



clashes with corporate giants

22 campaigns for biodiversity and community



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22 campaigns for biodiversity and community

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biodiversity and people



Protecting biological diversity is critical - not just for the intrinsic value of a particular butterfly species or a specific rainforest, but for the vital role that biodiversity plays in people's lives.

When biodiversity is threatened, people's livelihoods are also put at risk. The communities on Papua New Guinea's Fly and Ok Tedi Rivers are losing their staple food, the sago palm, due to the pollution spewed out by BHP Billiton's Ok Tedi mine. The Ogoni of the Niger Delta can no longer safely eat the periwinkles, oysters and crabs upon which they have long depended because of repeated oil spills in their mangrove forests by Shell and other companies.

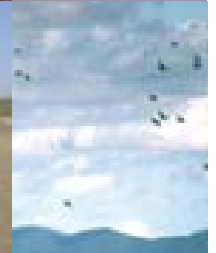
Members of the Penan in Sarawak suffer from skin diseases, headaches and stomach pains from the chemicals and oil dumped into their rivers by Malaysian companies logging for export. And the people of Tambogrande, Peru fear they will lose their sustainable livelihoods as fruit farmers if Manhattan Minerals' open-pit gold mine goes ahead as planned.

These cases and many more found in this publication illustrate how dependent humans are upon biological diversity. This biodiversity is disappearing at an alarming rate: an estimated one third of global biodiversity has been lost since 1970, according to WWF's Living Planet Report 2000.

On the human front, the rural poor – not only in the South but everywhere – are the main victims of this loss. Farmers, small-scale fisherfolk, and indigenous and other forest peoples are facing rapid economic, social and cultural impoverishment as the basic stock of their livelihoods is depleted. They are being forced to subsist without seeds, fertile land, water, food, fish stocks and the numerous goods and services provided to them by forests, wetlands and other ecosystems.



corporate-led globalization and biodiversity loss



The loss of livelihoods is deeply rooted in the macro-economic development model of corporate-led globalization. It promotes too many enterprises that are the main drivers of biodiversity loss: the large-scale, export-oriented agricultural industry; unsustainable commercial logging companies; fish farms and factories; and the mining industry.

These companies are fostered and actively promoted through trade liberalization and other forms of corporate-led globalization. Unchecked by effective national or international rules, they are able to plunder the earth's resources for the benefit of distant shareholders while the communities that lived more harmoniously with these resources for generations are left with a ravaged earth.

The policies of the World Trade Organization, multilateral development banks like the World Bank, and export credit agencies together exacerbate this plundering with their promotion of export-oriented economic models and the further commercialization of biodiversity.

Small and medium sized businesses that form part of local economies, meet local needs and are more accountable to local people are undermined and unable to compete with huge multinationals. In the battle of economies, big is beautiful and local is expendable.

towards binding corporate accountability



FoE Italy protests outside Bank BNL for its financial involvement in Ecuador's OCP pipeline.

*"First they ignore you.
Then they laugh at you.
Then they fight you.
Then you win."*

Gandhi.



The evidence that all corporations cannot be trusted to regulate themselves is widespread and persuasive. The case studies in this publication are just a sample of the misdeeds and atrocities inflicted every day upon the environment and upon people around the world by corporations not living up to the promises of their lobbyists to deliver sustainable development.

At the 2002 Earth Summit in Johannesburg and beyond, Friends of the Earth will be lobbying for a binding framework to secure the accountability of corporations to citizens and communities. FoEI is urging governments to collaborate on establishing effective international and national law on corporate accountability, liability and reporting. This must be backed by effective sanctions and citizen and community rights to consultation, legal challenge and redress over environmentally and socially damaging corporate activities.

FoEI's work on genuine corporate responsibility has been enthusiastically received by campaigners, citizens and some governments around the world.

more information: www.foei.org/corporates

recognizing the ecological debt



FoEI is also pushing for the recognition and reclaiming of the ecological debt accumulated after decades of resource extraction by northern countries in the South.

Ecological debt is defined as the cumulative debt of northern industrialized nations to Third World countries for resource plundering, biodiversity loss, environmental damage, and the free occupation of environmental space to deposit wastes from industrialized countries, among others.

FoEI's Ecological Debt Campaign opposes northern natural resource extraction that damages southern peoples' survival and degrades their best lands and marine resources in the name of export production. This includes the appropriation of southern traditional knowledge and biodiversity, which contribute billions of dollars each year to the northern pharmaceutical industry.

The Southern Peoples' Ecological Debt Creditors alliance, supported by FoEI, reclaims the repayment of the ecological debt – not just in financial terms, but in the total restoration of ecosystems so that communities can resume their sustainable livelihoods.

more information:
www.cosmovisiones.com/EcologicalDebt

corporate greenwash and the earth summits



The lack of progress on the urgent and life-threatening global issues debated at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio can largely be attributed to the full-force and strategic participation of transnational corporations there. Corporate lobby groups used the Earth Summit as a platform from which to redefine their role, from that of polluters to that of partners in sustainable development.

Corporations emerged from Rio with no binding rules or regulations to hinder their environmentally and social damaging activities. The only reference to transnational corporations in Agenda 21, one of the main outcomes from the Summit, was an acknowledgement of the role of industry in sustainable development. This was accomplished largely thanks to a strategic lobbying by the Business Council for Sustainable Development (BCSD), a group of 48 business leaders from major corporations around the world.

In the decade between the Rio and the Johannesburg Earth Summits, corporations and their lobby groups have perfected their greenwash skills and continue to avoid binding regulation by governments. They have also eased their way into various "partnerships" with nearly every UN agency, including Secretary General Kofi Annan's personal project, a high-profile corporate partnership called the Global Compact.

another chance in johannesburg?

Protest outside the October 2001 meeting of Business Action for Sustainable Development.



The Earth Summit in Johannesburg offers another chance for industry to convince governments to ignore community resistance and the popular challenge to neoliberal economic globalization, and to continue to allow corporate operations without constraints in the global market. With this in mind, captains of industry have created another special alliance, Business Action for Sustainable Development (BASD), to give them a green face at the Earth Summit.

BASD, a joint creation of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and the International Chamber of Commerce, boasts big-time corporate members including Aventis, British Petroleum, Rio Tinto, Shell and many of the other corporates featured in this publication. The BASD will profile environmental and social initiatives by member companies as “proof” of corporate commitment to sustainable development, and as a strategy for avoiding the tightening noose of corporate regulation.

What will it take to convince governments that corporations are not able to deliver what they promise in the area of sustainable development? Will Johannesburg be business-as-usual, or will bold steps be taken to make corporations accountable to people?

Friends of the Earth and other social and environmental movements will continue to resist corporate domination over their lives and natural resources. Our campaigns, carried out with local communities, have already delivered some impressive results, and there are some places where specific corporations no longer dare to tread. We are convinced that people and biodiversity will ultimately preside over plundering and profits.



mangos over mining

peruvian community rejects tambogrande gold mine | www.manhattan-min.com

Fifty years ago, Peru's San Lorenzo valley was a dry desert where almost nothing would grow. Today, thanks a successful World Bank/USAID irrigation and land distribution project, succulent lemons, papayas and mangos hang from the trees, and provide about 20,000 farmers with sustainable livelihoods. As the local people say, "Nobody here is rich, but there are no poor either."

"The popular referendum is a civic lesson, not only for Tambogrande but for Peru, for the world, and for our nation's congressmen."

Manuel Ortiz, leader of the Tambogrande Defense Front.



The June 2002 referendum.

