



A Global Forest Coalition Newsletter on International Forest Policy

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About Forest Cover

Welcome to the thirty-first issue of Forest Cover, the newsletter of the Global Forest Coalition (GFC), a world-wide coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs). GFC promotes rights-based, socially just and effective forest policies at the international and national level, including through building the capacity of NGOs and IPOs to influence global forest policy. 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 donors or the editors. For free subscriptions, please contact Yolanda Sikking at:

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Ex Silvis: A Super-rational Approach to Climate Change

Andrey Laletin, acting chairperson, Global Forest Coalition

Climate change is no longer a potential threat: many communities around the world are already suffering its impacts. The events of the last two years have also exposed the fragility of our prevailing economic system, giving us some idea of the financial maelstrom likely to accompany a changing climate. Yet the Kyoto Protocol's goals still remain a distant ambition, even though 137 countries have so far ratified it. Right now, global carbon dioxide emissions by industrialized countries are higher than they were in 1990, even though the Kyoto Protocol aims for an average cut of 5% against 1990 levels during the period 2008-2012.

A recent report by Professor Martin Parry, a former co-chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, noted that the real costs of adaptation were likely to be 2-3 times greater than estimates made previously by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In addition, the ecological debt of industrialized countries is rising steeply with every day that they delay taking action. The African Union recently calculated that the North owes US\$400 billion to their continent alone. But attempts to reach a new

agreement on climate change seem to be foundering, falling foul of political power games.

Yet it seems that the difficulties may run even deeper: the fact that Northern countries cannot come to an agreement about reduction commitments and repayment of ecological debt is arguably quite logical: as Dutch writer Rob Wijnberg argues in a recent book 'Nietzsche and Kant are reading the newspaper', the climate problem is in many ways a classic example of the old 'prisoner's dilemma'. That dilemma was invented in 1950, by American mathematicians Melvin Dresher, Merrill Flood and Albert W Tucker. The prisoner's dilemma shows how rational people acting in their own interests may take conscious decisions that actually work to everyone's detriment.

The original prisoner's dilemma is about two people who are suspected of a crime. The police have insufficient evidence for a conviction, and make a proposal to each: if they will betray the other and are the only one of the two who does so, they will go unpunished, while the other will get the maximum sentence of ten years. On the other hand, if both betray each other, they will both receive a five-year sentence. But if both remain silent, and support each other, they will only be sentenced to six months in jail.

The theory is that the rational choice is always to betray the other, even though each player's individual reward would be greater if they played cooperatively: the cost of being the only one to act in the best interests of both are just too steep (ten years' incarceration), and the reward on offer to the lone traitor too high (complete freedom).

When it comes to environmental problems, the EU, the US and other Northern countries seem to be stuck in the same trap, seeking maximum benefit at the lowest cost, even though the likely collapse of the Copenhagen talks will also cause serious negative impacts on their countries, as well as developing countries. The presumed individual costs outweigh the potential shared benefits if all industrialized countries change their behavior, thus explaining the current impasse in the climate change negotiations.



Is there a way out of this dilemma in Copenhagen? Yes, says the American cognitive philosopher Douglas Hofstadter. It can be solved if you switch from thinking rationally to 'super-rationally'. Super-rationality is rationality based on trust. You assume that the other party, just like you, recognizes the best solution and that you will both choose the best option. Similarly, Rob Wijnberg is right to say that in such a case the only option is to say goodbye to the rationale of the 'homo economicus' (also the basic principle of capitalism, which prioritizes the goal of achieving the maximum benefit for the lowest cost): this also implies a recognition of the moral impediments of climate justice and historical responsibility for climate change.

Sharing Research on Forests, Climate Change and Traditional Knowledge in Eurasia

Ilya Domashov, coordinator of sustainable development programs, YEM 'BIOM', Kyrgyzstan

An International Conference on Forests, Biodiversity, Climate Change and Traditional Forest-related Knowledge in Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia was held in Bishkek, 28-30 June 2009. Organized by the Kyrgyz National University, the Global Forest Coalition (GFC), IUFRO and Ecological Movement 'BIOM', the conference shared research and information about forest biodiversity, the role of forests in climate change, traditional knowledge about forests, and international forest policy; and provided a space for international collaboration on these issues.

