



In Defence of Real Forests and their Communities

Global Forest Coalition Annual Report 2017

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Author: Mary Louise Malig and Ashlesha Khadse

Editors: Michael Braverman and Simone Lovera

Design & layout: Oliver Munnion

Cover photo: Colombia CCRI. CENSAT/GFC

The online version of this report and all onward links to documents and other media can be found at:

<http://globalforestcoalition.org/annual-report-2017/>





Who we are

Board Members in 2017: Diego Alejandro Cardona (Chairperson, Colombia), Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim (Vice-chairperson, Chad), Rachel Smolker (Treasurer, US), Fiu Mata'ese Elisara- La'ulu (Samoa), Anna Kirilienko (Kyrgyzstan) and Dil Raj Khanal (Nepal)

Overview of the GFC Team in 2017:

Executive Director: Simone Lovera

Campaigns and Communications Coordinator and

Research Associate: Mary Louise Malig

Senior Gender Advisor: Isis Alvarez

Gender Programme Coordinator: Jeanette Sequeira

Indigenous Advisor: Mrinalini Rai

Media Coordinator: Ashlesha Khadse

Membership Coordinator: Andrey Laletin

Communications Manager and Lead Editor: Ronnie Hall

Editor: Michael Braverman

Social Media and Web Manager: Muhammad Ikhwan

Web Designer and IT Specialist: Jake McMurchie

Publications Designer and Producer of Visual Materials: Oliver Munnion

Climate and Land Use Policy Advisor: Simon Fischer

Climate Finance and Human Rights Advisor: Coraina de la Plaza

Coordinator of Legal Team: Holly Jonas

Financial Controller: Janet Bastian

Financial Administration Assistant: Astrid Kleefstra

Regional Resource People: Andrey Laletin, Souparna Lahiri, Swati Shresth, David Kureeba, Holly Jonas and Mrinalini Rai

Translators:

Spanish: Isabel Diaz Forero and Megan Morrissey

French: Aneli Velazco, Karen Lang, Catherine Bescond-Sands and Martine Ferrer

Russian: Svetlana Abramovich

Message from the Chairperson

Reflecting on 2017, we are reminded of the need to remain firm in our convictions and of the nobility of doing so at all times and to the end, a lesson provided by our friend and mentor Wally Menne, who suddenly passed away on 26 October 2017. With absolute commitment to the cause, Wally dedicated his life to the defence of forests and territories, to the peoples residing in them

that plantations are not forests. His respect for the peoples and communities with which he worked, the clarity of his ideas, the force of his arguments, and his unbreakable discipline are lessons we carry with us since his departure, guaranteeing that he will always remain present among us.

themselves to initiate a phase of advocacy in relevant decision-making spaces such as the Convention on Biological Biodiversity. A task that will continue in terms of campaigning and advocacy at this and other levels.



and the struggle against tree plantations, both in South Africa where he lived, and in countless other corners of the world where he inspired or guided the struggles of so many other organisations and communities.

Undoubtedly, Wally—who for years was part of Global Forest Coalition through Timberwatch, of which he was a member—left his mark on the struggle to make clear

Working on values and principles similar to Wally's, Global Forest Coalition had significant achievements in 2017.

We concluded the process of evaluating the community conservation resilience initiatives in a total of 22 countries. These initiatives reflect a diversity of ways of understanding and coexisting with forests, providing lessons and identifying needs from the communities

The focus and commitment to gender increased in our work with women from various countries, communities and processes. This reaffirmed the fundamental role women play in the understanding and appropriate use of natural goods, as well as the need to transform the relationships that impede their full autonomy, and the aggression and violence they face in different contexts.

Our work on forest plantations also yielded satisfactory results, reflected in indicators such as decision-makers that incorporated concerns and warnings arising from communities and territories, leading to the rejection of projects to develop new forest monocultures.

The mobilisation in Buenos Aires, with friends and allies, highlighted the power of joint action to resist, transform and impede the advancement and imposition of a model that attacks and destroys, represented in this case by the World Trade Organization.

No less important was the growth of our Coalition in 2017, reaching a total of 94 member groups in 62 countries, which, more than simply numbers, represents opportunities for us to grow in our visions, processes, learning and opportunities for advocacy.

However, the challenges of the past year are great and to a large extent determine the work agenda for 2018. Corporate capture and control of the climate sector through the financing of initiatives and strategies, and the creation of public-private alliances require us to work to put real and legitimate solutions in the hands of people and communities.

The energy transition also necessitates greater efforts to move toward a truly sustainable energy grid and form of consumption, one different from that promoted by states, corporations and multilateral spaces whose agendas continue to promote bioenergy and agrofuels as false solutions. Not coincidentally, the

topic proposed by the FAO for the Day of Forests in 2017 was “bioenergy” from wood, which is precisely one of the current causes of the destruction of forests. Therefore, we must also remain firm in our advocacy and positioning regarding unsustainable meat production as a significant cause of deforestation and forest loss. And we must fight against visions that attempt to normalise such a harmful activity, and about which there is no room for criticism or reflection, much less transformation, which is so urgent in this devastating model.

These challenges will be taken up in 2018 with the encouragement and support of our allies and friends, and above all, inspiration from peoples and communities.

Diego Alejandro Cardona
Chairperson



1. Introduction

As a global coalition, we have come far. Founded in 2000, we started with 19 member organizations. Today we have 94 members in 62 countries. The Global Forest Coalition has succeeded in bringing together many diverse organisations in the struggle to defend the world's forests against a dangerous consumer culture promoted by transnational corporations that view nature as a commodity. We have vowed to fight for the rights of Indigenous Peoples, communities, and women who depend on forests, and have always called forests their home and territory. Their culture, knowledge, and customary systems of governance are of fundamental importance to conserving forests against a barrage of extraneous threats from our economic system. We do not believe in a conservation model that is devoid of people. We have always striven to make sure that local communities have a strong voice in forest policies.

2017 was a year of important accomplishments and celebration for GFC. But, we also grieved the death of our dear comrade, Wally Menne, a ferocious defender of forests in South Africa and the world. For GFC, and so many forest activists, it is hard to imagine a world without Wally. He was a winner of GFC's Alexandro Urushadze award, a true inspiration, a pillar of the movement, and a personal hero to many. His death was a great shock, but let us honour his life and spirit, and continue to fight for his vision with as much passion as he did.

