

Forest Cover

A Global Forest Coalition Newsletter on International Forest Policy

Issue no. 7: October 2002

About Forest Cover

Welcome to the seventh issue of Forest Cover, the newsletter of the Global Forest Coalition (GFC). This coalition was established by a group of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs) to facilitate the informed participation of NGOs and IPOs in intergovernmental meetings related to forests. Forest Cover is published four times a year. It features reports on important intergovernmental meetings by different NGOs and IPOs and a calendar of future meetings. The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Global Forest Coalition, its founding members or the editors. For free subscriptions, please contact Simone Lovera at: [lovera1@conexion.com.py](mailto:llovera1@conexion.com.py)

Contents of this Issue:

- **About Forest Cover**
- ***Ex Silvis: WSSD, What Did You Expect?* by Miguel Lovera, Coordinator, Global Forest Coalition**
- **The Kimberley Indigenous Peoples Summit and the WSSD, by Hubertus Samangun, ICTI, Indonesia**
- **Tree Plantations and Climate Change, by Winfried Overbeek, FASE-Espirito Santo, Brazil**
- **Biodiversity and Climate Change Meets Again, by Miguel Lovera, Coordinator, Global Forest Coalition**
- **Carbon Sinks Watchdog, by Jutta Kill, FERN, UK-Belgium**

- **Test Case for CDM, by Jutta Kill, FERN, UK-Belgium**
- **An Indigenous Peoples' Workshop on Underlying Causes in Aotearoa/New Zealand, by Sandy Gauntlett, IRI, Aotearoa/New Zealand**
- **Reports on Other Forest-Related Meetings**
- **Calendar of Forest-Related Meetings**

Ex Silvis: WSSD, What Did You Expect?

By Miguel Lovera, Coordinator, Global Forest Coalition

A thorough review by governments of environmental trends since Rio? A commitment to address the problems? A well-crafted, well-funded action plan democratically arrived at? Measures and targets to halt deforestation?

None of these came out of the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) that took place from 26 August to 4 September in Johannesburg, South Africa. Instead, the UN and governments disclaimed responsibility, trumpeted partnerships with big business, largely excluded Indigenous Peoples, and restricted participation of NGOs.

While non-government organizations, Indigenous Peoples Organizations and others were struggling to acquire the four to five different passes they needed to get close to the negotiations, a foul coalition of right-wing-led European countries and corporate-led governments such as that of the US agreed to hand over key responsibilities to

corporations, in order to allow them to regulate their own activities and decide what their level of environmental and social responsibility should be. Despite the United Nations Environmental Programme's conclusion that voluntary agreements have not led to necessary changes, the WSSD ended up partly as a big marketplace for so-called Type II partnerships -- voluntary deals between big corporations, small NGOs and other unequal partners to undertake "some" action on sustainable development. Forgotten was the old Latin saying: "*Nunquam est fidelis cum potente societas*" ("The powerful will never be faithful to their partners").

The political declaration and Plan of Implementation signed by chiefs of state at Johannesburg were typical "one-size-fits-all" affairs. In fact, they were nearly empty. No targets were set, no financial commitments addressed. Links between fossil fuels and climate change, between globalization and poverty, between the lack of corporate regulation and environmental degradation, between tree plantations and deforestation were all simply denied. NGOs could do nothing to prevent obscure deals being closed between the corporate world and their governmental spokespeople.

But not everything was bad at or around Johannesburg. The summit did recognize that the Biodiversity Convention has a role to play in forest policy and that there is a need for coordination between various forest-related bodies. The summit also recognized that community-based ecosystem management has to be promoted, including community-based forest management. And as Hubertus Samangun reports in this issue, Indigenous Peoples celebrated a major victory that implies formal recognition of their status as Peoples (with an "s").

Moreover, thanks to the hospitality of the people of South Africa, and despite the summit organizers' apartheid system separating corporate Chief Executive Officers and heads of governments from ordinary South Africans and other representatives of

civil society, the "nongovernmentals" had a great opportunity to link up with each other, strengthen ties and plan joint actions and cooperation during the thousands of workshops and other events that took place parallel to the official conference. This encounter brings new hopes that NGOs and other actors determined to try to help communities resist today's overwhelming pressures from monopolistic forces, can become more active at the local level.

Oh ... I forgot. One positive thing even came out of the official summit plenary: the vigorous boo awarded to the representative of the world's biggest bully government!

