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About Forest Cover

Welcome to the thirty-third issue of Forest Cover, newsletter of the Global Forest Coalition (GFC). GFC is 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 international and national level, including through building capacity of NGOs and IPOs in all regions 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.

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Collection of non-wood forest products is a major source of income. Samardha, Madhya Pradesh India. Photo: Rajeev Verma.



***Ex Silvis: Loss of Biodiversity is being felt most keenly by Indigenous Peoples
Marta Zogbi, Friends of the Earth International and outgoing Chairperson of the Board of
the Global Forest Coalition***

The United Nations (UN) has declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB), and has created a special website,¹ so that the issue can be easily promoted amongst the general public. This site has an unsettlingly utilitarian approach to biodiversity and seems to miss some of the underlying causes that are preventing the hoped-for turnaround in biodiversity loss.

On the 'value of biodiversity' page,² for example, there is a strong emphasis on biodiversity's economic value and its utility from people's perspective. Much of the text is dedicated to highlighting the financial costs and benefits associated with biodiversity loss and protection. The last minute reference to biodiversity's "cultural and aesthetic benefits" on this page implies that maybe these qualities aren't especially important.

In the section dedicated to biodiversity loss,³ there is no mention of some of the factors really driving this process forward, which have so far prevented a dramatic alteration in our approach to biodiversity. There is no reference to international trade rules and regulations and the role that many transnational corporations play, both in driving trade in natural resources relentlessly forwards, and ensuring that the 'rules' allow them to continue to do so. Similarly there is no reference to over-consumption of resources by the world's rich minority.

Both of these pages are also notable because they fail to mention that the loss of biodiversity is being felt most keenly by Indigenous Peoples and local communities, until now living sustainable lives based on a measured use of natural resources. These peoples' rights to those resources, already clearly acknowledged within the UN, also fail to get a mention.

Astonished by the UN's silence on the intrinsic link between cultural and biological diversity, and by the absolute absence of any reference whatsoever to a rights-based approach to biodiversity – such as community rights or Indigenous Peoples' acknowledged right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent – I also realized that the IYB proclamation has failed to include any kind of input from Indigenous Peoples' Organizations, forest peoples' groups or the environmental movement. Such a waste!



*The eastern Himalaya mountains are very rich in biodiversity, India.
Photographer: Thomas Hofer.*

There is a growing meta-movement calling for social and environmental justice, the defense of communities' territories including their forests and biodiversity, and their right to manage them. This movement opposes the commodification of biodiversity and nature, biopiracy and free trade agreements that undermine the rights of Indigenous Peoples and peasant communities.

The protection of biodiversity is about much, much more than just the decisions of individual consumers, important as those are. It must also be a matter of recognition and respect of collective and community rights. And it is these that are directly threatened by the prevailing trend, including within the UN, to adopt a market approach to resolving environmental problems.

There is an alternative though. I invite the makers of the UN's IYB to follow the call and the example of one of the critical voices heard at COP 15. In "System Change – not climate change: the People's Declaration from Klimaforum09," a declaration prepared with inputs from civil society groups, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities from all over the world, there is real hope.

It states that "What people and the planet need is a just and sustainable transition of our societies to a form that will ensure the rights of life and dignity of all peoples and deliver a more fertile planet and more fulfilling lives to future generations". The Klimaforum call goes beyond the individual consumer, calling on "every person, organization, government, and institution, including the United Nations (UN), to contribute to this necessary transition," recognizing that it will be a challenging task. The crisis of today has economic, social,

¹ <http://www.cbd.int/2010/welcome/>

² <http://www.cbd.int/2010/biodiversity/?tab=0>

³ <http://www.cbd.int/2010/biodiversity/?tab=1>



environmental, geopolitical, and ideological aspects interacting with and reinforcing each other as well as the climate crisis. Real solutions to the climate crisis will be based on safe, clean, renewable, and the sustainable use of natural resources, as well as transitions to food, energy, land, and water sovereignty.

