

Stop 'Forests in exhaustion' under CDM

(CMP5, Agenda item 6: Further guidance to the CDM, Article 13, version 14 Dec.'09 9.00)

The proposed Article 13 opens the opportunity for CDM to support tree plantations in areas that were (as of December 31 1989) or are a plantation at the start of the CDM project activity, but may be cleared or converted to "exhaustion" within 5 years. Why this article should be rejected:

- **Plantation countries benefit, LDCs will loose**
Countries with large forest plantations like Indonesia, Malaysia and Brazil in particular will benefit from this very easy CDM-policy. In general, LDCs do not have much area under plantations and thus will not benefit.
- **Maintaining forests should be dealt with in REDD, not in CDM**
This proposed definition of *forests in exhaustion* creates a huge overlap with REDD. A messy situation is created with conflicting definitions between different policies.
- **Support for plantations blocks carbon rich forest restoration**
Plantations result in a substantial decline in carbon stocks. Compared to natural forests and their carbon-rich soils, regularly harvested tree plantations contain a much diminished carbon stock and are more susceptible to disease, drought and fire. Plans to restore carbon-rich natural forest ecosystems are hindered by this CDM-policy.
- **Plantations on drained organic soils get support**
In Indonesia alone, millions of hectares of peatlands have been drained for palm oil and pulp wood. The loss of these carbon rich soils causes ongoing emissions of up to 90 tons CO₂ per ha/yr, / 200 mln mton CO₂ per year. Ending these plantations and restoring the peatlands is very much needed. CDM should definitely not support the spread of these emissive plantations.
- **Support for existing plantations is support for deforestation**
It is the plantation sector that is causing a huge chunk of global deforestation by turning carbon rich natural forest into plantations with low carbon stocks.
- **Conversion to non-forest land in 5 years. How do you know?**
Giving support to continue plantations as they may end is bizarre; nobody can be certain about this end. It comes down to throwing money to a commercial activity that might continue anyway. Criteria based on a hypothetical assumption can never be proved accurately, as is the case for current project-by-project additionality testing.

More information:

Alex Kaat, Wetlands International: +31 6 50601917 / alex.kaat@wetlands.org

Eva Filzmoser, CDM-Watch: +4528539618/ eva.filzmoser@cdm-watch.org