



Photo source: Douangprachanh Champaphonevilay.

This workshop was organised to widen the discussion on the concepts and critiques of the REDD programme<sup>1</sup> (Programme for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) to coincide with meetings of the UNFCCC in Bangkok from 3-8 April 2011. Around 55 participants gathered together from Thailand, Philippines, Cambodia, Laos, India, Nepal, and Japan. This included around 30 from local or regional NGOs, around 10 participants from indigenous peoples groups, and around 10 from peoples' networks in Thailand. Many of the participants were new to the subject of REDD although their governments have already have submitted plans for REDD funding, have been rearranging their forest management priorities to respond to REDD. The organisers were Thai Climate Justice, Philippine Movement for Climate Justice, Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance (TERRA), and Focus on the Global South.

The following report provides a brief summary of the day's presentations and discussions, the presentations made at the workshop can be found on <http://www.focusweb.org/>.

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<sup>1</sup> The broad outline of the REDD programme was agreed in a decision adopted in 2007 at the UN Climate Summit in Bali, Indonesia. Some critical issues relating to its purpose and operation have not yet been agreed however, such as the funding mechanism. Negotiations by governments will continue this year at the UN Climate Summit in Durban, South Africa in December 2011. More information can be found on [www.redd-monitor.org](http://www.redd-monitor.org). Further sources of information are referred to in this workshop report.

## PANEL 1 – Introducing REDD

**Chris Lang**, of [www.redd-monitor.org](http://www.redd-monitor.org), introduced the REDD programme as a carbon trading initiative that is fundamentally based on World Bank (WB) ideas for devising market solutions to the climate crisis. He presented some of the main critiques of carbon trading (including that carbon credits are a permit to continue polluting elsewhere, and that the carbon trading system is vulnerable to instability and collapse). He also explained there are huge risks in creating such a market, as it opens the way for corruption, criminality, and complex fraud. Chris invited participants to consider and discuss their response to the REDD programme.

**Norly Mercado**, of the Bank Information Centre, described the many ways in which the WB is involved in the REDD programme and some of the key critiques. In particular she noted that WB is still providing billions of dollars worth of loans (an increasing amount over the last 3 years) for fossil fuel projects, eg for coal-based energy development to middle-income countries, ensuring these countries are committed to coal for the next 40-50 years. She described the mechanisms of the WB initiated Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) which is operating in several countries of the region, including Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. Finally, she noted that the World Bank was recently appointed Trustee of the new Green Climate Fund in spite of lobbying by G77 countries, amid concerns about their track record in financing projects that have high social and environmental costs, as well as concerns about their high administrative fees. Other key players in the financing of REDD (including Norway and various conservation NGOs) were also noted.

**Joan Carling**, of the Asia Indigenous People's Pact focussed on the issue of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) which is enshrined in various international legal instruments. This concept should ensure that indigenous community groups can access full details about project and its proponents, and have time to deliberate and reach a collective decision about whether to reject or conditionally accept the project. She also highlighted several critical issues about REDD that are of direct concern to IP groups. From this perspective, she feels that IP groups cannot afford to disengage from REDD because the more they are excluded, the more their concerns (about land tenure, forest governance, etc) are ignored. She finished by summarising the lessons learned from the recent consultation exercise by UNREDD in Vietnam. While good help materials were available, and despite good intentions of the consultation team, the process lacked legitimacy for several reasons including: the wrong question was asked in the consultation, risks to IP livelihoods were not raised, and insufficient time was given for communities to discuss amongst themselves.

**The discussion following this panel** included an intense exchange on the issue of climate justice. Forest communities are being asked to sign up to REDD, but REDD is a means of allowing oil to keep flowing and factories to keep running in the North. So, even if safeguards for IP rights are achieved within the REDD programme, there is still a fundamental problem with REDD – if REDD allows developed countries to avoid reducing their own emissions. In this perspective, many rights are being violated with the adoption of REDD – including the rights of communities living next to Northern industrial facilities, and the rights of people all over the world affected by climate change. However rather than alienate IP groups who sign up to REDD, after all their rights are being violated as much or even more than others by climate change, many voices expressed hope in solidarity between IP and other groups and between poor communities of the North and South. A point of agreement was that carbon emissions should be cut at source, and that this was the most fundamental, crucial point for lobbying.

The rest of the discussion focussed on realities facing forest communities. Participants from Thailand raised the issue of indebtedness in rural villages and how this puts pressure on forest resources. Some were concerned that oil palm plantations would begin to encroach on the forest again after the recent lifting of the World Bank lending ban. A participant from Cambodia was equally concerned that several areas proposed in the national REDD plan overlap with existing or future economic land concessions.

## PANEL 2 – South East Asian experiences

**Joseph Purugganan** introduced the second panel by providing a brief outline of some relevant regional data, including data on forest cover, forest loss, greenhouse gas emissions, REDD market potential, vulnerability and poverty.

**Saman Budwang**, of the Inpeng Community Network, the only officially recognised example of carbon trading in Thailand described his experience and understanding of the project. He stressed that none of the families in his community were conserving their forests for the purpose of gaining a carbon credit, it is more like a free bonus. For one thing, the payments that each family receives is very low, just 150 baht per rai per year<sup>2</sup>. He expected that this payment will increase, but very few details are known in the community about how the project really works. In fact the project is linked to several academic institutions in Thailand and the United States.

**Erwin Quinones**, of the Land and Natural Resource Rights Centre, Philippines introduced the Filipino government's policy on REDD+ including the National Framework Strategy on Climate Change, its Climate Change Action Plan and its REDD Plus Strategy. He pointed out that old growth forests were down to just 3% of the national area in 2000 and that the total forest cover of around 18% of the total area was under various kinds of threats. A major threat, mining concessions, is not addressed in the climate change action strategy. Erwin outlined some of the REDD "readiness projects" which are being funded in the Philippines by the ADB, JICA, AusAid etc. Finally, he touched on some differences amongst civil society approaches in the Philippines, raised concerns about re-defining forests as carbon stocks, and feared that weak and incoherent governance will continue to allow forest degradation - "business as usual".

**Seng, Sokheng** and **Chea, Boreth**, both from Cambodia, gave two pictures of the pilot project for REDD implementation in Oddar Meanchey province, northern Cambodia from different perspectives. Sokheng works with a new community network whose members are concerned about the many threats to their forests. Boreth works with Children Development Association, a local NGO that is helping to implement the REDD project. Sokheng described the major threats posed by economic land concessions (ELCs) which are being implemented by powerful investors connected to both the government and the military, and which are causing food insecurity for millions of Cambodians. He added that no money has been disbursed yet via the REDD project and there is no clear mechanism in place yet to share the benefits. Boreth provided data about the REDD project and outlined the institutional framework of the project. He also highlighted the devastation brought by ELCs and the direct impacts these have on livelihoods. He also feared that rubber plantations could be considered "forests" by the government and might be counted within the REDD project.

**Douangprachanh Champaphonevilay**, speaking about Lao PDR, gave an overview of the national REDD policy framework and the first steps of its implementation in Laos. Several aid agencies have been working on this in Laos and Douangprachanh's organisation the Lao Biodiversity Association has been working together with GIZ to work through the implementation of REDD in the Nam Pui National Protected Area in Xayaboury province in the centre north of Laos. There is little information dissemination about the REDD project among local CSO implementers. The introduction of the requirement for free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) could present a challenge. While the government has signed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), it does not recognise the many ethnic minorities in Laos as "indigenous peoples".

