

Recommendations

For public authorities, from local to international level

➤ Concerning financial markets

- Abandon carbon trading and all compensation mechanisms, ban the use of market tools for nature and life.
- Ban financial products indexed on natural commons, such as Exchange-Traded Funds/Commodities.

➤ Concerning companies

- Adopt binding legislations that impose legal responsibilities for companies, which also apply to their subsidiaries abroad.
- Require transparency for lobbies at all decision-making levels, to ensure that no industry pressure group has a privileged or unfair access to policy making.
- Require financial country-by-country reporting, so that multinational corporations and banks no longer exploit legal loopholes and tax havens, currently a central key to their assault on nature.

➤ Citizen participation

- Respect communities' rights and their central place in decision-making that concerns the natural commons on their territories.
- Favour democratic, collective and shared control of society-wide decisions (energetic model, preservation of natural commons, large infrastructure projects etc.).

For citizens

- Refuse the financialization of nature by supporting and participating in alternatives to defend and reclaim the commons.
- Solicit local, national and international decision-makers about these questions.
- Find out how your savings are used and what their social and environmental impacts are: ask your bank manager/financial advisor to give you a complete breakdown of the investments and the make-up of the investment funds.
- Do not place your savings with a financial product involved in the exploitation of natural commons. The specialised website of Friends of the Earth France www.financeresponsable.org and their guide *Environment : How to choose my savings?* will help you make an informed choice.

All information regarding this campaign can be found online here: www.amisdelaterre.org/economieverte

The federation of **Friends of the Earth France** is a non-profit environmental and human rights network, independent from any religious or political influence. Created in 1970, they helped build the French ecological movement and helped found the world's largest grassroots environmental network, Friends of the Earth International. Friends of the Earth France forms a local network gathering 30 autonomous local groups that act according to their own priorities and support the national and international campaigns with a shared vision for social and environmental justice.

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Nature is not for sale !

Respect communities' rights.
Stop the takeover of nature by finance!



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A “green economy” which deepens the ecological crisis

What is at stake at Rio+20

Twenty years after the Earth Summit in Rio (Brazil), environmental damage has continued accelerating, inequalities have widened and the ongoing crises undermine democracy. It is in this context that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as “Rio+20”, takes place in June 2012.

At the forefront of this conference is the “green economy”, presented as a solution for the ecological, economic and social crises. Defined by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as “an economy which brings about an increase in human well-being and social equality, while significantly reducing environmental risks and resource scarcity”, in reality, it consists in applying market instruments and mechanisms in order to “manage” nature and human wellbeing. The aim therefore is to transform the ecological crisis into a “green” growth opportunity for business, with the creation of an international legal framework which favours the takeover of nature by multinational corporations and financial funds.

The banks have successfully infiltrated the international institutions. The creation, and official recognition, of an UNEP Finance branch allows

them to promote their private interests as public interests. Central in this strategy is the launch, at Rio+20, of a “Natural Capital Declaration”. What is this? The vision of the financiers, based on the conception of environment and of life as a simple capital resource, and their support for mechanisms that push the financialization of nature.

The economy swallowed up by the financial sector

The economic crisis of the 1970s caused profound changes, among which the domination of the economy and societies by the financial sector. The influence of banks, insurance companies and financial institutions grew, and as a consequence, the influence of financial markets. Confronted by reduced profits from the goods and services sectors, conservative governments responded to this crisis by implementing liberalisation policies and economic deregulation. At the core of these policies was “The Washington Consensus”, headed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), in collaboration with the US Treasury. Cuts in social budgets, privatization and liberalisation followed. In other words, the same “austerity” measures which Greece and the rest of Europe currently suffer from.

Nature, natural commons:
the terms of nature or « natural commons » were preferred to that of « natural resources », which already gives the idea of natural goods being simple raw materials, to be exploited, whereas in reality they are commons..

The crisis, THE best bet for the markets

In this economy dominated by finance, the financial markets and their institutions have taken control of the spheres of production of goods and services. Via markets for debt, for currencies, for shares, for raw materials (gold, silver, grains etc.), the economy has become a casino where speculation and risk taking lead to the concentration of profits in the hands of a few and debts for the rest. The satisfaction of basic human needs – pensions, housing, education, food, health, etc. – is submitted to the profit needs of financial funds.

