

# EU Forest Watch

Informing NGOs, MEPs, Member States, the European Commission and the media

Issue 138 May 2009

## Billions of Euros available for afforestation

A new report<sup>1</sup> by the European Commission's DG Agriculture shows that roughly a third of the money available for forestry measures in the Rural Development Fund is allocated to afforestation. The Fund is the largest in the EU to support forestry measures, and is estimated to be eight billion euro during 2007–13. On top of this, Member States and private funders will contribute another eight billion. This 16 billion corresponds to between seven and eight per cent of all finance for rural development programmes.

Member States' programmes aim to afforest more than 650,000 hectares of agricultural land and 240,000 hectares of non-agricultural land. However, FERN and other NGOs have found that in six Member States, a large percentage of these afforestation projects include plan-

tations with alien and invasive species.<sup>2</sup> Their report goes on to state that a more considered, environmental approach to afforestation is therefore needed.

To halt biodiversity loss successfully, the Rural Development Fund must be used to finance the EU's flagship biodiversity programme, Natura 2000, but this is presently not the case. In fact, of all the funds allocated to forestry measures, only one per cent specifically sits under the Natura 2000 measure. If the EU is serious about achieving its 2010 target, the Commission must reverse this trend and require all Member States to include implementation of Natura 2000 in their programmes.

1. [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/publi/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/publi/index_en.htm)

2. "Funding Forests into the Future," [www.fern.org](http://www.fern.org)

## Forest activists win prize

Earth Day, 22 April 2009, saw the announcement of the winners of the Goldman Prize,<sup>1</sup> awarded to grassroots environmental heroes. The prize seeks to inspire people to take extraordinary action to protect the natural world, and each winner receives US \$150,000. Among this year's winners were FERN partner Marc Ona Essangui of Brainforest, Gabon, for his efforts in stopping large-scale mining and deforestation in the Congo Basin; and Wanze Eduards and Hugo Jabini of the Saramaka people, who brought a case against the Suriname government (Forest Watch 137) leading to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights' landmark ruling about the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples to control exploitation on their territories.

1. [www.goldmanprize.org](http://www.goldmanprize.org)

## Recession+ETS=few carbon reductions in the EU

A report<sup>1</sup> published on 15 April 2009 by Barclays Capital increased FERN's concern that the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) will do little to encourage investment to reduce EU emissions (see "Playing with Numbers", Forest Watch 136). The report showed that the recession is leading to a drop in production, which in turn is reducing emissions. Because of this, the EU will be able to meet its emissions targets without the offsets available in ETS phase two (2008-12).

This will have two major effects. First, the cap on emissions during phase two will exceed projected EU emissions, therefore providing no economic incen-

tive to move to clean technology and infrastructure before 2012. Second, because the EU allows unused phase two permits and offsets to be used in phase three (2013-20), any claimed economic incentive during this period will also be reduced.

Additionally, the UK National Audit Office (NAO) said that the total number of offsets available for both ETS phases together would be higher than implied by the European Commission's figures.<sup>2</sup>

Integrating Barclays' research and the NAO data into FERN's analysis shows the true story behind the Commission's claimed 20 per cent reduction target. Of

the nine per cent of emissions reductions required by the EU climate and energy package, less than three per cent are required from within the EU.

In light of the increasingly alarming reports from IPCC scientists on the likely path of climate change, the EU needs to make a more concerted effort to reduce its own emissions, rather than engaging in cheaper but ultimately ineffective reductions abroad.

1. [www.businessgreen.com/business-green/news/2240529/recession-leads-supply-credits](http://www.businessgreen.com/business-green/news/2240529/recession-leads-supply-credits)

2. NAO, March 2009 report [www.nao.org.uk/publications/0809/eu\\_emissions\\_trading\\_scheme.aspx](http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0809/eu_emissions_trading_scheme.aspx)



Published by FERN, the campaigning NGO for greater environmental and social justice, with a focus on forests and forest peoples' rights in the policies and practices of the EU.

United Kingdom: 1C Fosseyway Business Centre, Stratford Road, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire, GL56 9NQ, UK; T +44 (0) 1608 652 895; F +44 (0) 1608 652 878. Belgium: Rue d'Edimbourg 26, B-1050 Brussels, Belgium; T +32 (0)2 894 46 90; F +32 (0)2 894 46 10.