In **synthesis**, several country presentations raised concerns about the duplicitous position of governments in relation to REDD. In some cases, governments were signing up to REDD while issuing agricultural and mining concessions in the same area. A few speakers questioned the type of forests to be protected under REDD - if agrofuel or rubber plantations could become eligible for REDD financing, REDD could not protect the forests from one of their major threats: clearance for plantations. Most presentations recalled the historical roots of mistrust between the government and forest communities. While forest communities are amongst the

<sup>2</sup> \$1 = approximately 30 Baht. 1 rai = 0.16 ha

poorest in the region, their rights have been systematically violated or undermined by governments who now promote REDD as their forestry strategy. Indigenous peoples and others who depend on the forest have, in the past, been excluded from their forests, from decision-making, from compensations and from revenues. Access to critical information, capacity building, and genuine benefit-sharing are key demands of communities who are being brought into the REDD programme.

## **GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

The final session was arranged as **small group discussions** to give more space to include all participants in the discussion. The groups were asked to consider the main threats to communities' access to forests, lands and natural resources, and discuss what is required to support communities to address these problems, including whether or not REDD can help. Whatever the answer to this question, the groups were also asked to consider what position they would propose to engage with REDD, or more specifically "how civil society groups can engage with REDD without legitimizing green capitalism and carbon markets".

A **brief summary of the reports of the group discussions** follows: the most serious threats to the forest identified by the mixed discussion groups were large-scale agri-business plantations and mining projects. Such threats were summarised by one participant as "aggressive, market-driven development". Collusion between state, military and investors to exploit forest resources makes for a forceful combination of wealth and political power. Concentration of land by rich investors is also a problem in Thailand, but the Thai group gave more attention to another important issue facing communities - indebtedness, which is putting pressure on Thai families and communities to cut down their remaining forest lots.

No group was convinced that a REDD mechanism could work to reduce these threats or uphold the rights of the communities. Some groups reported a clear stance against REDD and against any carbon market.

REDD proponents within environmental organisations try to convince people that participation in REDD is the most effective, or perhaps the only, way to ensure community rights to land, forests, resources, etc are protected. Participants in one group felt that this argument is dangerous because it ties community rights to an initiative that has no proven track record for protecting these rights, and also makes these rights contingent on a market mechanism. They argued instead that civil society groups should not confuse clear political objectives of working to protect and promote community rights, with work to establish REDD.

However, REDD is undeniably under way in the Mekong Region. It is being pushed as a national 'consensus' in all countries. Civil society organisations can work to increase information for communities, support critical analysis, create dialogues. Communities should be clearer about what are the threats, the risks, where is the money coming from, who benefits, and who is making the decisions.

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The following pages contain more detailed notes on each of the sessions and presentations. For any other information about the workshop please contact the organisers:

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**Chris Lang, REDD Monitor**

Chris introduced the [www.redd-monitor.org](http://www.redd-monitor.org) website and encouraged everyone to explore it. His [presentation](#) provided an overview of the REDD programme, some of the main points are described here:

While REDD appears to be a very simple concept (essentially: Governments in the North give money to companies or forest owners in the South for keeping their forests standing instead of cutting them down) there are many complex issues in the detail of how REDD works.

In Cancun, governments took a decision on REDD+. The acronym refers to:

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>REDD</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing emissions from deforestation</li> <li>• Reducing emissions from forest degradation</li> </ul>  |
| +           | <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation of forest carbon stocks</li> <li>• Sustainable management of forest</li> <li>• Enhancement of forest carbon stocks.</li> </ul> |

Adding **conservation** sounds good, but there is a long history of exclusion of local and indigenous peoples from National Parks, Protected Areas, in the name of forest conservation. Activists in this region know very well what “conservation” can mean.

Adding **sustainable forest management** - there is a myth promoted by the logging industry that companies can log the forests sustainably. In the end, the logging industry takes all trees, even outside the logging area. Subsidies are given to the logging industry.

Adding **enhancement of forest carbon stocks** – this is UN jargon, which could mean anything, for example it could mean the regeneration of degraded forest land, of rainforest. But, it could also mean industrial tree plantations, because they are also carbon stocks.

**REDD is a carbon trading deal.** Major actors, UNREDD<sup>3</sup>, FCPF<sup>4</sup>, have clearly said that they are establishing a carbon market for forests. In 2007, when FCPF was launched in Bali, Benoit Bosquet, head of FCPC, stated that the goal of REDD is to jump start a forest carbon market. The FAQ section on UNREDD website links REDD directly to a carbon market.

#### What's wrong with carbon trading?

- The only reason to buy a carbon credit is to continue to pollute. The head of the CDM acknowledges that carbon trading is a zero sum game; this means a reduction in one place allows an increase somewhere else. Carbon trading does not reduce emissions, it just moves them from one place to somewhere else. At the moment there is no international agreement on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. What REDD and other carbon trading mechanisms are doing is to design a loophole in the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions, before the regulation even exists.
- Carbon trading will create a new financial bubble of extremely complex carbon derivatives. It is trading something that doesn't exist. In the case of forests, it concerns trading “emissions from avoided deforestation”. The price of the carbon traded will depend on an extremely complex and untransparent securitisation process. A [recent report from a group of derivatives traders](#) concluded that, from a market perspective, REDD cannot work.

<sup>3</sup> UN REDD is a joint programme of FAO, UNEP, UNDP

<sup>4</sup> Forest Carbon Partnership Facility is a World Bank supported programme

- The forest carbon market opens the door wide open for Carbon Cowboys. A one man band based in Sydney, Brett Goldworthy, who has a company called Shift2Neutral, claims to have managed to sign contracts for carbon in 1 million ha in the Philippines, 1 million ha in the Solomon Islands, 1 million ha in Brazil, an area covering more than the entire forest area of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and also projects in Indonesia and Malaysia<sup>5</sup>.

**The World Bank is playing a large role in the debate on REDD.** It is producing a huge amount of information – the FCPF is operating in 37 countries, the “Readiness Preparation Proposal” reports are over 100 pages long and it's a full-time job just keeping up with this flood of information. There is a serious danger, of many NGOs and civil society, being co-opted into the World Bank's agenda and spending a large part of our time in Bank organised meetings and reacting to the Bank's information rather than setting our own agenda – or opposing the role of the World Bank in REDD (based on the Bank's record on forest destruction).

**Corruption.** Pro-REDD enthusiasts say that there could be between 20-30 billion dollars a year poured into REDD. However the Forestry Departments involved are amongst the most corrupt departments in some of the most corrupt countries around the world. Corruption is not just in the South. Such corruption also can be driven and led by the North. It is intellectual corruption to think that these departments are going to change purely by pouring in more billions of dollars of money. There have already been cases of fraud in Europe. The European Emissions Trading System market lost more than 5 billion Euros because of fraud.

**Still in the middle of a global economic crisis.** The banks and the economists are expected to save the climate, when it's clear they were unable to save the economy.

**The forest carbon market is “simply too big to monitor”.** Interpol has sounded alarm bells. “The potential for criminality is vast and has not been taken into account by the people who set it up. . . . Organised crime syndicates are eyeing the nascent forest carbon market. . . . Fraud could include claiming credits for forests that do not exist, or were not protected, or by land grabs”<sup>6</sup>. Carbon is a product that you cannot see, originates from remote areas, which will be bundled up into extremely complex derivatives on the other side of the planet. People will have no idea what they are buying - echoing the sub-prime mortgage fiasco.