In 2017, GFC made significant progress in our three key campaign areas. The first, is the campaign to defend the rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women in forest policy. Under this campaign we completed the third year of our Community Conservation Resilience Initiative. Through this project, our members have carried out bottom up assessments of the resilience of local communities' own conservation efforts in 22 countries. In 2017, we conducted such assessments in 12 Southern countries around the world including India, Georgia, Kenya, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Malaysia, Tanzania, DRC, Ghana and Colombia. A rich tapestry of findings will be compiled into a global report to be launched in 2018. This will be a critical contribution by local communities to conservation policy. We have continued our work under this

campaign with our feminist allies in the Women2030 alliance, an alliance of five major women and gender networks around the world to realise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with gender and climate justice at the centre. Gender equality is a fundamental issue for us, and we strove to address it in all of our campaigns and within our organisation. Through Women2030, GFC and its members facilitated the capacity building of community organisations and women's groups on gender equality, biodiversity,



Wally Menne. Ronnie Hall/GFC



conservation and sustainable development in 14 countries.

Our second major campaign is to stop the treatment of life as a commodity to be traded for profit. Under this campaign, we raised awareness on the impact of market-based conservation and climate schemes, including REDD+. We also targeted major climate funders like the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the Forest Investment Program (FIP) to stop investing in false solutions like monoculture tree plantations. These false solutions, far from solving climate change, cause serious social and environmental impacts as they degrade biodiversity and livelihoods, and provide little employment per hectare of land. Instead, we promoted real solutions like community conservation and restoration initiatives.

Our third major crosscutting campaign is to address the direct and underlying causes of forest loss in both the Global South and North. Whether it is monoculture plantations, livestock rearing, palm oil, bioenergy production, or the free trade agreements and institutions that promote trade in forest commodities, they are all direct threats to the world's

forests. We strongly opposed these trends in collaboration with our allies. In the EU, we joined our allies to stop the classification of bioenergy as a "renewable" energy source as it requires the major importation of wood for burning to produce bioenergy. There is growing scientific evidence that wood-based bioenergy is devastating to forests, forest-dependent peoples, and the climate itself.

Our membership grew in 2017. Ten new members joined GFC, from Latin America, Asia, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Africa. We also conducted a survey to identify the key political priorities of our members and to understand which GFC programmes and campaigns were of interest to them. This process helped us get a clear understanding of the members who were going to be active on specific campaigns.

Apart from these campaigns, we produced a number of compelling publications, especially directed towards policy makers. These received wide reach and appreciation. We also strengthened our communications capacity. One novel approach we initiated in 2017 was a stronger visual focus in our media work. We collected many impacting, high-quality

photographs in our online library and utilised these in exhibitions and social media. We also published a number of stunning photoessays through international media channels which received a great response. Our social media campaigns, followers, and engagements grew significantly. We are thrilled to note that we carried out various media trainings for grassroots women activists with our allies in Women2030. This was a key moment for community women to learn about social media, mainstream media, and how to become more effective communicators of their important struggles. These efforts resulted in a plethora of media content generation. Video and photo testimonies became a popular way for community members to tell their own stories in compelling ways.

The rest of this report will provide a detailed overview of our accomplishments in each of our campaigns and sub-campaigns. A financial summary will follow, and finally an overview of our main publications and press coverage in 2017, which includes links to photo/video testimonials and photoessays.

2. Main Campaigns in 2017



Defending the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities and Women in Forest Policy and Building and Promoting Respect and Appropriate Support for Community Conservation



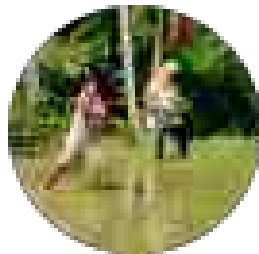
Life as Commerce: Addressing the Corporate Take-over of Forest Policies



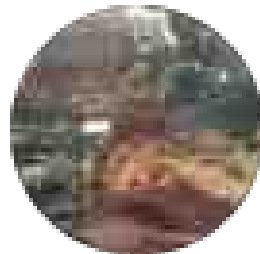
Addressing Key Direct and Underlying Causes of Forest Loss



Community Conservation Resilience Initiative



Defending Women's Rights and Promoting Gender Mainstreaming in Forest Policy



Large-scale Wood-based Bioenergy Production



Unsustainable Livestock Production



Trade

2.1 Defending the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities and Women in Forest Policy and Building and Promoting Respect and Appropriate Support for Community Conservation

2.1.1. Community Conservation Resilience Initiative

The Community Conservation Resilience Initiative (CCRI), supported by the International Climate Initiative of the German Government, is now in its third phase. We are proud to report that multiple community plans, developed through the initiative, have been implemented. We have seen positive ripple effects as a result of these assessments on the sympathetic public, youth, and most importantly, other communities and policymakers.

GFC and our allies facilitated community conservation resilience assessments in between two and five communities in the following 12 countries: Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sri Lanka, Nepal, India, Malaysia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Georgia and Colombia. The following Indigenous Peoples organisations participated in the facilitation of the CCRI assessments: Indigenous Information Network in Kenya, PIDP Shakira Bambuti in DRC, PACOS Trust in Malaysia, and the Nirmanee Development Foundation in Sri Lanka.

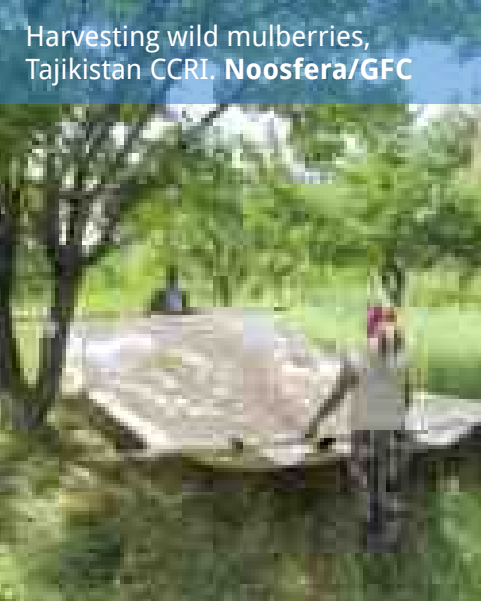
Community-based organisations involved in the assessments include FECOFUN in collaboration with NEFIN in Nepal, and the All India Forum of Forest Movements and Sahjeevan in India. Additionally, the following NGOs conducted assessments: Envirocare in Tanzania, The Development Institute in Ghana, Censat Agua Viva and Fundaexpresion in Colombia, BIOM in Kyrgyzstan, Noosfera in Tajikistan and Zerkova and the Greens in Georgia.



