

Forest fraud:

say **no** to fake
carbon credits

Forests play a major role in regulating the earth's climate yet we are destroying these vital ecosystems at an uncontrolled rate. Meanwhile, climate change is already impacting on forests – causing deforestation and disrupting biodiversity. The consequences for forest-dependent peoples are severe, as pressures on their livelihoods, resources and traditions increase.

The proposed solution to the crisis – the Kyoto Protocol – includes the concept of carbon sinks, a theoretical idea based on the natural ability of trees, plants and soil to soak up carbon dioxide and temporarily store it as carbon. But this concept is deeply flawed.

FERN and **SinksWatch** are calling on governments to

- ◆ Meet Kyoto targets without using carbon sink credits
- ◆ Find solutions that work for both forests and the climate
- ◆ Expose the flaws of the phony climate fix.

www.fern.org

www.sinkswatch.org





Ten facts about carbon sinks

- 1 **Carbon in trees is not equivalent to carbon in fossil fuels:** Tree-stored carbon is easily released into the atmosphere through fire, natural decay and timber harvesting. Carbon in fossil fuels is locked away and only released through human intervention. Carbon credits that equate the two are based on a false premise.
- 2 **One-way road:** Trees provide temporary carbon storage as part of the normal cycle of carbon exchange between forests and the atmosphere. The release of carbon from fossil fuels is permanent and, over relevant time scales, will accelerate climate change by increasing the active carbon pool and destabilising carbon flows.
- 3 **Fake credit:** Carbon sink credits in the Kyoto Protocol use *temporary* tree plantations to justify *permanent* releases of fossil-stored carbon into the atmosphere. Carbon sink credits are fake credits for the climate.
- 4 **Footprint chaos:** Carbon sink credits increase the ecological debt of the North. The more fossil fuel a Northern country uses, the more land it is entitled to use to 'offset' its emissions. This is unfair and undermines global efforts towards sustainable development.
- 5 **Subsidies for mega-plantations:** The Kyoto Protocol stands to provide a new subsidy for the plantations industry. Documented evidence shows how large-scale plantations have negative impacts on forests and forest peoples. Kyoto includes no meaningful safeguards to rule out large-scale monoculture tree plantations from receiving carbon credits.
- 6 **Communities suffer twice:** First, climate change affects the livelihoods of forest peoples and rural communities through increased droughts, floods, forest fires and deforestation. Second, carbon sink credits promote the expansion of large-scale tree plantations, which indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities are opposing in many parts of the world.
- 7 **Arming a time bomb:** Avoiding climate change requires drastic reductions of greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels, but carbon sink projects do nothing to help solve this problem; in fact they mask the real crisis. This is sentencing future generations to live with fewer choices and worse conditions.
- 8 **Forest fraud:** Forests play a vital role in storing carbon and buffering extreme weather events. But linking forest restoration with carbon credits is a dead-end for forest peoples as well as for the climate. Halting the forest crisis requires action against the underlying causes of deforestation, *not* a bigger active carbon pool and more monoculture tree plantations.
- 9 **Blind guess:** Measuring carbon pools is fraught with uncertainties. Scientists have found that estimates of the carbon balance in Canadian forests could vary by 1000 per cent if seemingly small factors, such as increased levels of atmospheric CO₂, are taken into account.
- 10 **Phony climate fix:** Real and lasting solutions to the forest crisis and the climate crisis lie in providing incentives for forest-dependent communities and indigenous peoples to restore their forests and practice sustainable forest management. Small-scale pilot projects are already showing positive results, while large-scale carbon sink projects are attracting criticism and protest.

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