#### **What should our response be to REDD?**

Note that CSO are concerned about IP rights, environment, role of the World Bank. These are all issues that are central to REDD. There are various CSO positions on REDD:

- No rights, no REDD! (safeguards from Cancun are extremely weak, perhaps its time for these groups to say: since rights have been left out, we now oppose REDD)
- No REDD! (safeguards will NOT make it better)
- No World Bank involvement in REDD!
- No carbon trading in REDD!
- A mixture of the above?

The Cochabamba People's Agreement is very clear: No REDD, no World Bank, and no carbon trading.

<sup>5</sup> Further information here: <http://www.redd-monitor.org/?s=Shift2Neutral>

<sup>6</sup> Peter Younger, Interpol environment crimes specialist, October 2009. John Vidal, “UN's forest protection scheme at risk from organised crime, experts warn,” *The Guardian*, 5 October 2009, <http://bit.ly/9jPqfc>

## Norly Mercado, Bank Information Centre

Norly's [presentation](#) concentrated on the role of the World Bank in the financing of REDD. The World Bank is posing now as "The Climate Bank". The Bank is the Trustee, the Administrator and the Implementing Agency of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). They have a Climate Finance Unit to work on the facilitating private sector projects.

### Currently the World Bank manages 12 carbon funds under its Climate Finance Unit.

1. Prototype Carbon Fund
2. Netherlands Clean Development Fund
3. Community Development Carbon Fund
4. Biocarbon Fund
5. Italian Carbon Fund
6. Netherlands European Carbon Fund
7. Danish Carbon Fund
8. Spanish Carbon Fund
9. Carbon Fund for Europe
10. Umbrella Carbon Facility
11. Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)
12. Carbon Partnership Facility

The World Bank was **likened to a two-faced character** in which on the one hand it wants to promote itself as a climate bank but on the other hand it is funding and promoting fossil fuels, and other high emissions investments that exacerbate climate risks. Some statistics:

- 2010 - Bank funding for coal hit a record high of \$4.4 bn US dollars in 2010. This is a 356% increase from 2009 and amounted to ¼ of all their total energy lending portfolio.
- 2007- 2011 - WB provided \$6.5 bn for coal-based energy development to middle-income countries, ensuring these countries are committed to coal for the next 40-50 years.
- 2008 - WB funded fossil fuel projects that emit 2 billion metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> over their lifetime - equivalent to 7% of total global annual emissions from energy sector.
- The WB and other IFIs (such as ADB) have disbursed \$137 bn for new coal-fired power plants since the UNFCCC came into effect in 1994.
- 2005-2007 A total of \$1.3 bn went into funding fossil fuel projects, but in years 2008-2010, this shot up to over \$4.2 bn. Funding for renewables also increased, but total funding to fossil fuel projects remains much higher than renewable projects.

The World Bank has **just launched its new energy strategy**. They will no longer issue loans for new coal-fired power plants in middle-income developing countries (India, South Africa) over the next decade. A victory... but the poorest countries, (Bangladesh, Tajikistan for example), could still receive loans for coal plants. Money will be channelled for emerging technologies. Hydropower projects are said to be clean.

### FCPF = main climate initiative set up to fund developing country schemes for REDD.

The FCPF has two faces - [Readiness fund](#) – to support country readiness for REDD, while the [Carbon fund](#) is to support pilot, performance-based payments.

The FCPF became operational in 2008, 37 countries and more than \$150 million has been committed. Four countries in the region have applied to the FCPF Indonesia – Preparation Grant approved in May 2010 (\$3.6 million). Laos – RPP approved in October 2010. Cambodia – RPP approved in March 2011. Vietnam – RPP approved in March 2011

**Readiness fund** is a grant. On average up to \$200,000 per country to develop an RPP<sup>7</sup> = a national road map showing how to make REDD work. Then a preparation grant of \$3.6 million dollars is issued for the capacity building phase.

**Carbon Fund** After the country establishes that it is "ready for REDD", then the government can apply for financing in the form of payments for emission reduction, or carbon trading

<sup>7</sup> REDD Readiness Preparation Proposal

### Key issues/concerns

- Problems related to safeguards and due diligence. Not all “delivery partners” have the same safeguards. If WB doesn’t have a forestry programme in a country (eg Cambodia), it will get another partner (eg UNDP to “deliver” the REDD services).
- Problems related to consultation and participation, transparency, accountability.
- Problems related to land rights. Important issues such as land rights, land conflicts, corruption and weak governance, drivers of deforestation are not sufficiently addressed in the country plans submitted to the FCPF.

### Green Climate Fund (GCF)

The GCF was created in the “Cancun Agreements” in December 2010, WB appointed as Interim Trustee for 3 years. At present the GCF is still a concept. The Transitional Committee, which will work out how the GCF should work, is supposed to have 25 reps from developing countries and 15 from developed countries, but they have not been selected yet.

The G77 proposal for a climate fund did not want the WB involved. But US lobbied hard for the World Bank, because the US did not want to lose control over climate financing.

Based on previous experience with other climate funds, WB has high administrative charges. According to [research carried out by the South Centre](#), the WB and the Global Environment Facility (the operating entity) charge fees of \$3.8 million from the Special Climate Change Fund (this equals 10.52% of its total available funds) plus \$2.5 million, from the Least Developed Country Fund (which equals 18.49% of its total available funds).

WB has bad track record of rights violations and ecological destruction - supporting problem projects (coal plants, extractives, palm oil plantations, displacement of communities etc)

### Supplementary finance notes, Chris Lang

Before it got involved in climate financing, the WB was becoming irrelevant. Other financial entities were taking its place. It has reinvented its role as a green bank, reinvented a ‘green’ neoliberalism. This is a new way of disbursing money, which is the Bank’s primary function.

#### Funders of REDD

- World Bank a key influence – through the FCPC, through FIP, (forest investment partnership) and through 12 carbon funds (several involved in forest carbon).
- Regional banks eg ADB are all starting to get involved in REDD funding. Mainly the REDD readiness stage. In Guyana a REDD programme is already operating.
- UNREDD, set up by UNDP, UNEP and FAO - similar to and overlaps with the FCPF.
- Bilateral (North – South) REDD deals, Norway is promising to give out billions for this programme. One motivation may be to clear its conscience. Norway grew rich on oil. It has promised \$1 bn to Indonesia, \$1 bn to Brazil, \$250,000 to Guyana. They are also funding UNREDD and FCPF. However, the Norwegian pension fund still has shares in oil palm plantations in Indonesia. Norway is not cutting back on its oil exploration (in Indonesia, for example). Many other bilateral agreements, for example Germany and Australia are funding various REDD projects in Indonesia.
- REDD + partnership. After failure of Copenhagen to decide on REDD, France and Norway set up a “REDD+ partnership” to push through a REDD deal in Cancun. Badly implemented.
- Conservation organisations – The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, Environmental Defense Fund, Wildlife Conservation Society, WWF. Entering into partnerships with polluting industries to sell carbon credits to polluting industries.
- Avoided Deforestation Partners – a group of polluting corporations and conservation organisations.
- Some commercial banks - Merrill Lynch and Bank of America are financing a REDD project in Indonesia, with a company called Carbon Conservation. But there is not much commercial bank involvement in REDD generally yet.



Joan began by introducing her organisation, the Asia Indigenous People's Pact, comprised of 32 indigenous peoples (IP) organisations in 13 countries in Asia. It is formed by Indigenous Peoples, including AIPP secretariat and leadership and work closely with indigenous peoples organisations in relation to REDD+ and climate change, in Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Indonesia and Nepal.

