

Red Alert on REDD



by Anastasia Pinto

Essentially nothing has been happening in the current carbon trading schemes that are meant to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Instead of cutting back their emissions, developed countries have merely paid developing countries to absorb the former's responsibility, that in the end even increasing the greenhouse gases that escape the atmosphere.

Our Land, Our Bodies.

Indigenous women are among the first to oppose any developmental encroachment into the forest, however it pretends to be oriented for greater forest cover. Given their roles as resource managers, women have built a deep relationship with the land. Just like its stewards, the land has been subjected in gripping and evolving power struggles that have REDD as one of its latest manifestations.

Photo from Rettet den Regenwald (Rainforest Rescue).

However unsustainable and inequitable, there are no signs that this market is about to be put to rest. Instead, it is even gaining momentum as major polluters among developed countries and their cohorts in the South are now opening up yet another frontier to be annexed under carbon trading, displacing even more and poorer women who are dependent on forests for themselves, their families and communities.

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD) is the newest scheme in the carbon market. Although much of the concept's implementation is still being debated in formal processes, it is already being piloted in areas in India, Indonesia and Peru, among others, unleashing its dangerous impacts to forests, communities especially indigenous peoples and the very core of stewardship and survival.

To further understand REDD, it is instructive to grasp carbon trading. Carbon trading is a convoluted accounting process with a simple goal: to make it cheaper for companies and governments to meet emissions reduction targets, without the massive expense and loss of political and economic control that is critical in the restructuring of technological and consumption patterns in relation to the need to clean up the environment.

A multi-billion dollar scheme, carbon trading rests on the premise that a polluter can pay someone else to clean up its mess. It takes two main forms: cap and trade and offsetting. Countries have an assigned limit or cap for greenhouse gas emissions. But under the cap and trade scheme, countries are given "carbon permits" to pollute and allowed to trade these with those who have exceeded their reduction commitments or are still far from reaching their cap.

The European Union Emission Trading Scheme (EUETS) is currently the world's largest carbon market that is worth US\$63 billion as of 2008. Among the beneficiaries of the market are companies that are not only able to go around the legal requirements but are also able to save money.

Meanwhile, carbon offsetting allows governments, companies, international financial institutions and individuals (IFIs) to fund "emissions-saving projects" especially in the South. Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) is a platform for carbon offsetting. It has registered 1,800 projects as of September 2009. With more projects in the pipeline, CDM is expected to earn more than US\$55 billion by 2012.

Despite these carbon trading schemes, there are doubts on their effectiveness in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. As Oscar Reyes and Tamra Gilbertson in their report, "Unveiling Carbon Trading," pointed out, "Even the World Bank officials, accounting firms, financial analysts, brokers and carbon consultants involved in devising these projects often admit privately that no ways exist to demonstrate that it is carbon finance that makes the project possible. Since carbon offsets replace a requirement to verify emissions reductions in one location with a set of stories about what would have happened in an imagined future elsewhere, the net result tends to be an increase in greenhouse gas emissions."

REDD is the carbon market's encroachment into the most crucial and few pristine frontiers: the forests. Under REDD, large tracts of forested land will be committed to upholding the trade in carbon as sequestration projects, in return for quite a lot of money. This money will be paid to Southern governments who insist that they are the "owners" of these lands and resources on behalf of their citizens. Since

these governments then have the legal obligation to ensure that these forested lands are not disturbed, they will have to limit human "intrusions" into them.

Unfortunately, the question of rights of peoples has not effectively entered the REDD discussions. Whenever these rights are articulated through civil society's interventions, it is seen as a hindrance to clean up the environment or at best, a muddying of clear and simple mandates.

Yet the supposedly clear and simple mandates under REDD are indeed muddying the lives of communities on the ground, badly affecting women the most.

In many countries, traditional forest dwelling communities still have some rights by customary or legal tradition. Whether or not these communities consist of indigenous peoples, it has been commonly presumed that these forested areas are trust properties or constitute the public commons. For them, the lands belong less to the communities than the communities belong to these lands. While the people use resources from these lands and these resources are indeed the basis of the local and indigenous traditional economies, these resources are likewise perceived as something that is held in trust for the general well being of the current and future generations.

But this perception on land as commons has been seriously eroded by feudal or other economic modes of claiming ownership, including state ownership. Along with the marginalisation of the commons is the marginalisation of the responsibility to sustainably conserve natural resources and the surge of the right of exploitation.

This has generated a range of practice from clear felling of vast swathes, creating deserts or degraded lands to fencing off of equal swathes for supposed "nature conservation"

REDD concerns deepen in Indonesia

by Down to Earth

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As Indonesia pushes ahead with plans for REDD, the World Bank and others are making ill-prepared agreements on funding projects in Indonesia. In the Bank's case this is with apparent disregard for its own policies on consulting forest-dwelling communities and on safeguarding their interests.

