

# Behind the 'Green Economy': Profiting from environmental and climate crisis

June 2012

**GRAIN - The Biodiversity Alliance - World  
Rainforest Movement (WRM) - Friends of the  
Earth Latin America and the Caribbean**



This article examines the real intentions behind the proposals for a «Green Economy». It is the introductory chapter to a compendium on the Green Economy that was prepared as a common position for RIO+20 and published collectively in Spanish by GRAIN, Alianza Biodiversidad, World Rainforest Movement (WRM), and Friends of the Earth Latin America and the Caribbean (ATALC).

# Behind the 'Green Economy': Profiting from environmental and climate crisis

**GRAIN – The Biodiversity Alliance – World Rainforest Movement (WRM)  
– Friends of the Earth Latin America and the Caribbean**

We live in difficult times. Humanity and the planet are facing a series of crises that seem to be worsening or becoming increasingly more entrenched. The climate crisis has added to a more general environmental disaster and both have been exacerbated by the state of the world economy. Meanwhile, those who have the power to determine possible courses of action at the national and international levels have proven themselves incapable of identifying real solutions. International negotiations revolve around false promises and the process is locked in an atmosphere of complacency and deception, reminding us of the proverbial emperor's new clothes: we have before us naked proof that these crises are serious when they reach extremes, but we continue to hear praise for a blanket of solutions that are, in fact, ineffective.

Contrary to the situation ten years ago, no one can today argue that there is a lack of proof or knowledge about the climate and environmental crises. Thousands of organisations, activists, and scientists have tried in different ways to create awareness in society and among authorities. The scientific and practical evidence is so damning that all attempts to ignore it have met with defeat. Not long ago, we were part of a world where all governments and investors refused to recognise climate change or, in more general terms, the environmental crisis. As the warming and destruction advanced along a devastating path, governments acted little, if at all, and businesses were even more reluctant to take action. Nevertheless, a consciousness eventually emerged and today, pleas that we should take care of our planet are heard everywhere, from initiatives to use energy-conserving light bulbs in each home, to building non-polluting buildings. We are surrounded by numerous examples about how to take responsibility for the crisis and resolve it.

*Global warming, we judge, is likely to prove one of those tectonic forces that –like globalization or the ageing of populations - gradually but powerfully changes the economic landscape in which our clients operate.<sup>1</sup>*

***Dr John Llewellyn, Senior Economic Policy Advisor, Lehman Brothers<sup>2</sup>***

*Population growth and economic development are placing mounting pressures on the global environment. Climate change is the highest profile of those pressures.*

***Goldman Sachs report, May 21 2009<sup>3</sup>***

So have we finally succeeded in awakening a consciousness among ordinary citizens, governments and investors? Yes, and at the same time, not at all. The information that has been made public, as well as everyday experience on the issue, has resulted in a general consciousness among large sectors of the population that climatic and ecological systems have been profoundly and seriously altered. Only those promoting an ideological agenda with an extremely narrow-minded approach can deny that we are facing a crisis of incalculable proportions. On the other hand, it is clear that governments and businesses did not recognise this crisis because they somehow finally saw the light, but rather because they succeeded in devising ways to make money from a disaster that affects the very survival of the planet.

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1. [http://www.lehman.com/press/pdf\\_2007/TheBusinessOfClimateChange.pdf](http://www.lehman.com/press/pdf_2007/TheBusinessOfClimateChange.pdf)

2. Goldman Sachs. Change is coming: A framework for climate change – a defining issue of the 21st century. <http://www.goldmansachs.com/our-thinking/environment-and-energy/change-is-coming.html>

3. Goldman Sachs. Change is coming: A framework for climate change – a defining issue of the 21st century . <http://www.goldmansachs.com/our-thinking/environment-and-energy/change-is-coming.html>

All the big actors of global finance,<sup>4</sup> as well as a growing number of investment funds in climate change –public as well as private – with the support of the World Bank, the IMF and regional development banks, have drawn up documents emphasising big business opportunities that have sprung up from changes in the climate and ecosystems. Those who have also contributed to this approach are the “cheerleaders” led by governments and organisations of the UN, and in particular UNEP, but also the FAO and UNCTAD.

