects the false solutions to climate change, such as the carbon markets, REDD and other forms of privatization and commodification of life of the green economy; intellectual property rights; mega-dams; monocultures; nuclear energy; climate engineering; agrofuels; transgenic seeds; and any other mechanism that violates the rights of the People. Moreover, among others, it proposes to transform the power relations and the decision-making systems; transform the production and consumption systems; etc.

See Declaration:

http://www.precopsocial.org/sites/default/files/archivos/margarita_declaration_on_climate_change.pdf

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RECOMMENDED



10 things communities should know about REDD, by the World Rainforest Movement.

This booklet produced by WRM was published over a year ago. It is being re-launched with a new introduction which explains in an accessible language what REDD means.

<http://wrn.org.uy/books-and-briefings/10-things-communities-should-know-about-redd/>

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Carbon versus food, by Friends of the Earth – France.

A case study of a "forest carbon offset" project implemented by the French company Pur in the region of San Martin, Peru. This project allows other companies to "offset" their carbon emissions. The local communities that live in the area have not been properly consulted nor informed about the project. Meanwhile, carbon-related rights are being transferred exclusively to the Purcompany.

<http://www.amisdelaterre.org/purprojet>

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REDD-Monitor,

REDD is one of the most controversial issues in the climate change debate. The basic concept is simple: governments, companies or forest owners in the global South should be rewarded for keeping their forests standing instead of cutting them down. The devil, as always, is in the details. REDD-Monitor looks into some of those details.

<http://www.redd-monitor.org/>

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The So-Called “Green” Economy: the Last Looting Frontier, by OtrosMundos Chiapas.

The so-called “Green Economy” is a new area of business. It is called “Green” not because it is good for the environment, but because its commodity is nature. We are seeing a stage of advanced Capitalism in which the water, soil, biodiversity, air, subsoil, the components of nature and of life and even the landscape are being converted into commodities.

See publication in Spanish: http://otrosmundoschiapas.org/materiales/docs/pdf/folletos/serie_dictadura_capital/manual_economia_verde.pdf

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Colonialism and slavery never left: REDD+ in Asia and Africa, by SERVINDI.

While the world’s governments debate the catastrophic consequences of global warming, a trading structure of global scope threatens to establish a new form of subjugation in Asia and Africa, by appropriating one of the main agents of life on Earth: its forests. The lead actor in this threat is REDD, which is sponsored by the United Nations and masquerades as one of the solutions to global warming.

See article in Spanish: <http://servindi.org/actualidad/109107>

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Deforestation, REDD and Takamanda National Park in Cameroon - a Case Study, by FPP.

While focusing in particular on the German financing of rainforest protection in Cameroon, this report also covers the broader issue of how Cameroon's forest policies are shaped by the REDD process. It takes a case study approach, examining the way such forest protection policies impact on local communities by focusing in on the specific example of those communities whose land has been overlaid by the Takamanda National Park.

See report in English: <http://www.forestpeoples.org/topics/un-redd/publication/2014/deforestation-redd-and-takamanda-national-park-cameroon-case-study>

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