



PRESS INFORMATION

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Land conflicts, carbon piracy and violations of indigenous peoples' rights: New report by Amazonian indigenous peoples exposes the reality of REDD+ in Peru and proposes solutions

A new report published today by Peruvian indigenous organisations, AIDSESEP, FENAMAD and CARE, and international human rights organisation the Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), reveals the impact that REDD projects and programmes are already having on the lives of indigenous peoples. ***The reality of REDD+ in Peru: Between theory and practice - Indigenous Amazonian Peoples' analyses and alternatives*** finds that REDD pilot projects run by some NGOs and companies are already undermining the rights of indigenous peoples, and are leading to carbon piracy and conflicts over land and resources. Persistent advocacy efforts by indigenous peoples' organisations to secure respect for the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples have resulted in some government commitments to modify national REDD programmes financed by the World Bank. Nevertheless, solid guarantees for respect of these rights are yet to materialise.

Roberto Espinoza Llanos, coordinator of AIDSESEP's Climate Change Programme and one of the lead authors of the report, explains, "*The commitments made by the previous government in 2011 were not made lightly, they were assumed by the State and approved in a global meeting of the World Bank's FCPF [Forest Carbon Partnership Facility]. We hope that the present government and international entities like the World Bank will deliver on their promises to respect land and territorial rights. Continual monitoring will be necessary to make sure they keep their word.*"

Carbon piracy

The AIDSESEP-FPP report highlights how, without any form of regulation, carbon piracy is already rife in Peru. Project developers are roaming the jungle attempting to convince indigenous peoples and local communities to enter in to REDD deals with promises of millions of dollars in return for signing away their rights to control their land and forest carbon to third parties. Many deals are being conducted using strict confidentiality clauses and with no independent oversight or legal support for vulnerable communities. Some of these peoples are not yet fully literate in Spanish, but are being asked to sign complex commercial contracts in English that are subject to English law. Many communities have already come to regret some early deals made with carbon traders and NGOs, and are now attempting to extricate themselves. One leader from the community of Bélgica in South East Peru explained,

"...We were presented with a trust fund in which the community is obliged to hand over the administration of communal territory and be subject to the decisions of the developer for 30 years....this will not allow us to make decisions about our territory or plan for the future of our children."

Land grabs

Many other communities have no secure land rights, as an estimated 20 million hectares of indigenous peoples' customary territories in the Peruvian Amazon still possess no legal recognition (including those of isolated or 'autonomous' indigenous peoples). This is in violation of Peru's international obligation to recognise and secure indigenous peoples' traditional possession of their forest lands. At the same time, hundreds of formal requests for 'conservation concessions' (with the intention of establishing REDD projects) have

been submitted to the government by private individuals and environmental NGOs. Many of these 'would be concessions' directly overlies indigenous peoples' territories still awaiting legal recognition, thereby setting the stage for a state-backed land grab.

Conrad Feather, Project Officer for FPP and the report's other lead author said, "*REDD is not just a policy instrument being negotiated at the UN; unregulated REDD developments are already turning Peru into a centre of international carbon piracy and the site for a potential land grab of indigenous peoples' territories on a massive scale. Urgent measures are needed to protect the lands and livelihoods of indigenous peoples.*"

Indigenous alternatives to REDD+

Indigenous peoples' organisations, however, are not only ringing alarm bells, they are also proposing alternatives. They are urging the new Peruvian government to re-think the forest and climate plans developed by their predecessors and use REDD funds to secure indigenous peoples' forest territories and support community-based solutions to tackle climate change.

The report concludes that instead of squandering the money on unproven and unstable carbon markets, more modest and selective funding could be targeted to secure the land and territorial rights of indigenous peoples and support sustainable community forest management. These community and rights-based approaches are cost-effective and proven to protect forests. Community-based alternatives will not only reduce emissions from deforestation and keep forests standing but will also lead to poverty reduction, increased livelihood security and biodiversity conservation. In the words of Alberto Pizango Chota, President of AIDSESEP, "*Only in this way can REDD truly become an opportunity for indigenous peoples instead of a threat.*"

The reality of REDD+ in Peru: Between Theory and Practice: Indigenous Amazonian Peoples' analyses and alternatives is available for free download at:

<http://www.forestpeoples.org/the-reality-of-redd-plus-in-peru-indigenous-amazonian-peoples-analyses-and-alternatives>

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PRESS BRIEFING AT COP17, DURBAN: 30 NOVEMBER, 1.30-2.00pm: Room Kosi Palm (ICC MR 21 ABCG) – International Convention Center, Durban

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Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) and Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN) Side Event:

Safeguards in REDD and the Green Climate Fund - 9 December 2011, 13.15 - 14.45, Room 2, Durban Exhibition Centre (DEC).

- AIDSESEP (Interethnic association for the development of the Peruvian Amazon) is a national confederation of indigenous Amazonian peoples in Peru, representing over 1400 communities. <http://www.aidsep.org.pe>
- FENAMAD (Federation of the Native Peoples of the river Madre de Dios and its tributaries) is the umbrella indigenous federation of the Madre de Dios region, Peru. <http://fenamad.org.pe/noticias/>
- CARE - Asháninka Centre of the river Ene is a local indigenous federation representing Asháninka communities on the Ene river in the central jungle region of Peru. <http://ashanincare.org/>
- Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) is an international non-governmental human rights organisation working to support the rights of peoples who live in forests and depend on them for their livelihoods. <http://www.forestpeoples.org> For FPP climate and forests briefings: <http://www.forestpeoples.org/topics/climate-forests>