The financial domination of the economy leads to a series of crises. After the I.T. and housing bubbles, the markets and the banks are looking for new investments and profits. **With the ecological crisis, a new target has appeared to them: nature.**

Mobilization of Friends of the Earth France!

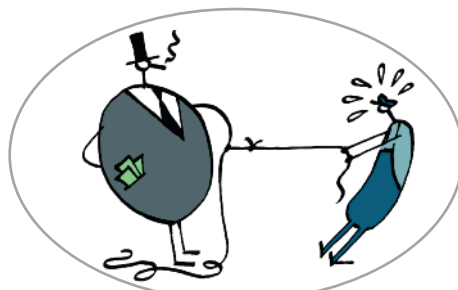
Because the ecological crisis must not serve as an excuse for a growth that depletes the planet and reinforces social inequalities, Friends of the Earth France launches a campaign to warn against the “green economy”, which is a smokescreen.

To find out more about our actions:
www.amisdelaterre.org/economieverte

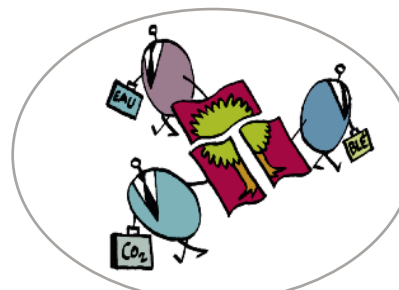
The financialization of the economy is essentially:



the increased weight of the financial sector in the world economy



the increasing grab of profits by the financial sector



the creation of new financial products and of new financial markets

UNEP Finance Initiative

multinationals Lobbying

Reclaim the UN from corporate capture

Friends of the Earth attend the UN Conferences as civil society observers. As the world's largest grassroots environmental network, we represent millions of people who campaign for social and environmental justice. At Rio+20, Friends of the Earth International and numerous other organisations expressed, in a declaration, their concern about the growing influence of multinationals within the UN.

“Increasingly we see UN policies that do not necessarily serve the public interest, but rather support the commercial interests of certain companies or business sectors”.

It is essential to preserve the independence of the UN as a place for political cooperation, which allows the creation of shared international policies. The UN must not be captured and controlled by multinational corporations!



During Copenhagen Summit in December 2009, Friends of the Earth Europe has marched with an “angry mermaid” against corporate lobbying within UN negotiations.

Nature, the latest whim of financial markets

The temptation to extend the market economy to ecosystems and the atmosphere has already existed for many decades. Accordingly, many of the “services” provided for free by nature, such as the purification of water, are not adequately taken into account, although their destruction or degradation do have a cost. For example the “free” pollination of plants by bees - if they were to disappear, they would have to be replaced by workers.

In 2008, the United Nations Programme for the Environment (UNEP) launched a large study about the economics of ecosystems to try to calculate the value of these “services”¹.

This exercise might appear useful, but the identity of the authors of this study allows us to understand the real “agenda” behind the study. Coordinated by Pavan Sukhdev, a Deutsche Bank economist, the financial actors have an important influence over this study, notably via UNEP Finance Initiative, a parallel structure at the United Nations that is clearly very active.

The risk of confusion between value and price is considerable: nature has an immense value and must be protected for its own sake, but trying to give it a price will almost inevitably lead to the creation of new markets with clearly identified pitfalls.

¹ The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) : www.teebweb.org

Planet for sale: finance launches an attack on new markets

Having speculated on food commodities, raw materials and energy and ahead of an assault against nature, the world of finance has already created new markets and associated financial assets: the best known are carbon markets.

Carbon market: bound to fail...

Within the framework of the Kyoto protocol and under the guidance of the UN, greenhouse gases (GHG) became, in 2005, tradable, with the creation of a carbon market by the European Union. Within this system, companies receive a maximum of rights to pollute, in the form of “emission certificates”, each one corresponding to one ton of carbon. As these credits can be exchanged between companies, a trading scheme was created.

The public banks, such as the World Bank (WB), the European Investment Bank (EIB) or, in France, the Caisse des dépôts et consignations helped with the setting up of this carbon market. Today, the majority of exchanges are handled by banks and investors, who speculate in carbon credits and create increasingly complex, unjust and inefficient financial products. The unjust and inefficient compensation mechanisms for rich countries' emissions in poor countries even lead to the creation of fictive carbon credits!

An over-allocation of quotas, a collapse in the price of carbon, massive frauds, profits for the polluters and the bankers – the carbon market has led to all kinds of things but the reduction of GHGs. In the meanwhile, the climate crisis gets worse and the impacts for populations become more and more serious.

