

# Defending Community Rights in Forest Policy

**Global Forest Coalition**

**Annual Report 2013**



### About the cover:

Concepcion Martinez Vigil is the vice president of the Octavio Ortiz community. He is a farmer who practices organic farming, but occasionally uses a bit of non-organic fertilizer. He is concerned by the climatic changes and flooding which increasingly affects the Lempa River. He believes that his method of farming, along with his hugely diverse crop system, is helping him to continue to feed his family and earn an income. His biggest concern is the summer temperature. A few years ago it was possible to work on the land all day but over the past few years, the mid day sun has become too hot to work. Photo: Jason Taylor



Photo: Protest outside Bioenergy producer Drax AGM in the UK in April 2013, Photo: Biofuelwatch

## Who we are:

### Board of the Foundation GFC in 2013 - 2014:

Andrey Laletin, Fiu Mata'ese Elisara, Mary Louise Malig and Estebancio Castro

### Overview of the GFC Focal points and Staff in 2013:

- Indigenous Peoples' Focal Point Asia: Hubertus Samangun, ICTI Tanimbar, Indonesia
- Indigenous Peoples' Focal Point Latin America, Marcial Arias, Fundación para la Promoción del Conocimiento Indígena, Panama
- Indigenous Peoples' Focal Points Africa: Jennifer Koinante and Sada Albachir, Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee, Kenya/Niger
- NGO Focal Point South and East Asia: Swati Shresth, Centre for Grassroots Development, India
- NGO Focal Points Latin America and the Caribbean: Tatiana Roa and Diego Cardona, Censat Agua Viva/Amigos de la Tierra, Colombia
- NGO Focal Points Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia: Anna Laletina, Friends of the Siberian Forests, Russia and Ilya Domashov, BIOM, Kyrgyzstan
- NGO Focal Point Africa: Wally Menne, Timberwatch Coalition, South Africa
- Focal Point Oceania: Donald Marahare, Network of Indigenous Peoples of the Solomon Islands
- Focal Points North America: Anne Petermann and Orin Langel, Global Justice Ecology Project, USA
- Focal Point Europe: Almuth Ernsting, Biofuelwatch, UK

**Executive Director:** Simone Lovera

**Outreach Officer and Gender Advisor:** Isis Alvarez

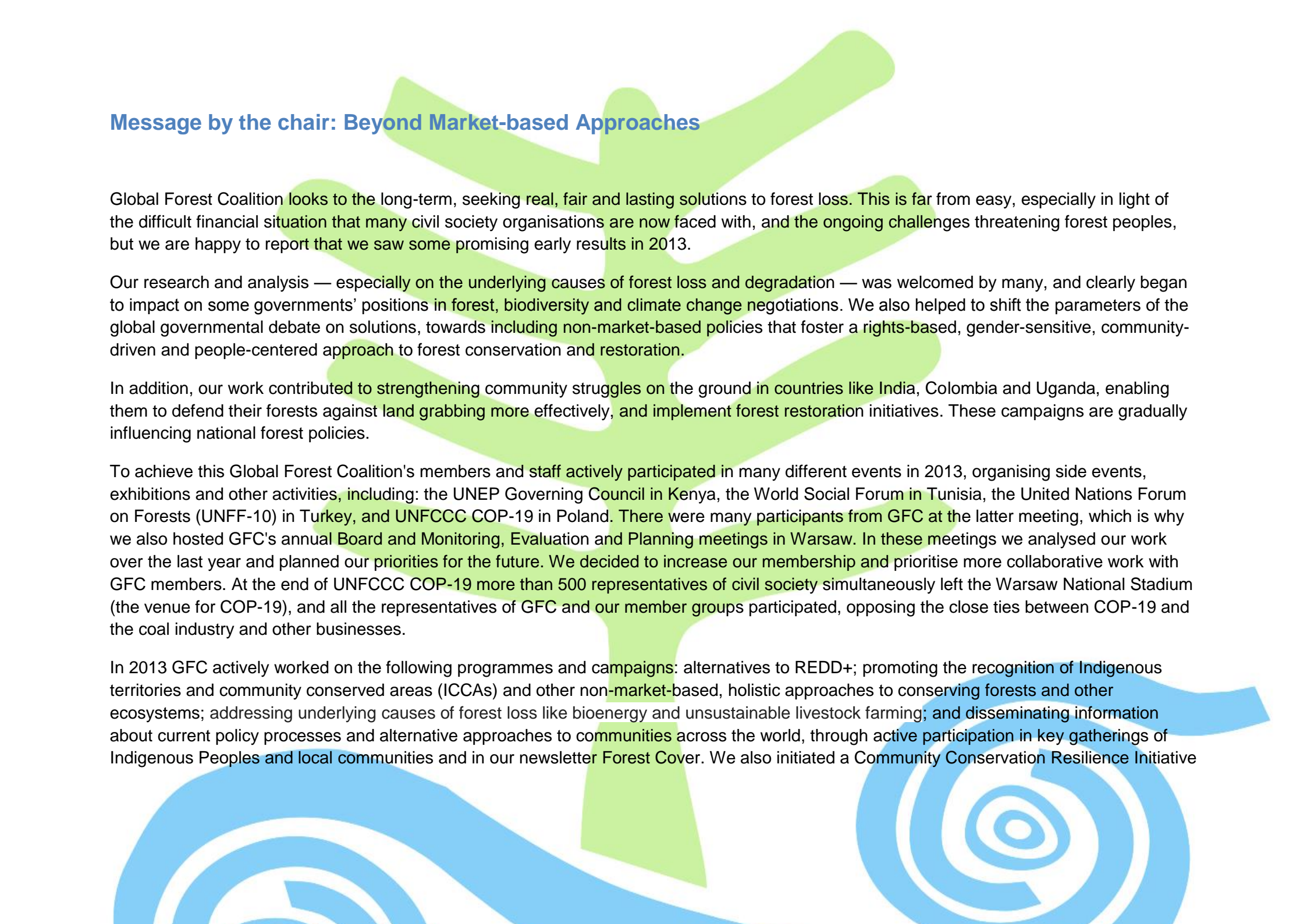
**Communications Assistant:** Coraina de la Plaza

**Campaign Communications Advisor:** Ronnie Hall

**Financial Administrator:** Ioanet ten Voorde-Araceli

**French translator:** Katy Pacheco





## Message by the chair: Beyond Market-based Approaches

Global Forest Coalition looks to the long-term, seeking real, fair and lasting solutions to forest loss. This is far from easy, especially in light of the difficult financial situation that many civil society organisations are now faced with, and the ongoing challenges threatening forest peoples, but we are happy to report that we saw some promising early results in 2013.