About 90 forest scientists and specialists from different countries – including Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan – took part. Scientists, experts, people from local communities and non-governmental organizations, and those who appreciate the experience and wisdom passed down from our ancestors, the deep-rooted traditions which can help us solve today's burning problems, all took an active part in discussions.

According to well-known Kyrgyzstan ecologist Professor Emil Shukurov, there can be no doubting the tremendous significance that traditional forest-related knowledge has for today's world. Over many centuries, communities and peoples have accumulated an amazing treasury of wisdom about their environment, yet this wisdom is often over-looked by the modern world as its struggles to deal with problems of climate change and ecosystem destruction. The traditions, ideas about the world, and beliefs of peoples in the Central Asian countries, the Caucasus and Russia are an almost inexhaustible resource when it comes to discovering 'new' approaches to solving ecological problems: it is these peoples who can enrich our culture and make us intellectually and materially richer.

The conference also considered forests and their relationship to climate change. Forest ecosystems are natural and important climatic regulators, but they are also impacted by climate change themselves, in addition to all the other factors that take their toll on forests, and are in need of special protection. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, little more than 4% of the total land area is covered by natural forests, but this figure could be increased to 30-40% under current climatic conditions. In the famous epic poem about Manas, the founder of



Press conference on Forests, Biodiversity, Climate Change and Traditional Forest-Related Knowledge



Kyrgyzstan, there are lines where Manas' army gets lost in the forest: how hard it is to imagine a place in Kyrgyzstan where this could happen today!

The gathering culminated in the adoption of a resolution on the conservation of traditional knowledge relating to climate change and biodiversity conservation in Eurasia; a new discussion website; and plans for further work in the spheres of forest restoration, traditional forest knowledge, the conservation of biodiversity and climate change.

Keeping in mind the indispensable role that Central Asia's forests play in regulating the climate and in stabilising ecosystems, it is vital to revive traditional knowledge and practices relating to forest exploitation and preservation, including by initiating research and educational programs and implementing best practice; initiating programs to support the natural renewal of forest ecosystems; and pushing for relevant changes in legislation. Natural ecosystems need to be legally protected, and the substitution of natural ecosystems with man-made ones should be banned. Measures to stimulate local community initiatives relating to the preservation of forest biodiversity and productivity also need to be designed and implemented.

Central Asia's peoples have many centuries' experience of the best ways to use natural resources, including forests, without destroying them. The aim of modern forest specialists must be to safeguard this experience and knowledge and to use it to protect ecosystems in Central Asia and across the planet.

If you are interested in finding out more about the conference, please contact Ilya Domashov at idomashov@gmail.com or biom.kg@gmail.com or go to www.photo.kg/gallery/eko/2049/



*A well-recovered shifting cultivation plot with trees, Thailand
Photo: Masakazu Kashio*

2nd World Agroforestry Congress Warned About the Dangers of Eucalyptus

Philip Owen, GeaSphere, South Africa

The 2nd World Agro Forestry Congress, was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 24–28 August. Agroforestry involves the cultivation of a variety of trees for a range of purposes in an integrated model: instead of planting just a single species such as eucalyptus, the farmer grows fodder trees for use by livestock, fertilizer trees to provide nutrients, fruit trees to provide food, firewood trees, building pole trees and so on. The trees and their various products are used primarily by the farmers and their families, but excess produce is also sold for cash.

Agroforestry is particularly important because it provides a way of allowing wilderness and agriculture to complement each other and work together, providing essential services to the integrated environment. This is especially important at a time when birds, bats and bees are disappearing at an alarming rate across the globe. This loss holds disastrous consequences for the global human population, since these animals are primarily responsible for pollinating the majority of the world's food crops. A major contributing factor for the collapse of these animal populations is the loss of 'wilderness' habitat.