*Dealing with climate change will be the biggest global investment theme of the next 20 years. We believe there are excellent returns available by investing in companies that will benefit from efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change.*

**Robin Stoakley, Director of the Schroders Climate Change Fund.<sup>5</sup>**

*Invest in the future – with sustainable products from Deutsche Bank. As we examine the global economy, it becomes apparent just how widespread the business opportunities are in the climate change sector. Companies and investors are quickly realising that climate change is not merely a social, political or moral issue – it is an economic and business issue as well.*

**Deutschebank<sup>6</sup>**

*I passionately believe that by recasting the argument for action on climate change away from the language of threats and punishment and into positive, profit-making terms, we can have a much wider impact.*

**David Cameron – UK Prime Minister<sup>7</sup>**

This new area of business has been designated as the “Green Economy.” Previously the concept referred almost exclusively to activities involving the creation of energy from sources other than petrol, but today it is used in a larger sense, permitting the inclusion of a) the commercialization of all goods that nature offers (water, biodiversity, land, scenic beauty, the re-fill of rivers and lakes, climate regularity, even air and in fact, any other natural process that we could potentially sell) and b) all economic activities that create ways to allegedly mitigate climate change and environmental degradation, but are ultimately about adapting to their effects. Agencies such as the United Nations Environment Program, (UNEP), as well as several governments, use definitions that take into account sustainability, poverty reduction, equity and inclusion. However, these definitions fall apart when one sees them implemented on the ground and especially when one reads documents or reports addressed to global investors. When all is said and done, it is the investors that truly determine the nature of the Green Economy.

Corporate and government studies and documents insist that there are many opportunities to make money (to the order of billions of dollars), but they do not explain long term calculations, nor do they specify general figures. At best, they only provide a few examples of cases considered to be successes. Even so, the potential for profit seems enormous. Morgan Stanley, one of the only companies to have given concrete figures, indicated in 2007 that the “clean energy” sector could generate revenues of billions of dollars for the firm in 2030.<sup>8</sup> At present, the global carbon market alone generates around 180 billion dollars per year.<sup>9</sup>

4. The ten biggest global financial entities - Bank of America, Barclays Capital, BNP Paribas, Citigroup, Credit Suisse, Deutsche Bank, Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, Nomura Securities, UBS, Wells Fargo Securities- published documents on their websites attesting to the potential of the Green Economy.

5. For an example, see: <http://www.schroders.com/staticfiles/Schroders/Market%20Strategy%20And%20News/PR/Press%20Releases/Climate-change-launch-May2007.pdf>

6. <http://www.db.com/italia/en/content/1357.html>

7. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/nov/28/david-cameron-climate-change-cancun>

8. Clean Energy. Sustainable Opportunities. October 25, 2007. <http://www.morganstanley.com/views/perspectives/print/0fbc1272-41a0-11de-a1b3-c771ef8db296.html>

9. Point Carbon. Volume of carbon traded in 2011 grew 19%, bucking downturn. 11 Jan 2012 <http://www.pointcarbon.com/aboutus/pressroom/pressreleases/1.1714530>

The entire market of goods and services “with a low carbon footprint” (which only includes one aspect on adaptation) currently surpasses 5.5 billion dollars annually (more than 7 per cent of the global Gross Domestic Product) and it is growing at an incredible speed.<sup>10</sup> This figure is actually insignificant when compared to the scale of the privatisation of nature in its entirety. The figure initially given by one of the pioneering promoters of the Green Economy indicates that if everything in nature were to be transformed into commodities, the trade that would result would be equivalent to some two times the global GDP, according to the most conservative of estimates.<sup>11, 12</sup>