Our research and analysis — especially on the underlying causes of forest loss and degradation — was welcomed by many, and clearly began to impact on some governments' positions in forest, biodiversity and climate change negotiations. We also helped to shift the parameters of the global governmental debate on solutions, towards including non-market-based policies that foster a rights-based, gender-sensitive, community-driven and people-centered approach to forest conservation and restoration.

In addition, our work contributed to strengthening community struggles on the ground in countries like India, Colombia and Uganda, enabling them to defend their forests against land grabbing more effectively, and implement forest restoration initiatives. These campaigns are gradually influencing national forest policies.

To achieve this Global Forest Coalition's members and staff actively participated in many different events in 2013, organising side events, exhibitions and other activities, including: the UNEP Governing Council in Kenya, the World Social Forum in Tunisia, the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF-10) in Turkey, and UNFCCC COP-19 in Poland. There were many participants from GFC at the latter meeting, which is why we also hosted GFC's annual Board and Monitoring, Evaluation and Planning meetings in Warsaw. In these meetings we analysed our work over the last year and planned our priorities for the future. We decided to increase our membership and prioritise more collaborative work with GFC members. At the end of UNFCCC COP-19 more than 500 representatives of civil society simultaneously left the Warsaw National Stadium (the venue for COP-19), and all the representatives of GFC and our member groups participated, opposing the close ties between COP-19 and the coal industry and other businesses.

In 2013 GFC actively worked on the following programmes and campaigns: alternatives to REDD+; promoting the recognition of Indigenous territories and community conserved areas (ICCAs) and other non-market-based, holistic approaches to conserving forests and other ecosystems; addressing underlying causes of forest loss like bioenergy and unsustainable livestock farming; and disseminating information about current policy processes and alternative approaches to communities across the world, through active participation in key gatherings of Indigenous Peoples and local communities and in our newsletter Forest Cover. We also initiated a Community Conservation Resilience Initiative

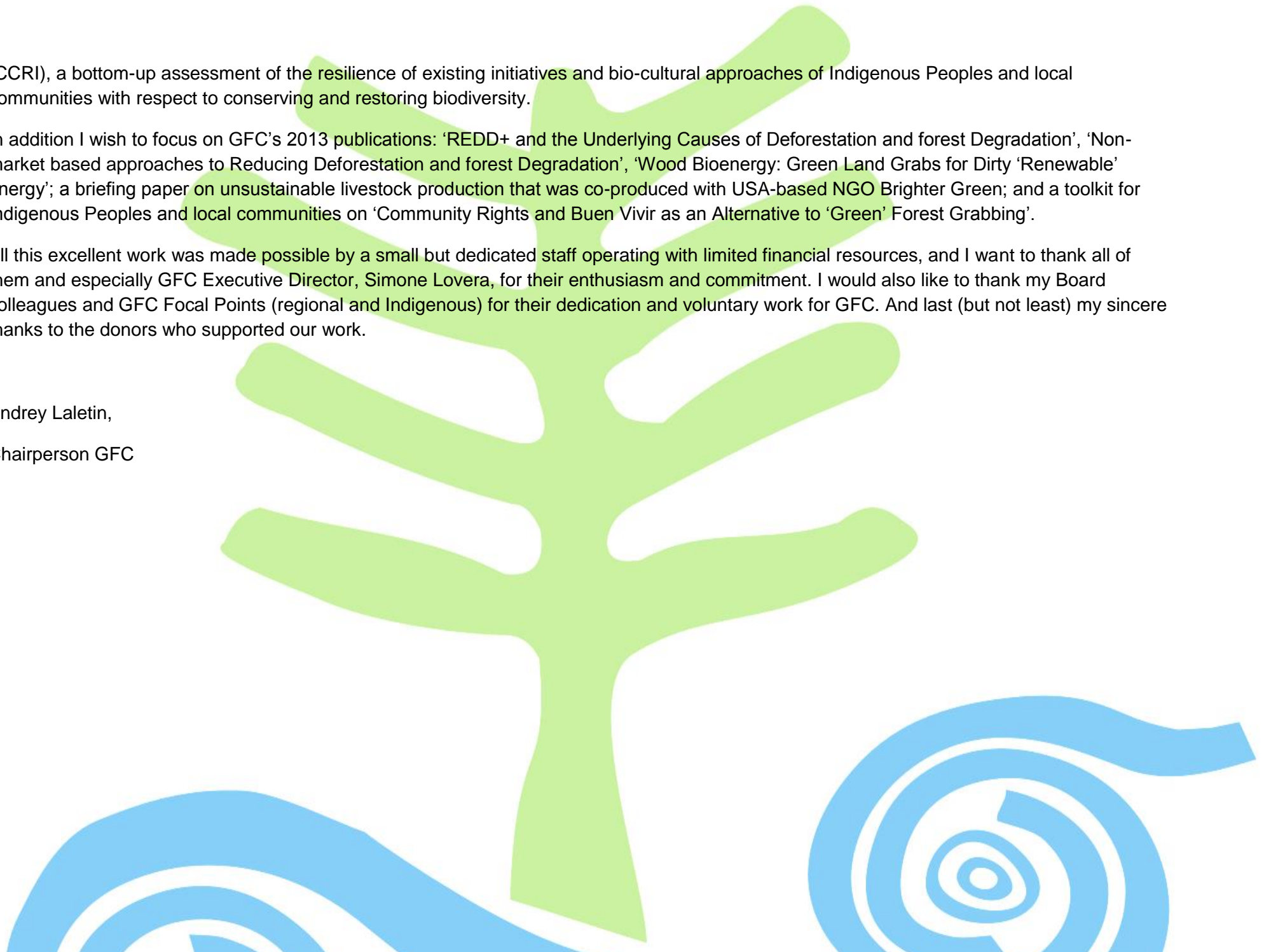
(CCRI), a bottom-up assessment of the resilience of existing initiatives and bio-cultural approaches of Indigenous Peoples and local communities with respect to conserving and restoring biodiversity.