“The mining company and the Peruvian government irresponsibly claim that agriculture and mining can harmoniously coexist, but we know that isn’t so. The very nature of mining conflicts with the natural balance of the ecosystem. In order to get to the minerals, one must go under the subsoil, thereby destroying and disrupting everything that lies on the surface, including the forest, the river, the landscape, the wildlife, not to mention people’s homes, farms, livelihoods and heritage. The biodiversity of the area, ranging from the microorganisms to ourselves, will without a doubt be in great danger.”

Ulises García, San Lorenzo Valley farmer and activist.

“Whose poverty levels do we wish to diminish - those of the mining businessmen or of the population?”

Miguel Palacín Quispe, National Coordination of Communities Affected by Mining.



All was well in this fertile paradise until mining companies discovered mineral riches under Tambogrande, a village nestled in the valley, in the 1980s. Since then, local farmers and families have been engaged in a struggle to prevent their homes and agricultural land from being ripped out from under their feet.

Manhattan Minerals planned US\$315 million open-pit gold mine would displace about one-third of the population of Tambogrande. Downstream water would likely become contaminated with metals and dust, and heavy rains caused by the El Niño phenomenon could flood the toxic pit and spread chemicals throughout the valley. The economic fruits of the project for the community are not appetizing. “Mining in this country has hardly brought any benefits to local communities,” according to Astrid Cornejo of Labor/Friends of the Earth Peru.

Villagers say that Manhattan has brought “sticks, fire, police and violence”, and resistance against the mine has been strong from the outset. In February 2001, a total strike and massive mobilization in Tambogrande called for the corporation to withdraw, and the company’s encampments were destroyed.

In June 2002, the people of Tambogrande held a community-initiated referendum to determine what kind of development - mining or farming - they want for their town. Thousands of residents arrived to cast their votes - by foot, bus, horse, donkey and boat. The results showed that an astounding 98.65 percent of the population was against the mine.

Although Manhattan Minerals had pledged that they would obtain the consent of the Tambogrande community before constructing the mine, they now claim that “the results of the opinion poll have no validity” and seem determined to move ahead with the project. Furthermore, they have plans to approach the World Bank for funding, which if granted would be an ironic twist to the Bank’s initial sustainability-promoting project.

more information: www.foei.org/ifi/tambogrande, www.labor.org.pe, www.oxfamamerica.org, www.geocities.com/frentetambogrande

“My breast milk dries up sometimes because I do not get enough food. So I try to look for ubut and boil it with water to feed the baby. But even ubut is difficult to find. Everything has been destroyed by the companies.”

Paya Ding, 29, Long Sayan.



indigenous penan resume blockades

timber companies still spreading misery

Sarawak, home to the indigenous Penan, has been ravaged over the past two decades by the logging of ancient forests for short-term profits by a number of Malaysian timber companies. These companies produce raw logs, plywood and wood chips in Sarawak for export to Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, China, Europe and the United States.



“We asked for forest reserves. We asked them not to disturb the land surrounding our longhouses. We asked for a school for the village so that our children could go to school. We asked for clinics. Instead they gave us the logging companies.”



Ajang Kiew, Long Sayan.



Penan blockade in early 2002.

Skin diseases resulting from polluted river.

In the mid 1980s, thousands of Penan staged simultaneous peaceful blockades of logging roads in Sarawak to draw attention to their plight. People around the world were shocked at the magnitude of the devastation caused by the logging operations in Penan territories.

As a result, the government made many promises to the Penan- from forest reserves to infrastructure and from health care to seeds for cultivation. Yet one decade later, the Penan are more impoverished than ever, lacking decent housing and plagued by frequent food shortages and poor health. Their rivers are polluted with silt, oil spills, wood preservative chemicals and garbage disposed by the logging companies. The staples of their diet - game, fish, fruit and wild sago palms - are almost depleted, and they are struggling to adapt to a settled lifestyle and learn agricultural skills.

In early 2002, Penan groups began to simultaneously blockade logging roads for the first time in over a decade. Their demands include a halt to all logging activities on their native territory, a fair and transparent compensation process leading to better living conditions, and the recognition that they have the right to choose the development model that suits them best.

Friends of the Earth Malaysia continues to support the struggle of the Penan, and urges the public to do the same. Time may be running out for these peace-loving people, whose numbers are fast dwindling with only about 10,000 members remaining in Sarawak.

more information: www.surforever.com/sam

“In the past our life was peaceful. It was so easy to obtain food, you could even catch fish using your bare hands. Now the people are frequently sick. They are hungry. They develop all sorts of stomach pains. They suffer from headaches. Children cry when they are hungry. Several people, including children, also suffer from skin diseases caused by the polluted river.”

Ngot Laing, Chief of Long Lilim, Patah River.



dirty, dangerous and deceptive

sasol pollutes poor communities in south africa | www.sasol.com

“We put as much into the community as we do into our petrol.” This is an advert by the South African based multinational Sasol. Yes they do, including unacceptable levels of benzene, vinyl chloride and methylene chloride. Sasol's annual reports admit to annual air pollution in Sasolburg, a town named after the company, amounting to over 42,000 tons of volatile organic compounds, 22,000 tons of hydrogen sulphide and 26,000 tons of sulphur dioxide.



"Sasol pollutes the air we breathe, causing poor health and bad living conditions while making huge profits for the company. They fund a couple of community projects, thinking we will forget about the pollution. How can we forget when the pollution is making our parents, brothers, and sisters sick? Residents of Sasolburg are running out of patience with Sasol's arrogance. Sasol puts nothing of value into the community whilst taking away the very air that we breathe. Enough is enough."

Lerato Kasa, chairperson of the Sasolburg Environmental Committee.



In 2001, a fire at the Sasol and Total owned crude oil refinery resulted in the deaths of two workers. No action has been taken against company management. Indeed, the costs of Sasol's operations and pollution are not borne by the company, but externalized onto the mostly poor black communities who pay with their health.

In the notoriously polluted South Durban industrial area, the Sasol polymers plant had three serious chlorine gas leaks during 2000 alone – in one instance resulting in the hospitalization of more than 200 people, most of them children from a nearby school.

Sasol is among the world's top fifty transnational chemical companies, with an operating profit of US\$2.5 million per day. The company has partnerships with the French multinational Total and Dow Chemicals, among others.

Community groups have started mobilizing against Sasol's air pollution, and the Sasolburg Environmental Committee (SEC) has been vocal in fighting pollution in their area. The SEC faces the challenge of countering Sasol's propaganda, which blames domestic coal fires in local black neighbourhoods as the source of pollution.

Originally established by the government to counter international sanctions against apartheid, Sasol has been instrumental in pushing voluntary environmental agreements to delay and dilute any legally enforceable standards that polluted communities could use to hold them liable. Groundwork/Friends of the Earth South Africa is campaigning to hold them accountable for their dirty and dangerous activities, which compromise human health and fuel global climate change.

more information: www.groundwork.org.za



oil and water don't mix

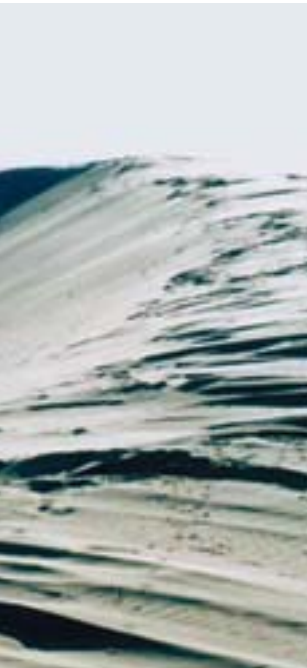
baltic sea drilling threatens unique park | www.lukoil.com

New on the scene and rapidly expanding into foreign markets, Russian oil giant Lukoil is on the verge of extracting offshore oil near Lithuania's and Russia's extraordinary Curonian Spit National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The oil deposit to be exploited, some 22 kilometres from the Lithuanian coast, is thought to contain some 24 million tons of oil.

