



# MIFEE: An agribusiness attack in West Papua

By Chris Lang, 19th May 2012



The MIFEE project, or the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate to give it its full name, is an agricultural mega-project proposed for Papua province in Indonesia. It was dreamed up as a response to the food and fuel price crises of 2008 and to President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's appeal to "feed Indonesia, then feed the world".

Last month a detailed information pack was produced about the MIFEE project, with a website: "[Awes MIFEE: Tracking the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate](#)". The report and the website were produced anonymously, "to provide a tool for action or campaigning around MIFEE (or for that matter, the other topics it encompasses such as food sovereignty, agrofuels, the rights of indigenous communities or the Papuan people's struggle.)"

When it was launched in 2010, the MIFEE project was estimated to cover a total of 1.28 million hectares. The project area is largely forested and would involve the dispossession of thousands of people's ancestral lands. While it would employ hundreds of thousands of workers, many of these would move into the area from elsewhere in Indonesia.

The [MIFEE project](#) is happening in parallel to REDD. While REDD is big news in [Indonesia](#), it seems that there is no REDD mechanism by which REDD proponents can use REDD to prevent the forest destruction caused by MIFEE and similar projects.

The introduction to the information pack explains how the information is structured:

The first part gives some background information about the people and ecology of the Merauke region, as well as the political context of West Papua. This is followed by an in-depth look at the MIFEE project, including a critique of the rationale behind it, a description of how the project has developed and testimony from affected villages throughout the area. In part three, consideration is given to some other important aspects of MIFEE, the impact of a population flow into West Papua and how the food estate model could affect farmers throughout Indonesia. Finally, profiles are given of many of the companies which are thought to be involved in Merauke. The profiles include first attempts at tracing links with these companies' activities globally, in the hope that these companies can also be held to account in other countries for their activities in Merauke.

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"Until now we have always been the outsiders; this is the first time we have been asked to participate at such a high level with the Ministry of Forests... We must remember that the problem of land rights in Indonesia is about corruption and the lack of tenure, and reforms must be about resolving those two things. If we do not, the forests of Indonesia will die."

— Abdon Nababan, head of AMAN, July 2011

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**Chris Lang** (#1) 19 May 2012 at 7:49 pm

“In November 2011, ten national and international civil society organisations, including Down to Earth, highlighted concerns about human rights in Indonesia, in a report about human rights and natural resources management and climate change. The report was submitted under the UN’s Universal Periodic Review – a process which reviews the human rights record of all 192 UN member states once every four years. In June 2012, Indonesia will be among the countries to be reviewed in a meeting of the UPR Working Group.”

More about this on [Down to Earth’s website](#).



**Papua Forest Eye** (#2) 21 May 2012 at 10:15 pm

You can see major deforestation in the Merauke area on this Panoramio site: <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/72425776>

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