In addition I wish to focus on GFC's 2013 publications: 'REDD+ and the Underlying Causes of Deforestation and forest Degradation', 'Non-market based approaches to Reducing Deforestation and forest Degradation', 'Wood Bioenergy: Green Land Grabs for Dirty 'Renewable' energy'; a briefing paper on unsustainable livestock production that was co-produced with USA-based NGO Brighter Green; and a toolkit for Indigenous Peoples and local communities on 'Community Rights and Buen Vivir as an Alternative to 'Green' Forest Grabbing'.

All this excellent work was made possible by a small but dedicated staff operating with limited financial resources, and I want to thank all of them and especially GFC Executive Director, Simone Lovera, for their enthusiasm and commitment. I would also like to thank my Board colleagues and GFC Focal Points (regional and Indigenous) for their dedication and voluntary work for GFC. And last (but not least) my sincere thanks to the donors who supported our work.

Andrey Laletin,

Chairperson GFC



## 1. Introduction

Global Forest Coalition exists to promote socially just and effective forest policy, which respects the rights of Indigenous and other forest peoples. We believe that our work is more important than ever in light of the current vogue for ‘business friendly’ solutions to forest and biodiversity loss, which seek to leverage private finance. It is absolutely essential that forest policies are both effective and equitable – but many of the market-oriented mechanisms currently being proposed and implemented by governments are neither. Yet they are still supported by governments who see them as being cost-effective, and are popular with the financial sector, which stands to benefit from their implementation.

A key concern is whether or not solutions address the real, underlying causes of forest and biodiversity loss. However, this in itself entails a better understanding of what those causes are, and how they vary between regions and countries. To this end in 2013 Global Forest Coalition continued its focus on collaborating with members and allies to analyse the underlying causes of forest biodiversity loss in five important forest countries — Uganda, Tanzania, India, Colombia and Brazil. We also sought to integrate the results of this analysis into relevant national and international processes concerning deforestation and forest degradation.

We were particularly concerned to get information about the underlying causes of forest loss across to policy-makers in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) climate change negotiations. Forests play a critical role in regulating the world’s climate, and any climate change policies emanating from the

UNFCCC need to be crafted with care, targeting the real drivers of forest loss and treating forest-dependent peoples with respect and dignity.

Through side events, [exhibitions](#) and advocacy activities we honed in on two particularly important emerging drivers that are often overlooked in policies to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) — the industrial-scale production and consumption of both meat and wood-based bioenergy.



**Deforestation for meat production in Ayoreo territory in Paraguay.**  
**Photo: Miguel Lovera**

We have also been at the forefront of efforts to analyse and inform others about governmental and industrial proposals to develop a ‘bioeconomy’. This is a relatively new and little known topic that is being rapidly developed by governments and the private sector seemingly with little or no assessment of the potential negative



impacts. It is heavily based on the use of biomass, both as a fuel and as a raw material from which to manufacture a wide range of products, including plastics and chemicals. This will be made possible courtesy of a range of technologies including genetic manipulation, nanotechnology and synthetic biology. The 'bioeconomy' is likely to trigger further land grabbing. In 2013 we focused on disseminating information about the potential environmental and social impacts of the bioeconomy, including on women, to people all over the world.

GFC also strengthened its Gender Program not only by adding a stronger gender perspective to each of its projects but also in its role as one of the Organizing Partners for the [Women's Major Group \(WMG\)](#), both for Sustainable Development Processes of the United Nations and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). In these different arenas we also brought new insights on the impacts of bioeconomy on women.

As a global coalition of groups and Indigenous People's Organisations working with or representing people directly impacted by land grabbing, GFC continues campaigning to bolster local, national and international resistance. In 2013 we sought to provide movements and networks with up-to-date and accessible information about the international policy processes that are driving these forms of land grabbing, and to disseminate the concerns of local movements at the international level.

Happily there are effective and equitable people-centred alternatives to market-based policies. These are of increasing interest to some global policy-makers, especially some Southern

policy-makers, who are becoming more sceptical about market-based approaches to forest conservation.



**GFC at the ICCA Consortium VI General Assembly. October, 2013. Valdeavellano de Tera, Spain. Photo: Christian Chatelain.**

We also sought to disseminate information about current policy processes and alternative approaches, to communities across the world, through active participation in key gatherings of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (like the COICA Summit of Amazon Indigenous Peoples), the production of a toolkit on defending community lands against green land grabbing, a [poster exhibition](#), social media channels, and our regular newsletter '[Forest Cover](#)'. We provided direct support to several campaigns against green land grabbing by Indigenous groups and social movements in countries such as India, Kenya and Panama.

Finally 2013 saw a new focus on developing a [Community Conservation Resilience Initiative \(CCRI\)](#), a bottom-up assessment of the resilience of existing initiatives and bio-cultural approaches of Indigenous Peoples and local communities with respect to conserving and restoring biodiversity. This assessment will help to inform the case for legal, political, socio-economic, financial, technical, and capacity-building support to sustain and strengthen these critical initiatives and approaches in the future. Our first steps in 2013 involved launching a pilot period to develop a participatory assessment methodology that can be replicated elsewhere in future years.

## 2. National Campaigns

Persuading governments to acknowledge and address the specific underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation operating in their respective national contexts is vital to real and effective progress. In 2013, member groups that contributed to Global Forest Coalition's analysis of the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation implemented critical national advocacy and awareness raising campaigns about the need to address the real drivers of forest loss.