Her [presentation](#) focused on the concept of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), which is a mechanism by which indigenous peoples take their own independent collective decision on matters that affect them as an exercise of their rights to their land, territories and resources, their right to peace and security, to self-determination and to cultural integrity. This means IPs are able to say "No" and can set terms and conditions for their partnership with others.

The concept of FPIC is integral to many international laws and declarations, for example:

**Articles of UNDRIP<sup>8</sup> that refer to the requirement of FPIC**

- Article 10: on the right to land and territory
- Article 11, no.2: on the right to culture and religion
- Article 19: on self governance and formulation of laws, policies affecting IPs
- Article 28, no 1: right to land and to redress
- Article 29, no.2: right to territory and security from hazardous materials
- Article 32, no.2: right to land and resources

**Other important recognition of FPIC**

- Intl Labour Organization: Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169)
- Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

**Principles and substance of FPIC** - It is important that all these elements are together

- Free refers to an independent process of collective decision-making defined by indigenous peoples, without coercion, intimidation or manipulation.
- Prior refers not only to getting consent before project activities start, but also requires IPs to be given enough time to understand and analyze the information they receive.
- Informed refers to the right to access information about any project activity that affects them, as well as info about track record of companies and past projects. The information should be factual, impartial, objective and complete.
- Consent cannot be valid if it is from an unrecognised or unaccountable authority. The right of self-determination means respect for IP decision-making procedures.

**Lessons learned** - negative experiences, where incomplete or biased information was given, particularly where the company is in charge of the information provision. Often, no time or space is provided to discuss amongst themselves, the company requires a decision by the following day. There have been cases of manipulation, for example, sometimes companies promise services like roads, clinics, employment, schools etc, in exchange for consent. There have been cases of misrepresentation - where fake tribal councils were set up and bribed by a mining company to give consent. In other cases, companies collect villager signatures (eg signatures on attendance forms at meetings) and use these to claim fraudulently that the community consents.

Apart from an understanding of FPIC, a most important factor is the strength of communities on the ground to assert their rights, to govern themselves and to make their own decisions. At present there is a lack of independent monitoring on the implementation of FPIC and of recourse mechanisms for indigenous peoples.

<sup>8</sup> UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

**REDD - CRITICAL ISSUES:** - Issues that IPs are dealing with, on the ground, now:

- REDD must address the real drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, often IP groups agro-forestry activities, or shifting/rotational cultivation is blamed, but this is not the main cause – swidden agriculture is a matter of survival for IP communities.
- Respect for IPs' land tenure. Many communities are saying that they are engaging in REDD, not because they are for REDD or against REDD, but because regardless of whatever happens to the carbon, the main issue is; will IP groups be driven out? This concern comes from recent lessons that are intensely-felt by many IP groups - having been evicted from forests that they have conserved for years so that environmentalists who think they know better can look our forests instead. If IPs don't engage in REDD, the more they are excluded, the more their concerns will be ignored.
- IP forest governance and management institutions are also threatened, cannot allow these to be destroyed and abandon this way of life.
- Women have a critical role in the transfer and enhancement of traditional knowledge, and in management of natural resources. Yet their role is invisible, or made invisible.
- Benefit sharing brings up many concerns. Communities whose tradition does not use cash, are vulnerable to capture of elites. Benefits can end up with a few individuals instead of the whole community.

As REDD is being designed during this Readiness Phase and in the formulation of national strategy programmes, REDD must address the issue of land tenure, forest governance, benefit sharing. Joan feared that if IP groups don't engage in the national discussions and put our concerns forward, the situation will end up like the declaration of National Parks and Conservation Areas, where IPs were just thrown out of their lands. For IPs, knowing how REDD will be implemented at local level is a question of survival.

**REDD Safeguards** - Any actions taken in REDD should be beneficial to the environment and to IPs and local communities. They should take into account the needs for sustainable livelihood of IPs etc. They should respect knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples. Governments are asked to make an official standardised report. UNDRIP obligations are not repeated in the REDD framework, but are noted.

### **Lessons from the process in Vietnam**

AIPP took part in the evaluation of the FPIC process in Vietnam. Communities were shocked that they were consulted at all, this is the first time that this had happened in Vietnam. There was a good team of facilitators – ethnic minority students - but they lacked background understanding of REDD and FPIC. The process was very fast - communities were given short notice, they had only a short time to get information and to consult. There were good posters, booklets etc, however these only concentrated on the importance of forest protection. No mention was made of the potential risks and the implications for REDD for their rights and livelihoods – these are critical issues, but they were never addressed.

Concerning decision-making, this was by secret balloting of individuals or raising of hands. There was no time or venue for communities to independently process information and decide collectively. In the end, the communities did consent, but to what? The question asked was “do you want to protect your forest”? They weren't asked to consent to REDD. Lessons from this pilot have been acknowledged by UNREDD.

### **Preconditions for an effective process**

Joan's presentation ended with the comment that communities have to be well organized and know their rights, need strong and accountable leaders. It's important for them to fully grasp FPIC, as well as to understand climate change and REDD issues, and to have the relevant skills: negotiations, facilitation, documentation, etc. The government must recognise IPs and respect their rights. Conflicts with companies, projects etc. should be resolved using a human rights framework. Governments should engage with IPs in good faith, transparently and accountably, and need to respect decisions of the community.

## Discussion (summary comments and questions)

**Chea Boreth, Director of CDA, Cambodia** The Cambodian RPP has indicated potential areas for REDD, but some of these areas already have ELCs or are going through a land concession process, and still more on the way. This is one concern about REDD in Cambodia.

**Kevin Yu, Philippine Movement for Climate Justice** Need to contextualise this discussion within the context of the negotiations at the UNFCCC. Huge funds are being diverted to REDD, because developed countries have to commit to emission reductions. It is expensive to retrofit their industries, and mechanisms like REDD are cheaper for them, and do not require a change to their mode of development. UNEP calculated that existing pledges will generate a 4-5 degrees increase in temperature. Engaging in carbon trading can be seen as a violation of the rights of other communities elsewhere around the world, who will suffer the climate and other impacts of a 4-5 degrees increase. Even if we achieve all the safeguards that we want for IP groups in REDD, isn't there a bigger issue of the increase in temperature that REDD will facilitate?

**Gibby Gores, Youth Against Debt, Philippines** Sometimes there are undemocratic power structures within the community, which seek to take advantage of their power and agree to REDD. There may already be covert negotiations between REDD proponents and IP leaders. How can civil society get the government to ensure that FPIC processes will really happen?

**Thai participant** In Thailand, community leaders are beginning to sell carbon, but without enough monitoring or control. We don't want to sell carbon, just want to conserve our woodlots. There are two sawmills in our area. Family woodlots are being cut down, when family members have debts they end up having to sell their woodlots.

**Douangprachanh Champaphonevilay, Laos** In Laos, forest dwellers are amongst the poorest. He more concerned about whether and how will benefits go to the communities than about offsets. How can their rights be recognised?

**Prue Odochao, Thailand** On the need for strong communities – no one, but ourselves, can make us strong. No matter how good the frameworks, suggestions, problems arise because it is always someone else who decides. IPs are just beginning to learn about REDD, but its already been decided. REDD is coming. Companies encourage villagers to agree with the idea and get the villagers to push the government for it. Every community is now indebted, so people are very excited at the thought of money coming in. But this could lead to destruction of our planet.