“People are newcomers here. We should behave and protect this wonderful place for future generations. Oil is a painful memory for the people living here. We experienced an oil spill in June of 1983 during the test drillings for the D-6 oil field. Most of us living here are trying to protect our clean beaches, sea water, fish and seabirds from the oil.”

Kazimieras Mizgiris, renowned Lithuanian photographer and resident of Curonian Spit.

Curonian spit.



Friends of the Earth Lithuania protests against the Lukoil project.



Environmental NGOs in the Baltic region are concerned about the dangers of environmental pollution and accidental oil spills associated with the project. Curonian Spit is an exceptionally sensitive ecosystem, and the Baltic Sea is relatively clean and rich in biodiversity in this area. Both the Lithuanian and Russian parts of the Curonian Spit have great potential for sustainable tourism and nature protection.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) granted Lukoil a US\$150 million working capital loan in May 2000 to bolster the floundering company. In return, the company is expected “to bring Lukoil environmental management practices in line with international good practice”.

Friends of the Earth Lithuania and other members of the CEE Bankwatch Network are skeptical about Lukoil’s ability to extract oil from the Baltic Sea without wreaking environmental catastrophe. They fear that the Lukoil project will open a Pandora’s Box for offshore oil extraction in the Baltic Sea and other companies will flock to the area. They are urging the EBRD to freeze or even withdraw its lending to Lukoil if the company will not drop this extremely controversial deal.

The Baltic is one of the world’s dirtiest seas, and the 80 million people in the nine countries along its shores already feel the impacts of this pollution. Oil extraction, with the inevitable accompanying spills and accidents, could be the final drop that overflows the bucket.

more information: www.bankwatch.org



pardon the mess!

australian miner off the hook for ok tedi pollution | www.bhpbilliton.com

Every day over the past twenty years, the Ok Tedi mine in Papua New Guinea (PNG) has dumped 80,000 tons of waste into the Ok Tedi and Fly Rivers. The result has been an environmental disaster that has destroyed thousands of square kilometers of rainforest and caused terrible hardship for local people. In particular, there has been a dramatic decline in their staple food, the sago palm, threatening food security.

“Rivers and lands are our life. The Ok Tedi River is dead and the Fly River is also affected by the pollution. Forests are dying and our communities will be left with the mess from the mine for a long, long time. We are worried for our children and grandchildren.”

Rex Dagi, clan leader.

“The Ok Tedi mine is causing the Southern Hemisphere’s single worst environmental disaster. The damage from the mine will last for most of the 21st century. BHP must demonstrate that it is willing and able to solve existing problems so it does not create new ones.”

Wep Kanawi Obe, Papua New Guinea NGO Environmental Watch Group.



“Ok Tedi has deprived our people of the totality of human right - in everything.”

Anna Bisai, Daru.

Australian mining giant BHP Billiton was the major shareholder in Ok Tedi Mining Ltd (OTML) and the mine operator until early 2002. At this time, the company handed over its majority stake in OTML to the newly formed and ironically named Sustainable Development Project Company.

This quiet revolution demonstrates the power of transnational corporations in PNG. With the transfer, BHP gained legal indemnity from PNG government action with respect to all the pollution and destruction it has already caused and will cause in the future. The government surrendered its sovereignty, failing to protect its citizens by setting environmental standards and monitoring corporate activities.

At the same time, the company has been trying to convince local people to sign Community Mine Continuation Agreements in which they sign away their rights (likely for the rest of the century) as landowners to sue the company for damages or environmental catastrophes.

The communities of the Fly River region have resisted BHP Billiton’s use of the river as a dump for their mine waste, and have twice taken the company to court to force it to adopt environmental management systems.

BHP Billiton CEO Brian Gilbertson put a glossy spin on Ok Tedi at the Global Mining Initiative conference in May 2002, declaring that the company will not participate in any new project that puts tailings into rivers. Not too convincing from a company that has walked away from a world class environmental disaster at Ok Tedi, handing the poisoned chalice to the locals.

more information: www.mpi.org.au/oktedi

“Oil industry people are piling up money to save in the North, and putting the Cameroonians they hire under a modern form of slavery.”

Chad-Cameroon pipeline worker.



Pygmy children.



broken promises

rocky start for chad-cameroon oil pipeline | www.exxonmobil.com, www.chevron.com, www.petronas.com

It's an old hunting trick. Using powder made from the bark of the Moabi tree, the pygmies of the Cameroon forest make a camouflage potion to disguise themselves from their prey. They then disappear into the forest.

“The banana trees that are going to be cut down, the manioc, the corn, the peanuts... We don't agree with the prices that we get. Really, we are betrayed by this compensation.”

Villager near Bélabo.



“I am concerned about the environment. Looking around me I see rivers drying out, birds disappearing, the wood is drying out, too. It feels as if soon it will be a desert here. They’re clearing a large strip of forest that acted as a windshield for us against the strong winds from the sea. It’s clear that we will be exposed now, many of us will have problems. The roofs might get damaged and so on. And our underbush will lose the freshness it used to have. But we’re told this project is of international importance ... We have no way of opposing it, we will have to live with it.”

Village chief near Kribi.



The Baka tribe’s vast knowledge of the plant and animal life of the forest has sustained them for centuries. The continued exploitation of Cameroon’s natural resources via the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline, however, will bring an end to these indigenous people’s symbiotic relationship with their environment. Deforestation, resettlement, pollution and overburdened resources will force these communities into cultural and economic oblivion.

The US\$3.7 billion oil pipeline will stretch 1,070 kilometres through Chad to the Cameroonian port of Kribi. It will cut through rainforest, pygmy territories and major food and cotton producing areas. Resulting oil spills could have an enormous impact on the livelihoods of local people, and it has been estimated that thousands of fishermen will be put out of work. Livelihoods will be lost along with fragile ecological systems.

In late 1999, the project appeared to be doomed when two of the companies involved, Royal Dutch Shell and TotalFinaElf, dropped out of the consortium, reportedly partly due to environmental opposition by communities and groups including Friends of the Earth. However, ExxonMobil has since been joined by US-based Chevron and Malaysia’s Petronas, and the World Bank and European Investment Bank provided \$200 and \$120 million respectively for the project in 2000 despite opposition of campaign groups.

The project is off to a rocky start. It has been revealed that the President of Chad used \$4.5 million of the Bank funds designated for the pipeline to buy weapons, rather than investing in public health, education and vital infrastructure as was agreed. Furthermore, as the FoEI report “Broken Promises” reveals, many of the dire warnings of NGOs about the project have already proven correct, with commitments on issues like employment and compensation for affected people being ignored.

more information: www.foei.org/ifi

“What really upsets me is that they came to destroy our territory, our environment. Foreign criminals from oil companies are not welcome here. Our forest is a paradise because we’ve got everything that we need here. We don’t need money: with our rivers and our forests we have enough to live on. The money from the oil companies is useless to us. The companies have offered us clothes, candies at Christmas, but I haven’t accepted anything from them. We have to make clear to them what the integrity of indigenous people is about. We have to unite.”

Cristina Gualinga, Quichua woman, Ecuadorian Amazon.



tree sits, blockades and protests

local and global mobilization against ecuadorian pipeline | www.agip.it, www.aec.ca, www.oxy.com, www.invertir.com,
www.repsol-ypf.com, www.techintgroup.com

If the Oleoducto de Crudos Pesados (OCP) proceeds as planned, an international consortium will lay a 500-kilometre heavy crude pipeline from East to West through Ecuador. On the way, the OCP will pass through 11 protected areas and many populated areas, including cities and indigenous territories.