To find out more: FERN, *Trading carbon*, 2010

...but the promoters persist

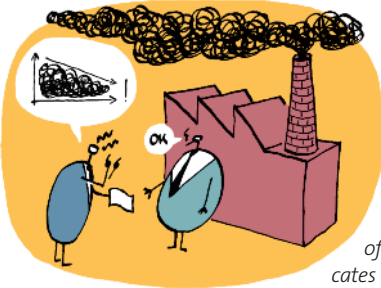
The carbon market might well be a failure, but as part of the “green economy”, the financial actors today propose to also include forests and agriculture through initiatives such as the UN “REDD +” (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation). Ireland has even already announced the inclusion of forest carbon credits in its 2012 finance bill in order to “capitalise on the financial needs of the future green economy”.

After the storms that ravaged the forests in the south west of France, le Conseil régional d'Aquitaine (regional authority) is studying a carbon fund project, to encourage the forestry industry to intensify their production or to use fast-growing tree species, to accelerate the replacement of forests and the creation of carbon capture.

To find out more: video of FERN,, *The story of REDD*, 2012

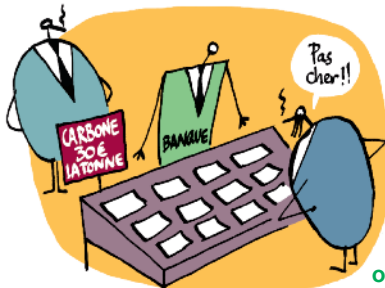
Integrating nature into markets means taking unacceptable risks:

- **Further reduce the responsibility of corporations:** instead of respecting laws, they can continue to pollute or destroy the environment by paying a compensation;
- **Increase social injustices:** integrating nature into markets relies on the creation of new property rights and on the rich having the capability to buy rights to the environment, excluding the poorest and the collective rights of communities over their own territory;
- **Fragment the complex unity on which ecosystems are based:** the proper functioning of these systems are intrinsically linked. If one function has a greater market value, for example carbon storage, will we modify the ecosystem in order to increase this function to the detriment of others - for example by favouring fast-growing trees rather than local species?
- **Deepen the ecological crisis:** as species or ecosystems become rare, their market price increases, leading to the temptation not to combat this decline, but rather to encourage it to maximise profits.



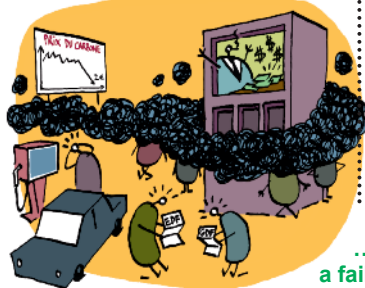
Setting up of the carbon market in Europe...

A limited number of emission certificates (equivalent to one ton of carbon) are given to industries. The total volume of these emissions must decrease to respond to the climate urgency.



... which promises to be an opportunity for the financial actors

Banks and investors play the role of intermediaries and create complex financial products.



... and turns out to be a failure for climate !

The outcome : the price of carbon collapses, the price of energy rises, the climate crisis deepens.

➤ Carbon, a new opportunity for Monsanto

Agriculture has not escaped the repercussions of the carbon markets. On the contrary, the climate is the latest argument put forward by Monsanto to impose their GMOs. This multinational has become an ambassador of conservation agriculture and the technique of “non-till farming”. With the massive use of Roundup® (glyphosate) and a soy that has been genetically modified to tolerate this herbicide, there is no longer the need to plough mechanically to remove weeds. Not ploughed, the soils stock more carbon, which allows the attribution of precious carbon credits, as well as the enormous profits from the sale of their herbicide and the corresponding GMO seeds.

➤ Water markets, violation of a fundamental right

In certain countries, water markets have been created in order, according to economists, to enable a better allocation of water. As for carbon markets, those who don't have enough “water rights” can buy them from those who have too many. Crop production that is “efficient” in water use would be favoured even if their use is limited, whereas other crops are required to meet peoples' needs.

The financial players have not hesitated to make a profit from this market, with the creation in Australia of a water trading market, the “Water Exchange”. In Chile the system has resulted in the concentration of water rights in the hands of the big companies and a reduction in access to water for the small-scale farmers and the indigenous, poorest populations. This water market is also heavily criticized because of the resulting speculation and the lack of government regulation. In Bolivia, the proposal to adopt the Chilean model was central to the triggering of the “water war” in Cochabamba in 2000, which resulted in a victory of the mass movements.