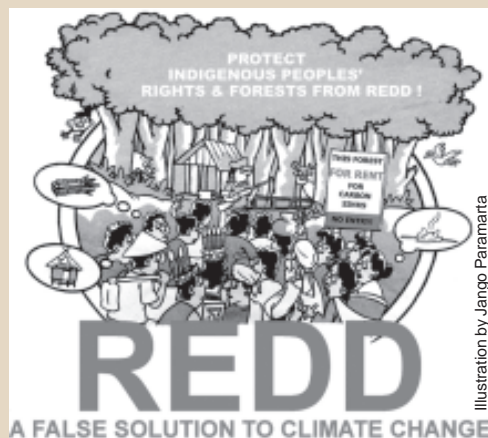
The World Bank is positioning itself to become one of the major funders of REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries)¹, through its Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and the Forest Investment Program (FIP).²

Indonesia submitted its Draft "Readiness Planning Proposal" (R-PP)³ to the FCPF in May 2009. These have prompted a storm of criticism from civil society organisations at home and internationally, especially in light of the following:

- A lack of consultation with key stakeholders, such as indigenous peoples, a lack of access to information, including almost none in the Indonesian language;
- The failure to address a deficient national legal framework for protecting indigenous peoples' rights and the failure to address these rights in the R-PP itself;
- The lack of attention to governance issues, and the potential for corruption in implementing REDD projects, especially given the lack of clarity surrounding the status of forest land claimed by the state, and overlapping land use claims from other sectors such as plantations and mining;
- The concentration of "ownership" of REDD in the forestry ministry, leading to risks that conflicting legislation, on plantations and peatlands for example, will continue to drive deforestation.

Indonesia's R-PP was considered by the FCPF's Participants Committee in June 2009. Acceptance of the proposal means that Indonesia may access US\$ 3.6 million towards "readiness" activities.

CSOs have called for any decision on Indonesia's R-PP to be delayed at the very least. They argue that setting low standards for approving the initial plans under consideration will signal to other countries that they will also be able to submit sub-standard Readiness Plans in future. Without proper protections for forest-dwellers, REDD is far less



tracts, to stripping of forest cover for mining, urban development, transport and other market or military related infrastructure and the like.

Traditional and indigenous communities living previously in these areas were summarily and violently evicted or killed. Meanwhile, those who survived have been reduced to serfs of one sort or another and slum dwellers. They have become part of the vast labour pool that has built up global economies.

The motives are dual and intertwined: in order to generate concentrated personal wealth, the materials of the earth have to be excavated and pressed into the privatised (or state owned) industrial and market economies. In order to maintain this, the labour of large populations must be managed, controlled and forced one way or other into service at the lowest cost to these extractors. REDD is the latest manifestation of such a process.

Reluctantly recognising that forests have an irreplaceable role to play in maintaining human life and that their benefits cannot be corralled into captive productivity for a few, REDD appropriates some of the last vestiges of natural systems into the control of extractors for private wealth generation.

The real costs of communities' displacement from forests are well known and well documented. They include greater scarcity of water and food and a degradation of social networks that are dependent on land-bound societies that sustain themselves through the commons. The removal of these communities or even the limitation of their sustainable livelihood activities creates a massive burden on developing economies which cannot be met by governments even if these governments have the political will to address such displacement with any other instrument than repression.

There are, at a very modest estimate, more than 400 million indigenous and local communities who are almost totally dependent on forest ecosystems for their basic human needs. At least one billion are dependent on forests to supplement incomes of less than or barely equivalent to a dollar a day from small holdings and “unskilled” jobs. Whether these societies are more patriarchal or otherwise, the men and women derive their different roles from how they use and conserve the forest ecosystems.

Generally, men hunt and fish. They provide the major timber needs for large constructions such as housing, boats and carts. They also perform some agriculture related work, including for slash and burn. On the other hand, women are responsible for the day to day needs of the communities and households for water and food. They also maintain the cleanliness and orderliness of the households.

But as resources become more and more scarce, men tend to migrate while women are forced to stay, providing the necessities for their families and communities. They have to supplement or even in many cases replace the absence of the basic provision of the male members of their communities. Moreover, they perform these in situations of greater risk and violence to themselves and their dependents.

Without thriving forest systems to support their efforts, men are left without productive occupation. The outcomes are well known even if not clearly linked to loss of land and biodiversity: community-scale abuse of alcohol and other substances. Cases of violence against women and children are also common. Men who migrated for work elsewhere also tend to abandon their families and communities. The men are also too many to be all absorbed in the cheap labour pool.