GeaSphere has always promoted the concept of decentralized, diversity-based small-scale agricultural models as an alternative to large-scale industrial timber plantations, and supports the potential of agroforestry systems. However, we are concerned that some agents may try to use the model to introduce alien invasive species such as eucalyptus, whose spread is difficult to contain. Eucalyptus trees also soak up exorbitant quantities of water. I went to the congress armed with literature regarding the negative impacts of exotic timber production in southern



Africa, and ready to use every opportunity to state the case against planting eucalyptus and pine.



Professor Wangari Maathai

I arrived a bit late due to registration administration and walked into the main auditorium when the key note speaker, Nobel Peace Prize winner Professor Wangari Maathai was presenting her address. The Green Belt Movement which she started has been responsible for planting millions of trees across Kenya, and, in my experience, such projects in southern Africa often involve the planting of alien species. So I felt a great sense of relief when Professor Maathai, "with respect to the Australians present" told the audience that there are no kangaroos in Africa, and that, "we do not need eucalyptus." She strayed from her prepared presentation and spoke about the impacts of

eucalyptus, specifically with reference to biodiversity and water use issues. She described eucalyptus plantations as "dead forests" and urged government to ban alien tree species. Her words had a marked impact on the audience, and promotion of eucalyptus at the Agroforestry Congress received a serious blow from a powerful, passionate and peaceful activist.

Decades ago Sir Albert Howard, a founder of the organic farming movement, proposed that farming should model itself on natural systems like forests and prairies, and that scientists, farmers and medical researchers needed to re-conceive "the whole problem of health in soil, plant, animal and man as one great subject." The agroforestry model offers such an alternative to large-scale industrial agriculture: it offers hope of a model integrated with natural systems and generating mutually beneficial relationships. We all partake in agriculture through the act of eating: so we should all participate in the development and adoption of agroforestry, which could well become the 'future of global land use'.

*For more reports, stories and photographs, visit the WCA blog at: <http://www.worldagroforestry.org/wca2009/blog>
You can contact Philip Owen via owen@soft.co.za or www.geosphere.co.za.*

Report On Pacific REDD Workshop

Sandy Gauntlett, Pacific Indigenous Peoples Environment Coalition (PIPEC) and Oceania GFC Focal Point

Late July saw the second of the regional REDD workshops funded by Global Forest Coalition being held in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, at the campus of the The University of the South Pacific (USP). The workshop discussed the relation between the implementation of the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biodiversity of the Convention on Biodiversity and REDD, International Law and Indigenous Rights as it relates to REDD, Climate Change and Biodiversity and the possible dangers and problems associated with REDD.

The following declaration came out of the workshop:

From July 29th to 31st 2009 over 15 participants from 8 different countries in the Pacific/Oceania region, from Indigenous peoples, civil society and governments gathered in Tonga to discuss global issues that severely impact our region on a daily basis: climate change, forest protection, and the role of Indigenous peoples and local communities.

Preamble:

The Pacific Workshop on REDD recognises and thanks the Kingdom of Tonga and the University of the South Pacific (USP) in Tonga for their hospitality, and is grateful to the Global Forest Coalition and the Government of the Netherlands for their funding of the workshop and continued support.

We as Indigenous peoples of the Pacific have specific concerns that our rights in line with United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), particularly our rights to free, prior and informed consent, sovereign right to self-determination and rights to lands, territories, environment and natural resources be upheld and respected.

We are deeply alarmed by the accelerating climate devastation brought about by unsustainable development, and we are experiencing profound and disproportionate adverse impacts on our Pacific cultures, human and environmental health, human rights, wellbeing, traditional livelihoods, food



systems and food sovereignty, local infrastructure, economic viability and our very survival as Indigenous peoples.

Consumer nations must adequately address the issue of ecological debt to the global south and not shift liability for their own unsustainable production and consumption to those nations not responsible for the high level of climate emissions.

We are concerned about insufficient capacity building on forests and climate change discussions and negotiations in our communities, the lack of adequate resourcing, funding and representation of Indigenous communities at international climate discussions and negotiations, and the failure of Governments to adequately and accurately represent the views of our Indigenous and forest-dependent communities in the region.