**Joan Carling** On the issue of whether signing up to REDD projects can be a violation of the rights of other communities worldwide, framing it as a conflict of rights is a fundamentally wrong analysis. Carbon emissions are abusing IP rights as much as anyone else, carbon trading will continue to violate IP rights. IPs have the lowest carbon footprints, they should not be blamed for carbon offsetting. Carbon should be cut at the source, including those from the forest and industries, this is our clear message.

On the other question of power plays in IP communities, such power politics are a reality, just as in many other non IP communities, mostly there are systems to address conflicts. One of the preconditions for FPIC to work is to have strong, accountable leaders and well organised communities - these will make the difference. The projects should be transparent, there should be no under-the-table negotiations. We recognise this as a real problem and we have to address it through community empowerment. Capacity building is a long-term process, much support is needed in this by all groups.

**Chris Lang** was asked about whether REDD could help a community that is very poor but

still has a large amount of forest. He replied that it is important to know first the history of the village, and the other villages in this area. The Vietnamese FPIC process, began by asking the wrong question - a fundamental problem. It is a very bureaucratic approach - ticking boxes with the aim of getting consent, in order to move forward with REDD – and misses the huge complex social history of the people involved. While info is provided by REDD officials to villagers, villagers also need to be able to communicate their perspectives, their needs, their traditions.

Chris also agreed that carbon emissions should be reduced at source. This is the fundamental point, no matter what the debate within climate change. REDD is being introduced on the premise that it will reduce carbon emissions, but REDD will not reduce emissions of fossil fuels. REDD is a mechanism for avoiding the key issue of reducing emissions at source.

We are all affected by climate change. Activists should not point the finger at indigenous peoples who sign up to REDD. On the contrary it should be possible to generate solidarity. Carbon Credits are sold to polluting companies in the North. But in the North, poor communities, often poor communities of colour, are never involved in decision-making. There is no requirement of free prior and informed consent for people living next to a coal power plant that is allowed to continue polluting as a result of buying carbon credits. There is a real potential for links and solidarity across urban and rural communities, North and South.

## Overview South East Asia

**Joseph Purugganan** chaired the afternoon session and gave a [brief outline](#) of some of the relevant regional data. It is estimated that the annual loss of forest area in the Asia Pacific region is 3.7 million ha per year. Southeast Asia emits 12 % of world's total greenhouse gases (2000). Land use change, including deforestation accounts for three quarters of Southeast Asia's overall GhG emissions (ADB, 2009). Over half of global GHG emissions from deforestation, forest degradation and land use change is generated from eight countries in Asia, of which the top three are Indonesia, Malaysia and Burma - representing 45% of the global total. In the absence of action, conversion of the region's forests to other land uses could potentially release around 39 million tons of carbon stocks (FAO 2009).

**The Market** The ten countries with the highest REDD+ potential (ie have large forest area and high deforestation rates) would generate \$2.8 billion in emissions reduction credits from 2015 to 2020 from a 50% reduction in the rate of deforestation (@\$5 per ton of CO<sub>2</sub><sup>9</sup>). These countries are Indonesia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Laos, Cambodia, Nepal, Solomon, Sri Lanka, Timor Leste.

**Financing.** These include Fast Start Funds: \$3.5 billion of the \$30 billion 'fast start' funds 'agreed' in the Copenhagen Accord have been allocated by 6 countries (Australia, France, Japan, Norway, UK and US) for REDD. With additional funds from the Global REDD+ Partnership, total pledges amount to \$4 billion. Around 23% of pledged resources are allocated to countries in Asia Pacific (ie around \$964 million) through multilateral and bilateral arrangements (see box below).

### Multilateral REDD+ Support Mechanisms (\$434 m for Asia Pacific (AP) region)

- Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)- 4/37 countries are in SEA, 8/37 are in AP
- UN-REDD Programme (UN-REDD)- 10/18 countries are in Asia Pacific
- Forest Investment Program (FIP) of the Climate Investment Funds – 2/8 are in Asia Pacific
- Global Environment Facility Sustainable Forest Management and REDD+ Program (GEF-SFM/REDD+) - open to all forested countries

### Other sources

- Bilateral Partners (\$531 m for Asia Pacific region)
- In-Country Contributions – the governments take on 10-25 % of project costs. This can be a toll on the national government.
- Voluntary Carbon Market - 22 % of registered forestry projects are part of VC market
- Asia's share of world's forest-based offsets: 6 % (\$9.9 million)

## Implementation of REDD through a Phased Approach

Phase 1: Readiness – Development of National REDD+ strategy

Phase 2: Transformational Changes- Implementation of plans, policies and measures

Phase 3: Performance-Based Payments

**Vulnerability** This region is host to 70 % of the world's extremely poor (ADB 2008). Poverty is more pervasive in forested lands. Forests are a source of income and employment to many indigenous peoples comprising 210-260 million people in Asia.

## How is REDD being sold in the region?

ADB says that REDD could potentially be a large, new source of financing for sustainable rural development. But the following case studies show the complexities in this picture.

<sup>9</sup> The formula for valuing this potential sum appears to be = \$5 x tonnes of forest carbon per ha in 2005 x (forest area in 2005 (ha) x percentage of forest lost over 2000-2005 x 0.50) x 5 years). This is from a table on estimate market for avoided deforestation in an ADB document entitled "National REDD Plus Strategies in Asia and the Pacific, Progress and Challenges". Accessed at <http://www.adb.org/documents/reports/national-redd-strategies/national-redd-strategies.pdf>

### **Saman Budwang, Inpeng Community Network, Sakon Nakhon province Thailand**

Saman's community has become involved in carbon trading. He first heard about the idea in 2007. The community was contacted by a professor of ecology at Mahasarakham University who was interested in the diversity of plants, animals, insects in their area. In 2007, they were approached by the National Research Council and Michigan State University as part of their research into carbon credits in forest areas. His community was the first to take part in the pilot project in Thailand.

The community has been involved in the project for two years already. Revenue is still low. There are 40 families, they each get 150 baht per *rai*<sup>10</sup> per year (or \$5 per *rai* per year). Each family has at least 2 *rai* of forest lots, which represent for them a source of food, wood, herbs, medicines, all kinds of resources for daily life. They see the idea of selling carbon as a kind of bonus, not an occupation. Saman stressed that none of the families were conserving their forests in order to be able to sell the carbon.

The total combined area of the community's forest lots is 625 *rai* (or 100 ha). They were able to calculate the carbon via a partnership with Mahasarakham University, which worked out a figure of a certain number of tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> sequestered per *rai* according to the height and age of the tree. He explained that this was not easy, as the forest is very diverse - all the trees are different heights and ages. Saman was not sure of the terms of the contract as it was signed by the chairman, not him.

In his area, as well as the community forest, villagers also have their own woodlots. These woodlots are privately owned, mostly registered under a land title or another kind of land rights certificate. They are allowed to cut the trees in the planted teak woodlots. In the community forest they must notify the community in advance if they want to cut any tree down and also explain why.

He understands that the project will last 15 years. At the moment, the revenue from the carbon trading project only brings in 150 baht (\$5) a year per *rai*, but in 15 years he expects the payment will be higher. However he stressed again that the villagers do not grow the trees for the credits, they have their own reasons to look after the trees.

When asked what will happen if a villager cuts the trees for his own uses, or if it falls as a result of a natural disaster, Saman answered that if they need to cut all the trees, they can, but they must notify the University and the consultant. If a tree is cut, he felt it should be ok to plant a new one in its place, as the growing tree also soaks up carbon. But if they cut the whole forest area down, this would break the agreement with the University, so Saman felt that they would have to be fined and return the money received.