Most of the heavy crude oil transported by the OCP will come from Yasuni National Park, a UNESCO International Biosphere Reserve and home to the Huaorani indigenous people. Building the OCP will mean opening up Amazon forest in southern Ecuador, including the territories of indigenous groups such as the Quichua, Shuar and Achuar.

The pipeline will transport up to 450,000 barrels per day across nearly one hundred geologically-active fault lines and near several volcanoes, including the recently erupted Guagua Pichincha. It will pass through fragile areas of extreme ecological and agricultural importance, including the headwaters of rivers and streams, high-quality agricultural areas and primary tropical rainforest. It will also violate protected nature reserves, including Mindo, site of the highest bird density in South America.

facial marks

Facial marks help folks
Know members of the clan
Environmental scars traced
By seismic lines and illegal loggers
Transnational eco-devourers
Alienate us from our land
Now we are strangers to our own soil

Oil ducts
Tear ducts
Oil pipes
Blood veins
Pipes of conflict
Ducts of death
Pipes of blood

Facial marks beautify our folks
They help us attract and scare and show our strength
Environmental scars are death masks
Forced, alien, wicked, hateful
Slave marks, hellish scares
Alienate us from our land
Now, we are strangers to our own soil

Come together valiant souls
Drive off evil serpents from our land
Sacred that is our earth
Link those hands across the seas
Let's block these ducts with our
Collective fists

These pipes of dreams
Of dollars and sorrows and tears
These ducts burrow into our hearts
These pipes dry our lands
These pipes drain our souls
These pipes steal our dreams

Dedicated to the people of Mindo, Ecuador
Nnimmo Bassey, FoE Nigeria



Photos of a peaceful blockade in Ecuador's Mindo Nambillo Cloudforest Reserve, where community members are resisting the construction of a new oil pipeline.



To date, pipeline construction between Lago Agrio and Quito has affected more than 100 small farms. Landowners have suffered grave damages to their crops, grazing lands, and water supplies. According to a study carried out by Acción Ecológica/Friends of the Earth Ecuador, more than half of these farmers say they have been pressured into signing agreements with the OCP consortium.

The contract for pipeline construction was approved without an environmental impact study or consultation with the people to be affected by its construction, despite these being constitutionally required in Ecuador. The environmental impacts of the project were studied only after the project's approval.

OCP Ecuador is a consortium of several transnationals: Agip, Alberta Energy, Occidental Petroleum, Perez Companc, REPSOL-YPF and Techint. The Argentinean company Techint will construct the pipeline at a cost of more than US\$1.1 billion. Most of the pipeline's financing will come from a banking consortium headed by the German bank West LB.

Local people, farmers and environmentalists carrying out provincial strikes, occupying trees and machinery, and blockading roads are increasingly countered with violence and repression. Despite international media attention to the negative implications of the project and global campaigning all over the world, however, the OCP seems likely to proceed as planned.

more information: www.oilwatch.org.ec

Jan Rajter Senior on his land.



Water tower.

turning greenfields brown

car plant to swallow czech farmland | www.ford.com, www.nemak.cz

Northern Bohemia, one of the most environmentally ravaged regions of Europe, is the proposed site for a new car plant. The plant, run by the Mexican company NemaK (a subsidiary of the Ford Motor Company), will produce aluminium engine heads with the plan of supplying foreign Jaguar and General Motors car completion factories. It will be sited amidst the last remaining agricultural land in the area near the town of Havran in the Czech Republic.

“How can I compete with pictures of fresh and clean cows from Switzerland when people know this factory is here?”

Jan Rajter Junior, who farms the land where the Nematik plant will be sited.



The plant's operations are expected to release toxic substances such as heavy metals into this fertile farmland, which has been chosen despite the availability of nearby brownfields where the environmental impact would be much lower. “Investors like greenfields. There are brownfields [in the district], but why would we build a factory in the middle of a former coal pit?” a Nematik spokesman told the media. “They would have to pave the roads with gold for us to go there.”

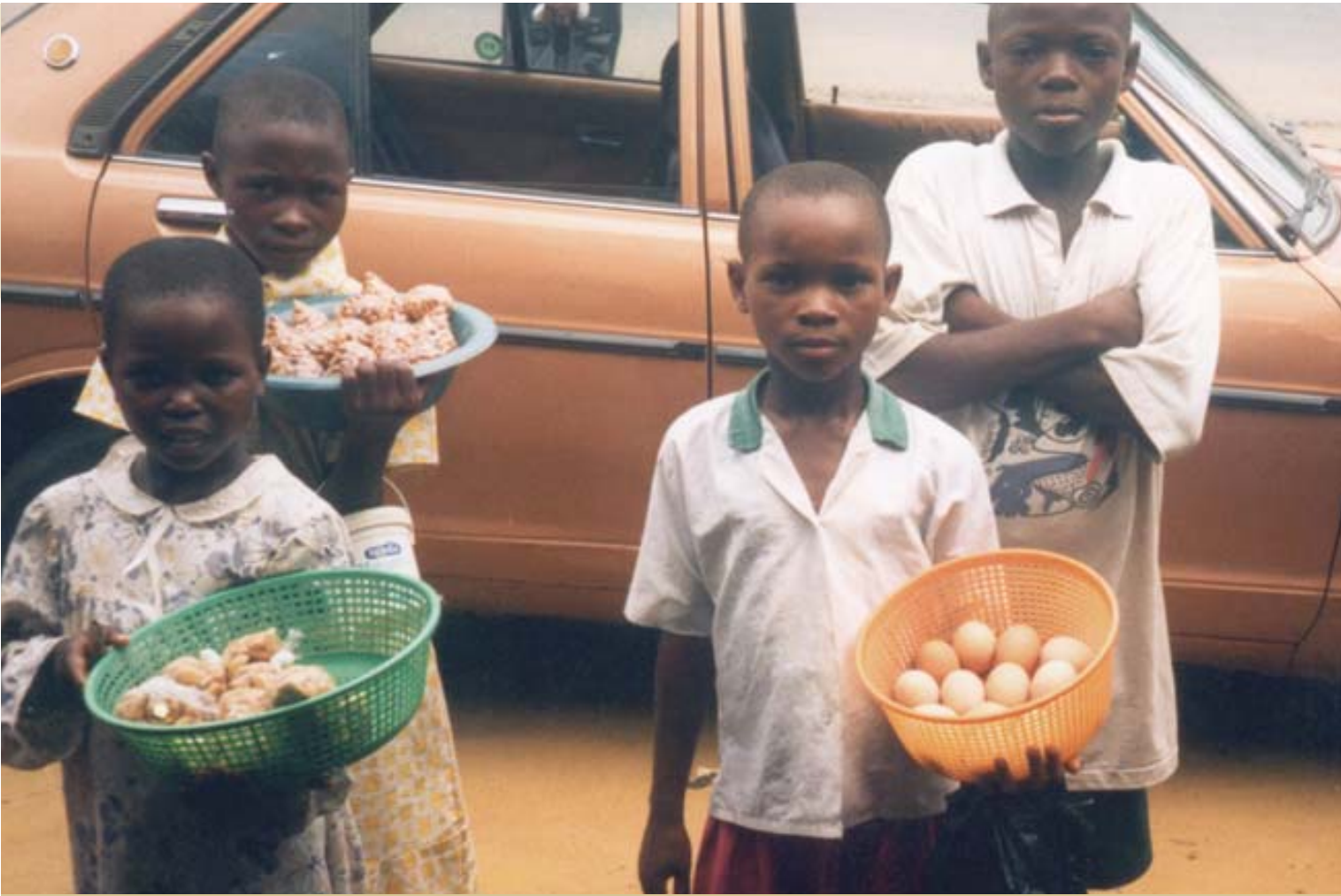
Jan Rajter Senior and his family farm the land where the Nematik plant will be sited. “These corporations are migrant birds,” he complains. “They come here, make their money, ruin the land – and then they'll move east in ten years looking for cheaper labour. I thought the destruction of the land was over after the communists, but it isn't.”