We remind the parties that Indigenous peoples are on the front line of climate change, whether they are from 'developed' nations or not, and do not automatically have access to the benefits of a developed economy. To treat Indigenous people on the basis of who is their colonial-based government is unacceptable.

Call for Action:

- We are concerned that in its current form REDD is misleading and is a false solution to climate change, erodes Indigenous land rights and fails to account for the long term and ongoing conservation and land management of forested areas by Indigenous peoples and forest dependent communities.
- We call for all nations in the Pacific to sign on to the UNDRIP.
- We call for any agreement on forests to fully and explicitly uphold the rights under UNDRIP, the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

- All rights under UNDRIP must be included into the CBD and UNFCCC, and the customary and territorial land rights of Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities must be recognised and enforced by any international agreement on forest policy.
- We call for the suspension of all REDD initiatives in Indigenous lands and territories until such a time as Indigenous peoples' rights are fully recognised and promoted, and community consent has been obtained.
- The linkage of REDD to markets risks allowing Annex-1 countries to avoid responsibility for reducing emissions in their own countries and could even increase net carbon emissions. Carbon offsetting and the inclusion of REDD credits in carbon markets will do nothing to address the underlying causes of climate change, nor will carbon offsetting and market mechanisms provide the predictable and reliable funding required for addressing deforestation.
- We demand that forests not be included in carbon trading schemes, and call on all governments to halt deforestation and keep fossil fuels in the ground; not trade one for the other. Forests need to be protected, but they must be protected by strengthening and enforcing forest legislation, not using market mechanisms.
- We support the call for binding emissions reductions targets for Annex I countries of at least 45% below 1990 levels by 2020, and at least 95% by 2050, and other elements of the AOSIS proposal. Annex I countries must therefore deliver on their commitments to making real and effective emission reductions.
- We are alarmed that some international climate and forest agreements are not legally binding, and that there is a disconnection between these international negotiations and inadequate national greenhouse targets and obligations.



- We call for real and genuine solutions to climate change, not false solutions like ocean fertilisation, REDD, biofuels and monocultures for plantations that erode and violate the rights of Indigenous peoples and forest-dependant communities, and destroy biodiversity.
- We object to the current definition of forests under the CBD, UNFCCC and the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO).
- Any definition of forests must strongly differentiate between plantations and natural forests to incorporate fundamental Indigenous understandings of forests and account for the vast differences in carbon storage capacity.
- Whilst we support the positions of the Pacific Council of Churches (PCC) and Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) on emission targets, we nevertheless recognise the non-negotiable positions of some small island nations, and their sovereign rights to fight climate change.
- We are concerned about inaccurate carbon accounting, and the vast amounts of money allocated by donor nations for the protection of forests through flawed solutions to climate change, including REDD.
- We call for accurate carbon accounting on forests, and for ANY funding for the reduction of emissions from deforestation and degradation, appropriate technology transfer to be prioritised for community based forest management schemes, managed through strengthened mechanisms within the UNFCCC that include impacted communities and in accordance with Indigenous rights under UNDRIP. Donor nations should not fund international financial institutions, like the World Bank to implement projects that support flawed solutions to climate change.

REDD in Latin America: Forests, Towns, Rights and Strategies

Diego Cardona, CENSAT-Agua Viva and GFC focal point Latin America and the Caribbean

Social organizations, Indigenous Peoples' Organizations and NGOs came together on 19-21 August, in Bogotá, Colombia, at an event organized by the Global Forest Coalition. The purpose of the workshop was to consider the implications of REDD projects – on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation – in Latin America, and to decide on suitable strategic responses.

Latin America is home to a significant percentage of the planet's remaining forests, including diverse ecosystems such as the forests of Mesoamerica, swamps, Andean forests and the Amazon. The conservation of these ecosystems has been determined in great part by the management skills of people living in the various forest towns and localities, who have accumulated a great store of knowledge about their local forests.

However, these forests are also subject to deforestation and degradation for multiple reasons, including the establishment of certified commercial forest plantations, including those intended to sequester carbon from the atmosphere. This can result in the replacement of bio-diverse tropical and equatorial ecosystems with barren homogenous systems, where local people cannot live.