➤ In the Camargue, biodiversity compensation is a new alibi for the concrete promoters

In France, the Caisse des dépôts et consignations (CDC) is a major financier player. It has a key role in the structuring of new markets, such as for biodiversity.

In the Plains of Crau, bordering the Camargue, the CDC has bought thousands of hectares of a damaged ecosystem, the Coussoul, which is home to endangered species such the Little Bustard and the Bupreste de Crau (a type of blister beetle). The aim is to ask companies to finance the restoration of this ecosystem in exchange of a compensation certificate for the environmental damage of their projects elsewhere. In other words, these certificates legitimize the destruction of an ecosystem against the “restoration” of another area elsewhere, as if the two were interchangeable. Instead of tackling the damage caused by urbanisation and the loss of biodiversity, this compensation ignores the issue. The French Minister of Ecology admits it: “This enables the reduction, in particular, of delays in getting projects accepted by local communities”. One company has already bought these biodiversity credits in advance, with the promise of compensating for the environmental impacts of a project which is currently opposed by local groups.



In the southwest of France, the same perverse logic is applied. In order to undermine the opposition against the Pau-Langon Motorway project (A 65), the CDC proposed that the promoting company, Aliénor, should compensate for the damage that the project would cause, by financing the purchase or the improved management of 1.372 hectares of land elsewhere.

To find out more: www.nacicca.org



Demonstration of Friends of the Earth Indonesia to defend their forests in 2007.



Activists opposing carbon compensation in 2009 in Copenhagen.



March to defend the rights of indigenous peoples against the REDD mechanism in Cancún in 2010.

➤ Yes, I support Friends of the Earth France

To reinforce our independence and to have more weight to make our voice heard, we need you ! Help us by making a donation, by becoming a member of the association, by diffusing our work. Your support will finance our advocacy work and our support to local struggles against projects that push the financialization of nature.

In order to do it, please visit our website : <http://www.amisdelaterre.org/faireundon> (to donate) and www.amisdelaterre.org/adherer (to become a member)

I make a donation to support the campaign “Nature is not for sale !”

- ☐ 30 € finance our documents of public awareness raising
- ☐ 50 € reinforce our advocacy work towards decision-makers
- ☐ 75 € support our investigation work

If you wish to stay informed about our work, please fill in this form and send it to:

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Voluntary carbon compensation: a complementary initiative or the sabotage of negotiations?

The inclusion of forests and of biodiversity in carbon markets is being imposed, little by little, through voluntary compensation projects. Numerous NGOs or companies defend these initiatives, claiming that they are complementary with GHG emissions reduction. This argument is naive and harmful – whether the compensation is voluntary or compulsory, it is based on the same flawed logic and hides pollution or the destruction in one place by pretending that there are GHG reductions elsewhere.

Above all, the companies ensure that a law obliging a reduction in their emissions appears unnecessary as they give the impression that they already voluntarily reduce their GHG emissions. At climate conferences numerous parallel events take place to present to the negotiators the pilot voluntary carbon compensation projects and to convince them to adopt this inefficient approach.

The growing infiltration of finance into the existing natural goods markets

Financial actors

The takeover of nature by the financial sector also takes the form of their increasing intrusion into the natural goods markets. Once again, the financial players are driven by profit and the creation of financial value, and do not respond to the real needs of people.

The private banks have thereby become central to agricultural, energy and metals markets. They act as intermediaries by issuing shares/bonds for companies that produce and in addition, they create numerous financial products, in particular derived products, “derivatives”, for which the price fluctuates according to the changes of the value of other assets, such as wheat, cacao or oil. This is the case for “ETC” (Exchange Traded Commodities), funds indexed on the prices of raw materials.

Alongside the traditional banks, there is an increasing role for the “shadow banking” players - hedge funds, private equity funds, etc. Often based in tax havens, these players escape banking regulations and take greater risks.

The result is an increase in speculation on these markets. This is known to be one of the principal causes of food price volatility, the impacts of which are terrible for small-scale farmers and the world's poorest populations. The oil market is also dominated by the major banks. Creating increased volatility works in their favour for two reasons - they can subsequently speculate on the evolution of prices, and they also profit by selling hedging products to companies that are heavily dependent on energy, such as the airlines.

