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Turning forests into fuel for the new ‘bio-economy?’ What Really Happens When Forests are Commodified - Voices From Around The World

A Video Repository [1]

Doha, Qatar- As Governments gathering for the 18th Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP18) continue discussions on the need to address the drivers of forest loss, the Global Forest Coalition [2], today launches a video repository that tells a powerful story about the commodification of forests as a key driver of climate change. This can only worsen as new industrial ‘bio-economy’ strategies come into play.

The repository brings together key videos produced and directed by a wide range of groups and communities, clearly demonstrating that Indigenous Peoples and local communities in countries right across the world are encountering and challenging the same problems with the rapidly expanding commodification of forest resources. Forests, their biodiversity, and their inhabitants are under attack as never before. In addition to existing problems, such as illegal logging and the clearing of forests to grow food crops for export, a variety of new policies threaten to escalate the situation dramatically. These include the production of biofuels, and the new industrial ‘bio-economy’ approach, which aims to replace fossil fuels with biomass (including from trees), both as an energy source and to provide the raw materials for a new phase of industrialisation [3].

In addition, governments’ market-oriented ‘green economy’ approach includes a key policy that impacts on forests. REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) is still being negotiated in the UNFCCC, but already unfolding on the ground, with sadly predictable impacts. It is explicitly premised on increasing the value of standing trees, leading to more and more land being grabbed from people living in or dependent upon forests. Furthermore, REDD policies mistakenly equate diverse and ancient forests with plantations. This means that REDD permits funds destined for forest conservation to be used for the establishment of quick-growing and otherwise barren monoculture plantations. This would place severe constraints on our collective ability to deal with climate change since plantations only contain a fraction of the carbon locked up in old growth forests.[4]

Simone Lovera, executive director of the Global Forest Coalition, points out:

“Bio-economies spell big trouble for the world’s forests. How can governments be planning a new industrial phase based on biomass, even though the UNFCCC is supposed to be protecting the world’s forests for the sake of the climate? There is a clue though: timber and plantations companies stand to make a profit from both agendas.”

The video repository, [‘Turning forests into fuel for the new ‘bio-economy?’ What Really Happens When Forests are Commodified - Voices From Around The World’](#), brings together a range of real cases where projects are impacting the lives and livelihoods of people around the world. These include Brazilian company ETH promoting large-scale sugar cane plantations for ethanol production in Mato Grosso do Sul, causing the displacement of 40,000 Guaraní Kaiowá; the Lutheran Church of Sweden and Norway

funding gum tree plantations impacting local biodiversity and food security in Mozambique; the descent of 'carbon cowboys' on unsuspecting communities; and the negative impacts of carbon offset schemes in countries such as Uganda and Mexico.

Note: During UNFCCC's-COP18 the Global Forest Coalition, in cooperation with ICCA Consortium, is having a side event on **Wednesday 28 November, 11:30 - 13:00 AM, SIDE EVENT ROOM 8 IN HALL 5** on '*The Impacts of the Bioeconomy on Climate Change, and the Rights and Conservation Initiatives of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities*'. GFC will also have an exhibition space during the first week of the COP, please come and visit us!

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[1] Video research: Isis Alvarez; Edition: Ronnie Hall & Simone Lovera. Global Forest Coalition, 2012.
<http://globalforestcoalition.org/media/gfc-videos/web-based-video-repository>

[2] Global Forest Coalition is a coalition of 54 NGOs and Indigenous Peoples' organizations from 39 countries striving for rights-based, socially just forest policies. See
<http://www.globalforestcoalition.org>

[3] See also <http://www.criticalcollective.org/publications/green-economy-3> for a collection of reports by GFC and others on the impacts of the Bio-economy

[4] Forests in a Changing Climate, Friends of the Earth International, December 2008, Issue 115.
<http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/forests-and-biodiversity/2008/04-foei-forest-climate-english>