

GenderCC – women for climate justice: Submission to SBSTA, June 2009

GenderCC, its constituent organisations and members from around the world, strongly urge the following measures:

The UN climate change process should support the protection and restoration of forests and supportive ecosystems, respecting and strengthening all rights of indigenous and forest dwelling communities who have so far conserved them with special support to women's traditional rights and knowledge systems.

Preserving forests and restoring forests for their biodiversity value and for the livelihood of forest and forest-dependent communities is consistent with international human rights standards and positions accepted by the international community.

Forest protection, conservation and restoration must fully incorporate traditional custodians including women, indigenous communities, forest dwelling communities and others at the centre of decision making and planning from the ground to the highest levels. Regulation must proactively facilitate traditional systems of forest harvesting and use where these support low carbon livelihoods.

A non-market based and adequate UN fund should be made available for direct support to indigenous and local communities for carrying out needed protection and restoration actions.

Mutual capacity building and training activities must be financed under this fund to allow indigenous and traditional knowledge to be shared with modern scientific and technological capacity with proper protection and direct benefit sharing for traditional and indigenous knowledge holding communities with special care for the role and needs of women.

REDD schemes must not be a way of carbon offset and market-based mechanisms.

Some of the proposed REDD schemes and the related biochar initiative would serve to maintain high-carbon economies by enabling offsetting of high emissions technologies and economies. The projected "saving" by REDD would, therefore allow and promote the retention and expansion of high carbon economies perhaps further offsetting these against industrial tree plantations. This is not acceptable.

Tree plantations are disguised as forests under REDD and other CDM, are accessing legal protections of forests, and are already creating massive human rights violations and ecosystem damage including exacerbating climate change.

Large amounts of money being transferred through REDD schemes would promote destructive, swiftly changing production, consumption and cultural patterns in traditional societies leading to a further financialized economy where women would be the most

excluded, doing away with their ancestral rights as indigenous women, compromising their livelihoods and disrupting their knowledge systems.

The result would be enlarged displacement, alienation and victimisation of women. Migration and displacement force women into alien exploitative situations (cheap and hazardous labour in factories and mines, prostitution, domestic labour, etc.) and sexualabuse and violence.

Migration and displacement lead to conflict over basic resources such as water, food sources, access to land and work. Host communities and migrating communities are affected by conflicts and the overstraining of the natural and social resources of the host community and women are often made targets in such conflicts. GenderCC strongly urges that every proposal made in this forum must acknowledge the human rights issues and do no harm to the environment or to people, especially vulnerable ecosystems and communities.

The issue is reduction of emissions and it must not be diverted by financialization into offsetting and carbon trade schemes.