CCRI workshop in Ghana. The Development Institute/GFC



Wetland landscape at Ghana CCRI site. Ken Kinney/GFC



Harvesting wild mulberries, Tajikistan CCRI. Noosfera/GFC



Mountain ecosystem of Baldjuan, Tajikistan CCRI. Noosfera/GFC



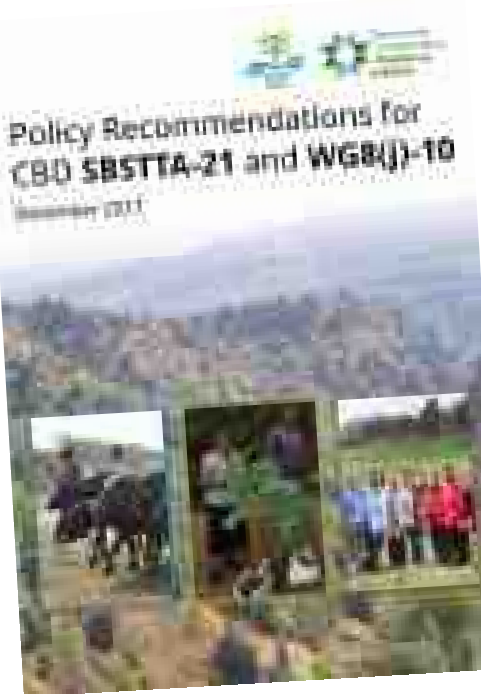
Collecting edible herbs. Noosfera/GFC

Capacity building is an important element of the CCRI. GFC organised capacity building workshops on the CCRI methodology, and outreach and advocacy strategies, in each of the 12 CCRI countries. These capacity building workshops took place on the following dates in 2017: January 26-27, in Moshi, Tanzania; February 1-2, in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo; February 9-10, in Ho, Ghana; March 13-14, in Kegalle, Sri Lanka; June 7, in Tbilisi, Georgia; and August 29, in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic. Moreover, GFC organised three regional capacity building workshops on community conservation and outreach campaigns to disseminate the lessons learned and other experiences, which formed an excellent opportunity for GFC Members, and partners in the Women2030 project, to learn about and share their own experiences on community conservation. Three day

media and communications trainings followed each of the regional workshops, organised under the auspices of the Women2030 program. The first regional workshop for Asia and the Pacific, took place from March 19-21, in Bangkok, Thailand, and was attended by 30 GFC members and other NGOs, IPOs and women's groups from the region. The second regional CCRI workshop took place from June 8-9, in Tbilisi, Georgia. 25 representatives from IPOs and NGOs from 11 countries in North and Central Asia and Eastern Europe attended this workshop. The third regional CCRI workshop for Latin America took place on from October 4-5, in Santiago, Chile. Thirty GFC members and other NGO and IPO representatives attended this workshop. We organised the African meeting in February, 2018.

The national and regional capacity-building workshops GFC organised in 2016 and 2017 have strengthened the capacity of more than 520 community members and support groups, promoted the application of the CCRI participatory assessment methodology, and facilitated advocacy for the recommendations that resulted from the CCRI assessments.

GFC has produced summary reports of all of the national CCRI reports, which we will launch in the form of a Global Report prior to the Convention on Biological meetings in Montreal, and the second Global CCRI Conference, in July 2018. We will publish the full national reports with photoessays, videos and blogs between January and May, 2018.



The key findings from the 12 CCRI summary reports are reflected in a set of [Policy Recommendations for CBD SBSTTA-21 and WG8\(j\)-10](#), and in a special issue of [Forest Cover – Leaving no one behind: Community rights and biodiversity conservation](#). Both reports were widely disseminated, including at the meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, and the Ad Hoc Working Group on Article 8(j) of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) in December 2017.

Outcomes and recommendations of the assessments have been widely used to raise awareness and influence other biodiversity-related policymakers, including in policy for climate finance.

The outcomes of all 35 assessments, and the outcomes of the 33 CCRI assessments performed in 2015 in Iran,

Russia, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Uganda, South Africa, Ethiopia, Panama, Chile and Paraguay, have been translated into concrete policy proposals targeting relevant national and international decision-makers, including in particular the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. As described in detail below, position papers and other advocacy materials, as well as a large number of other communication tools like posters, videos, newsletters and leaflets have been produced and widely disseminated.

The CCRI media and communications activities have been very successful too. Our social media followers and formal press list have been growing rapidly. According to the latest report, GFC's [Facebook page](#) has 2,023 followers, reaching 932 views per day. We have 2,886 followers and 3,100 impressions per day on our [Twitter handle](#). Our visual campaign to convey our CCRI campaigns is active on [Instagram](#) (260 followers) and more recently on [Youtube](#) (578 views). The findings of the CCRI process have appeared in a broad range of [national media](#) formats in countries where [CCRI assessments are underway](#), as well as international mainstream and alternative media outlets such as [The Guardian](#), [Intercontinental Cry](#) and [Telesur](#).

Mainstream media work in 2017 included an interview for Tanzanian public television and a radio interview for a radio station in Ghana. The three photoessays

mentioned below were published on popular media channels, including Telesur. Four video testimonies were produced, including a video testimony by [Nishant Mate](#), one of the leaders of the All India Forum of Forest Movements, a [video from a community member in Tanzania](#) describing their struggle to conserve springs and forests in their community, and two [videos](#) with testimonies by [community members](#) in Ghana. Five [blogs](#) reflecting CCRI results were produced on the national CCRI workshops in Tanzania, DRC and Ghana, the proposed UN Declaration on Peasant Rights, the outcomes of the UN Forum on Forests, the Climate Conference of the Parties in November and the UN Environment Assembly in December.

The project, with its comparative assessment in 22 different countries is clearly leading to more recognition and understanding by policy-makers, and the wider public, of the importance and resilience of community conservation and related Indigenous traditional knowledge and practices. The CCRI results are being incorporated into various national policy developments. For example, they have been incorporated into a draft legislative proposal on community conserved micro-reserves that is currently being discussed by the Kyrgyz parliament. In Nepal, the CCRI recommendations were inserted in the 2nd amendment of the Forest Act, the 6th Amendment of the Forest Regulation Act and the amendment process of the 1973 National Park and Wildlife Reserve Act.

Many additional project stories can be found on the GFC's [Supporting Community Conservation resources page](#).