Some women also enter the labour market. But in many cases, with the only resource

likely to achieve any positive result in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation, since the denial of rights is widely recognised as an underlying cause of deforestation in itself.

Indonesia’s forestry minister has now passed at least three pieces of legislation relating to REDD: Ministerial Regulation No 68 (2008) on REDD pilot projects; the main REDD regulation, No 30, (1 May 2009); and Regulation 36 (22 May 2009)⁴ on revenue sharing rules for REDD.⁵ Regulation 30 was passed despite a request from the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) to make changes to accommodate indigenous peoples’ rights to own and control their traditional areas.⁶

The regulations are all based on Indonesia’s 1999 Forestry Law, which fails to provide for indigenous ownership of forests within the “state forest zone,” an area that amounts to some 70 per cent of Indonesia’s total land area.⁷ Instead, the REDD legislation is aimed at ensuring that central government remains firmly in control of arrangements for and income generated by REDD.

Revenue-sharing for forest carbon projects in Indonesia (Regulation 36/2009)				
No	Permit holders/ forest type	Government	Community	Developer
1	IUPHHK-HA (Wood Use Licence for Natural Forest)	20%	20%	60%
2	IUPHHK-HT (Wood Use Licence for Plantation Forest)	20%	20%	60%
3	IUPHHK-RE (Wood Use Licence for Ecosystem Restoration Area)	20%	20%	60%
4	IUPHHK-HTR (Wood Use Licence for People’s Plantation Forest)	20%	50%	30%
5	Hutan Rakyat (People’s Forest)	10%	70%	20%
6	Hutan Kemasyarakatan (Community Forest)	20%	50%	30%
7	Hutan Adat (Customary Forest)	10%	70%	20%
8	Hutan Desa (Village Forest)	20%	50%	30%
9	KPH (Forest Management Unit)	30%	20%	50%
10	KHDTK (Special Purpose Forest Area)	50%	20%	30%
11	Hutan Lindung (Protection Forest)	50%	20%	30%

Source: adapted from http://news.mongabay.com/2009/0713-redd_indonesia.html

Note: subsidiary legislation on hutan adat (customary forest) has not yet been passed. A draft regulation was recently criticised by AMAN as offering no solution to current conflicts over forests.⁸

Australia contributes funds to the FCPF⁹, but has also made its own bilateral agreements with Indonesia such as:

- The Indonesia-Australia Forest Carbon Partnership, signed on 13 June 2008, to build on and formalise existing long-term practical cooperation between Indonesia and Australia on REDD. It includes Aus\$30 million for the Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership and a Aus\$10 million bilateral support package for Indonesia on forests and climate (see also below). Three key areas are identified: strategic policy dialogue on climate change, increasing Indonesia's carbon accounting capacity, and identifying and implementing incentive-based REDD demonstration activities.
- A Roadmap for Access to International Carbon Markets, agreed in November 2008. It is "a multi-phased strategy that is assisting Indonesia develop the necessary technical, system and financial pre-requisites for participation in future international carbon markets for REDD."
- The Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership (KFCP), described as the first, large-scale REDD demonstration activity of its kind in Indonesia. It aims to "demonstrate a credible, equitable and effective approach to REDD, including from the degradation of peatlands, that can inform a post-2012 climate change agreement ... trialling an innovative, market-oriented approach to financing and implementing measures for REDD." The initial focus is on an area of more than 100,000 hectares of degraded and forested peatland in Kapuas, Central Kalimantan. The initial aim is to protect 50,000 ha of peat swamp forest, and to rehabilitate a further 50,000 ha of degraded peatland to create a buffer around the existing forest. The overall target is to preserve up to 70,000 ha of peat swamp forest and to re-flood, rehabilitate and reforest 200,000 ha of degraded peatland.
- A second REDD demonstration activity, which Australia and Indonesia agreed to develop in November last year. The second demonstration activity aims to test different aspects of REDD in a different location and forest type from the Kalimantan pilot.
- A bilateral package of support to Indonesia on forests and climate, to "help Indonesia develop its national Forest Resource Information System and National Carbon Accounting System for Indonesia, to support the development of a national policy framework and strategies for REDD, and to better monitor, manage and prevent large scale forest fires in Indonesia."¹⁰

The Australia-Indonesia agreements also lack commitment to protect the rights and livelihoods of forest-dwellers, only offering, in the KFCP, for example, the aim to "improve livelihoods for forest-dependent communities...". The KFCP factsheet states that the project is "working closely with local communities" and is linking with existing initiatives and international agencies working in the region.