AXA and BNP Paribas, French leaders in the speculation on natural goods

AXA encourages its clients to enter into these markets : “owning shares in raw materials is an effective way to diversify your investments” ; “ETCs [...] allow you to profit from the dynamic of the raw materials market”.

BNP Paribas is a major player in the global agricultural and energy markets and offers numerous funds and instruments linked to raw materials. The bank even boasts about the fact that, in 2011, it won numerous awards linked to its activities and innovation on these markets.

To find out more: Friends of the Earth Europe, *Farming Money*, 2012

> 303
MILLION
DOLLARS

is the fine paid in 2007 by BP for having manipulated the USA propane financial markets.

> 20 TO 25
DOLLARS

more per barrel is the impact of speculation on the price of oil, according to a study by the US Senate.

Multinational corporations

Just like banks, multinational corporations see the “green economy” as a way to continue their business-as-usual, whilst pretending to behave responsibly. **Far from opposing the takeover of nature by the financial sector, multinational corporations prefer to seize the new opportunities offered by this “green finance”.**

The so-called productive companies, such as the major agro-industrial players or the oil and mining giants, also have a growing share in purely financial activities. They are obliged to produce the rapid profits demanded by their shareholders. They also speculate on the natural goods markets in which they invest and reap a growing share of their profits. **They are additionally responsible for a large part of land speculation and the subsequent land grabbing.**

The value of the shares of multinational oil and mining companies depends heavily on their reserves, seen as a measure of their future profits. This encourages extractive companies to try to get new extraction permits for purely speculative reasons: even if they don't yet exploit these resources it nevertheless increases their market value. **This financial logic results in an increase of oil, gas and mining projects around the world, pushing even further the limits of what is acceptable.** For instance, there is a multiplication of non-conventional fossil fuel projects such as shale gas and shale oil, tar sands, and deep-offshore drilling, with increasing social and environmental damages. The conflicts, human rights violations and land grabbing associated to mining projects also continue to grow.

To find out more: The Corner House, *Energy Security – For Whom? For What?*, 2012

Communities caught in the middle

The financialization of nature is also extremely worrying for communities. **It leads to the exclusion of communities from the decision making process regarding natural commons present on their territory.** As is shown by the example of the Plains of Crau, the creation of biodiversity or carbon compensation projects are too often implemented, like mining and oil projects, without any consultation of the local communities, despite the fact that they are the most directly concerned.

What's more, putting a price on nature also raises the question of who can pay, with a de facto exclusion once again of the poorest people. Selling the carbon which a forest can stock, or the “services” provided by an ecosystem, leads to the creation of new property rights, and often brings about the expulsion or the marginalisation of communities that live in the impacted areas. The companies or banks involved in these projects sometimes propose a minimal economic compensation for the displaced populations to supposedly compensate the loss of their livelihood, their traditional ways of life and even their cultures and identities!

The pressure on these populations is often even greater as water, carbon and biodiversity reserves are often concentrated in the same area and the collective rights of the impacted communities over these lands are often not acknowledged.

“Is there a law in Europe where it is written that when you build a factory, you can evict people at the other end of the world?”



Tutiko Kimaleni, Chief of the Basigu, an Ugandan ethnic group, commenting a REDD project in Uganda, (Extract from the France 5 report “Acheter vert, l'envers du décor”, 2010)

> 2 TO 3
BILLION
DOLLARS

per year are the profits that BP Oil made from its speculative activities between 2005 and 2010, about 20 % if its total profits

> 1
DOLLAR

the value of a tree from these forests for General Motors

Financial markets, crises and loss of power for the States

More widely, the takeover of nature by finance is a threat to democracy and the capacity of States to govern. This takeover is in fact a powerful mechanism that favours deregulation and the sidelining of environmental and social legislation. As we have seen, since the 2008 financial crisis and the ongoing Euro crisis, once power has been given to the financial markets, it is extremely difficult to control the consequences. Obsessed with « market ratings », governments lose their capacity to put in place the policies necessary to protect the general interest. Any regulatory measures to regulate the markets or financial actors are cut down by powerful financial lobbies.