2.1.2. Defending Women's Rights and Promoting Gender Mainstreaming in Forest Policy (Women2030)

Supported by the Women2030 programme, GFC member groups implemented capacity-building and training initiatives for community organisations, including women's groups and larger civil society organisations, around women's rights and gender equality in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. Capacity building for community organisations is a key component of Women2030, which is a programme that aims to achieve gender-responsive implementation of the SDGs by engaging women and gender-focused organisations and movements around the globe. It is funded by the European Commission's Development Cooperation arm and implemented by GFC together with Women Engage for a Common Future, Women Environmental Programme, Gender and Water Alliance and Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development. In 2017, 13 GFC member groups, with support from Women2030, reached out to their constituencies and networks for capacity building in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, DRC, Ghana, Tanzania, South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Chile, Paraguay, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The capacity building initiatives covered several issues related to gender, biodiversity and sustainable development being faced by our member groups and their constituencies. In Nepal, for example, awareness raising and training was held on the roles of rural

women's groups, community forestry groups and local government to achieve the SDGs in Nepal, and the importance of community action planning to empower women and implement gender-responsive community forestry. In India, capacity building was organised on gender and the SDGs, awareness of traditional and customary rights, rights to self-determination, and legal provisions and protection against domestic



Women2030 workshop in Paraguay. **Susana Balbuena**

violence. In Ghana, there was a focus on how communities can include gender mainstreaming and inclusiveness programming in natural resources management, as well as how grassroots women's groups can develop their own projects or initiatives to

achieve the SDGs. Food sovereignty and land ownership made up the key areas of discussion in three communities in Uganda, including how the revival of Indigenous knowledge, food and seeds can boost food production and build resilience to climate change. Agroecology methods and planting of indigenous trees to address soil erosion and household needs was also part of the training initiatives in Uganda.

In most countries, the process of getting gender equality and women's empowerment in sustainable development on the agenda of community-based organisations, communities and Indigenous Peoples has definitely started. But, a lot more time, engagement, resources and capacity building on these issues is needed and wanted at the community level.

As mentioned above, GFC organised three regional media trainings for its members, women's groups and civil society organisations all supported by the Women2030 programme; the Asia-Pacific training in March in Bangkok, the Central Asian training in June in Tbilisi, Georgia and the Latin American training in October in

Santiago, Chile. Understanding that GFC member groups engage in important advocacy, activist and outreach work throughout the world, these media trainings provided a timely opportunity for member groups to gather, learn, and exchange advocacy

experiences and practices so that groups can communicate more powerful stories and messages through mainstream, social and visual media.

In total, 66 participants (21 men and 45 women) from 30 countries in the three regions attended the media trainings, including 41 GFC members. The trainings were three full days and included theory, skill-sharing and practical sessions. Every participant reported learning new tips to enhance their media and outreach efforts, realising the value of different media platforms for their activism and campaigning, and the need to put more effort and resources into building presence in these areas.

The training enabled participants to understand the importance of having a clear message, the need to identify target audiences, what makes a good story, and key components of a communications strategy—essentially the importance of considering the why, who, what, when, and how of communications. They were introduced to the circular communications planning process (goals, audience, power analysis, messaging, tactics, responses from audience, monitoring, and revising goals and/or tactics). Participants also learned about using and creating strong campaign images to make their campaign stories more compelling. They were introduced to the camera/mobile phone camera's functions and learned about photo composition, file formats and the do's and don'ts of post-processing images. The training also covered critical ethical, legal and security considerations relating to documentary photography, including copyright law and licensing.

GFC and Women2030 produced a media toolkit, which has been published in [French](#), [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [Russian](#), and is available on the GFC and Women2030 websites. The toolkit is intended as a resource to help GFC members, Women2030 partners and other civil society organisations and movements in their outreach, advocacy and campaigning work, so that they can effectively advocate for gender equality and women's rights. It covers basic 'need to know' information about telling stories to new audiences using photography and social media, and gives advice on engaging with mainstream media. It is full of useful tips and formed the basis of the media trainings. In addition, Women2030 has published a comprehensive [Training Master Manual](#) for partners of the Women2030 programme and other civil society organisations that are interested in gender-responsive implementation of the SDGs. The training manual is made up of five modules on the following topics and [available online in English and Spanish](#): Women2030 approaches and the Agenda2030; gender mainstreaming in key SDGs for the programme Women2030; gender sensitive training and coaching skills; mainstreaming gender into organisational policies; and advocacy and policy consultation.

Prior to the Latin American media training, a full day seminar titled Latin American Women in Biodiversity Conservation was organised in October 2017, by a GFC member group in Chile, Colectivo Vientosur, with the support of GFC. The seminar was for GFC Latin American members and other organisations in the region participating in Women2030. The seminar featured panel discussions, reflection and exchange on the role of women in the conservation of biodiversity,



their contribution to local economies, and their experiences of struggle and resistance in different Latin American countries. In particular, there were presentations by women's and Indigenous groups in Brazil about gender, water and environmental education, local Mapuche solidarity economy in Chile and cultural rescue of Guna Yala women's clothing from Panama. There were also discussions on the experiences and collective struggles of women for biodiversity, including the fight against Monsanto in



Women practicing traditional rice cultivation in Indonesia. **Chaus/Walhi**



Planting trees in Kenya. **Indigenous Environment Network**

Paraguay, agroecology in Chile, and the struggle of women for water in Bolivia.

In continuing its longstanding work on defending women's rights and gender equality in international policy spaces, GFC, together with Indigenous Women's Biodiversity Network, led the advocacy efforts of the women's caucus at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) negotiations through submitting policy submissions to the CBD secretariat on the [CBD post-2020 strategic framework](#) and pushing for the women's caucus priorities in CBD negotiations. GFC also

produced a submission on its progress in implementing the CBD 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action and policy recommendations for improving the implementation of this plan. Additionally, through the Women's Major Group for Sustainable Development, GFC supported the advocacy of women's and feminist organisations at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) by highlighting the rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women in forest and biodiversity policy in the advocacy campaigns of the Women's Major Group. GFC also facilitated member groups in Nepal and Chile, FECOFUN and Colectivo Vientosur, to

produce shadow reports on their country's progress on SDG 5 and 15, providing a civil society alternative in the run up to the HLPF. Additionally, GFC actively engaged in the Women and Gender Constituency (WGC) at the meetings of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and GFC's Senior Gender Advisor led the Women's Major Group advocacy campaign at the third United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-3), in December 2017, in Nairobi, Kenya.

2.2 Life as Commerce: Raising Awareness of the Impact of Market-based Conservation Schemes, including REDD+

The overall goal of the campaign, which was partly supported by a grant from the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, was to convince climate policy-makers to refrain from investing in monoculture tree plantations, and instead provide effective and appropriate support to community conservation and restoration initiatives. It is part of a long-term world-wide GFC campaign to convince forest and climate policy makers of the need to clearly distinguish monoculture tree plantations from forest ecosystems. As demonstrated by the Community Conservation Resilience Assessments that GFC facilitated in countries like Chile, India, Uganda, South Africa and Malaysia, monoculture tree plantations cause many negative social and environmental impacts as they replace biodiversity and livelihoods, and provide little employment per hectare of land.

The specific objectives of the project were 1) to implement a targeted advocacy campaign to convince climate funders, including the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the Forest Investment Program (FIP) and other climate policy-makers of the risks and negative impacts of monoculture tree plantations, including wood-based bioenergy plantations and carbon offset plantations; 2) to collaborate with, strengthen and build upon the advocacy and outreach campaigns of communities, social movements and local NGOs resisting climate-finance related tree plantation investments in at least three countries; and 3) to denounce the corporate take-

over of climate finance through blended finance instruments and public-private partnerships, including through exposing conflicts of interests and perverse institutional incentives.