Endnotes

- 1 See DTE 79, DTE 80-81 and DTE 80-81 for more background on REDD and REDD plans in Indonesia.
- 2 See FIP and FCPF, Fern and DTE 76-77 for background.
- 3 <http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/fcp/Node/180>
- 4 English and Indonesian version available from http://aseanforest-chm.org/document_center/knowledge_networks/arkn_fcc/redd_documents/indonesian_minister_of_forestry_regulation_on_redd_permenthut_p_30_menhut_i_2009.html
- 5 The regulation can be viewed in Indonesian at <http://www.dephut.go.id/index.php?q=id/node/5428>.
- 6 See DTE 80-81
- 7 See DTE 79, and DTE special report *Forests, People & Rights*, 2002.
- 8 See DTE 80-81
- 9 Australia has provided Aus\$11.7 million to the FCPF and is contributing Aus\$10 million to the Forest Investment Program, see <http://www.climatechange.gov.au/international/publications/fs-ifci.html> accessed 22/Jul/09.
- 10 See <http://www.climatechange.gov.au/international/publications/fs-ifci.html>

they still command, their bodies, which means very often, sex work or the most demanding or demeaning physical labour in construction and domestic work.

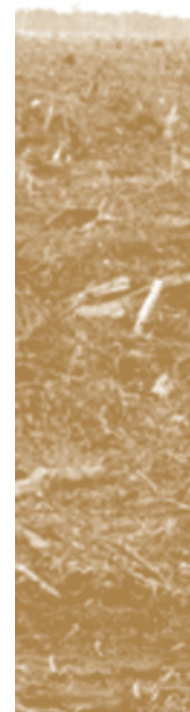
Worse, women's situation has been read more as "vulnerability" within and outside their communities. This further constricts their status, impeding their social and political capacity to order their lives and the regulation of their communities in ways that might be more productive or at least less damaging.

As the forests inevitably degrade without their traditional guardianship under REDD, they may well be used for experimentation with plantation and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in order to become more profitable. If higher credits can be obtained from converting them to agrofuel plantations, then this also will be done.

Certainly, all these changes will cost the environment and the people who have as little control as the forests themselves over how the ecosystem will be appropriated. Experience tells us that the burdens of meeting survival gaps in such communities will fall largely on women and the wherewithal for filling these gaps will be taken away.

This is not theory or speculation. In countries where REDD pilot projects are initiated, we are already seeing these patterns. Both Indonesia and Peru have seen the violent mass eviction of communities, the degradation of the forests and ensuing conflicts over land resources. In countries that are perceived as "ready for REDD," legislation for evictions are being put in place as in India.

In conclusion, we need to reiterate that there are no rights with REDD. It cannot happen. The efficiency of REDD as a mechanism demands the loss of community rights over forest lands. Just as water privatisation has impacted the poorest and among them,



There are no rights with REDD...The efficiency of REDD as a mechanism demands the loss of community rights over forest lands.

Loggers Urgently Needed. Under REDD, deforestation is encouraged, especially when plantations are proposed in forested areas. Now being tagged as the "poster child" of the World Bank's FCPF's 'poster child' would reward forest destroyers in Indonesia Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), the Indonesia-based logging concession April has found more excuses to aggressively fell more trees for its pulp and paper production.

Source: Lang, Chris. (2 March 2009). "FCPF's 'poster child' would reward forest destroyers in Indonesia." URL: <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2009/03/02/fcpfs-poster-child-would-reward-forest-destroyers-in-indonesia/http://www.redd-monitor.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2009/02/april-total-destruction2.jpg>

women, so too will REDD impact parallel or even perhaps the same communities in very similar ways. Women will be the worst hit and those expected to produce survival nets to the dispossessed. There is nothing in REDD agreements that can alleviate these burdens for women.

Are there alternatives? Of course there are. They involve a shift away from market mechanisms to respecting the vibrant life of forests in themselves and the role of traditional communities, whose livelihood is almost zero carbon.

There have been forest conservation schemes and processes that have engaged traditional communities themselves and that have been on their practices. These have actually worked and therefore need more

support at the political and financial levels. Regrettably by the very nature of these schemes and processes, they cannot produce profits for fat markets.

This alone is enough now for them to die unless there are massive movements that force governments to shift their priorities and their development plans. The question for women and women's movements is how far we will be able to support such movements in time. ■

Anastasia Pinto is the executive director of the Centre for Organisation Research and Education (CORE), an indigenous peoples policy analysis and human rights advocacy organisation in India's North East Region. She has been working and writing on a broad range of issues that includes armed conflict, childrens rights, gender, health, land rights (including water and biodiversity), indigenous knowledge systems and governance. In 2004, Anna was given the Silver Banner award. Her efforts were also recognised by the Women Green Global Environmental Network (WGGAN) and the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (IPSCAN). A mother of three children, Anna loves to garden.