Saman thought that the credits were being sold on the Chicago market. However when asked what benefits or revenue the brokers and other actors involved in the project are getting, he was not sure. He is certain only of how much his community is receiving. At the village, they have not discussed the role of others in the deal. Michigan University and other agencies have covered all the costs of the research.

Another participant (**Jacques-Chai Chomthongdi**) supplemented information from the previous day's meeting on carbon trading. This project is quite special as it is the first of its kind in Thailand - it is not operating according to a market mechanism. The Thai Greenhouse Gases Organisation (TGO) has intervened in setting the price in order to make the deal more attractive, the villagers have been given \$4-5 per tonne (150 baht) instead of the market rate of \$2 per tonne (70-80 baht). In fact, the credits did not qualify to be traded on the Chicago Market. However it may be that credits can be traded in future, under different conditions.

### **Erwin Quinones, Legal Rights and Natural Resources Centre, Philippines**

<sup>10</sup> A *rai* is the main unit of area in Thailand. It is equal to 0.16 ha.

The Philippines is not yet included in REDD programmes, but the government wants to join in and is busy preparing for REDD. Erwin's [presentation](#) focused on the policy framework that was pushed by the previous government, led by Gloria Arroyo, to include REDD in the national climate change strategy.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has been designated the operational implementer of REDD-Plus.

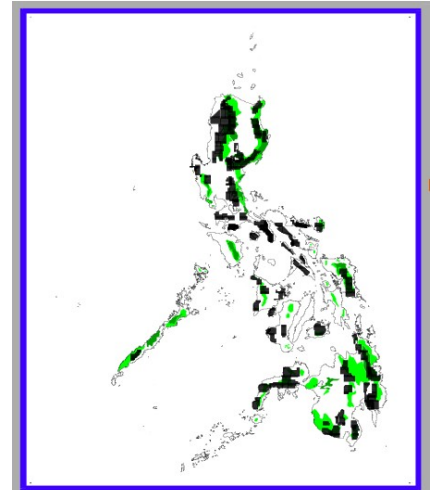
Forest threats are identified in the **National Framework Strategy on Climate Change** as logging, weak forest protection, incoherent policies, upland agriculture, unplanned land conversion, pests and diseases. Notably, mining is not identified as a threat, although it is a major problem and is being promoted aggressively. Existing mining projects have destroyed prime biodiverse forest areas (see photos). Many proposed mining areas overlap with remaining forest areas (see map, with mining in black and forest areas in green).

The **National REDD + strategy** presents strategies and activities over 10 years (2010-2020). It is said to have undergone a consultative process. REDD+ is supposed to deliver benefits such as biodiversity conservation, ecological restoration, distribute possible equitable benefits on the basis of progressive pro-community land tenure and forest management policies and strong civil society participation. However according to the Philippines report to the UNFCCC it is intended to leverage future funds and boost the "enhancement of forest carbon stocks".

#### **A summary of REDD funded projects in Philippines:**

- On September 2010, UN-REDD approved a one year grant of \$500,000 to develop the national REDD readiness plan.
- **German Technical Cooperation** (GIZ) is proposing a 3.2 million euro project to modernise the National Forest Policy and to introduce REDD pilot projects. Potential pilot areas include Northern Leyte's Anonang-Lobi mountains and eagle habitats: Samar, Panay and Caraga region, Mindanao.
- The **ADB's** Integrated Natural Resources and Environmental Management programme is supposed to develop new approaches for using REDD
- **JICA** is planning new loan projects for climate change, including forestry in three watersheds, incorporating some elements of REDD into the existing projects.
- **AusAid** has been focusing mainly on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction. It is considering the inclusion of mitigation and REDD in the strategy.

**Civil society concerns**, - many questions especially amongst those working with Indigenous Peoples. A coalition of NGOs, who call themselves CoDe REDD – Philippines, is pushing for a "responsible" REDD-plus mechanism. Another group sees REDD as an ongoing effort by rich countries to evade their own emissions cuts. They note that Philippines already has an Indigenous People's Rights law, and Ancestral Domains Claims (ADCs) are legally recognised, but most IP communities have not yet acquired secure tenure. There is also a problem of the definition of "forest" in REDD - forests are not just a stock of carbon, for many people the forest is a resource for their daily lives, it is their hospital, their foodstore, it is important for their cultural life, etc. Carbon trading raises several issues for them. Another problem is weak governance and incoherent policies. For example, the government has approved an ADC and a Protected Area and a mining concession, all in the same area. This ties in with the "business as usual" approach of the previous government, and fails to address



the root cause of forest and degradation.

## Cambodia

Seng, Sokheng shared the panel with Chea, Boreth. They both spoke about the pilot case of REDD implementation in Cambodia in Oddar Meanchey province, in North Cambodia.

## Sokheng, Community Peace Building Network, Cambodia

Sokheng began [his presentation](#) by emphasising that more than 80% of the Cambodian population depend on land and natural resources and as much as 63% of the population are landless or land poor. However, the government has decided that it needs more land for development. According to a study from WB and other experts, people are becoming landless at a rate of increase of 2% per year. The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that 4.6 million people are chronically food insecure, and found that food insecurity is highest in areas plagued by land grabbing, economic activities and mining industry.

The places where indigenous peoples live are also where there are a lot of economic land concessions. Three hundred companies have applied for land, mostly in the forest areas. More than 29% of forest cover has been lost in the last five years. Economic land concessions (ELCs) and mining concessions are the biggest problems for the forest. The Cambodian legal framework is not respected (when it comes to granting ELCs). Rights of the community are not respected, and there is no consultation with the community.

**REDD consultation process.** The government has already submitted its RPP (Readiness plan) to the FCPF via UNREDD, but it has proven difficult for civil society groups to assess this document, as it is written in English. Before preparing the RPP, the government only consulted at national level, and was limited to participants who speak English. People in the forest had no opportunity to express, let alone alleviate, their concerns.

Many potential areas are in danger. In these forests, there are thousands of IPs, who depend on the forest. The government does not have a strong commitment to preserve the forest.

No money has been received yet, and there is no mechanism in place for how this will be shared. So far only one forest area has been piloted. The government wants to do REDD to keep the forest, but at the same time they issue economic land concessions. There is only one cake, they want to eat it and keep it at the same time. They can see that there is money available to them from economic land concessions and from REDD. The community do not get any benefit from such actions. Their forest will be lost.

## Chea Boreth, Director of CDA, Cambodia

Boreth is directly involved in managing the implementation of the REDD project in Oddar Meanchey. His [presentation](#) provided additional information about the **REDD Pilot Project**. The Project started in March 2008 and concerns several areas in the province with a total of 67,783 ha (see map). This province lies close to the border with Thailand where there is a military presence.

The project is being implemented by the Children Development Association (CDA) and thirteen local Community Forestry Committees which relate to 58 villages (marked in red on the map). REDD is the continuation of the previous community forest work that they have been doing since 2003. In 2008, REDD took over. The technical aspects of the project are being handled by the Forestry Administration, Technical Working Group on Forestry and Environment, Terra Global Capital, Climate Change Clinton International, and PACT Cambodia. The budget to run the project is still based on a grant from DANIDA. No revenue from carbon credits yet.



The Project Design Document was submitted to the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) and the Voluntary Carbon Standard (VCS) and has already been approved. A Consultation Workshop was held with local community with the aim of planning about 30 years in the future under a REDD programme. Also a biomass inventory has been made of the area, in collaboration with Birdlife International. This was submitted and approved by the Voluntary Carbon Standard (VCS). A 30-year agreement was signed between the Forestry Administration and PACT Cambodia.