The calculations and the shining future prospects of “green investments” matter little, since the Green Economy continues to be, until now, a speculation. No one knows exactly how much wealth will accrue, who will receive it, or how, nor exactly in which sectors. But this speculative state of affairs explains many of the existing characteristics of “green business” and, in particular, the outcomes of international negotiations around climate change and the environment. Big businesses are now working to create conditions to guarantee the transformation of the Green Economy into a huge profit-making enterprise. This requires a hands-off approach. All fixed obligations or commitments can become a nuisance. And therein lies the apparent paradox: It is just when we seem to agree, not only on the existence of the crisis, but also on its gravity and urgency, that commitments to act on the issues become increasingly rare (we could almost say by government-business consensus).

### **It's not a conspiracy. It's the meaning of opportunity.**

History has indicated that governments and powerful social groups have rarely planned or predicted the future with certainty. The avatars are often as surprised as anyone else at how things play out. But what distinguishes the big actors of the capitalist economy is their unquestionable and unparalleled capacity to profit from opportunities and crush threats as they arise.

Did a gathering of entrepreneurs decide, fifty years ago, to devise genetic engineering? Of course not. The idea came from scientists who likely knew very little about the economics and politics involved. Nevertheless, once its economic potential and its ability to control were discovered, big corporations completely took it over and subordinated it to their interests. Did someone foresee the apparently subversive nature of the internet? Certainly not the military strategists that encouraged its development. But as soon as that threat became clear, civil and military authorities, along with entrepreneurial lobbyists, launched forms of repression akin to science fiction movies.

With climate change, something similar has happened. No one planned, predicted, or wanted it. But now that it is here, the opportunities to profit from it will not be passed up.

### **An economy of destruction**

Faced with this uncertain but promising future, what are big corporations placing their bets on with the support of most governments? It is obvious that they cannot stop business as usual if there are possibilities to benefit, and if there may be other, still more appealing opportunities in the future. Therefore, if businesses need to burn petrol, destroy the environment or continue to emit greenhouse gases from any and all sources, there's no need to stop the destruction. All that's required is to impose, or claim to impose, some kind of regulation. If it turns out to be profitable to provide compensation for damage or to redress some of the effects, why not destroy a little more, so that they always have to repair or redress? This is how we enter the era of programmed destruction, the brutal complementary of programmed obsolescence. And this

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10. Low carbon environmental goods and services. Report for 2009/2010. Report commissioned by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills. July 2011. <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/business-sectors/docs/l/11-992x-low-carbon-and-environmental-goods-and-services-2009-10>

11. Robert Constanza et al. The Value of the World's Ecosystem Services and Natural Capital. *Nature*, Vol 387, May 15, 1997.

12. Global GDP is today estimated at between 60 – 70 billion dollars. To see the statistics provided by the World Bank: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD/countries>

is why it is not surprising that proposals for the green economy are intimately linked to false solutions to the climate and environmental crisis, such as the absurd proposal to fix, as an objective, the warming of the planet at 2, 3 or 4 °C.

The logic of destruction is part of a larger logic of scarcity, the foundational premise of the capitalist economy, which consists of transforming scarce goods uncontrolled by the market into commodities. Everything is evaluated by the scarcity of goods. The scarcer the goods, the more willing we will be to pay for them. If we are presented with a total lack, we no longer speak of the likelihood of having to pay, but rather of the obligation to do so. If everyone who needed a piece of the earth to farm or to live had access to it, no one would need to buy or rent land. The earth becomes a commodity when whole populations are evicted from it, either by means of fencing it off, or by concessions, land grabbing, agricultural exploitation, etc. If we could produce our own food, no one would pay for it. If we all had access to water, no one would consider themselves obliged to pay for it. Economic transactions become possible when people congregate in cities, water sources reduce, dry up, or become contaminated, (or when they simply appear to be contaminated, for instance, in order to sell water in bottles), or when we construct dams everywhere.

