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Joint Press Release from Global Forest Coalition and Indigenous Environmental Network

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**Forest and Indigenous Groups Reject Cancún Forest Deal
REDD Will Violate Rights, Accelerate Emissions, Groups Warn**

Cancún, Mexico – Indigenous and environmental rights groups warn that an agreement on REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) at the upcoming UN climate change conference in Cancun, Mexico will spell disaster for forest peoples worldwide, limiting the rights of indigenous and peasant people over their territories. The real solution, the groups argue, is for developed countries to reduce fossil fuel emissions at the source.

While negotiators at COP 16 hope to forge an agreement on REDD, the Global Forest Coalition, Indigenous Environmental Network and a wide range of civil society and indigenous organizations, warn that any REDD deal will reduce forests to carbon stocks, disregarding their value for biodiversity and rural livelihoods.

Tom Goldtooth, Executive Director of the Indigenous Environmental Network said, “Yes we need to stop rampant deforestation – but REDD will neither protect forests nor reduce dangerous pollution. REDD will allow polluting industries to avoid reducing emissions through offsets from trees and other so-called 'environmental services'. From an indigenous and human rights perspective, REDD could criminalize the very peoples who protect and rely on forests for their livelihood, with no guarantees for enforceable safeguards. REDD is promoting what could be the biggest land grab of all time.”

Blessing Karumbidza of the South African group Timberwatch added, “REDD and other false solution like agrofuels and carbon sink plantations are ways to grab productive land in the South so that more cheap resources and food can be accessed by industrialized countries.”

The groups called on negotiators to address the underlying causes of deforestation, to remove subsidies for fossil fuels, industrial bio-energy and agrofuels, and to fully recognize ~~respect~~ the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other international norms, standards and agreements that protect land-based peoples and human rights.

“Peasant and indigenous peoples feed the world and cool the planet”, said Marcial Arias, Kuna from Panama. “In order to continue doing so, our rights to land, food sovereignty, and access to water as a common good must be upheld. REDD will violate these rights.”

The groups expressed concern that proposals on the table in Cancún to increase carbon finance for industrial monoculture plantations and logging would violate agreements made during last month’s UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to prevent false mitigation measures like bio-energy, REDD, and geo-engineering.

“These proposals take the commercialization of nature to new extremes,” said Rachel Smolker of Biofuelwatch.

Silvia Ribeiro of ETC group warned that “REDD's move to place forests into the carbon market is short-sighted and deadly. REDD will accelerate land grabs fueled by the deceptively named ‘green economy’. The forestry industry has been accused before of not seeing the forest for the trees; with REDD reducing trees to carbon sinks in order to offset industrial pollution, the industry won't even see the trees.”

Contacts: Janneke Romijn, Global Forest Coalition
janneke.romijn@globalforestcoalition.org
Tel: +31 6 82 07 13 82

Anne Petermann, Global Justice Ecology Project
globalecology@gmavt.net
Tel: +;1.802.578.0477 / (Cancún, Mexico mobile +52.998.167.8131 starts 27 November 2010)

Jeff Conant, Global Justice Ecology Project (Spanish)
jc@globaljusticeecology.org
Tel: +;1.575.770.2829

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