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Press release: Climate change and agrofuels

Bangkok, UN Climate negotiations move towards burning the planet

Tuesday 25 September 2012, by [La Via Campesina](#), [Movements \(Asian\)](#) (Date first published: 18 September 2012).

La Via Campesina and Asian social movements call for an end to financial speculation on food and climate as UN Climate negotiations move towards burning the planet.

(JAKARTA, September 18, 2012) Earlier this month in Bangkok, Thailand, a round of climate talks concluded under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The UNFCCC declared it a success and hailed concrete progress on the road to the 18th Conference of Parties (COP) in Doha, Qatar this December 2012. The progress they boast of is moving towards an agreement that will replace the Kyoto Protocol and will come into effect by 2020. La Via Campesina, an international movement of peasants, small- and medium-sized producers, landless, women farmers, indigenous people, rural youth migrants and agricultural workers, believes that this proposed agreement will not only be too late, it will also be too little as it has severely insufficient emission reduction targets and uses market mechanisms that aim to cheat nature not help it.

Official estimates from the UN itself show that even if all countries delivered on their pledges and did not use offset mechanisms and loopholes, this would still lead to a temperature increase of between 2.5 to 5 degrees Celsius before the end of the century [1]. And science has indicated that in order to avoid climate chaos, a maximum of 2 degrees Celsius should not be breached while movements have called for a maximum of 1 degree. [2]

Humans and nature are under attack

The impacts of climate change are real and are happening now all over the planet. Extreme weather of too much rain or of drought or too much cold or too much heat, have all wreaked havoc on crops, livelihoods and people's homes, leaving many hungry and homeless and is creating a new population of climate migrants and refugees.

And now, we are witnessing a grabbing war for who controls the remaining resources of the planet - land, water, forests and biodiversity. In Thailand and Indonesia, there are vivid examples of a new kind of "green" grabbing where small farmers and forest dwellers are kicked off their lands in the name of carbon offsetting by the big polluters. Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation or REDD is a mechanism that allows for big polluters, like the developed countries, to escape their obligations to reduce emissions and instead buy carbon credits by sequestering huge areas of forests in developing countries.

Small farmers and forest dwellers who live off of these forest lands are then kicked out or criminalized when they show opposition to their eviction. In northern Thailand, reports estimate an average of 20 arrests per day of villagers, accused of encroachment in the "protected" areas. In Jambi, Indonesia, a resource rich province of the island of Sumatra, small farmers and locals were

intimidated, interrogated, arrested while others were forced into signing a document that stated their agreement to leave the land and to never come back again.

Food, Climate and the new Green Capitalist Economy

This resource grab of land, forests, water and biodiversity, is no accident. It is the capitalist system's way of reviving itself from its near collapse. The global financial and economic crises pushed the capitalist system to a systemic crisis but instead of accepting defeat, it has found a new lease on life through this grab for the planet's remaining resources. Labeling it as the Green Economy, transnational corporations (TNCs) and banks have found a way to rebrand themselves as nature's saviors. And not only that, it has also found a way to make profit out of nature, climate change and the growing food crisis.

Because of the devastation of crops and farmlands due to climate change, prices of food have begun to climb again and TNCs and banks like Cargill, Wal-Mart and Monsanto are using this moment as an opportunity to earn more profits through financial speculation on food derivatives. And if the proposed green economy policies of the recently concluded Rio+20 Earth Summit were to be implemented, these TNCs and banks would also be able to speculate on nature itself.

Reclaiming our power in the fight against climate change

If we are to have genuine progress in the fight against climate change, social movements from around the world will have to reclaim the power and momentum in this struggle. In Bangkok, during the climate talks, La Via Campesina, together with several social movements from Asia had dialogues with movements from around the world, including activists from Occupy Wall Street and the Indignados movement from Spain and discussed the strengthening of solidarity amongst movements and the linking of struggles whether it be on climate, food, finance or others. As one concrete outcome, social movements from the South called for an end to financial speculation on food and climate and expressed its solidarity with the struggle of Occupy Wall Street on the occasion of its first year anniversary this week. Social movements from Asia will also prepare messages and actions on the occasion of the Global Noise with the Indignados movement on October 13, 2012.

Social movements are coming together to reclaim its power in the fight against climate change. Real change will not come from the official negotiations where governments represent the interests of their country's elites and TNCs.

The people and Mother Earth, hold the real solutions to the crises of food and climate. It is a matter of changing the system and reclaiming our sovereignty and implementing our alternatives that have another way of living, producing and co-existing with nature [3].

Footnotes

[1] UNEP. "The Emissions Gap Report: Are the Copenhagen Accord Pledges Sufficient to Limit Global Warming to 2C or 1.5C" November 2010.

[2] The Asia social movements call for an end to financial speculation on food and climate can be found on ESSF (article 26334), [arthe Asia social movements call fo...](#)

[3] For interviews with spokespersons of La Via Campesina, please contact: Indra Lubis ilubis@viacampesina.org or Mary Lou Malig marylouisemalig@gmail.com