The Kimberley Indigenous Peoples Summit and the WSSD

By Hubertus Samangun, ICTI, Indonesia

In 1992, Indigenous Peoples were recognized as a Major Group during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), enabling them to participate in environment and development conferences and negotiations. During preparations for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Indigenous Peoples were called upon to provide their own assessment of sustainable development over the decade and to identify which priorities and partnerships will be important for them in the coming years.

Four preparatory meetings (PrepComs) led up to the WSSD in Johannesburg. All were attended by many Indigenous Peoples, either as individuals, as representatives of Indigenous Peoples organizations or as a Major Group. The fourth PrepCom, which took place in Bali, Indonesia, from 27 May - 7 June 2002, drew numerous Indigenous Peoples from all over the world, as well as more than 100 Indigenous participants from Indonesia. Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN), the umbrella organization of Indigenous Peoples' organizations in Indonesia, had mobilized its members in impressive numbers.

During the second PrepCom in New York, Indigenous Peoples had established an International Coordination Committee to prepare the second Indigenous Peoples' International Summit on Sustainable Development. This summit was held in the traditional lands and territory of the Khoi San Peoples in Kimberley, South Africa from 19 - 24 August, 2002. More than 300 Indigenous Peoples' leaders and organizations from all over the world attended, in order to make their voices heard and to contribute to the WSSD's Political Declaration and Programme of Action. All participants were aware that it would be extremely difficult to influence the final text of the document, but agreed that it was important to try. They decided to focus on getting just one sentence inserted to represent their presence and role in sustainable development. Anne Nourgam, the president of the Saami Council, proposed the sentence: "*We reaffirm the vital role of indigenous peoples in sustainable development*". After an intensive lobby campaign led by, among others, the Tebtebba Foundation, the Saami Council and Sebastiao Manchineri, the sentence was finally incorporated into the official Declaration as paragraph 25.

This was a historic moment for the Indigenous Peoples movement. For the first time ever, the United Nations had accepted the term "Indigenous Peoples" with an "s", signifying its acceptance of Indigenous Peoples as Peoples and not just as individuals.

In addition to this successful campaign, the Kimberley Summit produced the "Kimberley Political Declaration", which highlights the fact that the commitments made to Indigenous Peoples in 1992 in Agenda 21 have not been honored. The declaration reaffirms previous Indigenous Peoples' declarations and the relationship of Indigenous Peoples with Mother Earth and their responsibility to coming generations to uphold peace, equity and justice. It also reaffirms the rights of Indigenous Peoples to

self-determination and to own, control and manage their ancestral lands and territories:

"Our lands and territories are the core of our existence – we are the land and the land is us; we have a distinct spiritual and material relationship with our lands and territories and they are inextricably linked to our survival and to preservation and further development of our knowledge systems and cultures, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem management. We have the right to determine and establish priorities and strategies for our self-development and for the use of our lands, territories and other resources. We demand that free, prior and informed consent must be the principle of approving or rejecting any project or activity affecting our lands, territories, and other resources."

The declaration demands, as well, repatriation of Khoi San human remains and respect for traditional knowledge systems. It states, among other things, that economic globalization constitutes one of main obstacles to the recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples:

"Transnational corporations and industrialized countries impose their global agenda on the negotiations and agreements of the United Nations system, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and other bodies which reduce the rights enshrined in national constitutions and in international conventions and agreements. Unsustainable extraction, harvesting, production and consumption patterns lead to climate change, widespread pollution and environmental destruction, evicting us from our lands and creating immense levels of poverty and disease."

The declaration also emphasizes the rights of Indigenous Peoples to defend their lands and territories against exploitation for tourism and urges governments to recognize pastoralism and hunting-gathering as viable and sustainable economic systems.

The declaration urges the United Nations, finally, to promote the recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements concluded between Indigenous Peoples and states. It welcomes the establishment of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and urges the UN to secure all the political, institutional and financial support needed for its effective functioning according to its mandate as contained in ECOSOC Resolution E/2000/22. The declaration also supports the continuation of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations based on its mandate to set international standards on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. And it calls for a World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and Sustainable Development as a culmination of the United Nations International Decade for the World's Indigenous Peoples (1995-2004) and concrete follow-up to the WSSD.

Participants in the Kimberley Summit can congratulate themselves for all these results. We have made a significant step in the international arena. However, the big question that still remains is: will this benefit our Peoples?

*For more information, please visit:
<http://www.johannesburgsummit.org>*

Tree Plantations and Climate Change

By Winfried Overbeek, FASE-Espirito Santo, Brazil*

Should monoculture tree plantations be included in the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism? That will be one of the two main points for discussion at the Eighth Conference of the Parties of the Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-8) to be held 23 October - 1 November 2002 in New Delhi, India.