These carbon sinks or 'green deserts' as they are known in the region, are promoted using the euphemism that they are 'planted forests'. Nothing could be further from the truth: they have already replaced millions of hectares of native ecosystems across several Latin American countries, decimating biodiversity. Unfortunately this trend is likely to get even worse as governments cast around for ways of mitigating climate change.

The replacement of native forests with plantations constitutes a 'false solution' to the on-going climate crisis, especially since plantation monocultures store less than 20% of the carbon locked up in primary forests. New REDD proposals could take this commercialization of the world's forests a step further, if governments



decide to fund REDD through the carbon markets: this would be yet another way of transforming life and its fundamental elements into merchandise, to be bought and sold on the world's stock exchanges, through 'carbon markets' created for that purpose.

REDD is a central part of the current negotiations in the UNFCCC (UN Framework on Climate Change). So far, however, these negotiations have not defined the precise way that REDD could or should operate: there are no clear rules of the game, that would allow people to calculate just what REDD might really mean for forests and their inhabitants. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that there are no ground rules yet, pilot projects already exist in numerous countries, several of which are in Latin America.



First Session (August 19) with social organizations, indigenous peoples and NGOs. Photo: Diego Cardona

The first day of the Latin American REDD workshop focused on analyzing the REDD strategy; determining its potential risks, traps and consequences; considering the way that forests have been included in climate change negotiations and the implications that this might have for peoples' rights; and deploring the lack of participation of such peoples in the negotiations. 34 representatives of Indigenous Peoples, social organizations and non-governmental organizations participated, from nine Latin American countries, including two of GFC's focal points.

The second part of the workshop, spread over a further two days, also involved government participants from Panama, Colombia and Paraguay, allowing space for these representatives to explain their positions and engage in a dialogue with the civil society participants present. The various debates brought in analyses and investigations relating to forests and peoples' rights, and the GFC's assessment of the implementation of the Biodiversity Convention's ongoing program of work on forests.

The workshop clearly demonstrated that there is a real need for more information about REDD to be made available in the region, not only for social actors and the different peoples concerned about REDD's impacts, but also for government officials in charge of designing and implementing policies and programs. This is vital to ensuring that peoples' rights are fully incorporated into all projects, and that REDD policies and projects are fully in keeping with the requirements of the Biodiversity Convention.

The issue of how REDD policies should be funded remains an ongoing concern. One group of Latin American countries, which includes Paraguay, Bolivia, Venezuela, Cuba and El Salvador, are firmly behind implementation through a fund and not via the market; but others, like Colombia, take a position that is diametrically opposed, focusing on maximizing all opportunities to commercialize forests.

The following synthesis constitutes some of the preliminary agreements and conclusions from the workshop:

- We recognize that the problem of global warming and its impacts affect all the inhabitants of the world, but especially those living in southern countries and the poorest populations.
- Indigenous People, African-American communities and peasants, in the full exercise of their rights, have built their own ways of life, that recognize their various organizational, cultural, spiritual and political processes; ways of life that have also been proven effective in caring for and having a good relationship with nature.



- The defense of land and a harmonious relationship with nature are fundamental to this approach, and lead people and communities to oppose the current energy-intensive extractive model of production, which is promoted by industrialized countries.
- It is recognized that these ancestral practices also help protect the land and could contribute to adaptation to climate change.
- Therefore, it is clear that in the face of the climate change, the solution resides in changing patterns of consumption, especially the consumption of fossil fuels and natural resources in industrialized countries: this change would result in a drastic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- We denounce international climate change negotiations that have instead led to the creation of false solutions, which could include REDD. We find that REDD has the following potential risks for our peoples, countries, forests and territories:
 - Loss of sovereignty over our territories and its natural elements.
 - A significant risk that the rights of individuals, peoples, and the environment could be undermined.
 - Loss of customs, traditions and ancestral practices.
 - Divisions and confrontations within communities and grassroots organizations.
 - The further expansion of large-scale forest plantations.
 - A weakening of territorial security.
 - The limitation or suppression of some peoples' legitimate right to act as 'environmental authorities' within their territories.
 - A failure to recognize the existence of agreements, conventions and other international instruments that recognize and implement peoples' rights, such as the UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People.
 - A failure to consider the requirements of the Biodiversity Convention when considering the risks that projects such as REDD could have for forests and associated biodiversity.
- A risk that decisions that are detrimental to communities' interests will be made, precisely because those communities have not had the opportunity to be properly informed about and involved in making decisions about such projects.
- We demand the recognition of the historical and ecological debt owed by developed and industrialized countries towards the countries of the south.
- We insist that peoples' and Indigenous communities' right to self determination is recognized, including when it comes to the management of nature within their territories.
- We denounce the limited access to appropriate and opportune information about negotiations taking place at the national and/or international level, which affect our territories and quality of life, and we deplore the fact that Indigenous People have been excluded from climate change negotiations relating to forests.