For example, in India, the All Indian Forum of Forest Movements (AIFFM) collaborated with Equations in the organisation of three consultation meetings in Arunachal Pradesh, New Delhi, and Maharashtra. Key underlying causes addressed include the destruction of huge tracts of India's forests for developmental projects; forest lands being replaced by plantations in the push for biofuels; and illegal land grabbing by project developers and the forest department in the name of compensatory afforestation. A key

conclusion was that biodiversity offsets and REDD+ initiatives are violating the rights of the forest communities that have been the main stewards of forests in India until now. These findings were communicated to the Indian government in December 2013.

Other examples of national advocacy include meetings organised with the Colombian government by CENSAT Agua Viva-Colombia, to share concerns about the national REDD+ programme and the fact that it fails to address the real drivers of forest loss in Colombia. REDD+ is being implemented through the voluntary market only, and there are no national policies or legislation on REDD+ that might address the significant risks created. It is notable that the General Attorney of Brazil decided to sue international companies that signed REDD contracts with Brazilian Indigenous Peoples<sup>1</sup> when there were no REDD+ policies and regulations in place in Brazil. But the Colombian government has refused to develop a formal national policy on REDD+. Furthermore, there is a yawning gap between the Colombian government's development and conservation policies, which prevents the achievement of forest loss targets.

Another workshop on halting forest loss was organised in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in May. The themes of the workshop were based on the ongoing research into and analysis of the underlying causes of forest loss in Tanzania that had been conducted between 2011 and 2013.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dw.de/brasil-vai-processar-empresas-que-fecharam-contratos-de-carbono-com-%C3%ADndios/a-15914327>



**Agroecology School in Santander, Colombia. Photo courtesy: Fundaexpresión**

In Brazil, Friends of the Earth-Brazil played an active role in advocacy campaigns around REDD and Payment for Environmental Services schemes within the broader framework of national advocacy work on climate finance and the struggle for environmental justice. They collaborated closely with the Belém Letter Group, which includes some of the largest social movements in the country. They also participated in a joint visit to several communities in Acre to consult them on the impacts of REDD+ and other green economy schemes. In close cooperation with these networks, Friends of the Earth-Brazil has been actively following and influencing both national policy development and the position of

the Brazilian government in international processes. They also played an active role in the campaign to halt a significant weakening of the Brazilian Forest Code, and while the Forest Code that was finally adopted is much weaker than the groups had hoped for, it was much better than in some of the original drafts.

In Uganda, the National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE) organised a national workshop in Kampala on measures needed to address the underlying causes of forest loss in Uganda, especially rampant forest degradation. Key issues in Uganda include government plans to degazette some forests and award concessions to investors, and voluntary forest carbon offset and other REDD+ initiatives triggering 'green land grabbing'. Other underlying causes of forest loss that were identified include increasing demand for firewood, inefficient charcoal burning and the replacement of forests by monoculture tree plantations. Meanwhile, those communities that already conserve their natural forests are not being given any incentives to continue to do so.

NAPE also organised various media and outreach activities to highlight the need to address the underlying causes of forest loss in Uganda, including radio shows to reach island communities, and a media-monitoring visit to oil palm plantations in Kalangala. NAPE also ran training sessions for communities in Kalangala, about forest conservation and restoration and other approaches to addressing the underlying causes of deforestation. Communities have started to form community land committees and to develop eco-maps clearly stipulating the resources they depend on. A key debate that emerged concerns community ownership of forests and wetlands.





**David Kureeba (on the left) on a radio talk show in Kalangala. Photo: NAPE**

### **3. International Collaboration**

As an international coalition of NGOs and Indigenous People's Organisations, Global Forest Coalition strives to convey the views and concerns of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to policy-makers negotiating internationally. We also feed back information, from the international negotiations to the national and local levels. This dynamic process is heavily dependent upon successful collaboration amongst GFC, its members and its allies, which is facilitated through international workshops and seminars, and the publication of effective communications materials. It also involves conveying campaign messages to negotiators by hosting side-events during international negotiations on forest loss, biodiversity loss and climate change. GFC always makes an effort to save travel-related emissions and resources by combining the

participation in international events with other activities and sending regional representatives where possible.

In 2013 we prioritised the organisation of international workshops and seminars on critical topics such as alternatives to REDD+, and the underlying causes of forest loss, with a view to raising awareness of these issues amongst Indigenous Peoples, women's groups, environmental justice activists, peasants and other social movements, thereby increasing their capacity to defend their rights and territories. Experience has taught us that such workshops can contribute to the creation of large, world-wide campaigns capable of influencing policies in countries in a very broad way, far beyond the direct influence of a relatively small organisation such as GFC.

For example, with a large group of climate justice movements we co-hosted a series of awareness-raising events on the different aspects of climate justice at the 'Climate Space' at the World Social Forum in Tunisia, in March. This series of events formed an excellent opportunity to present the initial findings of GFC's analyses concerning the real drivers of forest loss, including bio-energy production and unsustainable livestock farming, and the potential impacts of REDD+. We co-organised a very inspiring event on systemic alternatives to the climate crisis, which presented alternative approaches including indigenous and community conserved territories and areas (ICCAs), Buen Vivir, food sovereignty and the concept of qualitative rather than material growth. GFC also co-organised an event with La Via Campesina and Focus on the Global South on land grabbing, where we presented our new toolkit, 'Community rights and 'Buen Vivir' as an alternative to 'green' forest grabbing – a community manual'.

We collaborated actively with women's groups during the year, with a particular view to determining the potential impacts of the bio-economy and markets in environmental services on women. We were involved in consultations and made presentations at numerous events including the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) held in Nairobi; the Feminist Strategy Workshop in Bonn; the World Social Forum in Tunis and the United Nations Forum on Forests in Istanbul. These events brought a very diverse audience together, including experts in many different fields and local and international activists. Lively discussions emerged, as most people had no knowledge of the fact that these proposals are being made at the intergovernmental level, or that they are likely to affect women's livelihoods around the world. In 2013, GFC continued to engage actively with the [Women's Major Group](#) doing advocacy work that is helping shape the Sustainable Development Goals / Post-2015 development agenda.