Czech campaigners are concerned about the number of legal issues connected to environmental and land use proceedings in the preparatory phase of the Nematik proposal. To date, eight legal actions have been brought against the project, and more are under preparation. Two of them have already confirmed that environmentalists are right, and in late June the Czech ombudsman decided that the construction is illegal.

Nonetheless, Nematik is proceeding. “The former East-bloc states are racing to the bottom in their efforts to attract foreign investors,” according to Pavel Pribyl of Friends of the Earth Czech Republic, “and thus the investor dictates the terms”.

Campaigners are urging the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which is considering a loan for the project, and the Ford Motor Company, which has stated that it plans to become the world's most environmentally friendly car manufacturer, not to invest in the facility unless serious problems including the plant's location and the insufficient risk assessment of toxic releases are addressed.

more information: www.bankwatch.org



fire, blood and oil

shell shuns environmental justice in the niger delta | www.shell.com

Shell's now infamous exploits in the oil-rich Niger Delta have had drastic consequences for the region's peoples. The aged and rusting Shell pipelines that criss-cross the nation explode and rupture, spewing oil and polluting water, soil and vegetation. Death and sickness are the result, while the livelihoods of farmers and fishers are destroyed with no adequate redress.

"When oil spills here, those of us who go to the mangrove forest to harvest periwinkle and other sea foods suffer. The crude oil affects the growth and development of the mangrove forest resources such as periwinkles, oysters and crabs. When the river is polluted they all die."

Ikuroma Samipe, fisherwoman and mother of five children.

Ogoni children.



“Egi women are farmers, fisherwomen and hunters. With all the flaring and pumping of oil into our swamp areas they have denied us every living thing. Today we have no hope while they are making billions of naira with our gifts from God. They don’t care or hear our cry. When we cry the oil companies will only throw tear gas on us and beat us and drive us out of our land.”

Egi woman, Niger Delta.

Ogoni Day demo against Shell oil company

“When I die, know that Shell killed me.”

Jerome Atariku, age 7.



Thousands of oil spills have occurred in the past decades, with little or no clean up by the company. One 1998 Shell pipeline explosion in the Niger Delta killed more than 400 people. A June 2001 oil spill in Ogdobo destroyed the only source of drinking water for 150,000 people.

In Nigeria’s oppressive political climate, Shell’s collusion with the government and the military protection afforded the oil industry have had murderous results for those who resist. The dictatorship’s 1995 murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni anti-oil activists brought global attention to the Niger Delta, but Shell and other oil companies continue to relentlessly exploit the land and the people. Shell has financed troops to suppress resistance to hated oil developments.

Shell has proven vulnerable to public opinion in recent years. In May 2001, the company dramatically withdrew its plans to explore for gas in Kirthar National Park, the oldest national park in Pakistan. This sudden move was welcomed by Friends of the Earth International, which was pursuing a major legal case against Shell in Pakistani courts.

In 1999, Shell abruptly pulled out of the controversial Chad-Cameroon pipeline (see page 18), also likely due to public pressure. “Now it is time for Shell to seriously consider issues of environmental justice in its relation with the people of the Niger Delta,” says Nnimmo Bassey of Friends of the Earth Nigeria. “So far, all that the house of Shell has offered is public relations.”

more information: www.essentialaction.org/shell/era/era.html, www.oilwatch.org.ec



alumysa threatens “reserve of life”

communities unite against chilean aluminium plant | www.noranda.com

One of the biggest upcoming battles for Friends of the Earth Chile and other groups around the world will be the planned Alumysa mega-project, which will site an aluminium plant, three hydroelectric dams and a new port in one of the most pristine areas remaining on the face of the earth.

“The construction and operation of the dams and the plant will have serious impacts on our rivers. We will have fewer fish, and our native aquatic species will be threatened. Small-scale fishing is one of the region’s most important economic activities, and our fisherpeople will also be negatively impacted by increased ship traffic in the Aysén fjord.”

Alianza Aysén Reserva de Vida.



The corporate power behind this appalling scheme is Noranda, Canada’s principal mining company as well as a key player in the logging and energy sectors. Noranda is a notorious environmental offender, with at least 87 documented violations in North America alone and fines exceeding US\$1.9 million in the United States.

The \$2.75 billion aluminium production plant, 2 kilometres in length, will require a new port for the import of raw alumina and other materials. The three planned hydroelectric dams that will supply the requisite 758 megawatts of energy for the plant will flood an area of 9,600 hectares. The project also includes 95 kilometres of new roads, 79 kilometres of power lines, a wharf and the expansion of two nearby towns.

The costs to the local biodiversity in Aysén, a unique area in Central Patagonia that was settled only 80 years ago, are incalculable. The massive amounts of waste generated by the project (over 1 million tons per year) will pollute pure rivers, streams and lakes and impact local flora and fauna. The sparse local population has encouraged the development of sustainable activities including eco-tourism, small-scale fishing, and organic agriculture and cattle breeding.

The approximately 100,000 inhabitants of Aysén do not stand to benefit economically from the project: only 10 percent of the 1,100 jobs that the plant will create during its operation stage will be local. The looming threat of Alumysa has prompted local people to unite in order to protect their region, which they call a “reserve of life”.

more information: [alianza aysén reserva de vida](mailto:alianza_aysen_reserva_de_vida), c/o [foe chile](mailto:foe_chile) (bosque2@codeff.cl)



would you feed this to your kids?

genetically modified food aid travels the globe | www.aventis.com, www.monsanto.com

In 2000, Friends of the Earth US revealed the illegal presence of StarLink, genetically modified maize marketed by Aventis, in the human food chain although it had not been approved for human consumption. This discovery set off a chain of events that sent the US biotech industry into turmoil: reports of allergic reactions, recalls of numerous food products, discovery of StarLink in countries including Japan, and the forced buy-back of StarLink from farmers by Aventis. Campaigners around the world reacted to this discovery, asking their governments to take measures to keep StarLink out of the national food supply.

“We are farmers who choose not to grow genetically engineered corn. Now it appears that our crops may not be safe from contamination from StarLink ... Biotech companies and federal regulators need to be a lot more careful with the genetic engineering genie – because once it’s out of the bottle, it’s near impossible to stuff it back in.”

Peggy and George Naylor, Iowa, United States.

“It is unacceptable that the children of Nicaragua are consuming genetically modified products that come masked as food aid for our country. It is well known that baby food companies in the US and Europe do not use genetically modified products. Nevertheless, our highly-vulnerable condition has been used as an opportunity to send products that children in developed countries do not consume.”

Victor Campos, FoE Nicaragua.



Contaminated food aid package.

Two years later, in June 2002, Friends of the Earth discovered the presence of illegal genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in food donated to Latin American countries by USAID, the World Food Programme and other donor agencies. Civil society groups in Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Nicaragua criticized the spreading of contaminated food aid not fit for human consumption and illegal in many regulatory systems around the world, and demanded GMO-free food aid in the future.