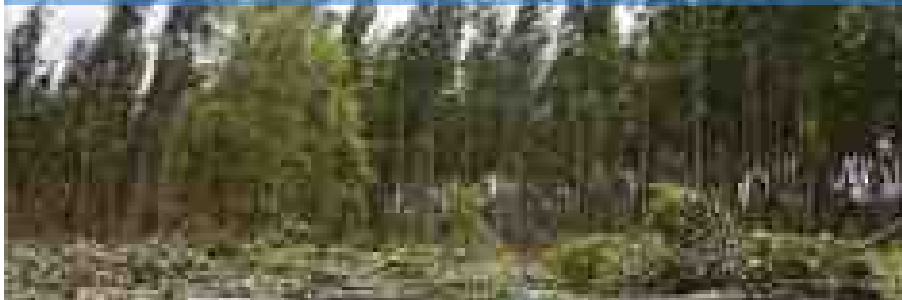
Local and national research, awareness raising and advocacy campaigns were supported in India, Paraguay, Benin, Nepal, Chile, Portugal and South Africa, leading to significantly increased awareness of the risks of tree plantations amongst peasant movements, women's groups, local environmental activists and national and international forest and climate policy makers. In collaboration with the Heinrich Böll Foundation a [Working Paper on the risks of large-scale biosequestration in the context of Carbon Dioxide Removal](#) was published and launched at the Climate Engineering Conference in October in Berlin. A poster exhibition and leaflet with the main findings were presented at the Climate Conference of the Parties in November in Bonn, including at a formal side event and two workshops at the parallel Peoples' Summit. Active advocacy campaigns were organised at the GCF, GEF and FIP, and the UNFCCC, leading to the postponement of a controversial project that would finance monoculture tree plantations in Paraguay, and an explicit commitment by the Nepalese government that they would try to avoid supporting monoculture tree plantation establishment within the framework of their National Forest Investment Plan. Also, in Benin, the national awareness-raising and advocacy campaign on post-Paris plantations has led to a formal commitment by the government to look into this problem.



Community forest management in Nepal.
Nawalparsi/FECOFUN

Eucalyptus plantations and fire in Portugal featured as a case study in GFC's working paper on large-scale biosequestrations.

Allyse Riordan



For FIP, we have been actively following the Sub-Committee meetings and circulating relevant documents and project proposals to different groups and constituencies. Likewise, we have submitted comments to the FIP Administrative Unit on several investment plans and project proposals revolving around bioenergy and monoculture tree plantations, and also analysis of the gender and rights holders engagement issues such as always giving priority to inputs sent by national groups.

For the GCF, we have been actively following all developments by attending Board meetings when possible, through the GCF Civil Society Network, and participating in all coordination calls. We have been advocating to prevent the use of funds for projects that contain components based on the establishment and further promotion of plantations like PROEZA in Paraguay. Under the GCF, we have actively participated in the advocacy work carried out by the Civil Society Network on relevant policies that are essential to avoid the negative impacts of these type of projects such as the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy, the Indigenous Peoples Policy and the Environmental and Social Management System.

We have also joined other networks working on biomass and overall land use related issues to raise awareness of and share information on projects involving plantations and/or biomass energy, that are funded by international climate finance mechanisms. We aim to engage more groups in these processes.

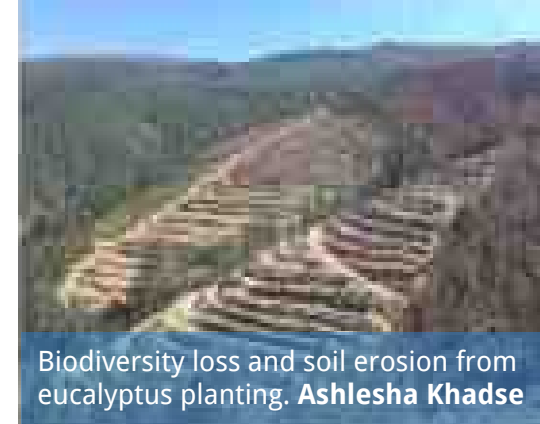
Forest fires hit the headlines throughout 2017, and were particularly bad in Portugal. **Margus Kurvitis**



The campaigns and discussions at these meetings also lead to significantly increased awareness amongst policy makers and NGO and Indigenous observers. However, a major challenge continues to be that the forestry sector has major vested interests in the plantations industry, and it continues to reject any proposals to clearly disqualify tree plantations from the definition of "forests", as was shown at the October 2017 discussions at the UN Committee on Food Security. However, these discussions, and the discussions at the other meetings mentioned above, opened the door for a further consideration of the

negative social and environmental impacts of tree plantations, including at the upcoming meeting of the High Level Political Forum in July 2018, which will address SDG 15 on biodiversity and forest conservation.

A number of important developments took place that were relevant to the context of the campaign. The GCF Board adopted a request for proposals for REDD+ projects in October 2017. This means that we can expect a significant increase in forest-related funding applications to the GCF in the coming years.



Biodiversity loss and soil erosion from eucalyptus planting. **Ashlesha Khadse**



Eucalyptus plantations spread fires quickly over large distances, often making escape impossible. **Dominos Patacho**



A project approved by the Green Climate Fund in Paraguay involves using wood from tree plantations to dry genetically modified soy beans, one of the main drivers of deforestation in the country, at facilities such as this one. **Ronnie Hall/GFC**

public-private partnerships, including through exposing conflicts of interests and perverse institutional incentives at interventions at the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties and parallel events, and at the above-mentioned climate fund meetings.

An unexpected result, was the initial rejection of the Paraguayan PROEZA project by the Green Climate Fund Board, partly over concerns about the fact that the project would promote monoculture tree plantations. An adapted version of the project was adopted in February 2018, but the discussions at the Board meeting were very helpful in terms of raising awareness amongst policy makers and civil society observers about the impacts of tree plantations. In fact, both the discussions at the GCF Board meetings and the discussions at the FIP meeting demonstrated that an

increasing number of climate and forest policy-makers are well aware of the potential risks of monoculture tree plantations. It is important that this momentum is used in the coming years to arrive at concrete decisions and agreements that address the negative impacts of monoculture tree plantations and halt and reverse their expansion.

Meanwhile, the Climate Investment Funds, of which the Forest Investment Program is one, are slowly running out of money now that more and more donors are shifting their financial contributions to the Green Climate Fund. This implies that the investment plans that were adopted at the December 2017 meeting, and previous meetings, will not necessarily lead to the FIP actually financing the proposed actions. Rather, the countries themselves are urged to find

their own funding for these plans. Regrettably, this might result in countries becoming even more dependent on financial support from the private sector, which enhances the risk that they will support monoculture tree plantations and other commercial forestry activities.

