The Palawan Oil Palm Geotagged Report 2013

PART II
(Samples of geocoded photos of oil palm locations and impacted areas)

ALDAW (Ancestral Land/Domain Watch)
member of

The ICCA
Consortium
GEO-REFERENCED MISSION’S FINDINGS

In a photographic context, *geotagging* is the process of associating photos with specific geographic locations using GPS coordinates. In this report, geotagging is used as a synonym for *geocoding*. During ALDAW field research, GPS coordinates were obtained through the use of a professional device connected to the camera’s hot shoe. Photos were taken between 2009 and 2012, during field reconnaissance in the Municipalities of Sofronio Español, Quezon, Aborlan and Rizal, Province of Palawan (the Philippines).

The geotagged images have been loaded into a geo-aware application and displayed on satellite Google map. The actual ‘matching’ of GPS data to photographs has revealed that, in specific locations, oil palm plantations are expanding at the expenses of primary and secondary forest and are competing with pre-existing cultivations (coconut groves, fruit tress, wet-rice, etc). The conversion of productive paddy land and forest into oil palm plantations is particularly evident in the Municipality of Quezon. Oil palm plantations have also expanded in areas used by indigenous people for the cultivation of local varieties of upland rice, root crops and fruit trees.

The fencing of large areas of oil palm plantations makes it difficult for local communities to reach their upland fields and forest. Geotagged evidences have also revealed the exact location where commonly used NTFPs, such as *buri* palms (*Corypha elata*) and bamboos, are being destroyed through massive land clearing by oil palm companies. Geocoded photos, such as those included in this report, also provide indications on the location of rivers and freshwater sources that are being incorporated into oil palm plantations and that are likely to become polluted through the use of pesticides and fertilizers. These freshwater sources provide potable water for local communities and some of them are essential for the maintenance of community-based dams.

Only a limited selection of geotagged photographs, taken during the mission, has been included in this report, additional images can be made available upon request. The geocoded photos herein included provide visual evidence on the damage caused by oil palm plantations and also on participatory geographic information systems and technologies used by ALDAW. Individual photos have been inserted in thematic boxes containing basic descriptions and their positions on Google Earth satellite map.
THEMATIC PHOTOS WITH GPS COORDINATES

Evidences of oil palm encroachment on forest

Massive forest clearing in barangay Tagusao (Municipality of Quezon)
Note the road pushing into a forested hill
Despite the moratorium on cutting trees, old trees are being felled with no authorization from DENR, so that the area will become palm oil plantations. Note the standing forest in the background.
Despite the moratorium on cutting trees, old trees are felled with no authorization from DENR, so that the area will be converted in oil palms. Note standing forest in the background.

This picture was taken in August 2009, when the forest behind oil palm plantations in Barangay Tagusao was still standing. In July 2011 part of that forest had already been cleared to allow oil palm expansion.
Meaningless text
Loaded GPS Data and Photos: DSCN3225

Latitude: +8.8887813 N
Longitude: +117.84322905 E
Altitude: 82
City: Brook's Point
Province/State: Province of Palawan
Country: Philippines
Description:
Comments: Oil palm plantations taking over forest in Barangay interior.
Evidences of massive land clearings
Several years already passed since Agural Philippines Inc. (API) started acquiring large chunks of land to plant oil palms.
Evidences of clean freshwater sources being found within oil palm plantations
Agumil Philippines Inc. (API) continues to acquire large chunks of land to plant new oil palm trees. Included into the plantations’ area are fresh water sources providing potable water to local communities.

Small water sources will be increasingly affected by chemicals used in oil palm plantations.
Evidences of oil palm encroachment on agricultural land
Oil palm expansion near Karamanag. Note coconut plantations in the background.

Palm oil plantations encroaching on cultivated land. See mango trees and coconuts in the background.
Old coconut groves sustaining local self-sufficiency are being destroyed by Cavite to give space to oil palm plantations.

Clear evidence of old coconut plantations being destroyed to pave the way for oil palms.
Evidence of oil palm plantations competing with rice cultivation in Quezon Municipality.
Evidences of oil palm plantations limiting freedom of movement
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Geotagged Photos Copyrights

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