If COP-8 says yes, countries like Brazil may wind up setting aside much of their land as tree-filled "carbon sinks" designed to absorb industrial emissions from Northern countries.

But will such plantations actually work? Experience in Brazil suggests otherwise.

In order to establish its Brazilian plantations, Aracruz Cellulose, a major world producer of bleached paper pulp, destroyed 50,000 hectares of Atlantic forest (which now covers only seven per cent of its original area). In doing so it *released* a huge amount of carbon into the atmosphere. The plantations also changed the local climate for the worse, drying out hundreds of rivers and brooks and diminishing the level of rainfall in a number of micro-regions that had never faced lack of rain before.

Thousands of people displaced by the plantations meanwhile ended up removing natural vegetation elsewhere in order to seek a living from the soil. Others who were expelled migrated to urban poverty belts, adopting a more carbon-intensive lifestyle.

In addition, most of the timber produced by the plantations is converted into paper pulp, the production and transport of which also emit large amounts of CO₂. Most of the resulting paper, consumed by Europe and North America, has a short lifespan, and the CO₂ it stores returns rapidly to the atmosphere, contributing to global warming (as do, ultimately all products of plantations, whether charcoal, furniture, lumber, fencing, etc.). It is worth noting that countries such as Brazil need to increase such exports continuously if they are to follow prevailing macro-economic policies.

The Brazilian experience suggests, in short, that industrial monoculture tree plantations are not plausible candidates for carbon sinks. The Parties to COP-8 need to understand that a tree plantation can never be defined as a forest, nor as reforestation. To grasp the nature of an actual forest, it suffices to consult some of the hundreds of millions of persons of different peoples, the majority of whom are Indigenous or traditional, who today live, in a harmonious manner, with the forest, enjoying the multiple benefits that a forest offers, including non-material ones relating to religion.

But if COP-8 does decide to approve the use of tree monocultures as Clean Development Mechanism projects, we hope that Northern NGOs will be able to pressure their governments to have the good sense not to accept this absurdity. In Norway, the Minister of Environment has already expressed skepticism about the investment of USD 20 million by his government and the Statoil and Norsk Hydro corporations in a eucalyptus "reforestation" project undertaken by the Plantar company in Brazil. The Plantar project is on the roster of the Prototype Carbon Fund of the World Bank and is only one of several such "carbon" projects, which, in the words of the Norwegian NGO The Future in Our Hands (FIVH), Dag Nagoda, "do not represent a real environmental benefit."

"Insofar as these projects give investors the right to maintain or increase their emissions, the result will be a global rise in emissions", FIVH says.

It is not enough, finally, not to invest in projects like Plantar. Northern countries must also reduce their excessive consumption of paper, fossil fuels, timber, metals, etc. if they are to help reduce global warming.

** FASE-Espirito Santo forms part of Rede Alerta Contra o Deserto Verde no Rio de Janeiro, Espirito Santo e Bahia (Alert Against the Green Desert in Rio de Janeiro, Espirito Santo and Bahia Network), a broad alliance that fights against the expansion of large tree monocultures in those states.*

Biodiversity and Climate Change Meet Again

By Miguel Lovera, Coordinator, Global Forest Coalition

The Ad Hoc Expert Group on Biological Diversity and Climate Change of the Biodiversity Convention met for the second time in Montreal, Canada, from 9-13 September, mainly to write and edit material gathered since its first meeting.

The group decided to combine the two publications it had originally planned to produce -- one on the links between biodiversity and climate change, the other on ways of mitigating and adapting to climate change -- into one. The new volume will contain five chapters:

1. Introduction
2. Biological Diversity and Linkages to Climate Change
3. Climate Change and Biodiversity: Observed and Projected Changes
4. Options
5. Tools for Making, Evaluating and Monitoring Decisions

The group's objective is to present a draft version of this volume to the eighth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-8) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) next March.

In our view, it is crucial that the CBD expedite the treatment of this report in order to send a clear message to the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) to look not only at the "carbon balance" of an activity, but also its social and environmental impacts, including on biodiversity.

The literature reviewed by the ad hoc group was full of clear examples of the importance of biodiversity to the success of climate projects. Tree plantation carbon sinks, for instance, would need to be biodiverse in order to be stable. The Ecosystem Approach of the CBD would accordingly increase the chances of success of such sinks. At the same time, it would limit carbon plantation scale and prevent the FCCC from harmfully lumping together forests and plantations. This also implies that the current definition of "forest" adopted by the FCCC is inappropriate to ensure biodiversity and climate benefits.

