



Maasai International Solidarity Alliance (MISA) Calls for a 5-year Moratorium on all Soil Carbon Deals in Pastoralists' Rangelands in Northern Tanzania



The Maasai International Solidarity Alliance (MISA) conducted an in-depth investigation into the emerging soil carbon credit schemes in Northern Tanzania, highlighting their potential for land alienation and adverse impacts on Maasai pastoralist communities. The report critically examines two major soil carbon projects — **The Longido and Monduli Rangelands Carbon Project (LMRCP)** by Soils for the Future Tanzania Ltd (SftFTZ) funded by Volkswagen ClimatePartners and **The Resilient Tarangire Ecosystem Project (RTEP)** by *The Nature Conservancy (TNC)* — targeting Longido, Monduli, and Simanjiro districts.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Lack of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC):** The FPIC process is deeply flawed, with limited community participation, exclusion of women and youth, and non-transparent agreements. Community members often lack basic knowledge of carbon markets, contract terms, and their implications.
- **Disruption to Pastoralism and Mobility:** Carbon projects introduce rotational grazing practices that will restrict traditional Maasai grazing patterns, undermining pastoral mobility — a cornerstone of Maasai culture and rangeland sustainability. These changes risk compromising food security and adaptive strategies against climate change.
- **Regulatory Gaps and Corruption:** Tanzania’s carbon trading regulations lack provisions to adequately protect our human rights as Indigenous Peoples in soil carbon projects. The absence of a binding and clear legal framework has led to community misinformation, corruption (e.g., pre-payments or “dowry money”), and legal ambiguities, especially regarding contract termination and benefit-sharing mechanisms.
- **Community Concerns:** Maasai communities are under strong pressure to enter into deals, because the two competing carbon project proponents are racing to submit their respective projects to validation by international standards. For this, they must sign with a minimum number of villages, complete their project document and show evidence of consent. Communities fear long-term land use restrictions, loss of communal grazing areas, intra- and inter-community conflicts, and cultural erosion. The prospect of 40-year carbon contracts has raised alarms about locking future generations into potentially harmful agreements.
- **Land Alienation Threats:** Soil carbon projects risk repeating historical patterns of land dispossession for the Maasai, with community land being controlled by foreign investors and grazing areas being privatized for false climate solutions.



“We are worried about future land conflicts which might arise from the carbon project. It has happened so often with other projects already where in the end we have lost our land to conservation, hunting or investors”.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



1. Immediate 5-Year Moratorium:

MISA calls for a complete halt on all soil carbon projects in Maasai rangelands until 2030 to allow for comprehensive community education, adequate regulatory frameworks at both national and international levels. A 5-year moratorium is necessary to safeguard Maasai rights and pastoralist land use practices.



2. Strengthening Legal and Policy Frameworks:

- Development of a Tanzanian legal framework specific to soil carbon projects, ensuring the protection of Indigenous land rights and human rights.
- Internationally, there is a need for a rights-based legal framework governing voluntary carbon markets.



3. Ensuring Robust FPIC:

- Full community involvement in all decision-making processes, with dedicated efforts to include women, youth, and marginalized groups and engagement of all village residents.
- Access to independent legal counsel and impartial information about carbon credits and their implications.



4. Protecting Pastoralism and Mobility:

- Carbon projects must respect traditional Maasai grazing practices and maintain community control over land use.
- Projects should not limit pastoralist mobility or enforce restrictive grazing practices that undermine resilience in the face of the climate crisis.
- Sharing of communal grazing areas should be encouraged as a strategy in case of drought, not undermined.



5. Transparent and Fair Agreements:

Contracts must be fair, publicly available, drafted in local language and not biased in the interest of carbon proponents and the state.



CONCLUSION

The soil carbon credit business in Northern Tanzania risks becoming yet another mechanism for land alienation, threatening our cultural heritage, livelihoods, and food security of Maasai pastoralists.

Without strong legal safeguards, transparent processes, and genuine community consent, these projects could exacerbate existing land conflicts, create community tensions and undermine climate justice. Further, there is no scientific evidence that the imposed changes in grazing practices will result in additional carbon storage, rendering the carbon projects worthless for buyers. MISA urges immediate action to protect Maasai rights and uphold the principles of environmental and social justice.



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