Actually, the knowledge that concerned people and activists around the world, including in organizations like the Global Forest Coalition, are currently uniting their efforts to build “a strong global movement of movements, which can bring forward peoples’ visions and demands at every level of society” to “make global transitions to sustainable futures”, revives my optimism and my belief in the struggle, even in this last act as Chair of the Board of the Global Forest Coalition.

I leave the place for one of the most tireless defenders of the customary land tenure system of Samoa, Fiu Elisara Mataese, who has advocated in local, alternative, official and international forums and spaces, to protect the rights of Indigenous Samoans, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples all over the world. When writing the last words of this editorial, I see I have no space for more skepticism, but a renewed motivation to join this collective fight.

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### **Movement at a crossroads: the 10th Anniversary of the World Social Forum and the Challenge of Climate Justice**

***Camila Moreno, Friends of the Earth Brazil***

The city of Porto Alegre in the southernmost state of Brazil again welcomed activists from around the world in the last week of January (25-29). They came to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the World Social Forum (WSF).

The city has so far hosted the WSF four times (in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2005). The first of these events was a particularly historic occasion, bringing the anti-globalization movement together on a global platform for the first time following its emergence during the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Seattle Ministerial in December 1999. The WSF has built links between social forces from around the world, successfully galvanizing the struggle of those who believe that ‘another world is possible.’ A rejection of neo-liberalism and the impacts of trade liberalization and the WTO have been the main focus for political reflection, resistance and action.

On the occasion of its 10th anniversary, however, the WSF is confronting a very different world. I participated at the WSF just one month after the climate change summit in Copenhagen – where I joined the 12 December march, and was inspired by the buzz of the KlimaForum and its cutting edge reflections, analysis and talks – and it seems to me that the WSF is missing the fact that we are at an energy and climate crossroads.

During its anniversary meeting the WSF stayed well within its comfort zone however. There were few opportunities for a timely post-Copenhagen reflection in the WSF agenda, although the Climate Justice Network did hold a separate afternoon meeting on 27 January, which created a brief space for networks, social movements and organizations to evaluate the achievements and the challenges of the climate justice movement to-date, and to articulate the process of mobilization on the road to the peoples’ summit on climate change, which will be held in Cochabamba, Bolivia in April.

Yet, the WSF itself has not yet grasped the overwhelming significance of climate change, the end of the fossil fuel era and future energy challenges. The WSF, surely, is the forum in which to challenge not only the neoliberal paradigm but the modern, urban and industrial civilization that has brought us to this place. Yes, another world is still possible, and more than ever urgently needed. But the global movement and the ‘left’ needs to reinvent itself, to recover its spirit (in the streets), or perish.



*Mobilizing around Climate Justice in Copenhagen. Photo: Yolanda Sikkinga, GFC*

This is the time to really embrace and reflect upon the radical ecological and political ecological dimensions of the WSF’s message. It needs to be building its understanding of and denouncing green capitalism, which



entrenches the carbon economy, carbon markets and the repertory of false solutions to climate change currently on offer.

It is now critical that we expand on the climate justice message, engaging other actors and networks, and creating a smoothly evolving process to take our global movement forward. In this context, mobilizing around climate justice has the potential to serve as a new driving force reigniting the political strength of the WSF, and revitalizing it with fresh thought and action.

The key message linking the living legacy of the WSF and the climate justice movement is a call to remember that system change cannot be reduced to one particular event: instead, it has to be lived as a daily struggle and a collective process of movement building, for we still believe it is possible!

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

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REDD Obscenities

Simone Lovera, Sobrevivencia, Paraguay

A COP-flop: That is the impression that the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Copenhagen probably left in the minds of most citizens of this planet.