The group also agreed that climate change "has already impacted biodiversity" and is likely to continue to do so over the next century "at a greater magnitude and faster

rate". Both ecosystem composition and ecosystem function will be affected.

In our view, the work of the ad hoc group turns on the recognition that mitigation and adaptation measures must not damage biodiversity further and that biodiversity and climatic stability are related. We should be looking for what biodiversity can do for climate rather than believing that we will have to sacrifice biodiversity in order to increase climate benefits.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.biodiv.org>

Carbon Sinks Watchdog

By Jutta Kill, FERN, UK-Belgium

FERN and the World Rainforest Movement (WRM) have launched SinksWatch, an initiative to track and scrutinize carbon sink projects, especially those involving tree plantations, related to the Kyoto Protocol. SinksWatch will provide a clearing-house for groups seeking information about carbon sink projects and expose the flaws and failures of carbon sink projects applying for CDM registration. The initiative will be implemented by the WRM Northern Support Office. A SinksWatch web site will go online in October 2002. SinksWatch will work in close co-ordination with CDM Watch (<http://www.cdmwatch.org>), which monitors non-sinks projects linked to the CDM.

Test Case for CDM

By Jutta Kill, FERN, UK-Belgium

Only ten months after governments accepted carbon sink projects as part of the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), critics' concerns about the consequences of this decision have been shown to be well-founded. One of the first projects to prepare for carbon credit registration with the CDM involves large-scale monoculture tree plantations and is likely to contribute nothing towards halting climate change. Research by CDM Watch into the Plantar project in Brazil – which involves a 23,000 hectare eucalyptus

plantation developed under the auspices of the World Bank's Prototype Carbon Fund (PCF) – has revealed many flaws in the project (see <http://www.cdmwatch.org>).

Among these are a lack of guarantees that the project will yield any positive benefits for the climate, questionable procedures in the calculation of carbon credits, and unclear impact on overall global use of fossil fuels. The good news is that the project evaluator, Det Norske Veritas, has recognized many of these weaknesses in its validation report.

The PCF has often emphasized a 'learning-by-doing' approach to CDM projects. Taking this approach seriously would mean shelving Plantar. Environmental and social rules for CDM sinks projects are still under discussion. Governments will have little incentive to make them strict if a CDM project which cannot demonstrate any climatic benefits and which involves a large-scale industrial tree plantation is already far advanced in the CDM application process, and any project steaming ahead of that process will undermine unbiased negotiation of such rules. Why? Because it is highly unlikely that any government that has approved a project as far advanced in the CDM application process as Plantar would agree to rules 'their' project would not pass.

In addition, Plantar could jeopardize several small-scale renewable energy projects that are also seeking CDM registration. Of the 25 projects currently seeking registration, Plantar is a heavyweight. It claims it can provide the equivalent of 4.3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide -- 10 per cent of the total amount claimed by all 25 projects put together. This is in comparison to the 20 per cent jointly claimed by 14 smaller-scale renewable energy projects which have none of the negative environmental impacts associated with big plantations but which, if approved by the CDM, will be competing directly with Plantar.

It is crucial that Plantar is stopped in its tracks as a CDM project and that the rules for sinks

in the CDM explicitly exclude industrial tree plantations. The three EU member states that are involved in the PCF (the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden) and would receive pro-rata credits from Plantar have a special obligation to ensure that the scheme will not become the first registered CDM sinks project. After all, the same EU argued very convincingly only a year ago against including any sinks at all in the CDM. SinksWatch will work to ensure that these EU countries -- and the EU generally -- put their money where their mouth is.

An Indigenous Peoples' Workshop on Underlying Causes in Aotearoa/New Zealand

By Sandy Gauntlett, International Research Institute for Maori and Indigenous Education, Aotearoa/ New Zealand

The Pacific Indigenous Peoples' Environment Coalition (PIPEC) held a workshop on the Underlying Causes of Deforestation and Forest Degradation on 21 - 22 September in Aotearoa.. Opened by the new Conservation Minister for New Zealand, Chris Carter, the workshop was attended by representatives from most Pacific nation communities in Aotearoa, including that of the Maori. Also present were nearly all Pacific academics working for Universities in Auckland, as well as a representative of the Siosiomaga Society from Samoa. Four case studies were presented from Aotearoa, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Tonga.