As part of our Community Conservation Resilience Initiative, we also ran skillshares on participatory community conservation assessment methodologies, which were organised in parallel to the General Assembly of the ICCA Consortium in Spain, and the UNFCCC COP-19 summit in Warsaw. Both skillshares were very inspiring and provided ample insights and information with respect to devising a methodology for these assessments, recognising that there are several existing networks and initiatives, both at the national and at the global level, which had already gathered a lot of experience with supporting and mapping the resilience of community conservation, including within the ICCA Consortium.



**Simone Lovera & Diego Cardona (GFC) at the Climate Space during the World Social Forum, Tunis, March 2013**

Other important meetings attended included a large Major Group strategy meeting on the Post-2015 process in Bonn, in March; the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York in March; a conference on Payments for Environmental Services in Paris, in June; a major International Conference on Women and Climate Justice prior to the UN General Assembly in New York, in September; and the REDD Exchange meeting that was organised by the Norwegian Government in Oslo, in October. These meetings provided excellent opportunities to gather further information on the REDD negotiations and other forest-related negotiations and to disseminate the (initial) findings of our research on the underlying causes of forest loss and non-market based approaches to

addressing them. In addition, these were important venues where we were able to stress the importance of understanding and addressing gender concerns relating to forests and forest policies.

Other collaborative activities included a workshop with Indigenous youth and various meetings with the Guna Congress and community in Panama, in February; and consultations with members of the Asia-Pacific ADB NGO network, in April.

During the year GFC also supported several joint campaigns by allied networks, including joint declarations to reject the European Emissions Trading Scheme; a joint submission to the UNFCCC that criticised proposals for new market mechanisms; a joint letter urging the Governor of California not to include forest carbon offsets in California's state carbon trading scheme; and a letter about the public withdrawal of the coordination of Indigenous Peoples in Panama from the national REDD+ programme. We contributed to the publication and dissemination of a number of statements concerning: the Indian government's attempts to weaken and undermine implementation of the Forest Rights Act 2006; World Bank funding for oil palm plantations involved in human rights violations in Honduras; human rights violations by the Korean Steel producer POSCO in India; and German company Drax investing in the expansion of wood-based bio-energy plants in the UK.

#### **4. International Advocacy including Side Events**

Global Forest Coalition members and staff endeavour to bring local communities' and Indigenous People's Organisations' views to bear at key intergovernmental negotiations that impact on forests and

forest peoples' rights. We do this through side events, formal submissions, exhibitions, and direct discussions with negotiators. We managed to continue this work in 2013 in spite of limited finances.

For example, an active international advocacy campaign was implemented to raise the awareness of policy-makers with respect to the need to address the real drivers of forest loss. GFC promoted a number of non-market based policy measures that would address these drivers effectively and equitably. These include a redirection of subsidies away from destructive sectors like bio-energy and unsustainable livestock farming, and the recognition of Indigenous territories and community conserved areas (ICCAs), which form inspiring examples of the powerful role communities can play in conserving and restoring forests. The campaign specifically targeted meetings of the UNEP Governing Council in February, the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) in April, the UN Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals in May, the Climate Convention (UNFCCC) in June and November and the Biodiversity Convention in October.

A total of four side events were (co)organised, as well as a networking session at the Global Landscape Forum, which took place in November parallel to the UN Climate talks. These included a side event on non-market based approaches at UNFF; a side event and exhibition organised at the UNFCCC negotiations in Bonn in June; side events at the Ad Hoc Working Group on article 8(j) and the SBSTTA meeting of the Biodiversity Convention in October in Montreal; and the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in November in Warsaw.



The rights, needs, role and aspirations of women formed an important cross-cutting theme for our international advocacy campaigns as well. Key findings of our draft report on gender impacts of the bioeconomy were presented during a presentation of recommendations by the Women's Major Groups on land management and land degradation to the chairs and negotiators of the UN working group on Sustainable Development Goals, which took place in May in New York. The official launch of the final report happened at a side event on equity in climate mitigation policies organised by GenderCC during the climate change negotiations in Bonn, in June. The report was very well received by different groups, including those advocacy groups who have already been working on bioeconomy and green economy but have not yet explored the gender aspect of these approaches.

The side event and the related advocacy activities in Bonn were particularly successful, and contributed to strongly increased attention being paid to the potential of non-market based alternatives to REDD+ by policy-makers. The views and experiences of local communities were also incorporated in a formal submission to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on alternatives to REDD+, which was launched in the form of the above-mentioned report on non-market based approaches to reducing deforestation and forest degradation at the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Forum on Forests in April 2013. Together with Biofuelwatch and Econexus we also submitted a detailed critical response to the Food and Agriculture Organization's draft report on biofuels and food security in January 2013: <http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/forum/contributions/re-hlpe-consultation-v0-draft-report-biofuels-and-food-security-39>.



**Panel at the side event ‘Non-market-based Approaches to Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation’ at the UNFF-10, Istanbul, April, 2013. Photo:GFC.**

## 5. Publications, Reports, and other Communications Materials

The publication of written, visual and audio materials is an essential component of Global Forest Coalition's campaign communication strategy. In 2013, these materials ranged from research publications

targeted at policy makers through to a handbook and toolkits designed for community use.

A key publication concerned our analysis of the underlying causes of forest loss in Uganda, Tanzania, Colombia, Brazil and India, and an assessment of the extent to which REDD+ policies are addressing them, which was undertaken by member groups between 2011 and 2013. The results were compiled in a report entitled '[REDD+ and the Underlying Causes of Deforestation and forest Degradation](#)', which was launched at the 19<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC and widely disseminated in several languages.

The report's conclusions make disturbing reading. Whatever the professed intentions of governments engaged in developing REDD+ programmes and projects, our cases studies found little evidence of any real progress towards addressing the underlying causes of deforestation or forest degradation. While there had been some small changes in the right direction — with respect to some governments paying more attention to what the underlying causes actually are in their countries, and in terms of at least paying lip service to the idea of transparency and consultation — the overall picture was still bleak. Governments may be 'busy' with REDD+, but many of them are, in reality, playing the fiddle while the forests burn. Most are still ignoring the need to actually *do* something about the underlying causes of deforestation, even though these are getting worse, as evidenced by the increasing global consumption of meat and wood-based bioenergy.