Programmed destruction is simply a way to create scarcity. It's nothing new and it goes well beyond the Green Economy. In order for the salaried workforce to be lucrative, capitalism had to destroy ways of living that offered alternative social systems across the entire world. It did so by playing the 'modernity' card and even by having recourse to the bullets of imperial wars. To transform seeds into a big commercial enterprise, we have encouraged the destruction of traditional systems of caring for, improving, saving, exchanging and producing seeds, destroying the ability of thousands of rural men and women to produce their own seeds. This destruction continues even today. There is no other way to explain the absurdity of banning the sale and exchange of local seeds in Europe and its imposition across the world through intellectual property laws.

Ecosystems and the climate, however, are interconnected with everything and we all have access to them. So how to make them "scarce" in order to transform them into sources of profit? First, by following the well known path toward privatisation. The menu is varied: land grabs, privatisation of national parks, privatisation of the sea (under the pseudonym of concessions), privatisation of the subsoil (for the mining industry, water and petrol), patents on genes and living beings, the creation of payment systems for substances like air, rain, etc. Each of these processes ensures that people or communities whose way of life depends on the ecosystems in question will not have access to fundamental resources for their food, habitation and for the survival of their unique forms of co-existence, agriculture, cultural creation, aesthetic pleasure, etc.

Second, why not explore the possibility of destroying a little more? If forests become even more scarce and fragile, will we not be even more willing to pay to safeguard existing forests, or for a program to restore them? If climatic and environmental degradation ensure that our food becomes scarce, will big agri-businesses not multiply their returns, as was clearly demonstrated during the 2008 food crisis? When the planet's landscapes have been largely devastated, we can be sure that national parks and reserve areas will be a golden opportunity: not only for their ecological functions, but also for their links to tourism, or simply to access beauty. If we are not yet charged for the air we breathe, that's because there is still enough air to breathe without having to ask authorization from someone. But imagine yourself in a situation where breathable air is scarce and it is not difficult to imagine yourself queuing in line to buy cylinders of pure air.

Let's now imagine ourselves in a world where the conditions of the climate are a permanent threat. We will instantly be able to visualize a prosperous industry, which makes business creating artificial conditions to confront the effects of a changing climate. Let's mention in particular medications for new illnesses, areas of land situated higher-up to avoid floods, shelters to protect against storms, systems of temperature stabilization, rain-creating devices, etc. Note that we do not mention domestic or local conditions, but rather areas large enough for geo-engineering projects to cover. Behind each of these absurd propositions to control the climate or cool down the planet is a potential business coming into existence or growing bigger.

*However, while human health may suffer from climate change, healthcare companies may improve their financial situation as a result of an increase in demand for their products.*

**Dr John Llewellyn, Lehman Brothers<sup>13</sup>**

*Physical threats such as more frequent droughts, a greater number and intensity of storms, as well as a general tendency toward warmer winters, will increase the earnings of water providers and insurance companies will see their bonuses increase.*

**Climate Change Corp. Climate News for Business<sup>14</sup>**

## **Grab whatever is left**

Destruction, of course, has its limits. Somewhere, at a certain level, of which we are unaware, there is a limit where the climate's dysfunction or the destruction of all the ecosystems will stop being a source of profit and will become a problem that cannot be ignored, even for the owners of big business. That is why they found it necessary to consider secondary strategies.

One such plan, projected as possibly the most important in the future is that of seising, controlling and physically monopolising reserves where nature can supposedly continue to function adequately or appropriating spaces that contain the resources essential for mitigating the effects of the crisis. This is the second role that privatisation plays. Herein lies the logic behind land grabbing, for instance. As agriculture becomes more difficult, it will be increasingly advantageous, from a business point of view, to possess or control cultivable land for the short or long term. We find similar reasoning and logic behind new concessions for fishing in cold waters, or the frenzy of privatisation of national parks and natural reserves, or the buying up of huge expanses of natural vegetation, either in tropical forest zones, or in the extreme south of South America.

