

What the public needs to know about REDD?

Presentation at ASTEKI/Samdhana
Workshop, 10 February 2010:
Increasing Participation for Local Television
Media
Dissemination of Information on REDD in
Indonesia

Chris Lang
www.redd-monitor.org

1. Introduction

Since October 2008, I've run a website called REDD-Monitor.

2. What people are saying about REDD

A selection of quotations – in particular about carbon trading and REDD.

3. Some of the risks

Fraud, illegal logging, fake carbon credits, carbon cowboys, land grabs, violence, abuse of rights and so on.

Transparency, accountability and rights.

REDD-Monitor

Analysis, opinions, news and views about Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation

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REDD in the news: 1-7 February 2010

8th February 2010

This week's round up of the last seven days' news on REDD, in chronological order with short extracts (click on the title for the full article). For those who can't wait until Monday for last week's REDD news, REDD-Monitor's news page is updated daily: "REDD in the news".

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President Jagdeo avoids answering the BBC's questions about corruption

5th February 2010



On 4 December 2009, Guyana's President, Bharrat Jagdeo, was interviewed on the BBC programme "Hard Talk". At one stage, the presenter, Zeinab Badawi, asks Jagdeo about REDD. What Jagdeo doesn't say in response is more interesting than what he does say. He doesn't mention the logging companies already logging Guyana's forests. He doesn't mention mining. He doesn't mention road-building. He doesn't mention the risks of corruption.

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REDD in the news: 25-31 February 2010

1st February 2010

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REDDisms





“REDD, or reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, is one of the most controversial new issues in the climate change debate. The basic concept is simple: governments, companies or forest owners in the South should be rewarded for keeping their forests instead of cutting them down. The devil, as always, is in the details.”

— Chris Lang, REDD-Monitor,
October 2008



“Policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.”

— Bali Action Plan, 2007



“Conservation could mean large scale evictions and loss of rights for Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Sustainable management of forests could mean subsidies for industrial logging.

Enhancement of forest carbon stocks could mean industrial tree plantations.”

— Chris Lang, REDD-Monitor, October 2008



“REDD: It’s a bit like ... Your house is now an important carbon sink and has been used to justify 200 Australians driving to the mall. Don’t worry, follow these rules and we’ll still let you live here ... for now.”

— Danny Chivers, *New Internationalist*, February 2009



“Offsets are an imaginary commodity created by deducting what you hope happens from what you guess would have happened.”

— Dan Welch, Ethical Consumer magazine, June 2008



“To have an international commodity [forest carbon], you have to have this scientific basis and certification process, because you’re selling something that doesn’t exist.”

— Timothy H Brown, The World Bank, Jakarta, December 2009



“REDD is the most mind twistingly complex endeavor in the carbon game. The fact is that REDD involves scientific uncertainties, technical challenges, heterogeneous non-contiguous asset classes, multi-decade performance guarantees, local land tenure issues, brutal potential for gaming and the fact that getting it wrong means that scam artists will get unimaginably rich while emissions don’t change a bit.”

— Marc Stuart, EcoSecurities, May 2009



“Instead of credit derivatives or oil futures or mortgage-backed CDOs, the new game in town, the next bubble, is in carbon credits — a booming trillion-dollar market that barely even exists yet, but will if the Democratic Party that [Goldman Sachs] gave \$4,452,585 to in the last election manages to push into existence a groundbreaking new commodities bubble, disguised as an ‘environmental plan,’ called cap-and-trade.”

— Matt Taibbi, *Rolling Stone*, July 2009



“You’ve heard of credit default swaps and subprime mortgages. Are carbon default swaps and subprime offsets next? If the Waxman-Markey climate bill is signed into law, it will generate, almost as an afterthought, a new market for carbon derivatives. That market will be vast, complicated, and dauntingly difficult to monitor.”

— Rachel Morris, *Mother Jones*, June 2009



“We think there’s a 30 percent chance the [carbon] market collapses ... That could create a ‘fat tail’ (a very rare event with major consequences) for us to make money.”

