

On International Women's Day: An invitation to sign the position on Women and REDD

by Women for Climate Justice Network
Saturday, 05 March 2011

REDD+ as currently designed will contribute to a global land grab of communities' and Indigenous Peoples' lands and territories, which will particularly affect women, states a position signed by women and organizations that denounces REDD as another false solution for climate change.

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The position, which follows at the end of this message, is the result of intensive discussions in the Women's Caucus during the COP 16 UNFCCC meeting in Cancun in December 2010. After several days of debate, the Caucus agreed that while the position would not be disseminated as a Women's Caucus position paper, but it would be open for signatures, particularly by those who participated in the conference.

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On the occasion of International Women's Day, the Women for Climate Justice Network (GenderCC), the World March of Women (WMW), World Rainforest Movement (WRM), the Latin American Network against Monoculture Tree Plantations (RECOMA), the Global Forest Coalition (GFC), Carbon Trade Watch (CTW), Grassroots Global Justice Alliance (GGJA), and the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) are launching a wide-open invitation for organizations to adhere to this position, denouncing REDD as a mechanism that not only fails to solve the problems of climate change, but will also pose more and greater threats to society in general and women in particular.

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If you would like to sign the position as an individual or on behalf of an organization or network, please send an email to:

mujeresporjusticiaclimatica@gmail.com

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Women and organizations at COP 16

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Position on Women and REDD

Cancun, December 9, 2010

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Women and organizations at the 16th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, taking place in Cancun, Mexico from Nov 29 to Dec 10, 2010, in order to promote and advocate for the recognition and protection of the rights of women and girls within climate change policies, and particularly those women and girls in vulnerable situations and impacted communities, would like to express the following joint concerns regarding proposed policies and incentives to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and enhance carbon stocks (REDD+).

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As women from diverse parts of the world, living in diverse conditions and circumstances, we affirm that it is of utmost

importance to safeguard the rights of women, including those enshrined in the UN Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). We fully acknowledge the rights of indigenous peoples as referred to in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIPs).

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In solidarity with affected communities and peoples, we, women and organizations at COP 16 UNFCCC meeting in Cancun, Mexico find:

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1. REDD+ as currently designed will contribute to a global land grab of communities' and Indigenous Peoples' lands and territories, which will particularly affect women. Industrialized-country governments and corporations will only pay for the preservation of forests if they get rights over the carbon in those forests in return. This will have a particular impact on women as their property rights are less secure.

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2. REDD+ initiatives, as they are currently designed, create perverse incentives and inequities. Women play a differentiated and key role in forest conservation and restoration. The current REDD+ design is that actors will receive carbon credits for reducing their deforestation. Women are, overall, less responsible for deforestation and forest degradation and therefore, according to this set-up, they would be less eligible for forest carbon credits.

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3. REDD+ as an offset mechanism will not address climate change as it takes away the responsibility for mitigation from the North and shifts it to the South. Contracts to provide pollution licenses for fossil fuel-dependent corporations will potentially harm communities elsewhere who are suffering from the fossil fuel extraction or pollution for which those corporations are responsible. Women and girls in these communities carry a disproportionately higher amount of this burden. For that reason, forest carbon offsets do not only impact indigenous communities in the South.

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4. The commercialization of life and carbon markets are incompatible with traditional and indigenous cosmologies and a violation of the sacred. (1) Women, as holders of at least half of all traditional knowledge, are integral to the preservation and living practice of this knowledge. Many indigenous tribal traditions in their historic responsibility protect the sacredness of Mother Earth and are defenders of the Circle of Life which includes biodiversity, forests, flora, fauna and all living species.

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What Is Needed

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What is needed is the implementation of projects that are women's rights-based, strengthen gender justice, and are people centered. These projects should bring environmental and social benefits to all women and men. We want gender sensitive, equitable and just mechanisms that do not repeat the mistakes of the past by promoting monoculture tree plantations.

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We recognise the need for industrialised countries to focus on new economies governed by climate justice, the absolute limits and boundaries of ecological sustainability and the carrying capacities of the earth. Such economies should strengthen and promote gender equality and the equitable sharing of global and local resources, and promote the encouragement and support of self sustaining communities..

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Real alternatives to REDD+ already exist and should be promoted:

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Â-Â-Â-Â To recognize and guarantee women's rights to land and territories, which includes collectively demarcating and titling Indigenous Peoples' territories, where most of the world's forests are found. This has proven to be one of the most

effective measures for reducing deforestation and supporting the livelihood and rights of forest-dependent women, girls and communities;

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Â-Â Â Â Â To ensure compliance with CEDAW and other human rights instruments, including UNDRIPs;

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Â-Â Â Â Â To halt deforestation and forest degradation, which is key to secure women's livelihoods. Efforts to stop forest loss must address the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation and climate change, including:

-Â Â Â fossil fuel extraction, mining and large-scale hydro-electric dam construction

-Â Â demand-side drivers like the demand for beef, pulp, lumber, palm oil and industrial bioenergy; and

-Â Â Â the need to abandon all forms of support to large-scale monoculture tree plantations and logging concessions, which jeopardize the ecosystems women depend on.

Funds should be invested in programmes that directly support alternative rights-based forms of forest conservation and restoration that are already known to work. These include Indigenous territories and community conserved areas that incorporate and ensure gender justice

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(1) See also the political position of the International Forum of Indigenous Peoples on Climate Change for the first week of negotiations of the 16th Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

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Organizations up to March 4, 2011

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Academy of the Medical Sciences/ International Women's ForumÂ Russia

Advocates for Environmental Human RightsÂ Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â USA

Amigos de la Tierra Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Argentina

Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Thailand

Asian Pacific Environmental NetworkÂ Â Â Â Â Â Â Â

Black Sea Women's ClubÂ Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Ukraine

Bus Riders UnionÂ Â USA

Carbon Trade WatchÂ UK

Center for Earth, Energy and DemocracyÂ Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â USA

Center for Women Policy Studies USA

Centre for 21st Century Issues (C21st)Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Nigeria

Coastal Women for ChangeÂ Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â USA

Deep South Center for Environmental JusticeÂ USA

Ecological Society The Phillipines

Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth

FASE

Forum de Mujeres/Espirito Santo

Fundaexpressi3n

Gender and Disaster Network

Gender, Environment and Climate Action Network

GenderCC/ Mujeres por Justicia climática

GenderFocus

General Counsel / International Indian Treaty Council

Global Forest Coalition

Global Justice Ecology Project

Grassroots Global Justice Alliance

Indigenous Environmental Network

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

IRDANA

K.U.L.U.-Women and Development

Kemitraan

Labor/Community Strategy Center

LIFE - Education, Environment, Equality

Movimento das Mulheres Camponesas

Movimento das Mulheres Camponesas Espirito Santo

MUGEDE-Mulher, Genero e Desenvolvimento

Otros Mundos

Red Latinoamericana contra los Monocultivos de Árboles (RECOMA)

REDES Amigos de la Tierra

Redmanglar

Rural Women's Movement

Savia - Escuela de Pensamiento Ecologista

Sebastian Heilmann, Member of the German Green Party

The Gertown Revival Initiative

The Human Impacts Institute

Vice President of the Thuringian state parliament

World Rainforest Movement

World March of Women International

Youth for Climate Justice USA