We also denounced the corporate take-over of climate finance through blended finance instruments and

2.3 Addressing key Direct and Underlying Causes of Forest Loss, including in particular:

2.3.1 Large-Scale Wood-Based Bioenergy Production

As part of our campaign on monoculture tree plantations, GFC continues to be actively engaged in international campaigns against industrial and other forms of large-scale wood-based bioenergy production. We closely followed bioenergy related discussions at the regional and global level, including the discussions within the European Union. Sadly, bioenergy continues to be classified as “renewable” and “carbon neutral” in the EU, despite a rapidly growing body of scientific evidence that wood-based bioenergy has devastating consequences for forests and human health (as it causes significant air pollution), and is actually no better for the climate than coal. The EU's decision on bioenergy will have significant consequences for forests within the EU and around the world, as the EU is a major importer of wood for industrial bioenergy production, and it sets a dangerous precedent for the rest of the world.

Cynically, international momentum to create awareness of the negative impacts of wood-based bioenergy was formed by the International Day of Forests 2017, as the FAO chose wood-based bioenergy

significant media coverage. They also contributed to raising the awareness of more mainstream NGOs on the negative impacts of wood-based bioenergy.

In the course of the year, GFC became more actively involved in a small network of NGOs

that is analysing the potential impacts of geoengineering and organising various campaigns to halt geoengineering proposals. Now that most countries are far behind in meeting the necessary greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets that would halt devastating climate change, shady corporate-sponsored scientists and NGOs are increasingly promoting large-scale manipulation of the atmosphere or the biosphere as a potential

option to halt or postpone climate change. One of the geoengineering proposals that would have devastating consequences for forests and forest peoples is Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS), which basically proposes to cover thousands of hectares of land with monoculture tree plantations and



as the main theme of the day. This caused an outcry amongst GFC members and allies. A large number of groups gathered in a successful joint social media and mainstream media campaign to protest this “International Day of Burning Forests”. The actions, which were coordinated by Biofuelwatch, triggered

other bioenergy crops, and subsequently store the carbon that is produced when these bioenergy crops are burned. Some geoengineering proposals also propose large-scale biosequestration in the form of massive monoculture tree plantations as a policy to temporarily sequester carbon.

In collaboration with the Heinrich Böll Foundation, GFC published an in-depth analysis of these proposals in the form of a Working Paper on the risks of large-scale biosequestration in the context of Carbon Dioxide Removal and presented it through a poster presentation at the Climate Engineering Conference in October 2017, and at the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties in November 2017, in Bonn. We also published and disseminated a four-page summary of the detailed paper for a wider target audience of climate policy makers, activists and social movements.

GFC continues to be actively involved in the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process, although less with the objective to influence the – often very meagre – official negotiation outcomes. But the climate talks tend to form an important gathering of policy-makers and other actors responsible for climate action on the ground. The UNFCCC meetings, thus form an excellent opportunity to raise the awareness of policy-makers and other actors of the risks of certain false solutions, including wood-based bioenergy, monoculture tree plantations and market-based conservation approaches like REDD+. GFC and its members remain actively involved in the Climate Justice movement, the Women and Gender Constituency, the International Indigenous Forum on Climate Change and other relevant networks. With the help of allies, we also monitored the discussions in the Intergovernmental

Panel on Climate Change on geoengineering and biosequestration. GFC staff, and a large number of member groups, participated in the Conference of the Parties of the Climate Convention in November 2017, and the preparatory meetings of its Subsidiary Bodies to the Climate Convention in May 2017. We organised an exhibition on the impacts of wood-based bioenergy and monoculture tree plantations, and the impacts of unsustainable livestock production, and organised two side events, one entitled “What’s at Steak?” about the main issues that are at stake in land use policy in general, and one entitled “Livestock, Biosequestration and Forests: Closing the Reality Gap in Land Use Policy and Finance,” that focused more in depth on the risks

of BECCS and other forms of large-scale biosequestration.

We organised two events at the Peoples Summit that took place parallel to the Climate Summit in Bonn. One event was fully focused on the risks of large-scale biosequestration. It featured presentations by member groups and Indigenous representatives from Kenya, Sri Lanka and Paraguay on the risks and negative impacts of monoculture tree plantations, and featured an introduction to the role of geoengineering proposals, and climate finance, in promoting such plantations. We also spoke at an event on geoengineering, organised by the Heinrich Böll Foundation.



Policy support for bioenergy is leading to huge demand for wood pellets globally. **Dogwood Alliance**

2.2.2 Unsustainable Livestock Production

The main goal of the unsustainable livestock production campaign, which is supported by Misereor, is to reduce the negative impacts of unsustainable livestock production. This is done through establishing an active international alliance of social movements and civil society organisations from producer and consumer countries that campaign against unsustainable forms and levels of livestock production. In addition, awareness-raising amongst policy makers and social movements of the need to address unsustainable livestock production in a holistic, rights-based manner is important.

The global alliance against unsustainable livestock farming was originally established at an international strategy meeting that took place in November 2014, in Asunción, Paraguay. The alliance members are all subscribed to a common listserv through which they regularly exchange information about important livestock-related developments, as well as develop joint plans and activities. We also organised a number of informal and formal international strategy meetings to which all members of the alliance were invited, including a full-day meeting in December 2016, in Cancun, Mexico, where we evaluated the activities of the alliance so far and developed joint strategies and concrete plans for the coming years.

The alliance-building process, while successful, still needs more work and support in order to move it forward. Right now, the alliance is still informal, but it has an active listserv and members are frequently

collaborating on joint activities and campaigns. The alliance has almost 50 member organisations and we have achieved a wide breadth of membership ranging from peasant farmers, small producers, pastoralists and Indigenous Peoples, to consumer groups and environmentalists. All members share common goals and targets, and they are complementing each other's strengths, experiences and knowledge. Additionally, the diversity of the alliance has proven to be an important asset in outreach and advocacy campaigns. The listserv has been used to do information and knowledge sharing between alliance members, and there are numerous examples of successful collaboration between the alliance members, especially around international policy processes like the Climate Convention and the World Trade Organization (see below). GFC also participated in the Seventh Conference of La Via Campesina in Spain in July 2017, where La Via Campesina openly acknowledged the specific problems of livestock production in its [official declaration](#).