— Anthony Limbrick, chief investment officer of the hedge fund firm Pure Capital, June 2009



“There are now already in development derivatives of CO2 prices that are so complicated that I do not understand it any more, if you get a reservoir of derivatives which becomes so big that it becomes an industry in itself that is very dangerous because you can get the tail wagging the dog.”

— Feike Sijbesma, CEO of chemicals group DSM, January 2010



“Saving the rain forest is no longer just about helping such countries as Brazil and Indonesia preserve their exotic fauna and flora. Now it is about benefiting American corporations too.”

— Margot Roosevelt, *Los Angeles Times*, October 2009



“Beyond the obvious and most significant benefits of reducing pollution, saving our biodiversity and protecting forest-dependent communities, protecting tropical forests will cut the cost of U.S. climate legislation almost in half – saving Americans billions.”

— Jeff Horowitz, head of Avoided Deforestation Partners, February 2010



“Alarm bells are ringing. It is simply too big to monitor. The potential for criminality is vast and has not been taken into account by the people who set it up. . . . Organised crime syndicates are eyeing the nascent forest carbon market. . . . Fraud could include claiming credits for forests that do not exist or were not protected or by land grabs. . . .

— Peter Younger, Interpol environment crimes specialist, October 2009



“It starts with bribery or intimidation of officials, then there’s threats and violence against those people. There’s forged documents too. Carbon trading transcends borders. I do not see any input from any law enforcement agency in planning REDD.”

— Peter Younger, Interpol
environment crimes specialist,
October 2009

Estimated proportion of illegal timber exports from REDD candidate countries in 2007



Source: based on estimates from <http://www.globalltimber.org.uk/IllegalTimberPercentages.doc> except Colombia (World Bank estimate).



Human Rights Watch estimates that every year the Indonesian government loses US\$2 billion as a result of corruption, illegal logging and mismanagement.

“[H]ard questions about who owns the carbon continue to be ignored, including who owns the resources and how to ensure that the revenues that flow from them are used, at least in part, to alleviate local poverty and fulfill basic rights.”

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REDD in the news

» Real threat to rainforest

By David Nussbaum (WWF-UK) and Andy Rowell, Letter to the Sunday Times, 7 February 2010 | I AM the co-author of the WWF report that you alleged included the bogus figure that "up to 40%" of the Amazon was sensitive to reduced rainfall. Not only did you fail to contact me, but you ignored credible evidence that the figure was correct. You also ignored evidence that the figure had been backed up by peer-reviewed research both before and after our publication. You spoke to Dr Dan Nepstad, one of the world's leading authorities on fire in the Amazon. You ignored the fact he told you he had published an even higher figure in Nature in 1994 and that subsequent research validated our figure. What you published was demonstrably false and has seriously misled the debate on climate change. Andrew Rowell

» Delivering coup-de-grace to U.S. cap-and-trade

By John Kemp, Reuters blogs, 3 February 2010 | President Barack Obama read the last rites for national cap and trade in 2010 on Tuesday, while senior Democrats in the House of Representatives prepared to put a stake through its heart to ensure the Environmental Protection Agency does not try to resurrect it unilaterally without congressional approval. Obama finally bowed to the inevitable and admitted cap and trade might need to be separated from a more popular green jobs bill in the Senate, a shift that would effectively end prospects for cap and trade in 2010. In a question-and-answer session the president commented: "The only thing I would say about it is this: We may be able to separate these things out. And it's possible that's where the Senate ends up."

» EU reviews internet security after emissions fraud

Reuters, 4 February 2010 | An email "phishing" fraud against the European Union's greenhouse gas Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) has prompted the executive European Commission to revise its Internet security guidelines, the Commission said. German officials said on Wednesday that online fraudsters had targeted international carbon markets to steal emissions permits from companies and sell them illegally.

» Urban growth, farm exports drive tropical deforestation

AFP, 8 February 2010 | The biggest causes of deforestation in tropical countries are population growth in

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