Particularly interesting was the Solomon Islands case study, which found that it is not so much genuine impoverishment as a perception of poverty caused by assimilation of Western values and concepts of wealth that has led to forest destruction. Many Solomon Islanders, in other words, have cleared forests not because they are poor but in order to create "Western" wealth. The study also identified corruption as a leading underlying cause of forest loss.

Participants from Samoa and Tonga, meanwhile, saw population pressure and the

need for infrastructure as a leading underlying cause, with roads having a major impact. Interestingly, the Samoan study also identified climate change – in particular, the increased frequency and force of tropical cyclones – as a major cause of deforestation.

During the conference's second day, participants brainstormed on pan-Pacific underlying causes and possible solutions. Most solutions focused on political leadership, policy and will. Education and capacity building of Indigenous Peoples were identified as particularly crucial to building true independence. With regard to the issue of aid and indebtedness, it was stressed, Indigenous Peoples need to learn to distinguish between rhetoric and action and to act and respond accordingly. Grasping how effective our leaders really are requires critical analysis of the sort offered by the PIPEC workshop itself, and if we are not being served by our leadership, then we need to change it.

For most participants, by far the most moving part of the workshop was a set of speeches given by Pacific children between 10 and 13 years old -- the next generation of forest activists -- on the importance of forests in our lives.

More than 65 people took part in the workshop, and PIPEC picked up several new members. All participants felt that the workshop had helped in cementing resolve to work on issues relating to forests both within our own communities and collectively. We look forward to participating further in the international struggle for Indigenous rights and biodiversity.

Reports on Other Forest-Related Meetings

CEFDHAC Discusses Poverty

The fourth meeting of the Conference on Tropical Rainforest Ecosystems in Central Africa (CEFDHAC) took place from 10 - 13 June in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of

Congo. Several hundred representatives of governments, NGOs, Indigenous Peoples, parliamentarians' organizations and funding agencies attended. They discussed the relationship between sustainable forest management and poverty in Central Africa, together with a number of related issues such as the impact of armed conflict and globalization on forest management.

A proposal to explore a possible merger of this so-called Brazzaville process with the government-dominated Yaounde Process -- the *Conférences de Ministres de Forêts de l'Afrique Centrale* (COMIFAC) -- was withdrawn after opposition by the participating NGOs. It was replaced by a proposal to explore synergies between the two processes.

For more information, please contact IUCN-ROCA at roca.iucn@camnet.cm.

Calendar of Forest-Related Meetings

For more information please visit: <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages>.

- ****Eighth Conference of the Parties of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, 23 October - 1 November 2002, New Delhi, India.** This COP will continue to discuss how to define reforestation and afforestation projects under the Clean Development Mechanism. See the reports by Winfried Overbeek, Miguel Lovera and Jutta Kill. For more information, please visit: <http://www.unfccc.int>
- **Thirty-Third session of the International Tropical Timber Council, 4 - 9 November 2002, Yokohama, Japan.** Prior to the session there will be a first meeting of a Civil Society Advisory Group. The session will discuss, among other things, progress in work on forest law enforcement and a study on certification as a tool to promote sustainable forest management. For more information, visit <http://www.itto.or.jp>.

- **Eighth session of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biodiversity, 10 - 14 March 2003, Montreal (tentative).** This meeting will discuss, amongst others, mountain ecosystems and technology transfer. For more information, please visit: <http://www.biodiv.org>
- **Third session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, 26 May - 6 June 2003, Geneva, Switzerland.** This third session is expected to deal with unfinished business from the second session, including the Terms of Reference of possible intersessional working groups. It will also address economic aspects of forest management, forest health and productivity and the maintenance of forest cover. For more information, please visit: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/forests>
- **Twelfth World Forestry Congress, 21 - 28 September 2003, Quebec City, Canada.** This congress is organized by FAO once every six years. It is open to all and addresses a broad range of forestry-related themes. For more information, please visit: <http://www.wfc2003.org>

(** meetings at which GFC can facilitate Southern NGO/IPO participation)

Editorial Team:

- *Simone Lovera, Friends of the Earth International*
- *Larry Lohmann, Corner House, UK*
- *Ricardo Carrere, World Rainforest Movement, Uruguay*
- *Sandy Gauntlett, International Research Institute for Maori and Indigenous Education, Aotearoa/New Zealand*
- *Berencie Muraille, FERN, UK-Belgium*
- *Andrei Laletin, Friends of the Siberian Forests, Russia*

This publication was made possible through a financial contribution from Netherlands Development Assistance.