



global witness

For immediate release: 2 October 2009

Climate agreement at risk of subsidising logging of primary rainforests

The post-Kyoto United Nations climate agreement currently being negotiated in Bangkok is at risk of subsidising industrial scale logging of primary forests, according to [Trick or Treat?: REDD, Development and Sustainable Forest Management](#), a briefing paper released today by Global Witness. Without good governance and a focus on protecting intact natural forests rather than the forest industry, any climate agreement has little chance of addressing the nearly 20 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions that stem from the destruction of tropical forests.

The introduction of the term “sustainable forest management” (SFM) in the negotiating text of the agreement’s forest component, called REDD – reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation in developing countries – will ultimately undermine its effective implementation, according to the paper.

“The term ‘sustainable forest management’ has been co-opted by the forest industry to improve its image without actually changing the logging practices that are currently destroying the world’s remaining tropical forests,” said Dr. Rosalind Reeve of Global Witness.

SFM is a poorly-defined term that in practice has included industrial scale logging in intact natural (primary) forests. In addition to being a major source of carbon emissions, industrial logging has failed to bring meaningful development benefits to forest communities or to provide lasting economic benefits to tropical forest-rich countries. Moreover, so-called “sustainable” logging dramatically increases the likelihood that a forest will be entirely converted to other land uses.

Inclusion of loopholes such as SFM within the scope of REDD would allow industrial logging to continue with business-as-usual practices and even to be funded by the very mechanism that is supposed to stop this destruction.

The industrial scale logging supported by SFM has proven to be difficult if not impossible to regulate since most countries which stand to benefit from REDD suffer from poor legal frameworks, weak enforcement, and corruption involving political elites and the logging industry.

“REDD needs to support alternatives to industrial-scale logging that protect forest carbon and ecosystems and provide equitable, lasting and sustainable development benefits,” said Reeve. “But corruption and mismanagement will sabotage REDD, so good governance must underpin the whole system – without it, REDD will fail.”

Global Witness is a leading campaigning organisation with over 15 years experience in exposing the corrupt exploitation of natural resources, including logging and international timber trade.

/ Ends

Contact: Don Lehr on +66 08 2554 5829 or +1 917 304 4058, dbllehr@cs.com

Global Witness investigates and campaigns to prevent natural resource-related conflict and corruption and associated environmental and human rights abuses.