Furthermore, forest policies such as REDD+ and the production of industrial bio-energy are based on the privatisation and

commodification of forests, favouring resource owners and investors. This approach is inherently inequitable. In particular, it encourages financial investors and speculators to engage in 'green land grabbing' in forests, with dire implications for local communities and Indigenous Peoples living in and dependent upon those forests. Impacts on women can be particularly severe, since women are more dependent upon free access to natural resources to feed and care for their families, but less likely to own the land and resources in question and benefit from any compensation.



**Girl from an Indian pastoralist tribe. Photo: Swati Shresth.**

Our focus on underlying causes also included the publication of briefing papers on two important drivers that are often ignored in REDD+ policies: unsustainable livestock production, and large-scale, industrial wood-based bio-energy.

The [briefing paper on unsustainable livestock production](#) was co-produced with Brighter Green and launched in May. It described the impacts of cattle ranching and soy production on forests and forest peoples, the climate and biodiversity, and the social impacts of unsustainable livestock production and consumption in general. The briefing paper also highlighted more sustainable models of livestock production, including pastoralist traditions from different parts of the planet.

Our report '[Wood Bioenergy: Green Land Grabs for Dirty 'Renewable' Energy](#)' was co-produced with Biofuelwatch and launched in October. It describes how rapidly increasing demand for wood for large-scale, industrial bio-energy production is heavily incentivised by policy mandates and subsidies in the EU and the US in particular, and how it is triggering massive deforestation and forest degradation.

In March a report entitled '[Non-market based approaches to Reducing Deforestation and forest Degradation](#)' was published. This highlighted the need to address the drivers of forest loss by redirecting subsidies currently allocated to drivers such as large-scale bio-energy and unsustainable livestock farming, and the need to give legal recognition to Indigenous territories and community conserved areas (ICCAs). The report was published in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) and launched with [a media campaign in April 2013](#) at a side event organised at the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Forum on Forests (April 2013, Istanbul). It was also presented and widely disseminated at numerous other events throughout the year, including two side events at the meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technological and Technical Advice of the Biodiversity

Convention (CBD) in October in Montreal, and at a side event at the climate talks in Warsaw. A short briefing paper for policy-makers elaborated in collaboration with the ICCA Consortium comparing market-based and non-market based approaches to supporting ICCAs was disseminated at these meetings as well. These documents, which were disseminated amongst at least 4,000 policy-makers and campaigners, formed the basis for a strategic advocacy campaign.

As part of its gender program GFC published a specific report on '[The Impacts of the Bioeconomy and Markets in Environmental Services on Women](#)', a draft of which was presented at a panel on 'Feminist perspectives on a Just Transition to a Sustainable Economy', which was organised by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and DAWN at the World Social Forum. Its main findings were also presented at the UN Forum on Forests, the UN Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals, and the subsidiary body meetings of UNFCCC.

We also published a toolkit on '[Community Rights and Buen Vivir as an Alternative to 'Green' Forest Grabbing](#)' in English, Spanish, French and Bahasa Indonesia. This is a brief toolkit for Indigenous Peoples and local communities looking for information about 'sustainable forest management' and 'bio-energy' projects. Projects like these are increasingly being proposed as solutions to climate change and worries about energy security, and communities are being encouraged to take part in some of them. However, there are risks and pitfalls associated with commercial forest projects like 'REDD'. The toolkit outlines some of these, with a view to balancing out some of the extremely optimistic claims that are often



made by those promoting such 'market-based' projects. The toolkit was disseminated at several important gatherings of social movements representing Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including the La Via Campesina VIth conference in June in Jakarta, Indonesia, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amazonian Summit of the Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Watershed (COICA), which took place in Villavicencio, Colombia, in December.

In collaboration with the Indigenous Peoples Biocultural Climate Change Assessment Initiative, GFC also organised a poster exhibition on the biocultural conservation approaches of Indigenous Peoples as an alternative to REDD+ and the need to address perverse subsidies to bioenergy and other drivers of forest loss. Moreover, on 21 March 2014, the International Day on Forests, GFC launched an elaborate photography exhibition on defending community rights against green land grabbing and the alternatives that exist.

Throughout the year, GFC continued to reach out regularly through the media and social media (blogs, Facebook, Twitter) to share information on the REDD+ negotiation process and the need to address the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation. Some of the networks targeted included the Abya Yala forum and other important Indigenous Peoples' networks in the Americas, the new No REDD in Africa network, Indian movements of forest peoples, networks of anti-bioenergy and REDD+ campaigners, the women's movement following the post-2015 negotiations, global movements of Indigenous Peoples and activists supporting ICCAs, the CBD Alliance and Climate Justice Now!



**David Kureeba from NAPE Uganda and GFC director Simone Lovera at the launch of the REDD+ and Underlying causes report in Warsaw.**  
**Photo: NAPE**

Media releases on all the reports mentioned above and other actions were disseminated widely, leading to reports on several web-based media, including scoop.it, the Huffington Post, and ipsnews.net. Radio coverage included KPFK Sojourner Truth radio show in the US and various national radio shows in Paraguay, Uganda and other countries.

Other outreach activities included an elaborate commentary on Payments for Environmental Services contributed to an online forum organized by FAO, and blogs on a UN-REDD meeting in Paraguay, which were cross-posted on [www.redd-monitor.org](http://www.redd-monitor.org)

Last but not least, GFC continued with the publication of its regular newsletter on International forest policy '[Forest Cover](#)' which serves as a way of informing a wide public of mainly southern and NGOs and Indigenous Peoples' Organizations on the latest developments around the REDD+ negotiations and other important forest-related negotiation processes.

## 6. Difficulties, Shortcomings and Possible Remedies

Global Forest Coalition operates an ongoing Quality Management System, and hosts an annual Monitoring, Evaluation and Planning (MEP) meeting. At this yearly event all GFC's projects and campaigns are reviewed, and future plans are elaborated on the basis of that review. In 2013, our annual meeting was held in November, in Warsaw, since many participants were already present in Poland for UNFCCC COP-19, enabling us to save on travel-related resources and greenhouse gas emissions. Critically we identified a number of important and unprecedented external dynamics that are impeding the work of the GFC network and its allies.