But one can also look at the results of Copenhagen in a more positive way. Most insiders had already warned months ahead that there were only two realistic outcomes to the summit: a bad deal, or no deal at all. As we wrote in November, Copenhagen was a 'Chronicle of a Death Foretold.' The greatest polluter of all, the United States, was not in a position to take on any firm legally binding commitments as it had already failed to adopt the necessary domestic framework for such commitments; and other developed countries were unwilling to sign a deal without the US. Therefore, most people in the climate justice movement had indicated that they preferred no deal above a bad deal, as it was feared that a bad deal would lock the world for years into an international agreement that would be far too weak to halt climate change. In this light, the results of Copenhagen could be seen as a triumph of multilateralism over an exceptionally bad deal brokered by Barack Obama and a select number of powerful states- the Copenhagen Accord. The way this Copenhagen Accord was successfully rejected by a number of relatively small countries on the night of 18 December 2009 certainly gave observers a "The Mouse that Roared" feeling. "We are not going to betray our people for 30 pieces of silver," responded the representative of Tuvalu to the suggestion that the Copenhagen Accord should be accepted because it included some commitments for modest financial support to the countries that are most affected by climate change. For people working on policies and incentives to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD), the rejection of the Copenhagen Accord was a victory too, as the vaguely formulated REDD paragraph Obama wanted to sell to the world did not include any reference to the rights of Indigenous Peoples or to the need to avoid the massive replacement of forests by monoculture tree plantations. These references *were*

included in the formal draft REDD negotiation text that will now, hopefully, form the basis for further negotiations within the framework of the Climate Convention. However, the REDD reality is very different from this seemingly sympathetic draft text. As demonstrated by a report by the Global Forest Coalition on "REDD realities" in 12 different countries,⁴ that was launched at the Copenhagen Summit, the reality is that what is happening on the ground depends on the national legal framework that is already in place in these countries.



Deforestation in Brazil
Photo: Maria Rita Reis, Terra de Direitos

If that framework is good, , it might support Indigenous Peoples and communities in their efforts to protect and restore their forests. However the REDD proposals on the table are about something else - compensating those countries and actors currently engaged in deforestation - and countries that have good legal frameworks in place and/or Indigenous Peoples and communities that are engaged in protecting their forests, tend to have low deforestation rates.

⁴ <http://www.globalforestcoalition.org/img/userpics/File/publications/REDD-Realities.pdf>



This means that these countries are not interesting for REDD donors, including donors like Norway and France who have recently started an informal 'fast start' REDD process, neatly side-stepping nasty little mice in the climate negotiations who might ask for complicated things like environmental integrity. These donors prefer to focus on countries with high deforestation rates, like Brazil, Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This preference demonstrates that the many demands and cautions by Indigenous Peoples and NGOs that "Rights should come before REDD", and that good governance and combating corruption are a pre-condition for REDD, are being squarely ignored by governments rushing to put REDD into practice.

As a result, REDD realities are already turning into REDD obscenities. Brazil received no less than \$US150 million from the Norwegian Government to reduce deforestation in 2010. Yet, less than three months after Copenhagen the Brazilian government has given the go ahead to one of the most destructive dams it has ever built, the Belo Monte dam, which will destroy 500 square kilometers of forests and Indigenous territories. In Indonesia, another country blessed by Norwegian support, REDD obscenities go even further: instead of halting further expansion of the oil palm industry the Indonesian Government has formally proposed to recognize oil palm plantations as 'forests'⁵, so that it can receive REDD funding for converting peatlands, perhaps the most carbon-rich ecosystem in the world, into oil palm plantations.

As Souparna Lahiri reports, even in countries like India, that have a relatively good system of forest governance in place (legally, at least) REDD is a threat to this legislation rather than a positive incentive. After all, in countries where the rights of communities and Indigenous Peoples are recognized, the government might lose out if they are compensated directly for their forest conservation efforts.

So, when the Convention on Biodiversity discusses incentive systems at its upcoming Conference of the Parties in October 2010, it might be good to include a discussion on REDD as a perverse incentive that actually triggers further deforestation and denial of community rights.