Yasuni: the difficult promise to leave oil in the ground

Confronted by the heavy social and environmental impacts caused by the extraction of fossil fuels, there are concrete alternatives promoted by the civil society, amongst which is the proposition to leave oil in the ground. This idea lead Ecuador to promise in 2007 (a world first) to not pump the oil reserves within the Yasuni Park and instead invest in clean energy sources. In exchange, Ecuador requested an international contribution of 7.2 billion dollars – the equivalent of 50% of the estimated value of this oil.

The Yasuni ITT project could be a radically different alternative to the oil based development model and a first step towards low carbon societies. Besides the GHG emissions avoided, this initiative also raises the question of the reimbursement of the ecological debt of northern countries towards the South. One could imagine, as proposed by the Oilwatch network, that this debt be quantified as the obligation to leave in the ground a quantity of oil equivalent to that consumed, in exchange for the payment of its monetary value. The USA, which consumes 20 million barrels of oil per day, should therefore contribute to leaving in the ground 7.3 billion barrels each year.

However, the Yasuni ITT project, as it is currently formulated by the Ecuadorian government, is not without its ambiguities. On the one hand, it proposes to promote the project directly through carbon credits, to then be exchanged on the markets: i.e. falling into the trap of the financialization of nature which, as we have already seen, has failed as a tool against climate change. On the other hand, the proposition to leave the oil in the ground does not correspond to any national Ecuadorian policy: whilst it promises to protect Yasuni Park, the government multiplies the mining and oil permits in the rest of the country.



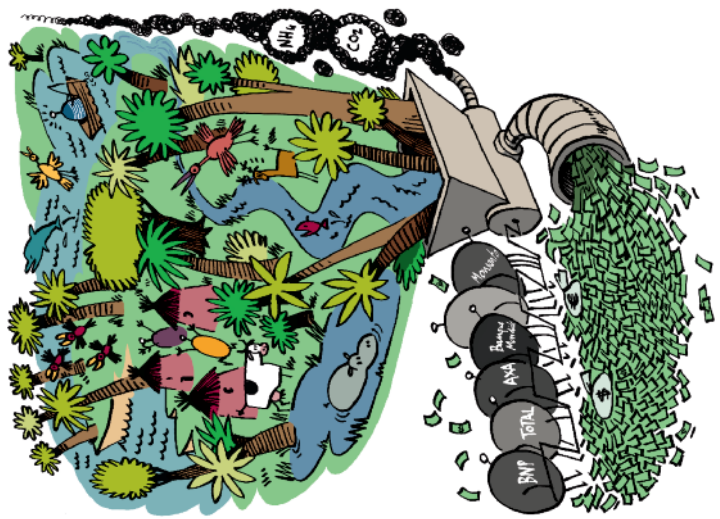
"Leave the oil in the soil, leave the coal in the hole, leave the tar sands in the land! These forms of energy are just the road to destruction."

Nnimmo Basey, Chair of Friends of the Earth International



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From financial debt to ecological debt

The debt crisis came about in the 1980's because of a sudden rise in interest rates in the USA, the collapse of raw material prices and corruption favoured by dictatorships. Forced by the international financial institutions (IFI), the indebted countries took out new loans to pay the interest on their previous debts and, in exchange, had to undertake drastic budgetary cuts and to increasingly open their economy to international investors. These "structural adjustment" policies have lead southern countries to export more and more of their natural goods at low prices, whilst having weakened regulation power to control social and environmental impacts. As a reaction to these policies, a movement was born to contest the legitimacy of this debt, and it later launched the concept of ecological debt of northern countries towards the South. Today, it is in the name of this ecological and social debt that we oppose the financialization of natural commons, because it reinforces an inequitable economic model based on the over-consumption and the concentration of wealth, to the detriment of the poorest.

To find out more: Jubilee South international network - www.jubileesouth.org

General Motors in Brazil: the human cost of 'Green 4x4s'?

The forests above Guaraqueçaba Bay are the remains of a far larger area that once extended across a large part of the Brazilian Atlantic coast, the Mata Atlantica. Ancestral lands of the Guarani Indians, these forests have also become home to many small-scale farmers looking for farmland.

These communities lived peacefully alongside each other until the arrival of the "green police". Antonio, a farmer from Paranagua was sentenced to 11 days in prison. His crime? To have cut down a tree to repair his house. He was unaware that these forests had been handed over to some American companies that are amongst the most polluting in the world: General Motors, Chevron and American Electric Power. If these companies have started buying forests, it is to buy the carbon credits. Their starting assumption is that, without their intervention, these forests would have been felled. So they consider that they have undertaken an action that compensates their pollution elsewhere.

