

June 8, 2009

Halt Climate Change ---- Halt Forest destruction ---- Halt Plantations

The undersigned broad coalition of NGOs, Indigenous Peoples' Organizations and women's groups call upon the Parties to the FCCC to take into account the critical role of forest conservation in climate change mitigation. The protection of forest biodiversity is vital for life on earth. Native forest ecosystems provide us with clean air, clean water, a safe climate, food, fodder and shelter and they are an important part of our global and cultural identity. Forests provide aesthetic and intrinsic values. Indigenous Peoples and traditional local communities of the forests are the guardians and original conservationists of the forest. They maintain a food sustenance and socio-cultural relationship to the forests based on their cosmovision.

For that reason, we call upon Parties to:

- Immediately put in place rights-based and equitable policies and institutions to halt deforestation and forest degradation and the destruction of other natural ecosystems like peat lands and grasslands in all continents
- Identify and address the direct and underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation
- Ensure that these policies and measures uphold international human rights and environmental standards and are fully consistent with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This includes the effective adoption and implementation by all Parties and all UN agencies and multilateral banks of the Right to Free Prior and Informed Consent of Indigenous Peoples and local forest dependent communities
- Ensure that these policies take into account the specific role, rights and interests of women and are fully consistent with Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
- Ensure that these policies are fully consistent with the Convention on Biodiversity and its Expanded Program of Work on Forest Biodiversity and contribute meaningfully to conserving and enhancing biodiversity and related cultural diversity, traditional knowledge and spirituality
- Explicitly exclude the establishment and management of monoculture tree plantations, including genetically modified tree plantations, and the practice of industrial logging from these policies. This also implies adopting a forest definition that clearly distinguishes forests from monoculture tree plantations
- Ensure any policies intended to reduce deforestation and forest degradation include measures to reduce consumption of forest products, especially in the Industrialized North
- Ensure these policies secure the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits of forests and other ecosystems, both between countries and within countries, taking into account the critical role of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women in conserving and restoring forests and other ecosystems. This also implies recognizing the customary and collective land tenure and forest rights of Indigenous Peoples and ensuring the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women in all decision-making processes related to forests;

We call upon developed countries to recognize the historical debt to developing countries caused by their excessive greenhouse gas emissions. This implies immediate and drastic cuts in their domestic greenhouse gas emissions (45% by 2020 / 95% by 2050 as an absolute minimum) AS WELL AS providing sufficient financial and technological support to enable developing countries to halt the destruction of forests and other ecosystems.

It is too late for either/or policies. Any form of carbon offsetting, including CDM forestation/reforestation and REDD offset projects will only increase the ecological footprint and carbon debt of developed countries and must thus be avoided. (Due to a broad range of ethical, social and methodological risks, forest-based carbon offsets will undermine an effective, equitable and socially just climate regime.)

Climate change mitigation and sustainable forest management must be based on different mindsets with full respect for Nature, and not on carbon offset mechanisms. Public funding mechanisms that ensure environmental integrity and equitable distribution of funds must be made established.

Signatories: International Youth caucus in Bonn; Ecosystems Climate Alliance; Global Forest Coalition; The Wilderness Society; World Rainforest Movement; Global Witness; Greenpeace; Rainforest Action Network; Wetlands International; Rainforest Foundation Norway; Rainforest Foundation UK; FERN; Friends of the Earth Sobrevivencia / FoE-Paraguay; Indigenous Environmental Network; Global Justice Ecology Project; CORE India; Life gender, Environment and Diversity Germany Sustainable Population Australia; Tanzania Forest Conservation Group; the Tanzania Community Forest Conservation Network MJUMITA; Stop GE Tree Campaign; RAVA Institute Indonesia; SWBC Nepal; Timberwatch Coalition South Africa; Pacific Indigenous Peoples Environment Coalition; Friends of the Siberian Forests Russia; Focus on the Global South; Women's Environment Network Australia; Biofuelwatch Women Environmental Programme Nigeria; Just Environment; COECO-CEIBA; Friends of the Earth Costa Rica; WALHI-Friends of the Earth-Indonesia; Down to Earth; Carbon Trade Watch; Women's Environment and Development Organization; Watch Indonesia; Asociacion ANDES Peru; Ecologistas en Accion Spain; Sustainable Energy and Economy Network; North East Peoples Alliance on Trade, Finance and Development India; WISE Inc. Philippines; GenderCC; FASE Solidarity and Education Brazil; Global Exchange; Kingdom Narintarakul Thai Working group for Climate Justice; Union pour l'Emancipation de la Femme Autochtone