Second Session (20-21 August) with the participation of government delegates from the region. Photo: Diego Cardona



Climate Change Talks Focus on 'REDD plus'

Jan Willem den Besten*

Unprecedented interest in forest-related mitigation options for a post-Kyoto climate agreement has kept forest specialists, lobbyists and campaigners trapped in relentless work and travel schedules this year; last stop was the 30th Session of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 1-12 June 2009 in Bonn, Germany.

Still under negotiation, 'Reducing Emissions through Deforestation and Forest Degradation' (REDD or REDD-plus) is now a major topic in the UNFCCC and in other international climate change fora. The general idea of REDD is to involve developing countries in global CO₂ emission reduction strategies, to put monetary value to forest-held carbon, and potentially to make forest carbon credit units tradable. According to the 2007 fourth IPCC assessment report, emissions from the forest sector make up 17% of global greenhouse gas emissions. The Stern report, that considered the economic implications of climate change a year later, argued that tackling these emissions offers a relatively cheap opportunity for CO₂ emission reductions: REDD could contribute to fast reductions in global CO₂ emissions but will only work in combination with deeper cuts in fossil fuel related emissions by industrialized nations.

From 10-14 August I attended the Bonn-III talks as an observer for the Global Forest Coalition (these are the third UNFCCC meetings this year in Bonn). As I entered the Maritim Hotel just after lunch on the first day of the talks, the corridors were orderly and mostly quiet, a marked difference from the frenzy of Bonn-II. The main meeting halls were deserted – where were the 2,400 delegates? This could only mean one thing: discussions behind closed doors. Indeed, earlier that morning the main plenary session had been adjourned and the talks had been replaced with closed meetings. This happened after the coalition of G77 countries and China suggested that the timetable proposed by the Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperation (AWG-LCA), Mr Michael Zammit Cutajar, was unworkable. In order to avoid a slow and cumbersome process, it was suggested that the Parties to the convention went



Two schoolboys planting mangrove propagules to restore a degraded mangrove area, as part of the National Tree Planting Day in Sierra Leone. Photo: Mette Loyche Wilkie

into direct negotiations over the proposed text. Time was starting to run out, and the UNFCCC negotiators were aware of it.

The fear of encountering insurmountable methodological questions kept forests outside climate negotiations for a long time. However, in 2005, at COP-11 in Montreal, two countries tabled a proposal to start looking at measures to avoid deforestation in the framework of the climate convention. Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica had started to work

together in the newly-formed Coalition of Rainforest Nations and fleshed out the idea of REDD, which soon enjoyed strong backing from countries like Norway, the UK and Germany and extensive interest from private sector actors and many conservation NGOs. By the end of 2007, it was firmly anchored in the climate negotiation process.

A broader type of REDD, including the sustainable management of forests and the 'enhancement' of carbon stocks (shorthand for reforestation and afforestation using monoculture tree plantations) was then included in the Bali Action Plan and gave birth to the idea of 'REDD-plus'. With discussions on the merits of the 'plus' elements continuing it is important to look more closely at the contentious areas.