The most significant of these is governments' preference for supposedly lucrative market-based 'solutions' to environmental problems. Such policies are appealing to many governments and some community leaders, for financial reasons, and this is leading to a bias in favour of untested, ineffective and/or inequitable 'solutions'. This is having a profound impact on the implementation

of effective and equitable policies to stop forest loss and degradation.

This certainly seems to be the case with respect to REDD+, for example, which does not address the drivers of forest loss, but promises significant (although unsubstantiated) financial rewards for what is practically business-as-usual in the field of forestry.

The prospect of financial rewards is also generating political interference in our work. We have experienced some actors with a financial or commercial stake in REDD+ trying to frustrate the capacity-building and awareness-raising activities of GFC and its partners. We have also found it difficult to access information about national REDD+ plans and policies: many requests for information are turned down, and key negotiation processes sometimes take place in a remarkably untransparent manner.

It has also been difficult to access information about the new 'bioeconomy' approach being promoted by corporations and their governmental allies. People have the right to know how these new industrial policies might affect them, especially since risky biotechnologies — including genetically engineered trees, synthetic biology, nanotechnology, and geoengineering — are integral to the bioeconomy approach. In some cases, however, it may be that relevant information does not actually exist at the moment. For example, in the course of our research work, we have been surprised to find virtually nothing about the impacts of biofuel production on women. There is clearly a need for increased transparency and/or research on such issues.

### Quality Management

The quality management system of GFC includes a regular project monitoring and reporting system, an annual Monitoring, Evaluation and Planning meeting and a regular external evaluation of its work and structure. The last external evaluation took place in 2010. All staff, focal points and partner groups, including the partner groups in the underlying causes project, are expected to submit brief regular reports on their activities and lessons learned, which is compiled in an internal newsletter Roots. The newsletter is disseminated amongst all staff and partner groups of GFC. All partner groups of GFC submit an annual report on their activities, which is reviewed before new annual contracts are closed.

The annual Monitoring, Evaluation and Planning meeting took place in Warsaw in 2013, back-to-back with COP-19 of the UNFCCC negotiations. Just prior and after the coordination group meeting a meeting of the Board of the Foundation GFC was held, to discuss financial and institutional issues and formally review and approve the decisions of the coordination group.

These changing dynamics also create a practical problem in that it is becoming more difficult for organisations that are critical of or concerned about reliance on market-mechanisms to secure funding. For example, GFC's critical stance on REDD+ and the corporate take-over of forest conservation caused GFC to lose more than 80% of its income between 2010 and 2013, which meant we had to close down our own small grants facility in this field as well. This shrinking financial support is impinging on national groups' ability to follow international processes actively. It is also restricting GFC's ability to translate critical materials into key languages. Other organisations

are experiencing the same restrictions and it should be noted that in countries like India, Uganda and Colombia, very few groups have the capacity to critically monitor national REDD+ policies, while the safeguard information systems that are being promoted for REDD+ assume there are strong critical national actors that have the capacity to independently verify the implementation of such REDD+ safeguards.

A number of NGOs and Indigenous organisations have also become dependent upon REDD funding, which means they are no longer in a position to play an independent watchdog role.

We are further strengthening our methodologies for working with communities on an ongoing basis. For example, we are acutely aware that it is important not to raise false expectations, as communities are quite vulnerable to outside influences and cannot afford to dedicate significant time and effort to campaign and assessment activities if they are not going to generate any concrete benefits. For this reason it is essential to ensure that projects are not interrupted or curtailed before results have been delivered. The current funding scenario is a significant challenge in this respect.

It is critical that projects fully respect the existing knowledge and conservation practices of the communities involved, especially the fact that existing traditional knowledge and conservation maps are confidential and need to be protected against biopiracy or abuse by outsiders who might want to establish a protected area or forest carbon offset project without the consent of the community.

It is important to bear in mind that it can take quite some time to build relationships with communities, respecting their traditional



governance procedures, in order to conduct proper research and assessments. With this in mind GFC member groups are also endeavouring to train trainers, and create separate discussion spaces for women and for youths.

## 7. Conclusions

Global Forest Coalition's campaigns are ambitious, seeking to get to the heart of environmental justice problems in order to propose real and lasting solutions that respect the rights and needs of Indigenous peoples, local communities and women. We collaborate with our partners and allies to seek out the real underlying causes of forest loss, and challenge any proposed 'solutions' that are unworkable or unjust. We also strive to put fair and feasible solutions forward, to show that there are other more effective and equitable approaches that governments could choose. Clearly, this is a long-term agenda, but we saw some promising early results in 2013.

Our report "[Non-market based approaches to Reducing Deforestation and forest Degradation](#)" was well-received by many forest policy-makers, who are obviously looking for alternative approaches to reduce forest loss now that carbon markets have failed to provide the financial resources expected. Our consistent campaigning on this issue particularly served to raise climate policy-makers' awareness about this issue, including within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). For example, although UNFCCC COP-19's formal decision about the drivers of forest loss was still rather weak and generic, it did explicitly recognise the need to address these drivers, which is itself

an important development. Furthermore, during the UNFCCC negotiations several governments stated that they were planning to address these underlying causes in their national context.

Moreover, thanks to the campaigns of GFC and others, the Bolivian government's proposal on alternative, non-market based approaches to addressing forest loss has become a serious theme on the agenda of the climate talks.

In climate and biodiversity negotiations we also succeeded in highlighting the need for joint mitigation and adaptation policies like Indigenous peoples and local community conserved territories and areas that foster a rights-based, gender-sensitive, community-driven and people-centered approach to forest conservation and restoration.

We can see results of these collaborative efforts in other arenas as well. For example, the fact that the European Commission recently proposed removing specific support measures for bio-energy after 2020 — because of the 'indirect land use changes' triggered by bio-energy production — is a further concrete indicator of increased awareness amongst policy-makers about the need to address drivers like bioenergy subsidies. GFC and its European focal point Biofuelwatch have been at the forefront of civil society efforts to highlight the potential negative social and environmental impacts of increased biofuel and, especially, wood-based biomass production.