To receive this newsletter please subscribe at [www.fern.org](http://www.fern.org)

Photo: Jutta Kill

## NEWS IN BRIEF

On 2 April 2009, the **World Bank approved US \$70 million in grants for authorities and stakeholders in the Democratic Republic of Congo** “to manage forests sustainably and equitably,” in support of DRC’s National Forest and Nature Conservation Program.<sup>1</sup> Earmarked for “pilot areas,” it is not yet clear how the significant sum will be used, nor how it will be disbursed. The project follows the legal review of forest logging contracts in the country, which led to the cancellation of the vast majority of them (Forest Watch 135).

1. <http://go.worldbank.org/OXA30QZGU0>

When the United Nations adopted the **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007**, only four countries – all with significant indigenous populations – voted against it: Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the U.S. On 3 April 2009, reversing its position, the Australian government formally declared its support for the UN declaration. The “soft law” document reflects international law governing relationships with indigenous peoples; already its provisions concerning the rights of indigenous peoples “to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources” (Article 32) have had an impact, having been cited in such cases as *Saramaka People v. Suriname* (Forest Watch 137).

[www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf)

As of 1 April 2009, the **UK Government’s timber procurement policy** requires that all timber and wood-derived products be from sustainable sources. FLEGT-licensed timber is also eligible although it is not yet available on the market. All central government departments, their executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies must adhere to the policy, which covers all timber and wood-derived products such as paper, furniture and construction timber.

Keep track of conferences and events surrounding **global governance and climate, finance and trade** through the Global Policy Coherence Calendar.

[www.envirosecurity.org/gpc/calendar/calendar.php?themes%5B0%5D=Climate](http://www.envirosecurity.org/gpc/calendar/calendar.php?themes%5B0%5D=Climate).

## Adapting to climate change?

The European Commission presented its white paper, “Adapting to climate change: towards a European framework for action”<sup>1</sup> in April 2009. Intended to improve the EU’s resilience to climate change, it foresees two phases: developing a comprehensive adaptive strategy and, starting in 2013, implementing it. Unfortunately, the actions outlined are vague. For instance, the paper rightly mentions forests, but the related action point goes no further than “Update forestry strategy and launch debate on options for an EU approach on forest protection and forest information systems.”

If the EU is serious about addressing the spectrum of threats posed by climate change and incorporating the role that forests play in mitigation, it must identify

a comprehensive action plan on how to tackle the drivers of forest loss and collect credible, transparent, coherent data regarding relevant greenhouse gas emissions/removals and forest condition. Presently, disagreement even exists about what constitutes a forest, let alone forest area and land use. Without a clear action plan and reliable data, the EU cannot realise its objective of making the Kyoto Protocol the basis for a future climate regime. We hope that the Commission will set its ambitions beyond collection of data and acknowledge that current information on the state of forests even within the EU is woefully inadequate.

1. COM (2009) 147/4 at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52009DC0147:EN:NOT>

## Republic of Congo to sign a VPA with the EU

The Republic of Congo and the EU will conclude a FLEGT<sup>1</sup> voluntary partnership agreement (VPA) on 9 May 2009, making the country also known as Congo-Brazzaville the second to sign an agreement with the EU setting up measures to legalise their timber trade.<sup>2</sup>

The pace of negotiations, concluding less than one year after their launch, has concerned civil society groups in both Congo and Europe. They argued that the timeframe forced NGOs and the affected community to engage hurriedly, which could lead to proposals to improve governance being undermined.

On the more positive side, the VPA includes a mechanism allowing local NGOs to participate in policy-making and monitoring of industrial logging operations. Commitments include passing legal texts ensuring the involvement of civil society and local and indigenous communities in forest management and strengthening civil society capacity. New legal texts will have to be developed in cooperation with civil society and then agreed and enacted before the first FLEGT license is granted. If implemented, this could be a major step towards the strengthening of local

and indigenous communities’ rights - one of the objectives of FLEGT. A specific allusion to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is made in the preamble of the agreement.

The government of Congo stated that the system of controlling legality of operations will be applied both to exports to the EU, covered in this agreement, as well as to non-EU exports and domestically.

Similar bilateral negotiations are ongoing between the EU and Cameroon, Malaysia, Indonesia and Liberia. The EU intends to open formal negotiations with the Central African Republic in the coming months, and is carrying out preliminary discussions with Gabon and Vietnam.

1. Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade

### Forest Agenda

**25–29 May:** Forest tenure, governance and enterprise, Yaoundé, Cameroon.

**29 May:** Green Public Procurement EU meeting Ad Hoc working group, Brussels.