The food aid sent to various countries included not only StarLink, but other unapproved strains of engineered corn: Liberty Link, also produced by Aventis, and Monsanto's BtXtra and RoundUp Ready. In the United States, Friends of the Earth has asked the US administration to recall the corn and to require Aventis to cover any costs incurred by recalls and replacements.

Food aid contamination with GMOs not approved for human consumption may threaten the health of recipients already vulnerable due to poverty and hunger. Food aid containing whole GMO seed, as discovered in Guatemala and Nicaragua, also threatens the environment, as it could inadvertently be planted and contaminate centres of origin, polluting genetic diversity cultivated over generations.

The latest example of contamination shows that biotech companies and the exporting countries that promote GMOs have lost control of their technology. Given their reckless and aggressive promotion to date and the impossibility of easily recalling bio-pollution, Friends of the Earth supports the right of all nations to ban or otherwise restrict the use of GMOs.

more information: www.foe.org/foodaid



blood proves thicker than oil

u'wa spurn corporate giant in colombia | www.oxy.com

The 7,500 U'wa people, aided by Colombian social movements, environmental organizations including Friends of the Earth Colombia, and campaign groups around the world, recently won an important victory in their decade-long campaign to stop the exploitation of their lands by US-based transnational Occidental Petroleum.

“Their stabbing was felt some feet below the Earth’s surface and she cried. She asked us to defend her and to tell the world what she was feeling. We did that and we will continue to do that.”

The Traditional U'wa Authority.



“Oil is the blood of Mother Earth. It belongs to the ground, where it sustains the world below. Up here it only causes violence and death.”

Luis Cabellero, vice president of the Traditional U'wa Authority.



“There will be a day that man replaces the mountains of the condor with mountains of money.”

U'wa people.

In 1991, Occidental was given rights to explore and extract oil in U'wa territory, an area that includes sacred lands and national parks. In 1995, after witnessing other oil-affected indigenous groups undergo eviction and spiral into alcoholism, prostitution, illness and hunger, the U'wa sued the company for not consulting them before obtaining the required government permission to conduct preliminary tests in the area.

A communal society of agriculturalists, fishers, and gatherers, the U'wa retain legal title to their land and a vibrant culture, despite colonization. Their traditions hold that petroleum is the blood of the earth, and that “the U'wa territory is the heart of the world, for in it runs the veins that feed the universe. If it is destroyed, the world bleeds.” They believe its magnificent biodiversity provides sustainable riches for Columbia that are far more valuable than oil.

oil is thicker?

*Blood is thicker
Than water*

*To you who sucks my hopes
Tell me,*

*Is oil thicker
Than blood...?*

Nnimmo Bassey, FoE Nigeria

Despite their purely peaceful opposition, the U'wa increasingly became the targets of threats and violent attacks perpetrated by the State as well as by paramilitary and other armed groups. In February 2000, during a peaceful blockade of a main road near Occidental's drill site, three U'wa children drowned after jumping into a river to flee the Colombian soldiers who had attacked them with tear gas and heavy machinery.

The campaign to support the U'wa snowballed globally, and in October 2000 the US financial firm Fidelity Investments dumped its 18 million shares in Occidental after U'wa supporters occupied the company's investor centres. Finally, in May 2002, Occidental Petroleum announced its departure from the region. The threat remains however that other companies will flock to exploit the blood under U'wa soil.

more information: www.uwacolombia.org, www.censat.org, www.ran.org, www.moles.org

“The majority of Wiradjuri people are against the proposed gold mine at Lake Cowal. This is part of the sacred heartland of the Wiradjuri nation. We don’t want to see our cultural heritage destroyed, or the land and waters poisoned by the cyanide used to extract gold. The place should be left as it is. But Barrick doesn’t care about any of this. They just want to mine the gold under the lake and take the profits out of Australia. The mine’s only got a possible 13-year life, but the lake is millions of years old. We’ve got plenty of gold mines in Australia. We don’t need this one.”

Wiradjuri Traditional Owner Neville Williams.



sacred lake cowal

australia’s wiradjuri oppose gold mine | www.barrick.com

Lake Cowal, the largest inland body of water in Australia’s state of New South Wales when full, is no ordinary place. In addition to being home to 170 species of waterfowl, it is also an important sacred region for the Aboriginal Wiradjuri traditional owners and listed as a wetland of national importance.



Traditional Owner Neville Williams of the Wiradjuri Nation with a canoe tree found near Lake Cowal. Aboriginal people used these trees to carve canoes in the 19th century.



Archaeologist David Johnston and Wiradjuri Traditional Owner Neville Williams marking the spot where an artefact was found near Lake Cowal.

Flight of waterfowl including rare Freckled Duck.



Nonetheless, Canadian miner Barrick Gold intends to develop a cyanide leaching gold mine at the edge of Lake Cowal. The mine will consist of a huge pit, one kilometre long by 825 metres wide and 325 metres deep, below the lake's high water level. If all goes according to plan, 128 million tons of ore will be excavated.

Cyanide leaks and spills are commonplace in the industry, as are accidents that wipe out entire river systems and devastate birds and other wildlife. A spill containing cyanide or arsenic could devastate the entire Lake Cowal ecosystem.

In their greed for gold, Barrick is overriding the deep concerns and opposition of Wiradjuri traditional owners, many of whom oppose the project. In March 2002, Wiradjuri traditional owner Neville Williams took Barrick to court, claiming that the company's current exploration is desecrating Lake Cowal and the destruction and removal of cultural objects and artefacts is illegal. The case resulted in an injunction restraining the company from further exploration drilling at the site. Furthermore, recent native title claims over the proposed mine area have delayed the issuing of a mining lease.

Many threatened and vulnerable animals, birds, fish and plant species can be found in the Lake Cowal area, including the Swift Parrot, the Regent Honeyeater, the Macquarie Perch, the Superb Parrot, the Greater Long-eared Bat and the Southern Bellfrog. Twelve species of migratory bird protected under international agreements between Australia, China and Japan also frequent Lake Cowal.

The Coalition to Protect Lake Cowal, which includes Friends of the Earth Australia, is supporting Wiradjuri traditional custodians in their efforts to keep Lake Cowal's gold underground.

more information: www.foe.org.au, www.rainforestinfo.org.au/gold/lakep.html



digging to disaster

brazil's urucu gas pipeline ignores history | www.petrobras.com.br, www.cmenergy.com



Petrobras, a Brazilian government-owned company, plans to build a 550-kilometre gas pipeline through one of Brazil's most pristine wilderness areas in the Amazon to transport natural gas to electricity generating plants in Rondonia. The fast-growing US-based energy transnational El Paso owns the generating plants to be supplied by the Urucu pipeline.



Labrea, one of the towns that will receive a large influx of people due to the pipeline project.

“The pipeline will not have beneficial results because there is no advantage and no assistance to indigenous people. The pipeline passes close to the indigenous reserve, and will damage indigenous lands and people. We are expecting problems like alcohol consumption due to contact with workers. And there is also the family problem. The men that will come don’t have families, and we then have a problem with prostitution.”

João Batista Apurinã, leader of the Union of Indigenous People from the Purus River

Petrobras constructed the first phase of the gas pipeline, linking the Urucu reserve to the city of Coari, in 1998. This initial bit of the pipeline has had an adverse impact on local communities and the forest along its 280-kilometre trajectory. Some communities ended up with polluted water. Fish, their main economic resource, have vanished. The city of Coari has become a centre for child prostitution.

History shows that other major infrastructure projects in the region have also had negative impacts. The Juma indigenous people were devastated by the construction of the Transamazonica Highway in the 1970s, for example, and they count only seven survivors today.