Aside from denouncing the negative impacts of unsustainable livestock production, GFC has also worked on the promotion of alternatives to such unsustainable production. In March 2017 GFC produced a briefing paper titled "[Our food is not your business: Alternatives to unsustainable livestock and feedstock farming and the current corporate free trade model](#)." This paper aims to contribute to the many ongoing efforts, actions, and discussions on alternatives to industrial livestock production, whether



local, specific or systemic. It considers how we can strengthen, link and build on existing genuine alternatives, as well as creating new ones, together with social movements, small farmers, small producers, environmentalists, consumer campaigners and many others. It includes examples of many different projects and programmes underway around the world that are implemented by members of the Global Alliance against Unsustainable Livestock Farming and other allies, and aims to inspire others to



discussing the risks and opportunities of addressing unsustainable land use through the climate regime. This included the impact of livestock production and current dietary habits, monoculture tree plantations, forest fires, offsets for aviation and other polluting sectors, and the role of international trade. The event was very well attended and led to an interesting discussion afterwards. The panel was represented by Cynthia Elliot from World Resources Institute, Coraina de la Plaza of GFC and Souparna Lahiri from the All India Forum of Forest Movements. GFC also disseminated copies of the “What’s at Steak?” report, summaries and displayed a “What’s at Steak?” poster at the Bonn meeting: Download the poster here: [English](#) / [Russian](#).

Lastly, GFC has been collaborating with the Critical Information Collective (CIC) on the further development of an elaborate online library of campaign photos and information materials that can be shared and used

Peasant farmers cool the planet. **La Via Campesina**

join the discussion, to take action and to help build socially and environmentally just alternatives.

GFC, and other members of the International Alliance on Unsustainable Livestock Farming, continued to highlight the importance of addressing unsustainable livestock production and redirect perverse incentives

that support such production at key international meetings.

In May 2017, the 46th session of the subsidiary bodies and the third part of the first session on the implementation of the Paris Agreement took place in Bonn. GFC hosted a side event titled, “What’s at Steak?”

by the alliance for campaigning and communications work against unsustainable livestock production.

2.2.2 Trade

In the WTO OUT Week of Action and the 11th Ministerial of the World Trade Organization, numerous events, panel discussions, workshops, actions, mobilisations, music and cultural festivals took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 7-13 November, to send a loud and clear message to the WTO: Get out! GFC, supported by the Isvara Foundation and the Rosa Luxembourg Foundation and in collaboration with allies, including the Confluencia FueraOMC, ATTAC Argentina, Siemenpuu and La Via Campesina, co-organised several events and actions both inside and outside the WTO Ministerial venue.

GFC members spoke at a number of panel discussions at the People's Summit, including: Inés Franceschelli of Henoi and Ñamoseke Monsanto on, "Extractivism and International Markets", Letícia Tura of FASE on, "Social, Environmental and Climate Justice", and Pablo Solón of Fundación Solón on, "Alternatives to Extractivism from the Peoples". These events all contributed to the overall theme on Forests and Biodiversity, in which the whole GFC delegation actively participated.

Inside the negotiations, GFC along with our allies closely followed the developments of two key negotiations: the WTO and the EU-Mercosur trade deal, relaying important information to allies working on the outside. We also held a press conference in the Ministerial venue to get our messages across in the media. We explained how the deals on the table would be detrimental to forest peoples, small farmers and peasants, workers, women, and the planet. We also



took part in an action inside the Ministerial venue, sending a clear message to the negotiators that we reject the deals on the table, and highlighting the fact that 300,000 farmers have already committed suicide in India alone because of the WTO's unfair trade policies.

There was then a huge mobilisation in the streets of central Buenos Aires with people joining in to sing, dance, and chant: "WTO Out!" or "Fuera OMC!" Shortly afterwards, the negotiations collapsed over a conflict between the US Trade Representative and most other countries over a deal that would provide public stockholding for food security for small producer countries.

The last day of the Ministerial finished with a very delayed closing session that refused to admit that both the WTO Ministerial Declaration and an EU-Mercosur deal had failed. There was no consensus on a Ministerial Declaration and instead, the Chair simply issued a statement ending with, "there is life after Buenos Aires". Indeed there is life after Buenos Aires—as the people who mobilise against the WTO around the world have shown, we can move forward with hope and determination to push for people's alternatives, and an Economy for Life that protects and provides for people and the planet in a truly sustainable and holistic way.

3. Quality Management, Planning and Membership Development

GFC's quality management system includes regular reporting by staff, team members, and groups receiving financial support. We have developed a detailed Internal Control System, and organise annual monitoring, evaluation and planning meetings of the advisory group. Board members and other member group representatives are welcome to participate in these annual meetings. To save flight-related emissions and financial resources the meetings are normally combined with Board meetings and other internal meetings, including meetings of the Steering Committee of the Community Conservation Resilience Initiative. Often, these meetings are held back to back with other important international meetings. The quality management system also includes a regular external evaluation, which takes place every 4 or 5 years. The last external evaluation took place in 2015, the next evaluation is planned for 2019.

The advisory group and Board meetings in 2017 took place in July 2017 in Lousal, Portugal, back to back with the 7th Conference of La Via Campesina in the North of

Spain. Meeting in Portugal gave us the opportunity to link up and visit the project sites of our Portuguese member group Quercus and see the devastating

GFC staff and board members visited a farm run by member group Quercus, in Portugal. **Cath Traynor**



impacts of the fires that raged through the monoculture tree plantations in Portugal, which killed almost 100 people in the course of 2017.

In the meetings, we discussed lessons learned in the different campaigns and short and medium-term campaign plans. We discussed, in particular, the CCRI and membership development, including ways to more closely involve members in GFC's international campaigns. It was pointed out that the four regional meetings that were organised in collaboration with the Women2030 programme formed an excellent opportunity for GFC members to come together, exchange views, skills and visions, and to involve our growing membership even more actively in the different programs, projects and campaigns of GFC.

Additionally, we worked out the time and venue of the 2nd Members Assembly of GFC and Global CCRI Conference, and discussed internal and external communications and media work, and GFC's financial situation. Moreover, the meetings

included a skillshare and discussion on the latest developments in climate and land use policy, including livestock, forest restoration, bioenergy and REDD+.

4. Conclusions

In this report, we shared the accomplishments of our key campaigns, our publications and communications milestones in 2017. We have learned much from our journey.

We have learned that our campaign to defend Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women has taken on a life of its own by having built a large global network of IPOs, NGOs, forest peoples and so many others who are defending community conservation and communities' rights. Policymakers have started to pay attention, and some countries have started to implement supportive policies. We may be approaching the final year of the Community Conservation Resilience Initiative, a major effort under this campaign, but the momentum that has already been unleashed will continue. Our collective struggle for a transformative conservation model that includes people and gives them territorial rights to defend Mother Earth will remain a priority for us in the coming years.