For more information, please visit http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_15/items/5257.php

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### **Forest Day 3: Noble Laureates and Carbon Brokers**

***Janneke Romijn, Global Forest Coalition, Netherlands and Andrey Laletin, Friends of the Siberian Forests, Russia***

With forests increasingly taking center stage at high-level meetings discussing our future climate, Forest Day is becoming more and more popular. On 13 December 2010, the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) organized the event for the third year in a row, back-to-back to UNFCCC COP-15.

Forest Day 3, which attracted more than 1300 participants opened with three Nobel Laureates. Rajendra Pachauri, Chair of the IPCC, elaborated on IPCC-4 report estimates that deforestation is occurring at a rate of 12.9 million ha per year, leading to a decrease of about four thousand million tons of CO2 absorptive capacity. Wangari Maathai, Goodwill Ambassador of the Congo Basin Forest, spoke about the ecological functions of forests and the role for local communities in Central Africa. Elinor Ostrom, of Indiana University, had received the Nobel Prize for economics in Oslo the week before Forest Day. She made a passionate call for local users and Indigenous Peoples to be recognized and assigned clear rights in the REDD process. She explained that her research showed that when local users have harvesting rights, forests are more sustainable. But. Forest Day was not only a place to hear passionate stories about the forest and acquire new insights: it has also become a business venue. In one of the corridors, set apart from the other exhibitions, agencies were busily promoting their carbon measuring techniques, their carbon consultancies, and their carbon brokerage services. A worn out Wall Street had found a new currency to speculate on: carbon credits.

But speculation in invisible carbon is not going to hold back global warming. Instead it will place more money in the hands of those who failed to protect forests in the first place. What we do need are, as Elinor Ostrom said, rights for local forest communities. Fortunately this call was reflected in one of the plenary sessions, where participants voted on what they considered to be the greatest risk to the successful implementation of REDD: 36% pointed to "lack of equity – rights of indigenous and local communities, inadequate benefit-sharing." It is to be hoped that this will be reflected in any and all policies relating to forests, whether in the climate change negotiations or elsewhere.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.forestsclimatechange.org/FD3.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/02/16/palm-estate-forest-says-ministry.html>



## **An Example of Post-Copenhagen REDD: Subverting Forest Rights in India** **Souparna Lahiri, National Forum of Forest People & Forest Workers (NFFPFW), India**

The Government of India made a detailed submission on REDD to the UNFCCC Secretariat in August 2009, a month before the intersessional in Bangkok. This submission<sup>1</sup> has since been the referral document for the Government of India in subsequent REDD negotiations, even though it was prepared unilaterally without any consultation with civil society organizations, the forest peoples or their movements

On the eve of COP-15 in Copenhagen, forest peoples' movements and groups in India issued a Joint Statement on the REDD Climate Scheme which condemned the "attempt of government and corporate interests to use climate change negotiations to illegally and unjustly enhance their control over forests and forest dwellers' resources" in the country. It called upon the Government of India to withdraw submissions favoring REDD and carbon trading in forests. The forest groups said that, "this scheme merely makes way for the government and private capital to grab the resources of the people, without in fact truly addressing climate change."<sup>1</sup>The forest groups warned the government that "the forests and forest lands of this country are not the private property of the government, to be agreed upon, bought and sold as it wishes. They are the homelands and territories of adivasis and other forest dwellers who have, for centuries, lived in and lived with them. We will not stand by and watch as forests are once again grabbed from us by the rapacious greed of private capital masquerading as 'eco-friendly' projects."

### **Post-Copenhagen: pushing REDD behind the scenes**

Though COP-15 did not reach agreement on REDD, and the Indian delegation mostly kept quiet about REDD while in Copenhagen, back here in Delhi it seems that the Ministry of Environment & Forests, led by its Minister and the forest bureaucracy, is trying to push REDD. But not before subverting and dismantling the Forest Rights Act.