There is a fear, in particular amongst environmental NGOs, that the broader scope creates a situation where industrial logging companies could be paid REDD revenues for degrading natural forests, under the banner of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). Worse even, natural forest could be replaced by tree plantations, with obvious negative consequences for Indigenous Peoples and other local communities, as well as for biodiversity and other forest ecosystem 'services'. More pressing even – especially from the point of view of negotiators at Bonn-III - is whether industrialized nations see REDD as an easy way out, that



will enable them to push their climate change mitigation responsibilities onto developing countries. Some Northern NGOs are supporting REDD for this very reason, as they are hoping that their countries will be ready to make deeper emission cuts than they might otherwise have done, because REDD gives them a more affordable additional option.

One of the most significant developments at the Bonn-II talks in June was the emergence of a REDD negotiating text in the AWG-LCA working group. Up to that point REDD had mainly been the domain of SBSTA, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technological Advice, that had discussed REDD mostly in technological and methodological terms. June's lengthy, 200-page LCA text, however, was riddled with brackets and included 20 pages on REDD-plus: much more than anyone could have imagined a few months earlier. Despite the fact that most of the language could still be deleted and completely altered, this text provides the springboard for a concrete discussion about the language that might eventually be included in the text of a new climate treaty to be discussed and adopted in Copenhagen in December this year.

A key feature of the LCA draft was that it referred to REDD-plus, despite the fact that some Parties and several NGOs prefer a narrower REDD scope. The 'phased approach' which is supported by several Northern countries proposes a focus on avoiding deforestation and degradation in early phases, followed by an expanded REDD with a broader set of measures in later phases. This phased approach also applies to the question whether REDD-plus finance should be fund or market-based. These countries have proposed that compliance markets would only kick-in during the later phases.

The early 'REDD-ready' phase would focus on institution building and the strengthening of governance arrangements, through strong stakeholder platforms and consultation with local communities. Strong safeguards and systems for Monitoring, Reporting and Verification are essential for successful REDD-plus functioning. These safeguards could help to promote the effective implementation of broad sets of REDD-plus elements in later years. According to these proposals, in the early years of the UNFCCC's next commitment period, REDD could make up 30% of all global mitigation efforts.

However, progress during the Bonn talks in August was painstakingly slow with hardly any breakthroughs. To do justice to the process, however, it is important to point out that the secretariat's facilitator made some process in grappling with the text and streamlining it, through one-to-one consultations with Parties. In the final plenary, Parties' comments were mixed and there was a continuing sense that many countries are mainly focused on seeing their own viewpoints reflected in the text. Others, however, did emphasize the need to remove duplications and work towards finding common ground. In order to hammer out an accord in Copenhagen though, the process will need to speed up and industrialized countries will have to move beyond the now very feeble mid-term CO₂ reduction targets. On the last day of the Bonn talks, Secretary Yvo de Boer warned that unless more progress is made, the Copenhagen deadline is not going to be met.

While the REDD debate will continue to focus on methodological concerns such as whether to opt for fund or market-based funding, whether to use reference levels or baselines, and how to ensure additionality, there is broad consensus amongst most Parties that REDD will only work if Annex-I countries commit to deep emission reduction cuts.

REDD governance challenges are another area of real concern. Will governance and institutional arrangements in individual forest nations, as well as at the global level, really be in place in order to make REDD-plus a viable abatement program in a post-2012 climate regime? Will full and meaningful participation and consultation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, in the spirit of 'FPIC' (free, prior and informed consent) be enshrined in REDD processes? Will tenure and ownership rights be clarified and will the forest-dependent poor be able to share in some of the benefits? These are just some of the issues that need urgent and ongoing attention.

** Jan Willem den Besten is a student at Wageningen University in The Netherlands, writing a Master Thesis on the REDD-plus negotiation process.*



Reports on other meetings:

Africans Threaten with Copenhagen Walk-Out while Europe offers Peanuts

While formal climate-related conferences like the third World Climate Conference, which took place from 31 August to 4 September in Geneva, drowned in the good intentions expressed by the overload of heads of states, international organizations and other high-level speakers, different regional blocks have been preparing for the Big Copenhagen Battle over the last few months.