The majority of the inhabitants have been pushed off these lands by the conservation organisation SPVS, which manages the new reserve on behalf of these multinational corporations. Those who have stayed are formally banned from fishing, hunting near the forests and of course from cutting down any trees - to prevent any damage to these "carbon stores" and the money they are worth. This disregards the fact that the existence of these unique forests and their biodiversity have been preserved until now thanks to the know-how of the Guarani communities that live there, and their traditional way of life that is compatible with nature. In the meanwhile, General Motors can continue to produce 4x4s, compensated by their carbon credits!

To find out more: Report by Mark Shapiro, Brazil: *The Money Tree*, 2009.

Community based natural commons management

The financialization of nature initially requires the creation of a market system, i.e. giving a price where there was not one previously, and giving exclusive property rights. However alternatives do exist, in order to defend and reclaim the commons, by excluding the market and financial markets from their management or control.

Elinor Ostrom, 2009 Nobel Economics winner, demonstrated the weakness of the theory of the "tragedy of the commons"², showing on the contrary how shared management of natural commons by communities can enable their preservation. It is for this reason that the richest biodiversity reserves and the best protected ecosystems in the world are in the territories of indigenous people, whose lifestyles respect natural balances.

And all over the world, the struggle for the universal right to water and sewage treatment requires that "the management and control of water must be public, cooperative, participatory, equitable, and not for profit". (Declaration of the Alternative World Water Forum, Marseille, March 2012). In France, where 60% of councils have chosen to delegate the distribution and treatment of water to private companies, many people campaign for a return to public management: direct management of water by local authorities under the control of local citizens.

² Theory of G. Hardin according to which the lack of individual property rights leads to the over-exploitation of resources as no-one has a reason to protect shared resources.

Acknowledge the rights of indigenous peoples to protect their forests

In Brazil, the acknowledgement of the rights of indigenous peoples have progressed (although it remains largely insufficient) thereby enabling these communities to obtain the mapping of their lands and the right to choose how they will be used. Subsequently, in 1997, the Kayapo obtained the recognition of their rights for an immense area of forest, many thousands of hectares, around the Xingu River, in the state of Para. A few years later, under pressure from ranchers and soy producers, the surrounding forests have been reduced to next to nothing in the rest of the state, but the deforested area stops short of the Kayapo area. To protect their forests, the Kayapo did not ask for financial compensation, just the recognition of their rights.

Building sustainable societies, based on social and ecological justice

It is essential to profoundly change our way of life, and our patterns of production and consumption. Currently based on over-consumption and the over-exploitation of nature, they exclude from the right to live with dignity a growing proportion of the world's population, including in the North.

We need to re-localise and re-orientate our economies so that they provide for our real needs. This will require, amongst other things, the creation of food production and distribution models based on the principle of food sovereignty and by the decentralised production, under democratic control, of clean and renewable energies.

Markets with compensation mechanisms enable the non-respect and the continued over-exploitation of the planet. On the contrary, creating sustainable societies means being able to place limits on the destructive consumption of natural commons. From individuals to groups, from local to global level, each person's "ecological space" must be respected. This space is designated by:

- a minimum threshold of resources that each person should have to cover his basic needs: access to air, water, food, energy, shelter...but also to health, an education, information and culture;
- a ceiling, above which someone is either taking from the ecological space of someone else, or from that of future generations.

It is between these two levels that sustainable societies, through creativity and by adapting to local conditions, can be created. Quite simply, so that everyone can meet their basic needs, it is necessary to greatly reduce the consumption in northern countries and reduce inequalities between the richest and the poorest.

To find out more: Friends of the Earth France's position on Sustainable societies, 2011

A decentralised production of clean energies, under citizen control

This is the challenge given by Energie Partagée, an initiative launched in 2009 by players from renewable energy and ethical finance sectors in France: this movement "wants citizens to retake control of energy issues and exit the development of renewable energies from the financial logic alone, as it is a source of inevitable conflict". Thanks to a citizens' saving fund, Energie Partagée finances citizen projects to develop energy efficiency and renewable energies. These projects are selected according to numerous criteria: local basis, democratic governance, respect of the environment and of course no financial speculation.

You too can contribute to the absolutely necessary energy transition by becoming an engaged shareholder!

To find out more: www.energie-partagee.org



Mural painted by communities affected by mining in Argentina.