



IUCN ACADEMY OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Forest Value Claims in the Global Economy - Social Justice and Sustainability Considerations

Workshop, Jakarta, September 2015

IUCN Academy of Environmental Law Research Committee

Convenors: Professors Carmen Gonzalez, Benjamin J. Richardson and
Tracy-Lynn Humby

Date: Monday, 7 September 2015

Venue: Atma Jaya Catholic University, Jakarta, Indonesia

Context and Themes:

In April 1955 a seminal meeting of twenty-nine nations drawn from the Afro-Asian group took place in Bandung, Indonesia. Presided over by a number of the leading lights of the postcolonial movement, the meeting signified the promise of a new world order, an alternative to the order being built by the cold war relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. It was a meeting to mark political achievement – the

independence gained by a number of former colonies – but also to canvass the fragile possibility of a new era in world history. United by a shared history of Western imperialism, racism and cultural discrimination, the conference culminated in a communiqué that “reinstated the desire for greater economic co-operation and cultural exchange, recognition of human rights and self-determination, the condemnation of new and future forms of imperialism, and the need to pursue policies that would promote world peace”.¹

Sixty years since the Bandung conference the world order has indeed changed, but not necessarily in the way its participants would have imagined and hoped. Environmental resources and their depletion have become an issue of global concern, and a divisive factor between many developed and developing countries in regard to who is responsible and how sustainable development should be promoted.

Through a case study of the forestry sector, this workshop examines how the aspirations of this seminal conference for a new global economic order have progressed. Forests constitute a significant economic resource for many of the nations that participated in or observed the Bandung meeting. Yet, the world’s forests have shrunk dramatically in the ensuing 60 years, threatened by a rapacious global economy that has made a mockery of the ethos of “sustainable development”. In recent years, new ways of exploiting forests have been devised — as carbon “offsets” for the climate impacts of transnational companies, as ecotourism destinations for foreign visitors, or as “productive” palm oil plantations to feed global consumers.

This workshop aims to identify, debate and deepen our understanding of these trends, impacts and governance in light of the Bandung Conference’s optimism for a more progressive international economy. The overall aim is to assess **forest value claims** in the global economy and how they are governed through both state and non-state

¹ Christopher J. Lee “Introduction – Between a moment and an era: The origins and afterlives of Bandung” in C.J. Lee (ed.) *Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and its Political Afterlives* (Ohio University Press, 2010).

processes. The notion of “forest value claims” means the different ways by which value is perceived, assigned to, and exploited from forests – as timber and forest products such as honey or bark for tanneries, as well as sources of carbon sinks, and as providers of important ecological services. The workshop will examine this overarching theme from the position of the Global South – its views, concerns and roles.

Among the variety of issues encompassed by this theme that may be discussed in the workshop, are the following:

- The influence of new international investment and trade agreements (e.g., WTO accords and bilateral investment agreements) on forestry operations in the Global South.
- The commodification of forests in the global carbon “offsets” market.
- The role of transnational corporations in forestry and efforts towards corporate social responsibility in this sector.
- The work of the Forest Stewardship Council in providing a better transnational governance framework.
- The plight of indigenous and other local communities who rely on forests, and the role of human rights law in protecting their interests
- The role of Global South states as intermediaries between local communities and the global economy in the forest sector, including the role of some such states in engaging in problematic or harmful forestry practices.

In regard to these themes, we welcome international law perspectives, national experiences, and insights into best practices and new governance models. Overall, the workshop will develop ideas for better governance of forests in a manner that supports sustainability and social justice.

Format:

Over half a day immediately prior to the IUCN Academy's main colloquium, the workshop will feature 3 plenary presentations, followed by moderated roundtable discussions featuring additional speakers to generate a highly focused and interactive debate. The 3 plenary presentations will cover different and selective aspects of the workshop themes outlined above.

The format is designed to maximise time for meaningful discussion and audience participation. The roundtables will feature 5 or 6 participant speakers who will prepare responses from a list of questions and issues in regard to each substantive presentation (rather than give each a formal presentation). Additional questions from the audience will be considered. Participants will be recruited by personal invitation and a call for contributions.

Both the plenary presenters and roundtable speakers are encouraged to submit written papers in advance in order to provide background information and additional detail and context to the issues to be canvassed in the workshop.

The draft schedule is:

- 1.00 – 1.15: welcome and introduction from the workshop convenors
- 1.15 – 1.45: 1st plenary presentation
- 1.45 – 2.30: roundtable discussion on 1st presentation
- 2.30 – 3.00: 2nd plenary presentation
- 3.00 – 3.45: roundtable discussion on 2nd presentation
- 3.45 – 4.15: nutrition break and networking time
- 4.15 – 4.45: 3rd plenary presentation
- 4.45 – 5.30: roundtable discussion on 3rd presentation

5.30 – 5.45: closing remarks by workshop convenors

Output:

It is anticipated that the three plenary presentations, coupled with any papers submitted by roundtable speakers and other participants, will be developed into a scholarly publication. These papers could be eligible for inclusion in the IUCN Academy's official proceedings of the colloquium or published separately in special edition of an academic journal. Further information about publication options will be available at the workshop.

Expressions of interest:

Persons interested in participating in the workshop, as a plenary presenter, roundtable speaker or member of the general audience, are invited to contact the workshop convenors as soon as possible:

- Carmen Gonzalez: gonzalez@seattleu.edu
- Tracy-lynn Humby: Tracy-Lynn.Humby@wits.ac.za
- Benjamin Richardson: B.J.Richardson@utas.edu.au

Proposals for a presentation or participation in the roundtables should be made before **1 February 2015**.