

ALTER-ECO

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Climate Justice Views from Social Movements and Impacted Communities

Indigenous Groups Reject UN REDD Program as Fundamentally Flawed

The Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) in partnership with Indigenous Peoples and social movements from around the world, are in Cancun for COP16 fighting the false solution known as REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation). Through a variety of tactics, IEN is exposing REDD in all its forms as irrefutably flawed, bankrolled by big polluters, intrinsically linked to the carbon market, and quite possibly resulting in the largest land grab of all time.

While most have low expectations for the outcomes of COP16, those of us here understand that we are debating a new global regime for forests. Over 1.6 billion peoples' livelihoods depend on forests, but only nine percent of the world's forests are legally owned by forest-dwelling and Indigenous communities. People without land rights have no legal power to influence REDD projects. In order to protect corporate investments, REDD pi-

lot projects have already encouraged forest enclosures, arrests and evictions in Kenya, Congo and Papua New Guinea.



Photo: Orin Langelle / GJEP

Moreover, by allowing countries like the U.S. to offset their emissions with projects abroad, destructive and polluting fossil fuel projects in Indigenous, low-income, and people of color communities in the U.S. are allowed to continue –

now with a “green” but false stamp of approval.

Climate justice communities, organizations, and networks are calling for real solutions that start at the grassroots and address the real drivers of climate change. In Cancun, these climate justice champions are supporting the government of Bolivia in upholding the Cochabamba Peoples Agreement and the rights of Mother Earth; calling for a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol in which industrialized countries commit to addressing their historical responsibility; and stopping any agreement on REDDs. Representing various Indigenous Peoples of North America and global allies, IEN is calling for rights. Not REDDs.

For more information, please see <http://noredd.makenoise.org/> for the “No REDD, A Reader” publication.

— Jihan Gearon
Indigenous Environmental Network

WikiLeaks Reveals U.S. Strong-arming Agreement on Copenhagen Accord

Recent release of confidential cables obtained by WikiLeaks reveals that the United States used conditional funding promises, spying and threats by their Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and cyber warfare in order to overwhelm and strong arm countries opposing the controversial “Copenhagen Accord”, an unofficial document whose text was negotiated by a sub-

set of the 194 member countries to the Convention in the final days of the Copenhagen conference in 2009.

The US diplomatic cables once again reveal that the altruistic, earth-saving rhetoric of many developed countries is merely a façade, as they consistently pursue inadequate mitigation commitments, shady funding practices and unrestricted access to

developing nations' economies via carbon markets and offsets.

Full transparency and access to decision-making and text negotiation is once again in jeopardy in the UNFCCC climate change negotiations. Secret consultations and Notes by Chairs submitted to the Convention are clearly methods to subvert democratic decision mak-

(WikiLeaks, Continued on page 2)

(WikiLeaks, Continued from front)

ing and squelch dissent around the form of the future agreement and the role of carbon markets.

We urge developing countries, particularly those who were blocked out of negotiations last year, to remember what happened in Copenhagen. It is time to stand up to developed countries that pursue unilateralism with impunity.

The sovereignty of developing countries is no less important than developed countries'. We encourage developing countries to remember that your strength is in your numbers and climate justice advocates and impacted community representatives are here to back you.

— Shannon Gibson
Global Justice Ecology Project

Who We Are

Alter-ECO is published by a group of social movements and impacted communities organizations at the UNFCCC COP-16, who call for climate change solutions based on social and ecological justice.

Alter-ECO does not necessarily reflect the views of the participating organizations, networks or contributors to Alter-ECO.

To submit articles, cartoons, etc., please email smg.justice@gmail.com.

Bio-fuelling the COP hypocrisy

"Chiapas Ecobus 100% Biodiesel!" scream the sides of the buses that endlessly transport delegates between Cancun Messe and Moon Palace. They're saying it like it's something to be proud of. As if biofuels were actually a real climate-friendly alternative to fossil fuels, instead of a social, ecological and climate disaster.

Do COP organisers really not know that the science shows that

the production and processing of biofuels produce much more CO2 emissions per gallon than fossil fuels? Have they not noticed the devastating global food crisis, caused in large part by biofuel production displacing and using food crops?

In Africa, we've seen how biofuel plantations displace farmers and indigenous peoples, cut down rainforests, and drive corporate grabbing of our most fertile and

agricultural land. Land that we urgently need to grow food. Yet the buses state proudly that "100 thousand hectares of Jatropha in Chiapas" were used to grow the oilseeds.

It seems that we've all been brought here by an unwieldy vehicle that promotes false solutions with disastrous social and environmental impacts, and is failing to address climate change. Hmm, sound familiar?

— Anne Maina & Teresa Anderson
African Biodiversity Network

Side Events Serve as Public Relations venue for Multilateral Bank Interests

Apart from the strong-arm tactics being deployed by rich countries in the formal negotiations, another form of maneuvering is taking place in side events against developing countries here in Cancun.

A side event on Monday afternoon was particularly revealing. Lined up on the panel were 7 representatives from the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), nominally reflecting on the 'lessons learnt' from their involvement to date in climate finance. Sadly, the event was more one of public relations than of honest evaluation. Much was made of how these institutions were uniquely positioned to

mobilize and coordinate new sources of climate finance; and how they have already massively expanded their portfolio in this area. But there was no assessment of their track record of debt-creation, dirty development, and economic policy conditionalities that harm the poor.

Nor was there any reflection on the appropriateness of forcing the world's poorest nations to pay twice for a problem they did little to create by taking on new loans for climate adaptation. And there was no discussion about the lack of democratic accountability implicit in the channeling of climate finance

through donor-controlled agencies. The UN Adaptation Fund wasn't mentioned once.

The implicit 'lesson' at this event is that the MDBs are the best channels for climate finance. But a more honest review of their role to date would lead to the opposite conclusion; that the track record of the MDBs suggests they are, and would continue to be, deeply inequitable and undemocratic channels of future climate finance. As the saying goes; "don't believe the hype", especially here in Cancun.

— Julian Oram
World Development Movement