The Urucu gas pipeline would open the door to loggers, miners, farmers and agriculturalists from Rondonia to intact areas of the Amazon. This could deforest one of the region’s most preserved sites, inhabited by extremely isolated and vulnerable indigenous groups such as the Apurinã, Paumari, Deni and the remaining Juma.

The Environmental Impact Study presented by Petrobras has been criticized by NGOs, led by Friends of the Earth Brazilian Amazon. The company carried out only two short field trips, clearly insufficient to accurately describe the 550 kilometres to be crossed. Some indigenous groups who may be affected were not even visited, and potential impacts were underplayed and even denied by the company.

more information: www.amazonia.org.br/english



indonesia without trees?

record-breaking logging of last rainforests | www.asiapulppaper.com

Indonesia's forests, along with those in countries like Brazil and Zaire, were once part of an enormously biodiverse band crossing the earth. Spanning two different geological zones, this greenbelt was home to many plant and animal species.



Tragically, during the past 30 years, commercial logging has destroyed nearly three-quarters of the country's rainforest in what is the world's fastest national rate of deforestation, resulting in 2-3 million hectares of deforestation per year. According to the World Bank, Indonesia will lose all of its forests in the next 15 years if the government does not act quickly. An estimated 73 percent of all logging in Indonesia is believed to be illegal.

Asia Pulp and Paper (APP), one of the world's largest paper companies, is responsible for decimating large areas of Indonesian rainforest, particularly on the island of Sumatra. It is also one of the largest corporate debtors in the world, owing US\$13 billion to hundreds of banks. APP has cleared over 280,000 hectares of rainforest in the past decade, and plans to cut another 300,000 over the next five years. The company has also been involved in conflicts with indigenous peoples in Sumatra, resulting in injuries to villagers attempting to blockade the road to company facilities.

Millions of people rely on Indonesia's forests for their livelihoods, combining rice and other crop cultivation with fishing, hunting, and the harvesting and selling of timber, coffee, rubber, rattan, honey, and resins. The Indonesian rainforests are also home to threatened species including the Orangutan, the Sumatran tiger, the Sumatran rhino and Asian elephant.

WALHI/Friends of the Earth Indonesia is calling for an immediate moratorium on logging in Indonesia in an effort to save what's left of the country's forests. Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland is supporting their efforts by campaigning against British banks financing rainforest destruction in Indonesia.

more information:

www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/corporates/case_studies/app,
www.walhi.or.id



something smells fishy

salmon farms in chile | www.nutreco.com

Dutch multinational Nutreco is the world's leading producer of salmon, with farms in Norway, Scotland and Chile among other places. Fish farming is often extremely polluting and damaging to the marine environment.



“The fish farms in Chile were developed without any environmental legal framework.”

Alejandro Buschmann, University of Los Lagos, Chile.



In early 2002, Friends of the Earth Netherlands investigated Nutreco's fish farms in the waters near Puerto Montt and off Chiloé Island, where the majority of the population has traditionally earned their livelihoods through fishing and agriculture. They found that Nutreco's salmon farms in Chiloé are the source of major environmental problems.

The water is seriously polluted with antibiotics and chemicals. Excessive salmon feed and excrement has led to toxic algae.

Workers also reported that Nutreco, locally known as Marine Harvest Chile, mistreats its employees. The company discriminates against

unions. Conditions are worst of all for those employed by Nutreco's subcontractors, although Nutreco denies any knowledge of these abuses.

Nor does Nutreco play by the rules: it repeatedly breaks Chilean Fisheries Law, and does not abide by International Labour Organization treaties or the OECD's guidelines for multinational corporations. In fact, Nutreco has been known to break its own environmental and social policies when they get in the way of profit.

more information: www.milieudefensie.nl/wto/publicaties/index.htm,
www.milieudefensie.nl/earthalarm/eng74.htm



piping to the rich, bypassing the poor

baku-ceyhan oil pipeline in caspian region | www.bp.com

If built, the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline will run 1,100 miles through Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey from the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean. The United States, with its endless appetite for energy and powerful corporate oil lobby, has been pushing for this US\$3.3 billion project for many years.

“I do not remember any good impacts from the Baku-Supsa oil pipeline. So I do not understand why BP carried out a social assessment. They just irritated people. When they ask questions about what people want and need, people hope that lots of things will be done for them. If this does not happen it will be catastrophic. BP will hide behind the government, and conflict will arise again between Georgians and the government.”

Lela Inasaridze, local Georgian NGO Meskheti Voice.



The pipeline will cross through extremely biodiverse regions, including Azerbaijan’s Gobustani Reserve (recognized by UNESCO for its cultural heritage), unique forests and mineral water reserves in Georgia’s Borjomi Nature Park, and unique wetlands designated for Ramsar protection.

British Petroleum (BP), the world’s third largest oil company and head of the pipeline consortium, is seeking public funding from the World Bank and major national export credit agencies to finance the pipeline. BP is a key proponent of greenwash within the corporate climate lobby. Despite its sophisticated self-promotion as a convert to corporate environmental responsibility and its widely publicized investment in renewables, the company continues to increase its oil production. Other members of the consortium include Eni (Italy), Statoil (Norway), Unocal (US) and TotalFinaElf (France).

Affected communities and campaign groups are concerned that the pipeline will bring few benefits to poorer people, and could exacerbate tensions in a region that is just recovering from a number of major conflicts. “Although there is a permanent energy crisis in Azerbaijan, the development banks support the energy needs of US citizens before considering Azerbaijanians who have limited access to gas and electricity,” says local campaigner Samir Isaev. “The oil and gas from the Caspian will be piped straight to western markets, completely bypassing local communities.”

CEE Bankwatch and Friends of the Earth groups are also concerned about the pipeline’s contribution to global climate change. The oil transported along the pipeline, once burned, will contribute 185 million tons of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere every year. As construction plans hinge on the provision of public funding, campaign groups are lobbying the World Bank and export credit agencies not to open their coffers for this explosive project.

more information: www.bankwatch.org

“Nature will cry if this golf course is built.”

A curious Maltese farming technique which uses prickly pear leaves to protect saplings.

Golf enthusiast living in Malta.



green beans or green links?

broad coalition aims to save maltese farmland | www.verdalamansions.com, www.carlson.com, www.regenthotels.com

Malta is the most developed country in Europe, and over the last 50 years large tracts of countryside have been sacrificed for tourism and housing developments. Agricultural land is scarce, and the country grows enough to feed only 17 percent of the population.



Rural village of Dingli.

“This land has been tilled by our forefathers and by us for hundreds of years. Now land speculators have cast their eyes on this particular piece of agricultural land with the specific aim of constructing a golf course. It is not acceptable that wealth which is being enjoyed by so many be acquired by a single company, especially more so since our livelihoods and those of our families depend on these 65 hectares of land.”

Maltese farmer.

Protest October 1999.



Friends of the Earth Malta has battled one golf course proposal after another in recent years, most of them planned for areas of agricultural importance or scenic beauty. Developers have been known to threaten farmers in order to persuade them to sell off their agricultural land, and the government has relied on decisions made by planning bodies with heavy input from the tourism industry and none by environmentalists.

Farmers in one agricultural area are determined to quash the proposal by three major tourism companies - AX Holdings, Carlson Companies and Regent Hotels - to build an 18-hole golf course, country club and luxury hotel on prime agricultural land that has been farmed for hundreds of years and currently provides 98 farmers with their livelihoods.

The golf course is an environmental nightmare: it will infringe upon the EU's Habitats Directive and will eventually consume as much water as 11,000 Maltese people. To date, Malta's Department of Agriculture has remained silent about the project.