On 3 September, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi announced that the African group was prepared to walk away from the climate talks if Northern countries were not prepared to meet the minimum demands made of them, in terms of providing around US\$200 billion in financial support for the harsh adaptation and mitigation challenges African countries face. "If need be we are prepared to walk out of any negotiations that threatens to be another rape of our continent" he said. Africa "will not be there to express its participation by merely warming the chairs or to make perfunctory speeches and statements," he added.

However, he emphasized that his main priority was to obtain deep emission reduction commitments from Northern countries. "We will never accept any global deal that does not limit global warming to the minimum avoidable level, no matter what level of compensation and assistance is promised to us". The African group is asking for greenhouse gas emission reductions of at least 40% by 2020, and 80-95% below 1990 levels by 2050. These estimates are in line with the latest scientific views on the minimum emission reductions needed to avoid dangerous climate change.

The African group also demands that developed countries should commit to a target of 0.5% of GDP for climate action in developing countries and commit to new and innovative sources of public and private sector finance, with the major source of funding coming from the public sector. "The upcoming negotiation

should ensure sustainable financial flow to mitigate and adapt the impacts of climate change" added African Union chief Jean Ping.

Meanwhile, the gap between this negotiation position and that of the European Union (EU) turned into an abyss on 10 September, when the European Commission released its European blueprint for the Copenhagen deal. The financial offers put on the table by the Commission are a meager 1 - 2 % of the financial support demanded by the African group. The EU grossly underestimates the overall costs of climate change mitigation and adaptation by using an unfounded figure of €100 billion, and also suggests up to 40% of this amount should actually be coughed up by hard-hit developing countries themselves. Of the remaining 60%, no less than 40% is supposed to come from carbon offsets, which implies that it actually will be EU corporations who benefit from these resources, as offsets allow them to reduce their emissions in a more economical manner. The remaining 20% is to be shared between the industrialized countries and non-industrialized countries, on basis of either GDP, or a combination of GDP and emission commitments. The latter would imply that developing countries that are exempted from emission reductions by the FCCC and Kyoto Protocol would still be expected to contribute significantly to global funding for climate change.

Obviously, this position is a very far cry from any acknowledgement of historical responsibilities and ecological debt by the EU. REDD may have been baptized the 'Polluter is being Paid Principle', but this EU position creates a new version of PPP: 'The Polluted will have to Pay Principle'.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, a coalition of no less than 300 US organizations have asked their senate to reject the draft US legislation on climate change, as it too is a far cry from the very minimum that is needed in terms of US domestic emission reductions. It is estimated that this new legislation would lead to a reduction of domestic greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990 levels of exactly 0% (zero percent) by 2024.

It seems advisable for the African Ministers to make a reservation for a flexible return flight from Copenhagen.....



Calendar of Forest-Related Meetings

More information on these and other intergovernmental meetings can be found at: www.iisd.ca/linkages

The ninth Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP 9) will convene in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 21 September to 2 October 2009. For more information, please visit: <http://www.unccd.int>

The summit on Climate Change will be held 22 September 2009 UN Headquarters, New York, US. For more information, please visit: <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/climatechange/lang/en/pages/2009summit>

The high-level event on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD) on 23 September 2009. UN Headquarters, New York, US. For more information <http://un-redd.org/>

The ninth session of the AWG-KP and seventh session of the AWG-LCA will take place 28 September to 9 October 2009 in Bangkok, Thailand. For more information, please visit: <http://unfccc.int/meetings/items/2654.php>

The thirtieth World Forestry Congress will take place 18 to 25 October 2009 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. For more information, please visit: <http://www.wfc2009.com/en/index.asp>

The forty-fifth meeting of the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC-45) and associated sessions of the four committees will be held 9 to 14 November 2009, in Yokohama, Japan. For more information, please visit: <http://www.itto.or.jp>

The eighth meeting of the CBD Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing will be held 9 to 15 November 2009 in Montréal, Canada. For more information, please visit: <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

UNFCCC COP 15 and Kyoto Protocol COP/MOP 5 will take place 7 to 18 December 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark. These meetings will coincide with the 31st meetings of the UNFCCC's subsidiary bodies. For more information, please visit: http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2009

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