

Abstract

Title: NAMA's from a Climate Justice Perspective

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The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities is at the heart of the international climate regime. According to this principle, which is enshrined in the Framework Convention on Climate Change, all countries should try to address climate change, but the developed countries that are primarily responsible for climate change should take the lead. In the view of the climate justice movement, these developed countries have gathered a significant ecological debt by creating a global environmental problem that is already causing billions of dollars of damage and the loss of thousands of human lives per year, especially in developing countries. That is why these countries should pay compensation, and contribute financially to nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs) and adaptation in developing countries. This financial commitment has been enshrined in the Framework Convention on Climate Change as well.

If well-designed, NAMAs can not only contribute to mitigating climate change, but they also provide a significant opportunity for poverty reduction. NGOs, Indigenous Peoples and community groups have gathered significant experience with small-scale initiatives that do not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but also contribute significantly to alleviating poverty. Community-driven forest restoration and agroforestry, for example, contributes to climate change mitigation, people's food sovereignty and enhanced access to natural resources and income. Experience in countries as varied as India and Brazil has shown that respecting the land rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities often provides enough incentive for them to conserve and restore their forests.

However, badly designed NAMAs can also cause environmental and social havoc. The introduction of a global cap and trade regime in the Kyoto Protocol has introduced a significant amount of commercial interests into the climate regime. The weak environmental and social standards in the climate regime are unable to prevent climate investments in harmful projects like nuclear energy, large dams and monoculture tree plantations. Moreover, carbon trade per definition does not contribute to reducing emissions, it just makes it cheaper to do so; the claim that this will lead to increased emissions cuts is unsubstantiated. Due to technical and political problems like fraudulent baselines, leakage and lack of additionality and permanence carbon offsets have actually contributed to increased emissions. Moreover, land use related carbon offset projects have lead to significant land grabbing in developing countries, which is a potential threat in Central Asia too. Many pastoral lands, for example, risk being classified as "marginal" and thus suitable for bio-energy plantations or other false solutions to climate change. This is a serious risk for the culture and livelihoods of pastoral peoples.

The challenge is to ensure NAMAs contribute to sustaining people's livelihoods, instead of undermining them. This will require strong, participatory and democratic public governance systems. Significant change is needed to ensure the climate regime facilitates such governance.

Biography:

Simone Lovera is executive director of the Global Forest Coalition, a world-wide coalition of Indigenous Peoples' Organizations and NGOs striving for rights-based, socially just forest conservation and restoration policies. GFC is an active member of Climate Justice Now! a network of social movements, Indigenous Peoples and NGOs campaigning under the slogan "System Change, not Climate Change". Simone Lovera also works as a volunteer forest campaigner for Sobrevivencia/Friends of the Earth-Paraguay. An international environmental lawyer by training, she has worked previously as international campaign coordinator for Friends of the Earth International and as coordinator of the legal and institutional program of the Netherlands Committee for IUCN.

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