Under the logic of expanding business possibilities, the physical control of large areas of land plays another important role: to stop populations, and in particular rural populations, from evading mechanisms of dependency. Eighty-five per cent of peasant and indigenous families all over the world have access to less than two hectares of land.<sup>15</sup> With all the legal, technical, and political hurdles that peasant and indigenous agriculture is faced with, relations with the market develop in irregular ways, with resistance coming and going according to the different circumstances. Big businesses and financial entities seem to have learnt the lesson that as long as they have control over their own resources, the people of the countryside will always be able to resist them with their capacity for autonomy. The response, again: total dispossession.

Whether it's under the guise of protection against environmental devastation, or under the guise of disarming mechanisms of evasion and resistance, or if it is simply about making profits, the seizure and control of large areas of land has become a useful strategy for businesses. This process works in conjunction with the forced removal of families, communities and people from their homes, lands and territories. This is what we have observed more and more frequently. Whether forced removals or dispossession are undertaken "calmly" or whether they are done by means of open warfare depends in large part on the character of the governments that cooperate with the investors to repress people.

## **A little sugar to make things easier to swallow**

From a business point of view, war or discontent might be inevitable, but they are also inconvenient. So, before applying the stick, it is preferable to show the carrot. For those indigenous and peasant communities that still occupy territories covering a substantial surface area and containing the best-preserved natural resources, the preferred carrot for the moment is the sale of environmental services and their by-products, especially REDD and REDD Plus. As many social organisations have shown, REDD/environmental

13. [http://www.lehman.com/press/pdf\\_2007/TheBusinessOfClimateChange.pdf](http://www.lehman.com/press/pdf_2007/TheBusinessOfClimateChange.pdf)

14. <http://www.climatechangeecorp.com/content.asp?ContentID=4852>

15. Oksana Nagayets. Small Farms: Current Status and Key Trends, prepared for "the Future of Small Farms Research Workshop," Wye College, June 26–29, 2005. [www.smallholdercoalition.org/files/Small-farms-current-status-and-key-trends.pdf](http://www.smallholdercoalition.org/files/Small-farms-current-status-and-key-trends.pdf)

services allow numerous companies, among them the most polluting and destructive on the planet, to continue contaminating and generating profits from their destruction, while creating the necessary conditions for the gradual expropriation of land and territories under the control of peasants and indigenous people. REDD begins by expropriating the capacity of families, communities and people to freely determine forms of control, holding and protection of their spaces and common goods. Using the pretext of the market, the REDD projects impose contracts or management plans drawn up by outside authorities that reduce sources of food and subsistence for local people. This alters local systems of co-existence and destroys or weakens social organisations, all in exchange for minimal monetary revenues that do not resolve the problem at its source and that actually exacerbate tensions. There are well known examples of communities running into debt, fragmenting or breaking up, which leads to resignation, migration, the division of communal land and the eventual acceptance of long-term renting concessions or the sale of the land to access mortgages. The carrot rarely succeeds in curbing discontent but it does keep it at bay until a point where the affected communities are no longer in a position to react or resist.

### **Free access for some, shackles for the rest**

The logic of scarcity and destruction favours business opportunities, but it provides little help in predicting the future. It makes things more uncertain. What and how much can be destroyed without causing a collapse that will also affect businesses? At what point can corporations be certain that the suffering the climate crisis will undoubtedly bring about will not create levels of social discontent that will alter everything? What will happen if processes of eviction and exclusion provoke social eruption? Economic uncertainty, physical uncertainty, biological uncertainty all add to and exacerbate one another.