Through a Notification dated 11 February 2010, the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) established a high level experts Committee to "Study the Implementation of Forest Rights Act 2006" to look at the issues of implementation, sustainable forest management and the protection/settlement of the rights of forest dwellers in detail.

In a statement issued on the same day condemning the establishment of such a Committee, NFFPFW questioned the legality of the MoEF forming this Committee, when the nodal agency for the implementation of the FRA is the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The NFFPFW statement further stated, "We are shocked to see that while the Forest Rights Act 2006 professes to undo the historical injustice meted out to adivasis and other forest-dwelling people, the Government of India continues to allow the forest bureaucracy to meddle in and illegally influence its implementation, ignoring the fact that the very same bureaucracy epitomizes and perpetuates the 'historic injustice'. Ever since the act came into being, the forest officials are actively engaged in sabotaging its implementation, and the list of violations becomes longer each passing day, the most significant being a deliberate undermining of those provisos in the act giving forest communities governance control over forests."

NFFPFW is of the view that the MoEF is effectively trying to maintain the primacy of and existing governance by the forest department; and in the name of assessing and reviewing the implementation of the FRA is actually on its way to derailing the FRA in order to clear the road for REDD. NFFPFW therefore demanded that the Notification be withdrawn immediately, and asked the two non-governmental nominees to the Committee to resign.

*This is a summary of an article that can be found, together with the mentioned position papers on <http://www.globalforestcoalition.org/img/userpics/File/publications/Sinks-in-the-making.pdf>  
A full report on REDD implementation in India can be found in <http://www.globalforestcoalition.org/img/userpics/File/publications/REDD-Realities.pdf>*



## Does the Year of Biodiversity have any value?

**Sandra Viviana Cuellar Gallego, CENSAT Agua Viva-Friends of the Earth-Colombia**

The Ninth meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing (WG ABS9) was held in the Valle de Cauca region in Cali, Colombia, 22-28 March 2010.

This working group began as a panel of experts on ABS at CBD COP-4 in 1998. Its purpose is to clarify principles related to the issue of access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their use. These principles include, for example, the concept of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), and decisions about use based on Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT). The current focus of the Working Group – highly ambitious given the few short months now left, and the many contentious issues that remain on the table – is to produce a draft treaty on access and benefit sharing, to be concluded at the CBD's COP-10, in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010.

The fact that an agreement on an international regime is still so far from being agreed, even after so many years of negotiation, gives rise to the question: why are we celebrating 2010 as a year of biodiversity? Biological and cultural diversity remain unprotected, misused and exploited; and there seems to be little or no genuine will or good faith amongst the negotiating parties, no desire to do anything that really moves us away from this dire scenario. The rapid deterioration, the extinction of species and ecosystems continue relentlessly, meaning that this should be a year of condolences, not congratulations.

It is deeply ironic that ABS-9 was held in a region teeming with biodiversity, blessed with fertile land and drenched in water. The irony, which seems to be lost on negotiators, is that this abundance of resources attracts transnational corporations that trade in natural resources to the region. It is here that Colombia's sugar cane and agrofuel industries are concentrated, here that their monocultures have been established by means of blood and fire, leading to the loss of forests, fauna and communities' territories. And talking about good faith, doesn't it go against the grain to permit a company of doubtful reputation, such as Smurfit Kappa Cartón de Colombia, to appear in the publicity for this meeting as one of its sponsors? This company, a subsidiary of the Smurfit Kappa Group is best known in Colombia for its history of persecution, displacement and labor exploitation and its lead role in the degradation of ecosystems like the Darien forest.



*A suspended wooden road, constructed by the Uitoto indigenous community, Colombia. Photographer: Rodrigo Andrés Gamba Blanco*

Going back to ABS-9, its task was to agree a draft treaty text to be sent out to parties by 18 April, to allow the required six months consultation in capitals, before COP-10 in Nagoya. Because the Montreal Annex, the product of ABS-8 in Montreal last November, was 57 pages long and contained over 2,000 square brackets, a further process to produce a more workable and much shorter draft text for consideration in Cali was subsequently set up. This process culminated in the Co-Chairs Informal Inter-regional Consultation, which took place in Cali, 16-18 March. This led to a slimmed down 15-page document for consideration by ABS-9. But according to the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB), this text – even before the negotiations started – was already missing some of the key principles and elements designed to ensure that Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights are recognized with respect to access and benefit-sharing, as acknowledged in the Montreal Annex.