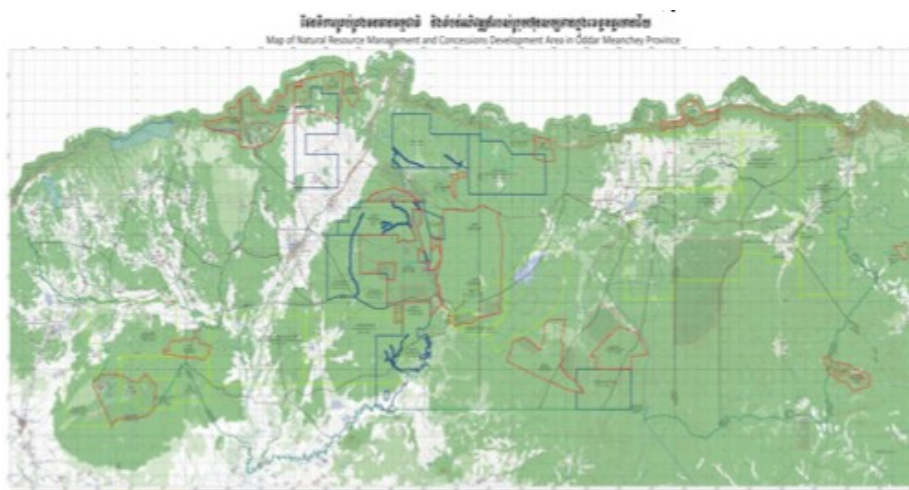
Currently, the main **challenge of REDD Pilot Implementation** is illegal logging by military and powerful people. There are conflicts with powerful men. There are many military in the border area. Economic land concessions (ELCs) and mining are the main issues for REDD. If these problems are not sorted then REDD in Oddar Meanchey will fail. The community forests are very small while the concessions are very large - more than 10,000 ha each. Comparing the two, ELCs and community forests, the ELC area is bigger. This affects the livelihood of the community in the area who need access to community land, farming land, *chamkar* (upland rice fields). The RPP is a very nice document but it doesn't reflect realities in Cambodia. The government may consult communities when setting up REDD areas but people are not consulted when the government issues ELCs. After the problem of ELCs and illegal logging, come problems of forest fires, poor land management, and limited knowledge about the REDD concept amongst the implementing organisations.

There is also a concern about the definition of forest in Cambodia. The government is increasing the number of plantation concessions (defining acacia, eucalyptus, rubber plantations as forest). The government might count rubber plantations as REDD areas.

As things stand, it is people who have to protect the forest, but the money will flow to the government. The community wants to participate and join into process of selling the carbon themselves, rather than just protecting the forest while other people will sell the credit.

**Recommendations** The government should stop issuing economic land concessions all over the country, especially in REDD project implementation areas. Consultation must be prioritized amongst community members before REDD is started, the rights of people must be prioritized.

There is still no mechanism for benefit sharing. According to measurements in 30 years this area could stock seven million tonnes of carbon. The project will access the voluntary carbon market, so still don't know how much money will be generated. Terra Global Capital, a company in USA will broker the deal, they estimate \$3-4 per tonne per year. If the carbon is sold, Terra Global Capital will charge 7% for the total value of the carbon sold.



Douangprachanh's [presentation](#) covered progress with the REDD+ policy formulation and piloting in Laos. In Laos, the REDD project is run by a REDD Task Force which is collaborating with the FCPF. REDD is being implemented in a pilot area which is supported by the Forest Strategy Implementation Project (FSIP). The SUFORD project is providing assistance with monitoring techniques for carbon stock monitoring. GIZ is also supporting REDD through its Lao-German Climate Protection through Avoided Deforestation (CliPAD) Program. The Japanese Government is providing some funds for the Department of Forestry to implement the REDD+ Project in the Northeast Laos, under a project referred to as PAREDD (Participatory Land-Use and Management for REDD). Other organisations involved are NAFES, WCS, IUCN, and RECOFTC. LBA and GIZ are working together on the implementation of REDD.

**Challenges** - Free, Prior and Informed Consent for REDD in the Pilot Area. This is a new issue for the government. Although the government is a signatory to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, it has stated that there are no indigenous peoples in Laos. IPs have not been recognised in the Constitution. The Constitution talks instead about ethnic people, and ethnic minorities.

Overall 42% of the national area is covered by forest. Around 80% of the land area is mountainous. The rural population depends on traditional agriculture and non-timber forest products for food subsistence and income generation. More than 80% of the 6 million population live in rural areas.

**REDD activities:** The pilot project by the Lao-German Cooperation Programme in the Nam Pui National Protected Area is run in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and others. So far there have been bilateral government negotiations on the project, a feasibility study, and some initial consultations on a programme preparation study. After this process, the technical cooperation element of the programme will be finalized and proposal made by the German Government. Finally, there will be another consultation on this element.

Another planned pilot project by GIZ and WCS will be at the Nam Et - Phou Loey National Protected Area (NEPL NPA). There is also a feasibility study being carried out by WCS at Bolikhamxay province in central Laos, including Nam Kading National Protected Area.

Douangprachanh ended with a note about how LBA is implementing the REDD project with support from AIPP. It is mainly involved in providing basic information, awareness raising, and capacity building on forest management and REDD for local people and local government officials in Laos. LBA is also working on legal awareness for local community empowerment and to try to improve land rights tenure security in project area. Their focus is agriculture/ forestland registration and how to ensure the compensation decree is followed and facilitating access to the justice system.

REDD is an established policy of the government, and it has already been signed with international agencies.

## Country presentations - Discussion and Synthesis

The discussion which followed Panel 2 brought in some of the issues concerning participants from other countries. For example, one speaker from Manipur, India, reported that while India is not a REDD country yet – there is no REDD readiness plan - the government is preparing for REDD through its new Green India Mission. The government is currently aggressively promoting extensive cultivation of jatropha and palm oil with the help, mostly, of companies from outside (such as ECOfirst). It is not known whether agrofuel cultivation in India will be part of carbon trading, as this has not been informed to communities, but the government might claim credits in later phase when REDD is being implementation.

Many expressed concern that the government appears to be playing a double game, keeping the cake and eating it too, by signing up to REDD while still issuing economic land concessions. What could REDD do to keep the economic land concessions out of the forest?

Several participants raised the perspectives of local communities who live and depend on the forest. There are huge problems still facing forest communities. These are the most impoverished communities across Asia, dependent on forests for their livelihoods, but facing many threats. There is an attempt to equate forest cover with revenue in the form of a simple equation. But communities have different ways of valuing the forests. The problems that will plague REDD are problems that have long plagued forest communities. Indigenous peoples groups in the Philippines are still in an ongoing struggle to recognise their Ancestral Domains Claims.

One speaker was concerned whether the compensation provided to families is fair for loss of their access to resources, particularly on plots owned by individual families. Elsewhere IP communities and large numbers of people dependent on non-timber forest products are not recognised by government and their access to the forests is not secure. What will happen to them under the REDD programme? Many concerns on whether communities are joining these projects willingly. Do villagers have full details even when the project has begun already? Do they have a say?

Others were concerned about the lack of mechanisms for benefit sharing by the communities. Contracts are being drawn up by the academics, with companies in the US. Meanwhile communities do not know how much money is generated. While communities receive 150 baht per *rai* per year, how much are other entities are earning?