*Globally, it is possible that climate change will lead to political unrest and even possibly war. Water will become an even more scarce resource in some parts of the world, while in others, rising sea levels may cause mass migrations leading to international tensions.*

***London Climate Change Partnership: Finance Sub-Group. 2006.<sup>16</sup>***

What can corporations do in the face of this uncertainty? What we are not told, what remains hidden in the background, is that corporations are at present seeking to create a legal duality: complete freedom for capital, but increasingly more restrictions for people. Business, government and financial entities talk to us about freedom, modernisation, discipline, transparency, corporate social responsibility, self-regulation, access to opportunities, the fight against piracy/fraud, encouraging investment and creating a secure environment. But in reality, they negotiate legislation, rules, norms, statutes, criteria and standards that obstruct people, communities, organisations and individuals from exercising their fundamental rights, from maintaining a certain degree of independence from capital, and from pursuing justice. Meanwhile they leave the road wide open to corporations, giving them tremendous margins within which to manoeuvre.<sup>17</sup>

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16. Adapting to climate change: Business as Usual? Report published by the mayor of London  
<http://www.london.gov.uk/lccp/publications/docs/business-as-usual.pdf>

17. To state an example, the World Bank group (which includes the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) is developing a sector of services called “investment climate” which aims at implementing reforms to improve the investment climate globally. They published a handbook titled “How to reform business licenses” which they describe as a resource to implement “guillotine style” reforms of business licenses. Among the types of licenses considered “guillotinables”, are mining permits. <https://www.wbginvestmentclimate.org/advisory-services/>. In a second publication, the same institutions claim that between 2008 et 2011, their programs were the only ones to globally develop 641 reforms eliminating “unnecessary” or “unjustifiable” legal conditions in order to facilitate investment [https://www.wbginvestmentclimate.org/uploads/2011%20FIAS%20AR\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.wbginvestmentclimate.org/uploads/2011%20FIAS%20AR_FINAL.pdf). A few pages later, the World Bank justifies the establishment of new intellectual property laws « to keep farmers from saving seed of the protected variety, sharing the seed with neighbours or engaging in informal sale of the seed. [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTARD/Resources/IPR\\_ESW.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTARD/Resources/IPR_ESW.pdf)

Corporations need an absence of rules so that they can continue to be free to accumulate profits. The absence of rules also minimises the potential costs and risks from climate and environmental crises, particularly the “legal and regulatory risks” and the “litigation risks.” The first refers primarily to new demands on companies to adopt more costly technologies or procedures than they currently use. The second refers to the possibility of having to confront judicial proceedings forcing them to pay millions of dollars or to adopt such technologies.

In the medium and long-term, the absence of rules (or at least the large margin for manoeuvrability afforded by free trade agreements and other international treaties, as well as diverse constitutional and juridical modifications) is possibly more significant since it gives free rein to exploration activities and enables companies to take a stance and to assume ownership of a sector as of yet uncertain and unknown. When the playing field remains ambiguous, which is what big investors require, and what governments are all too quick to grant, it’s a license allowing them to experiment, to speculate here and there, in order to find the specific location of extractible wealth, so that they can later take control if the business works. Big businesses need, at least for the moment an “anything is allowed” approach, a global and laissez-faire policy taken to the extreme; and for that, they rely on the cooperation of most governments and international organisations.

### **The State enters the scene**

Despite efforts to apply such diverse strategies, the future remains filled with uncertainty for corporations. What would be the best way to gain control? What happens if it proves to be too costly? What will happen if they choose the wrong places? If the required investment proves to be too high? If the profits are late in coming? And if the population turns against them and they lose investment?

All of these doubts make it difficult to invest securely. For that reason, private investments into new market mechanisms (for example REDD) are carried out with precaution and often in a marginal way. That’s why private investment companies use other people’s money to experiment.

This is where “Public Private Partnerships” enter the equation. In these schemes, governments run the risks and companies collect the profits. As is common to other processes of wealth concentration, governments will be called to invest as much and as long as is necessary to take the big risks, as long as important processes of research and development are necessary or while the start-up investment costs and needs remain high. Private enterprises will be the ones to carry out the work paid for by state investors and they will cash in at rates they consider acceptable. Hundreds of research projects, infrastructure construction projects, insurance schemes, consumer control systems and other projects have been built up with government money. If a government does not have money, the World Bank and other agencies are available to ensure indebtedness.<sup>18</sup> However, the government’s presence is not a long-term guarantee. As soon as conditions become clearer and more favourable, good business opportunities are transferred over to the private sector. If such opportunities do not turn out to be promising, governments must bear the costs.