The talks were long and arduous, and at one point were suspended. They did finally result in a draft text being agreed, however, but only because of the impending 18 April deadline. The meeting was finalized on condition that an additional note was appended stating that this text has not been negotiated and is still subject to further amendments. It was also accompanied by many annexes, submitted by groups, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, emphasizing associated Traditional Knowledge and customary law. This draft text will continue to be discussed in Montreal in June. The many points of disagreement that have still to be resolved in the coming months include, the scope, whether national or international standards should be used to regulate access to genetic resources, monitoring, tracking and reporting use, traditional knowledge, an independent financial mechanism, and the



treaty's relationship with other international instruments.

One key concern for CENSAT is the disclosure of detailed information about biodiversity, potentially increasing its abuse by advertising the whereabouts of its elements. Could this attract even more transnationals to an area? And if this place is in a far-flung corner of the world, what guarantees are there that the national or local authorities in that place would really ensure compliance in terms of the distribution of benefits to village communities? Furthermore, we should not forget that even if a text is agreed in Nagoya, this does not mean that trade in genetic resources is desirable, or that it will help to shape sustainable societies or bring about environmental and climate justice. Rather, it is critical to maintain and protect the exchange and barter of traditional knowledge about medicines, food, and maintaining the balance of ecosystems and agricultural systems for food sovereignty.

Let me restate my original question: should there be a year of biodiversity? The answer is no, not a year: a year is not enough. We need to transform our entire existence ensuring a profound cultural shift in the way we relate to Mother Earth, instilling respect for others, whether animal, plant, ecosystem, gene, or non-living entity. This implies moving away from commercialization as a guiding principle: we should stop discussing the systematic uses of biodiversity, and encourage community practices of solidarity, admiration and respect for the knowledge of the other, of caring for this treasure called Planet Earth for future generations.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2010/pr-2010-03-28-abs9-en.pdf>

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Major Groups Initiative on UNFF **Hubertus Samangun, ICTI Tanimbar, Indonesia**

One of the decisions of UNFF-8, held in April 2009, was that the Major Groups participating in the UN Forum on Forests process would organize an international workshop to prepare their inputs to the UNFF-9 (which is scheduled to take place 24 January-4 February 2011).

To begin to implement that decision, the Major Groups held a preparatory meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark, just after UNFCCC's COP-15 (19- 23 December 2009). This preparatory meeting was organized by the UNFF secretariat in collaboration with the Ghanaian government and the Institute of Cultural Affairs International. The Preparatory Meeting made decisions on several important points with respect to the planned international workshop. Its theme will be "Applying Sustainable Forest Management to Poverty Reduction: Strengthening the Multi-Stakeholder approach within the UNFF"; and it will be held in Accra, Ghana, 26-30 July (which is a change from the original plan to hold it in May 2010). It will be hosted by the government of Ghana with support from the UNFF Secretariat and a number of other governments, and organized by the Institute of Cultural Affairs International, Canada. It is important to note that the workshop will be held in English only.