Capacity building activities are certainly needed. But capacity building for what? Do we build capacity to join REDD or do we build a critical awareness to decide where to stand - perhaps to oppose REDD or to push for measures that would be more beneficial to people. The stakes are high, not just for the billions of dollars at stake, which are attracting carbon cowboys, but more importantly for the survival of people.

Communities are not being given sufficient information. Even the local REDD implementing organisations are not clear about REDD. R-PP plans are not translated into local languages. Conflicts on local land, so many people landless or land poor are facing a critical situation. Mining concessions are approved without consultation from local communities. Limited capacity limited understanding continuing threat faced by communities who are struggling day to day.

On the other hand, it was clear from the presentations that the REDD project is pushing forward under a global elite 'consensus'. Major support from multilateral agencies, private corporations. This is a new scheme, but governments and some civil society organisations are sold on the idea already. REDD+ is moving ahead very fast. Pilot projects have begun. People must discuss how to respond.

## Discussion groups

Following Panel 2 on country experiences with REDD, the room was divided into three English speaking groups and one Thai speaking group to discuss the following issues:

1. What are the threats to communities' access to forests, lands and natural resources?
2. What can we do to support communities address these threats?
3. Can REDD address these threats?
4. How can CSOs engage with REDD without legitimizing green capitalism and carbon markets?

The following sections cover the reports made by each of the groups after their discussions:

### Group 1

For this group the main threat to the forest was the power and prevalence of ELCs—mining, logging, dams, concessions pushed forward by powerful people connected to the government. If communities complain, they don't get far.

Often community collective or individual land titles are not recognised; the State claims the area as state land, and justifies clearing it on the basis of increasing GDP, national development, etc. There is much land grabbing—private, small and mid-scale also; the government colludes in this landgrab and is there to evict people. It seems possible that new economic development plans can continue to convert forests to fuel crops and rubber plantations, etc.

Tourism is another threat. Past experience of conservation projects has been the eviction of people living in the forest. IPs, their forest management, their knowledge, their traditions, etc. are not recognised. Spiritual values of IPs living in the forest are never mentioned.

Shifting cultivation is only a minor factor in forest degradation compared with other, more destructive activities.

Can REDD help with these threats? No, unlikely that REDD will solve problems. REDD acts mainly as an incentive for government to make more money; grab more land. REDD will not help save forests; though one participant expressed hope for the project in Vietnam.

The group had split positions on whether and how to engage with REDD; while some took the position that if there are no rights, there should be no REDD, others took the position of no REDD at all. REDD has already begun its process, so it is difficult to ignore. How can the harmful impacts of REDD be reduced? Help provide communities with more information about the REDD projects, etc. CSOs must and can do advocacy for community rights. Support IP rights— increase ownership of natural resources by IP groups. A difficult job when this goes against government policy.

### Group 2

This group raised specific cases. On the pilot project in Oddar Meanchey, in Northern Cambodia, one of the main threats is whether it will become a concession in future. The government will not consult with people in the communities about these concessions. Many people do not understand the technical terms in REDD. Governments take advantage of their opportunities and provide land for investors or the elites.

A similar problem was raised concerning the situation in Laos. Under the law, people have rights to access forest conservation areas, but the government also authorised a decree which means that economic concessions and the developers can override the law on protected areas. Rich people in all countries have more power to engage with the government or become legal persons to get access to and benefit from land.

Mangrove ecosystems absorb a lot of carbon. In the Philippines, there is a fear that if the

government of Philippines tries to implement REDD in the coastal area, they may ban or prohibit fishing in this area, with a damaging impact on livelihoods.

The problem of multiple claims and uses of land and forests were also raised -- IP ancestral lands, mining, REDD, plantations: local communities are affected by all. Following government decrees, companies can gain rights to develop mines, plantations. Even if they were not allowed to get those concessions, the rich would still have something to eat. But the community face food shortages. Huge plantations bring a lot of conflict. Land market is increasing especially in the context of the financial crisis. Land brokers are buying huge amounts of land. Land markets undermine the community rights.

How to support communities to overcome these threats? Promote critical discussion on REDD – within NGOs and communities. Support political analysis among IP groups, to identify risk and threats. NGOs and community-based organisations should work for the communities and give real definition about REDD.

This group opposed REDD policy and carbon trading; forests and lands should not be brought into carbon markets. The idea of REDD has been brought by international and local NGOs - are they thinking about their budget or the real interest of people? They may think only about their benefit, or completing their set of activities.

### Group 3

Threats to communities and natural resources? A Philippine participant had a name for it - “development aggression”: plantations, biofuels, hydropower, mining applications, economic land concessions, military oppression.

Climate change is a huge threat. But false solutions to climate change are also posing threats, such as CDM projects, biofuels plantations. REDD may also be a false solution.

What can be done? It was felt that it was valid to push for a change in the law - push for progressive laws that support community rights. However, this is a long-term process and also requires decentralisation. Important also to have activities to provide info about law, threats that are emerging. Sharing information about what is happening to communities is also helpful; and also what new threats are coming up. Communities in Cambodia are protesting against the logging of Prey Long forests, legal support is being provided to communities who are being threatened by illegal action. Can the REDD programme help address these threats? It cannot.

How to engage with REDD? It is useful to identify the real causes of forest degradation and ask REDD proponents whether REDD addresses these causes. Economic land concessions are the major cause of deforestation. REDD is not dealing with it.

It is possible to campaign against REDD, and particularly against the institutions, like World Bank, that are pushing REDD. They have a long and much criticised history in this region, and their record can be held up for scrutiny. Why would the Bank do anything different this time?

### Thai group

On the first question of threats, the main problem raised by the Thai group was the problem of chronic indebtedness: selling land to pay debts. Equally, when villagers do not have money to pay their debts, they sell off bits of their remaining private forest lots. There is poor understanding among community leaders about how to manage land—they tend to follow the government policy, which encourages using land as collateral.

Private investors have seized many areas of common land, for their own private profit. For example, in Suan Pung District, Ratchaburi Province in Western of Thailand many rich

businessmen from cities leased land from Treasury but have gradually take over the land, to operate resorts, while not paying any tax.

State policies ignore community participation in conserving their own forests. Policies do not support agrarian reform.

REDD – still not a solution to protect forests. Communities can protect forests themselves but legislation is needed first to secure community rights. If REDD is adopted in Thailand, then the law must be changed to legalise communities' rights to access the forest. REDD is supposed to help the countries of the South, but if the benefits do not come to the communities, then communities will not accept it.

If REDD comes, who will own the carbon, who will own the forest? Under Thai law—protected areas are owned by the state. If the forest law is not reformed in Thailand, then REDD will not benefit the community.

### Summary of the group discussions

Three discussion groups identified large-scale agri-business plantations and mining projects, as a serious present threat to the forests and one participant articulated these threats as “aggressive, market-driven development”. Collusion between state, military and investors to exploit forest resources makes for a forceful combination of wealth and political power. Concentration of land by rich investors is also a problem in Thailand, but another important issue presently facing communities is indebtedness, which is putting pressure on families and communities to cut down their remaining forest lots.

No group was convinced that a REDD mechanism could work to reduce these threats or uphold the rights of the communities. Some participants took a clear stance against REDD and against any carbon market. REDD is here, it is being promoted through an international ‘consensus’ and is being implemented fast. Communities and networks have to deal with REDD, whether they campaign against REDD or not. There are ways to increase information for communities, support political analysis, create dialogues. REDD is undeniably under way in the Mekong Region. Communities and their networks should hold information about the threats, the risks, where is the money coming from, who benefits, and who is making the decisions.