Our campaigns to address the underlying causes of forest loss have grown into new areas. Apart from challenging monoculture plantations, livestock, bioenergy, commodities, trade, and other drivers of deforestations, we became more involved with a small group of NGOs aiming to unmask the threats of false climate solutions like geoengineering through manipulation of the atmosphere and biosphere. We will continue to challenge such preposterous ideas that are far removed from nature and people, and do not tackle the root causes of forest loss and climate change.

With our work on women's rights and gender equality, we have learned that women face serious threats to their equal and meaningful participation in leadership and decision-making roles from the local to the global level. With our allies in Women2030, we have devised a number of important recommendations, focusing on capacity building, collecting gender sensitive data,

pushing for laws to stop violence against women, and creating spaces for solidarity and learning. These are key areas that require significant work. We will continue to promote these and other key recommendations in our policy engagement on the SDGs and climate with Women2030.

At the heart of our work has been the effort to challenge the consumerist culture led by the global elite that drives the world's ecological problems and marginalises so many. This culture has been pushed by an unfair economic system that enriches a few at the cost of many. As we now look forward towards 2018, for another year of struggle, let us remember the words of our dear comrade Wally Menne, ["You have got to live simply so that people can simply live."](#)

5. Financial Summary Report

Grants

The German International Climate Initiative contribution to the CCRI	362.647
The Christensen Fund, contribution to national Community Conservation Resilience Assessments	48.824
Siemenpuu through Nape, contribution to national Community Conservation Resilience Assessments	25.000
European Union through WECF, contribution to the Women2030 program	226.150
Misereor, contribution to the campaigns against unsustainable livestock production	25.000
Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, contribution to the campaign against Post-Paris Plantations	20.734
Isvara Foundation, contribution to the trade campaign	1.680
Other, including Heinrich Boell Foundation and private donations	5.474
Total	715.510

Expenses

Small grants and third party assignments	205.161
Staff costs	185.475
Travel expenses	78.189
International workshops and events	98.157
Publications and other communication	121.345
Administration costs	24.693
Office costs	9.812
Total	722.832

Result for the year **-7.322**

The full audited accounts of the Global Forest Coalition are available upon request.

6. Press Coverage and Publications

6.1 Publications

Policy Recommendations for CBD SBSTTA-21 and WG8(j)-10

Working paper: The risks of large-scale biosequestration in the context of Carbon Dioxide Removal

Forest Cover 52 – The Burning Issue

Forest Cover 53 – Leaving no one behind: Community rights and biodiversity conservation

Forest Cover 54 – Latin America's Veins Remain Open

From Bali to Buenos Aires: An Economy for Life

Final statement of the Peoples' Summit **"WTO Out, Building Sovereignty"** and for more information, see here: fueraomc.org

Four video testimonies were produced, including a **video testimony by Nishant Mate**, one of the leaders of the All India Forum of Forest Movements, a **video from a community member in Tanzania** describing how their struggle to conserve springs and forests in their community, and **two videos with testimonies by community members in Ghana**.

Five blogs reflecting CCRI results were produced on the national CCRI workshops in Tanzania, DRC and Ghana, the proposed UN Declaration on Peasant Rights, the outcomes of the UN Forum on Forests, the Climate Conference of the Parties in November and the UN Environment Assembly in December.

6.2 Press releases

"Bioenergy Burns Forests"—Environmentalists Denounce UN's Bioenergy Themed International Day of Forests

New GFC Report Highlights the Risks of Large-scale Biosequestration as a form of Carbon Dioxide Removal

Forest activists celebrate collapse of WTO and EU-Mercosur negotiations in Argentina

Summit of the Peoples #FueraOMC: Building Sovereignty

Aviation Emissions Under Scrutiny on Sustainable Tourism Day

Divest from destructive Rampal coal businesses, groups urge global investors

6.3 Photoessays

Indigenous communities are at the heart of conserving biodiversity and protecting mother earth by PACOS Trust and GFC

Indigenous Mapuche Play Key Role Protecting Chile's Environment by Carolina Lagos of Colectivo Vientosur and GFC

How indigenous nomadic pastoralists in Iran are using GIS maps to defend and conserve their territories by Ghanimat Azdhari of CENESTA and GFC

Indigenous West Sumatran Women Protect Forest by Chaus Uslaini and GFC

Forest fires in Portugal

6.4 Opinion articles

Stalemate In The WTO But No permanent solution for the right to food by Mary Louise Malig

International Day Against Monoculture Plantations by Oliver Munnion

Calling Out Violence Against Women Human Rights and Environmental Defenders by Jeanette Sequeira

FAO's Bioenergy Themed International Day Of Forests Is A Threat To Mother Earth by Souparna Lahiri

What's at "Steak?" The Need for a Just and Sustainable Global Food System by Ashlesha Khadse

RCEP in India: A creamy deal for transnational dairy corporations, growing resistance from farmers by Ashlesha Khadse

6.5 Examples of news coverage involving GFC and member groups

The Guardian Q&A: Forests soak up greenhouse gases, so how do we ensure their protection?

Ghana asked to adopt Community Conservation Resilience Initiative

Activists demand repeal of India tree-planting law hurting forest dwellers

Women who have been tortured for the environment

Women groups task UNEA-3 on safeguards for environmental defenders

Biomass under fire from environmental groups

Environmental groups write Letter to FAO director on bioenergy

Green groups urge FAO to change "misleading" forest definition

Bioenergy Burns Forests

Los ecologistas afean a la FAO que promoció "la quema de los bosques"

El conflicto de la soja en Paraguay

'Marriage of death': Protesters oppose Bayer-Monsanto merger

Chile, Pretenden legitimar alianza pro árboles transgénicos

Se organiza la resistencia a la presencia de la OMC en Buenos Aires

"Fuera OMC": manifestantes protestaron en la sede de la conferencia ministerial

UN agency coverage of our event

Stop the ECB subsidising climate disaster

América Latina, donde el ecologismo cuesta la vida

Tribune de 150 organisations en soutien à Florent Compain, président des Amis de la Terre : "Nous accusons !"

COP23 ends without concrete decision on climate finance

Industria de carne y lácteos devasta bosques de México y AL

Brazil beef scandal highlights dangers of industrial livestock farming

How China's Growing Appetite for Meat Affects Us All

GFC meeting in Portugal

Rachel Smolker: Vermont Gas' permit violations

Here We Go Again

People, Forests, Rights

Global Forest Coalition (GFC) is an international coalition of 94 NGOs and Indigenous Peoples' Organisations from 61 countries defending social justice and the rights of forest peoples in forest policies. We believe in forest conservation by and for people, and the sustainable co-existence of forest ecosystems, Indigenous Peoples and local communities as a way of saving forests.

We would like to express our gratitude to our members and all other institutions, donors, communities, groups and individuals that help us realise our campaign objectives.

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Tree planting with Envirocare in Tanzania. **Simone Lovera/GFC**