



global witness

Independent monitoring vital to address governance and corruption in US\$4 billion deal to end deforestation, new report says

Briefing paper highlights past lessons for effective independent monitoring of forest governance

Money pledged to help developing countries prevent deforestation and reduce carbon emissions is likely to be lost to corruption unless efforts are made from the outset to improve governance, law enforcement capacity and accountability, warned campaign group Global Witness in a new report published at the UN climate change negotiations in Bonn today.

In advance of the latest round of climate talks, about \$4bn was pledged for initiatives aimed at “Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation” (REDD) between 2010 and 2012.

REDD investment offers an unprecedented opportunity to reform forest management and prevent irreversible climate change. Up to 20% of global emissions come from deforestation and forest degradation, and REDD offers the potential both to reduce emissions and drive sustainable economic development in forest-rich economies.

However, the opportunities REDD provides come with considerable risks. Global Witness’ new briefing, *Principles for Independent Monitoring of REDD (IM-REDD)*, outlines details of a system for independent monitoring, essential to complement social and environmental safeguards, and a necessary component of governance reform. The report sets out a range of checks and balances that are necessary to protect both the interests of forest-dependent communities and the global environment.

“Protecting forests will be absolutely crucial to mitigating climate change, but past experience tells us that without transparent and effective governance and effective independent monitoring, money will fail to solve the problem”, said Laura Furones of Global Witness. “REDD carries considerable risks for forests and local communities and will only succeed if civil society is engaged as an independent watchdog to ensure that the money is used in accordance with national laws and international guidelines.”

Global Witness’ report demonstrates the value of independent monitoring in the context of REDD and lays out 10 key principles to ensure its effectiveness. These include independence from national authorities and private sector interests; transparent tendering and access to information; and an unhindered right to publish findings. Unless these basic elements are laid down through the international process, REDD will be open to abuse and risks being counterproductive.

“It is now widely accepted that for forest reform to be effective, it must be independently monitored”, said Ms. Furones. “This report takes the lessons from over 10 years’ work in the field on forest governance. It outlines what needs to happen when promises leave the conference halls and hit the ground. Effective monitoring will be critical for the scheme’s credibility.”

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Global Witness investigates and campaigns to prevent natural resource-related conflict and corruption and associated environmental and human rights abuses.