*Another constraint is that the expected benefits, even when they are marketable (such as in the case of freshwater provision or waste treatment) can take time to materialize. Together with the high costs, this can put off private investment, meaning that the role of governments and public budgets is critical.*

***TEEB – The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity for National and International Policy Makers 2009.*<sup>19</sup>**

*Access new financing streams: Under international climate change agreements, there will be increased public funding available for adaptation efforts in vulnerable communities in developing countries, and governments will look for corporate partners who can deliver the requisite goods and services. Not only*

18. For an example, see the website of the World Bank. In seeking loans associated with climate change, <http://www.worldbank.org/projects/search?lang=en&searchTerm=climate%20change>, more than 80% of the last 200 loans approved were granted to state entities. For different kinds of funds, see: <http://www.climatefundsupdate.org/global-trends/global-finance-architecture>

19. [http://www.unep.org/pdf/TEEB\\_D1\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.unep.org/pdf/TEEB_D1_Summary.pdf)



*does an effective response to climate change require financing for development of low-carbon technologies, it may also result in research and development funding for products and services that address critical adaptation needs Local and global companies that take early action to develop expertise in climate change adaptation and green economy solutions will have a competitive edge in these contracting opportunities with government partners.*

***Adapting for a Green Economy: Companies, Communities and Climate Change. A Caring for Climate Report<sup>20</sup>***

Pension funds are another source of money coming from outside sources and they serve to make investments in the interests of companies. Financial entities and investment mechanisms extract money from pension funds for investment purposes, with profits assured from administrative costs. If the investments generate profits, the investment companies benefit. If the investments fail, it's the workers that lose. It's a mechanism often used in land grabs and is also considered the most prosperous of investment funds in "green enterprises."<sup>21</sup>

## **Salvaging some hope**

We are facing difficult times. The onslaught of the Green Economy has ceased being merely a theoretical menace and is taking on a tragic tone, particularly for rural communities. We see increasing kinds of pressure, deception, blackmail and intimidation used with the intent of preventing families and communities from informing themselves adequately, from thinking individually or collectively, from making use of collective strategies toward freedom, decision-making and mobilisation; or preventing them from withdrawing from contracts that are harmful and unjust. Faced with these challenges, urgent action is very much needed, but above all we reiterate the need to see beyond the propaganda, the deception and the lies in order to discover ways of reflection and collective decision making that allow for the resistance and disruption of these injustices.

We are facing difficult times. However, we are part of a growing number of people, organisations, communities, and populations who know that an expansion of the market cannot restore what has been exploited and destroyed. We are part of a majority of people who have in their hands the experience and determination to put in place and strengthen real solutions, dignified ways of life that depend neither on consumerism, nor on unrestrained growth, but on local forms of agriculture and food production based on the sovereignty of people and on the permanence of indigenous people and peasants on rural lands. There are numerous organisations and movements that today are developing actions to fulfil these objectives and to make it clear that the mobilisation will not stop before real solutions are implemented.

We are without a doubt facing difficult times, but if, like rural communities, we understand that our work is to take part in a fight without an end date, and to commit to restoring the health of the entire planet, time will be in our favour.

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20. A Caring for Climate report by the United Nations Global Compact, United Nations Environment Programme, Oxfam, and World Resources institute: [www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues\\_doc/Environment/climate/C4C\\_Report\\_Adapting\\_for\\_Green\\_Economy.pdf](http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/Environment/climate/C4C_Report_Adapting_for_Green_Economy.pdf)

21. For an example, see : [http://www.altenergystocks.com/archives/2010/11/alternative\\_energy\\_and\\_climate\\_change\\_mutual\\_funds\\_part\\_ii.html](http://www.altenergystocks.com/archives/2010/11/alternative_energy_and_climate_change_mutual_funds_part_ii.html) y <http://www.iigcc.org/>