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PRESS RELEASE

Tanzania: Carbon Projects Development Undermines Maasai Human Rights

Catholic organisations call for an immediate halt to soil carbon credit projects in Northern Tanzania.

A new study published today by the Maasai International Solidarity Alliance (MISA) – whose members include CIDSE, [Misereor](#), [KOO](#), and its member [Welthaus](#) – highlights the harmful effects of international carbon offset projects on the human rights of the Maasai, who are Pastoralists and Indigenous Peoples from East Africa. The findings reveal significant pressures placed on Maasai communities to enter the carbon business, raising serious ethical and legal concerns about their lack of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC).

The study documents the anticipated impacts of two large-scale carbon credit projects Maasai land, uncovering numerous alarming irregularities. These include dubious advance payments to local villages, non-transparent and unfair contracts, and a disregard for international human rights norms – particularly regarding the consent of local communities. Most of the Maasai people interviewed for the report lack adequate knowledge of carbon markets, contract terms, and are not in a position to anticipate all the long-term consequences of these agreements. They fear that the contracts will make them lose control over their traditional grazing lands. Carbon contracts will prevent them from sharing areas that are strategic for survival in times of droughts and also interfere with their centuries-old sustainable land management techniques, which are vital to their survival.

Climate protection projects in conflict with indigenous traditions

The Maasai's traditional grazing routes are based on seasonal water availability and the migration patterns of their livestock. These practices are not only central to their cultural identity but also contribute positively to the conservation and resilience of dry lands. However, under the new carbon offset projects, Maasai land use is being subordinated to carbon sequestration – with agreements anticipated to last for a total of 40 years.

"The decision by large companies to meet their net zero commitments or reduce their carbon emissions is producing some very questionable results", comments Anja Appel, Director of KOO who adds "As Catholic organisations, we are committed to climate justice, which means responding to ecological challenges with just and socially balanced answers. For us, it is therefore imperative that climate policy is based on human rights. Especially when it comes to corporate responsibility and climate action, policymakers must now stand firm. Any backtracking would be disastrous for climate protection."

Land grabbing threatens Maasai livelihood

The two carbon offset projects examined in the study are in direct competition as they target the same area of Maasai land. Their goal is to change grazing practices to increase carbon storage in the soil, which in turn generates carbon credits for corporate offsetting. One such project, financed by Volkswagen, covers nearly one million hectares.

"Carbon credit projects are not only a threat to the Maasai people. They are also a big threat to so many indigenous peoples and local communities worldwide as big corporate interests continue not to take their responsibilities seriously in truly reducing their own carbon emissions," says **Emmanuel Yap, CIDSE Food and Land Policy Officer**.

Sustainability without responsibility: Volkswagen under fire

Discussions between Volkswagen's ClimatePartner and Maasai representatives regarding the protection of their rights and interests have yielded little progress. Despite strong concerns raised by the Maasai, Volkswagen has failed to provide substantial responses so far.

"Companies must not only make sustainability commitments but also take active responsibility for addressing the challenges their projects create. We demand that German corporations like Volkswagen ensure that their sustainability efforts do not come at the expense of human rights. This means ensuring FPIC, no negative impacts on food security and livelihoods, and transparently involving local communities in project planning from the outset," urges **Selina Wiredu, Africa Policy Officer at Misereor**.

The study underscores the urgent need for governmental accountability and the development of international and national frameworks to regulate voluntary carbon markets to ensure they do not undermine indigenous rights.

Further information:

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.

Access the full study and the summary (also available in German) [here](#).

NOTES TO THE EDITORS:

About CIDSE:

CIDSE is an international family of Catholic social justice organisations. We work with global partners and allies to promote justice, harnessing the power of global solidarity to achieve transformational change for people and the planet. We challenge systemic injustice and its destructive impacts through connecting, mobilising, influencing and telling stories of change. We promote environmentally and socially just alternatives to allow everyone to thrive in our common home. CIDSE's work is guided by Catholic Social Teaching and Gospel values. www.cidse.org

CIDSE members are: Broederlijk Delen (Belgium), CAFOD (England and Wales), CCFD-Terre Solidaire (France), Cordaid (the Netherlands), Development & Peace (Canada), Entraide et Fraternité (Belgium), eRko (Slovakia), Fastenaktion (Switzerland), FEC (Portugal), FOCSIV (Italy), Partage Lu (Luxembourg), KOO (Austria), Manos Unidas (Spain), Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (USA), MISEREOR (Germany), SCIAF (Scotland), Trócaire (Ireland), Vastenactie (the Netherlands).

About MISA:

The Maasai International Solidarity Alliance (MISA) is an international alliance standing in solidarity with the Maasai of Northern Tanzania. We bring together international faith-based organisations, human rights organisations, international aid and development organisations, as well as grassroots organisations, individual activists, researchers and lawyers representing the Maasai in several land cases.

The alliance includes, among others, the Africa Europe Faith Justice Network (AEFJN), Agrecol Association for AgriCulture & Ecology, Coalition of European Lobbies for Eastern African Pastoralism (CELEP), Center for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (CAWR) at Coventry University (UK), CIDSE - International family of Catholic social justice organisations (International), Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement and Conflict Transformation (IMPACT), FIAN International, FINAL GOVERNANCE, KOO (Koordinierungsstelle der Österreichischen Bischofskonferenz - Coordinating Office of the Austrian Bishops' Conference), Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker (Society for Threatened Peoples), IDINGO - Integrated Development Initiatives in Ngorongoro, Misereor, PALISEP, PINGO's Forum (Pastoralists Indigenous Non-Governmental Organisations), PWC (Pastoral Women's Council), TEST (Traditional Ecosystems Survival Tanzania), UCRT (Ujamaa Community Resource Team) and Welthaus Graz. Our main objective is to put an end to the human rights violations facing the Maasai of Northern Tanzania.

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