We also highlighted these alternatives at the UN talks on the post-2015 development agenda, as part of an overall plea for systemic change to address the climate, biodiversity and development crises. Several statements and decisions by policy-makers indicate a clear

interest in these policies. For example, the fact that the Green Climate Fund has decided to establish a second focal area related to forests — in addition to its REDD+ implementation focal area — can be seen as an indicator of the increasing interest in non-REDD approaches.

In addition our work during 2013 contributed to strengthening community struggles on the ground in countries like India, Colombia and Uganda, enabling them to defend their forests against land grabbing more effectively, and implement forest restoration initiatives.

These campaigns are gradually influencing national forest policies. We can now see the beginnings of a shift in policy, with some governments now expressing a clear commitment to analyse the drivers of forest loss and to elaborate policies to address these drivers, either within the framework of national REDD policies, or as complementary policies.

Our campaigns have also had a positive effect in other countries, through the wide dissemination of materials and awareness-raising in general. In Panama, for example, our toolkit on alternatives to green land grabbing helped inform communities, especially in Guna Yala, where the General Congress decided to reject REDD+ entirely. Similarly our partner group in Colombia assisted Indigenous groups in Peru to analyse the potential legal and political impacts of forest carbon offset projects and REDD+ in general, with results being shared at events such as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amazonian Summit organized by COICA in December 2013.



**COICA II Regional Summit of Amazon Indigenous Organizations.  
Villavicencio, Colombia. Photo: I. Alvarez**

Local campaigners in Latin America, India and East and Southern Africa have shared information on international policy processes that will trigger green land grabbing, especially REDD+ and bioenergy, with large networks and movements like the Abya Yala network and other important Indigenous Peoples' networks in the Americas, the new regional networks working on REDD+ and green land grabbing in Africa, Indian movements of forest peoples, and global movements of Indigenous Peoples and activists supporting territories and areas conserved by Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Global Forest Coalition has also been at the forefront of efforts to analyse and inform others about governments' and industrial proposals to develop a 'bioeconomy'.

All these collaborative activities have influenced the agenda of other civil society organisations. For example, it has become clear that large, influential NGOs in Brussels are now fully aware of the environmental and social impacts of wood-based bio-energy production, and have turned this into a key campaign target. The women's movement, which is following the post-2015 development goals discussion, has expressed clear awareness of the need to address unsustainable livestock production and have gained familiarity with gender issues in areas such as ecosystems and biodiversity.

Thanks to effective cooperation with many allied movements and networks, we have also contributed successfully to ensuring that alternative non-market based approaches and systemic change have become an integral element of intergovernmental discussions on climate change, biodiversity conservation and especially the post-2015 development agenda.

Our work to develop a Community Conservation Resilience Initiative also succeeded in its preliminary goal of creating and testing a replicable participatory assessment methodology, and a framework and workplan for taking this important initiative forward. Our first skillshare at the ICCA Consortium General Assembly in October in Spain was particularly fruitful as many members of the ICCA Consortium have been involved in participatory community mapping initiatives or in scientific assessments of the resilience of community

conservation initiatives, and they were able to exchange a wealth of information with each other. The [draft methodology](#) was published in December 2013.

Within the Women's Major Group an important path has been paved with a view to incorporating measures in the post-Rio+20 agenda; the different gatherings have served as important platforms for articulating work with other women's organisations and designing potential strategies to mainstream gender throughout the discussions.

Last but not least...thanks to effective cooperation with many allied movements and networks, we have contributed successfully to ensuring that alternative non-market based approaches and systemic change have become an integral element of intergovernmental discussions on climate change, biodiversity conservation and especially the post-2015 development agenda.



**WMG Strategy Meeting prior to the OWG8 on SDGs and Post-2015 agenda. Photo: B. Burns**



## 8. Summary financial report

The Financial Statements for 2013 are in accordance with the Guideline for annual reporting 640 “Not-for-profit organisations” of the Dutch Accounting Standards Board and approved by Stolwijk Registeraccountant, De Meern, the Netherlands.



People's march in Warsaw, Poland during the climate talks (COP19).  
Photo: Katy Pacheco.

### BALANCE SHEET

#### Current Assets

<i>Note 1. Cash</i>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
ING	<u>16.128</u>	<u>769</u>

#### *Note 2. Accrued Receivables*

Grant Misereor	<u>3.571</u>	<u>0</u>
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#### *Note 3. Advanced Receivables*

Prepayment of project grant The Christensen Fund 2014	18.293	0
Prepayment of project grant Siemenpuu Foundation 2014	<u>13.334</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>31.627</u>	<u>0</u>

### STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES

#### *Note 6. Expenses.*

	<b>2013</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>2012</b>
	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
Grants to third parties	14.728	25.500	22.823
Staff costs	42.544	36.250	35.218
Travel expenses	33.817	16.560	26.710
Publications and other communication	29.275	49.950	8.440
Administration costs	<u>7.718</u>	<u>4.290</u>	<u>3.570</u>
	<u>128.082</u>	<u>132.550</u>	<u>96.761</u>

Staff costs include costs related to coordination, fundraising and administration.

A large, stylized green tree graphic with a thick trunk and several branches, serving as a background for the title and the first paragraph.

# People, Forests, Rights

The Global Forest Coalition depends for its activities on the financial and in-kind support of a large number of members, volunteers and allies, including the following donors: The Swedish Biodiversity Centre, the Siemenpuu Foundation, the Christensen Foundation, the Isvara Foundation, Artists Project Earth, the Association for Women's Rights in Development, and Misereor. We wholeheartedly thank all who have generously contributed their time and resources to supporting our campaigns and activities.

***[www.globalforestcoalition.org](http://www.globalforestcoalition.org)***

A stylized blue wave graphic with concentric circles and a wavy line, located at the bottom right of the page.

The Global Forest Coalition (GFC) is an international coalition, which was founded in the year 2000 by NGOs and Indigenous Peoples' Organisations (IPOs) from all over the world. Its objectives are to facilitate the informed participation of NGOs and IPOs in international forest policy meetings and to organise joint advocacy campaigns on issues like Indigenous Peoples' rights, the need for socially-just forest policy and the need to address the underlying causes of forest loss.