

A Pro-poor and People-centered Response to Climate Change

Consultation, Washington, DC, May 27, 2008

Rights and Resources Initiative

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Work relates to Adaptation X Mitigation X

1. What is your organization doing to advance pro-poor and people-centered climate change?

A number of RRI Partners are very active in climate change deliberations, negotiations, and advocacy, e.g. FPP, IC, CIFOR, ACICAFOC, and IUCN etc. As a Coalition that is active in forest related issues, we believe that securing tenure and rights in forested areas is a critical element of both adaptation and mitigation strategies. To promote a better understanding of this reality among governments, donors and NGOs, RRI is organizing an international conference on Rights, Forests and climate change, to be held October 15-17, 2008 in Oslo, Norway. The expected outcomes of the conference are:

- The broader climate change discussions, negotiations, and institutions will become more supportive of the recognition and strengthening of human, property, civil, and political rights of forest communities and peoples.
- Recognition by the climate change community, particularly within UNFCCC delegates and negotiators that secure rights are a necessary part of climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.
- A clearly articulated narrative on the role of rights in climate change will be developed for advocacy. Concrete recommendations for the world community on addressing rights will be made.

2. What is, in your view, the most critical gap or unaddressed issue in the international negotiations towards a pro-poor climate regime?

The interlinked crises of climate change and energy are driving financial flows, land-use allocations, and a new international architecture of institutions, markets and regulations. The possibility of large investments in forests driven by the emerging carbon markets is high. What these huge potential investments entail for poor, forest-dependent communities is unclear, since “the primary aim of carbon financing is to offset emissions and not guarantee pro-poor development”. The question of who owns the carbon—whether emitted or avoided—has been little debated at the national and international levels. Nor have many countries begun to address the property rights issues surrounding carbon sequestration, emissions and trade. Debate within the UNFCCC on proposed new forest-related mechanisms (including reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation—REDD—and carbon markets) has only touched on issues related to local rights to forest resources, equity, governance and legitimacy.

3. Do you plan to address this issue? If yes, how?

Yes, by working with forest community networks and our Partners RRI would encourage donors, governments and UNFCCC to condition REDD and all funding for conservation, and other forest-related post-Kyoto investment, on the recognition of rights, including forest tenure, and adequate forest governance. We will also address this issue through various available fora by:

- Emphasizing how rights and tenure are the foundation of successful mitigation and adaptation strategies
- Suggest measures that can be taken by governments and the climate change community to secure rights and tenure in forested areas as a prerequisite for future carbon trading schemes
- Articulating how the recognition of rights can be part and parcel of the international response to climate change.

4. What are the challenges you see in addressing this gap?

Major challenges that we see in addressing this gap are:

- How to redirect investment from a flurry of climate mitigation and adaptation projects to the efforts that establish basic conditions for better inclusive governance that would make markets work;
- How to shift investment from more exclusionary protected areas scheme to development of climate resilient forests; and
- How to influence reorganization of Aid investment/distribution Mechanisms: Shift from the large, bureaucratic, opaque, and undemocratic financial institutions to a system of open, transparent, accountable and more democratic channels for aid investments