The Major Groups participating in the UNFF process are undertaking a self-selection process to identify participants who will be funded to attend the workshop. There are also a limited number of spaces for self-funded Major Group participants and observer government representatives. The workshop will have the following outputs:

1. Policy recommendations for UNFF 9.
2. Measures to enhance the effectiveness of Major Groups in UNFF.
3. Plans for Major Groups' activities for the UN International Year of Forests in 2011⁶

For more information, please visit: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/>

⁶ For more information, contact the Focal Points for the Major Groups to the UNFF, who are :
NGOs: Andrey Laletin; sibforest@akadem.ru and Lambert Okrah ; lambert@ica-international.org
Indigenous Peoples: Hubertus Samangun hsamanqun@yahoo.com
Children and Youth: Natalie Balafa ifsa_natali@hotmail.com
Scientific and Technological Community: Sim Heok Choh simhc@frim.gov.my
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Business and Industry: James Griffiths; griffiths@wbcsd.org



Reports on other meetings:

Linking Geneva and Copenhagen: why the WTO matters

The most notable thing about the WTO's 7th Ministerial meeting in Geneva, 30 November - 2 December 2009, was that nothing happened. Ten years after the collapse of WTO negotiations in Seattle, and eight years after the formal start of the Doha 'round' of talks, negotiations remain deadlocked. In the case of the WTO, no deal is most definitely better than a good deal, and this is excellent news for forests and the communities that live in them.

A finalized Doha deal could have a pincer effect on forests. It would probably lead to significantly increased levels of deforestation, since liberalization would be likely to increase trade in industrialized agriculture for export, and in the mining, petroleum and forest sectors. A general increase in international trade, including increased extraction and trade in fossil fuels, combined with a likely decrease in governments' ability to use domestic regulations to restrict greenhouse gas emissions, would also contribute to climate change. The WTO may still be in the deep freeze, but civil society has not forgotten the threat it would pose, including to forests and the climate, should it be defrosted. Even though the world's eyes were focused on the climate change negotiations due to start in Copenhagen just one week later, around 5,000 representative of social movements from across the world still turned out to voice their opposition to the WTO's plans and stage a constant vigil opposite the gates of the Ministerial.

The links between the WTO and the corporate-dominated climate change talks due to start in Copenhagen were also put under the spotlight by the Social Justice and Trade Caravan, which succeeded in bringing over 50 activists from the global South (including from the Global Forest Coalition) specifically to enable voices from the South to be heard in current debates on trade and climate, in Geneva, in Copenhagen, and across Europe. The caravan split into two, to enable public events, workshops and actions to take place in Dijon, Brussels, Hamburg, Freiburg, Frankfurt, Cologne and Berlin, as well as in Geneva and Berlin - giving the caravan's participants a series of important opportunities to talk to Europeans about the ways in which climate change and trade liberalisation are affecting their lives.

For more details of the corporate criminals tours:

<http://www.corporateeurope.org/global-europe/content/2010/02/genevas-corporate-criminals>

For more information about the social and justice climate caravan go to:

<http://www.climatecaravan.org/?q=call>



Climate Caravan in Geneva. Photo: www.climatecaravan.org



Calendar of Forest-Related Meetings

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

The fourteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity will take place from 10 to 21 May 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

The third meeting of the Working Group on the Review of Implementation of the Convention on Biodiversity, which will take place from 24 to 28 May 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

The 32nd session of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies will be held 31 May to 11 June 2010. The venue is likely to be Bonn, Germany.

For more information visit: http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2010

At least two negotiation sessions of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Kyoto Protocol and the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action of the Framework Convention on Climate Change will be organized between June and December 2010. Time and venue will be announced shortly.

For more information visit: http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2010

The 23rd IUFRO World Congress 'Forests for the Future: Sustaining Society and the Environment' will take place in Seoul, Republic of Korea, 23 to 28 August 2010.

For more information visit: <http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/Events/CIFOR/iufro-congress.htm>

The 20th session of the FAO Committee on Forestry is expected to be convened at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy in October 2010.

For more information visit: <http://www.fao.org/forestry>

The 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity will take place 18 to 29 October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan.

For more information visit: <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

The 46th meeting of the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC-46) is scheduled to take place in Yokohama, Japan, from 13 to 18 December 2010.

For more information visit: <http://www.itto.or.jp>

The Sixteenth Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC and Sixth Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol will take place from 29 November to 10 December 2010 in Cancun, México.

For more information visit: http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2010

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