The coalition to stop the golf course - campaigning under the motto "Agriculture, Not Golf" - is broad, encompassing some 1,000 farmers as well as politicians, environmentalists and students. They are determined to make sure that farmland is not sacrificed for hotel rooms, and that green beans take precedence over golf.

more information: foe@maltanet.net



rainforest pulped for japanese paper

clearcutting australia's goolengook forest

Goolengook forest, located in East Gippsland, Australia, is a mix of cool and warm temperate rainforest as well as extremely rare overlap rainforest. The forest is rich in biologically diverse old growth forest, and home to rare and threatened fauna and flora including the Spot-tail Quoll, the Long Footed Potoroo, the Sooty and Powerful Owls, the Green Bird-Orchid and several varieties of tree fern.

“It is an international disgrace to see Australia’s forests destroyed to trade on the international woodchip market. These forests will ultimately end up in Japanese garbage dumps as waste paper.”

Anthony Amis, FoE Australia forest spokesperson.



Scientists employed by the Victorian State Government have recommended that the Goolengook forest be protected. Yet despite their recommendations and despite a five-year blockade by conservationists, logging crews arrived in March 2002 with the government’s blessing.

A large permanent police presence has allowed the logging of Goolengook to go ahead. Over 80 people trying to protect the forest’s biodiversity by building treehouses, occupying machinery and blockading roads have been arrested since the logging began.

The old growth trees will be pulped at the Eden woodchip mill on the coast of New South Wales and exported to Japan. The mill, previously owned by Daishowa Paper Manufacturing Company, now comes under the umbrella of the Nihon Unipac empire.

Friends of the Earth Melbourne continues to provide logistical support for the grassroots activists at Goolengook, and campaigns to cease all logging in old growth and forests of high conservation significance. The global appetite for paper is insatiable and growing: Victorian native forest woodchip exports last year reached an all-time annual record of 1.5 million cubic metres.

more information: www.geco.org.au, www.goolengook.forests.org.au, www.melbourne.foe.org.au

FoE Norway campaign boat.



fingerprinting for pcbs

norwegian sea pollution traced to chemical giants | www.bayer-group.com, www.monsanto.com

In 1998 and 1999, ten young Friends of the Earth Norway activists took to the sea with the goal of tracing PCB pollution along the coastline directly back to the manufacturers of this toxic industrial chemical. “Chemical fingerprinting” helped them to identify and attribute specific PCB pollution to corporate producers Bayer, Monsanto and Kanegafuchi.

“It is highly reasonable that companies which have produced, sold and earned income from PCB and which have been closer than anyone else to knowing about the harmful effects of the substance should contribute towards the cost of clean up.”

Øivind Østberg, Norwegian lawyer.



Checking for contamination.



The results of their investigations created shock waves throughout Norway. Analysis of the samples showed high levels of PCB pollution in the waters off the Norwegian coast. PCBs, used in hydraulic oil, paint for ships, construction materials and electronic equipment, are among the most hazardous of known environmental toxins and have been linked to cancer, hormonal disruption and behavioural changes. Although most countries banned PCBs in the 1970s, they are not easily degradable and persist for hundreds of years in the environment.

PCB pollution in Norway is a worrying and expensive problem. Fish sales from many fjord areas have been banned, affecting livelihoods for many fishermen. Total clean up costs for Norwegian coastal waters are estimated at US\$2.5 billion. Friends of the Earth Norway is trying to convince Oslo port authorities to sue Bayer and Monsanto for part of the clean up costs. Authorities, no doubt intimidated by the power of these companies, continue to resist holding them responsible for their actions.

more information:

www.naturvern.no/gift/index.en.html, teo@naturvern.no



digging for gold in the poboya protected forest

rio tinto strikes again in indonesia | www.riotinto.com

Mining giant Rio Tinto is lobbying hard to open a gold mine in the Poboya-Tahura Forest Park in Central Sulawesi. Although Indonesian campaigners have long experience in battling the mining industry and Rio Tinto is no stranger to the country, this case poses special challenges as it would be the first mine to be dug close to an urban area.

“There is no community mining. The community feels prosperous with our lives now. If Rio Tinto goes ahead with mining in the area, our agriculture will be lost and the community will be faced with finding new sources of livelihood. We do not need gold.”

Lakapa, head of Kambuno village.

The toxic tailings dam of Rio Tinto's Kelian Equatorial Mine in Indonesia.



Indigenous communities protest against Rio Tinto in September 2001.



The 8,100 hectare protected Forest Park is a mixture of trees, including endemic sandalwood, ebony and rattan species, as well as extensive scrub and grassland containing rich biodiversity. It is the customary land of the indigenous Tara and Ledo people. Local NGOs and communities immediately rejected Rio Tinto's plans to mine in the area, and have been demonstrating and informing the media and the public about the dangers of the planned mine.

Rio Tinto is the largest mining company in the world, with operations in 40 countries. The company is renowned for its controversial projects on indigenous lands, including the Ranger and proposed Jabiluka uranium mine in Australia and its proposed titanium dioxide mine in Madagascar.

Yet Rio Tinto has felt the sting of public pressure in recent years. In 1997, for example, Friends of the Earth Czech Republic was instrumental in the cancellation of a Rio Tinto gold exploration and mining project in Mokrsko. And in 1998, Friends of the Earth Ecuador and local communities celebrated the departure of Rio Tinto from several areas around the country following staunch resistance to the company's unpopular mines there.

more information: www.jatam.org, www.moles.org, www.mpi.org

"I have lived on the edge of Hatfield Moor virtually all of my life. Childhood and teenage memories are of a wonderful wilderness, a haven for unique and enigmatic biodiversity. Now the devastation is heartbreaking. The last decade has seen a US multinational plunder a UK national treasure so that they can make massive short-term profits. In places, their massive plant machinery is punching through the bottom peat layer and exposing the underlying sands and gravel. They are destroying the very sensitive hydrological integrity of the bog - rather like turning a plastic bowl into a colander."

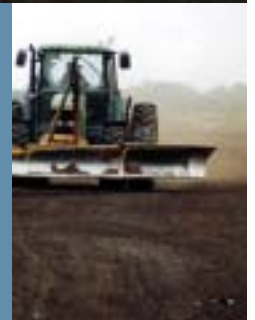
Helen Kirk, Thorne and Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum.



a plea for the peatbogs

us corporate digs british treasures for compost | www.scottscompany.com

Despite their less-than-glamorous image, the UK's lowland raised peatbogs are one of the country's most important wildlife habitats and are of national and international conservation interest.



The bogs form a unique and fascinating home for many rare species, including birds (the nightjar, woodlark, curlew, merlin, peregrines, hen and marsh harriers and long-eared owl), plants (the “carnivorous” round leaved sundew, butterwort, bladderwort, bog rosemary and many species of sphagnum mosses, which carpet the surface of the bogs in brilliant green, ochre yellow and rusty red), and thousands of rare insect species including the bog hog and the Hairy Canary fly.

Sadly, these treasures are fast disappearing. A 1996 study showed that of an original 69,700 hectares of peatbogs, only 5.5 percent, or 3,836 hectares could still be described as in a “near natural” state.

Some of the worst industrial scale peat extraction currently taking place in the UK is being carried out by a US-based multinational, The Scott’s Company. Scott’s, the world’s largest garden products company and a huge provider of compost, stepped up extraction in anticipation of new UK government regulations that will give several important and threatened peatbogs protected status.

Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland is pushing for a speedy implementation of protected status for the country’s peatbogs before they are dug up and sold in plastic bags.

more information:

www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/corporates/case_studies/scotts



a ray of hope

Today I've seen seven storks

On the meadow

Maybe the world won't become extinct

Not yet

Robert Fidirich, Friends of the Earth Hungary



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