

## India: Conquering Gridlock?

In one of the world's most polluted cities, long-time advocates for air pollution control are now pressuring the government to introduce measures that would also decrease global warming. The New Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) says that the recent rise of individual car ownership in India needs to be controlled, and quickly.

India, the world's second-most populous nation, currently produces six percent of the world's greenhouse gases. And Indian CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are projected to increase 102.4 percent between 2001 and 2025, according to the Government Accounting Office. Only China will experience a larger rise.

Under the leadership of Sunita Narain, CSE is pressuring the government to improve public transportation, so



*Tree planting is an important step in mitigating global warming in Indonesia (pictured), the Philippines and many other nations.*

people will actually use it. Of the 35 cities in India with more than a million residents, only eight have viable bus services, and the road tax for buses in Delhi is approximately twice that of cars. Buses carry up to 61 percent of metropolitan traffic, but are only three percent of the highway vehicle mix.

CSE is also pressuring the government to introduce fuel-efficiency standards and research new vehicle technology. USAID is working in India to develop the country's first zero emission battery-powered electric car, the Reva, which is being test marketed in several other countries, including Japan and China. What is needed in India, CSE claims, is nothing less than to "reinvent the idea of mobility." CONTACT: Centre for Science and Environment, (011)91-11-29955124, [www.cseindia.org](http://www.cseindia.org). —*Brianne Goodspeed*

## The Philippines: Reforesting and Reforming

It is the practice of Filipino families to spend time in resorts and bathing in rivers and waterfalls during summer to temporarily escape the cruel heat. That practice has taken on a new urgency as global warming is turning the Philippines into one of the world's hot spots.

According to USAID, land-use changes brought on by overpopulation are responsible for a major increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The country's inefficient electrical generation and energy sector contribute 50 percent of those emissions, and deforestation is also a serious problem. Manila, with a population of 12 million, is one of the world's most polluted cities, with particulate levels four times above national standards.

But solutions are in sight. In the Philippines, a recent global warming educational effort by the media is bringing cooperation among the people, the government and the private sector. The campaign has encouraged some big companies to get involved in projects such as recycling of solid waste to save energy. Glass, paper, plastics and aluminum cans are now being recycled, as are car batteries, broken electronics and appliances. Also recaptured are used motor oil, ink and toner cartridges and tires. Metro Manila generates nearly 7,000 tons of solid waste a day. About 13 percent is captured now, but experts hope that will improve.

Aid programs have helped the Philippines government place some 1.4 million acres of forest land under protection. The Save the La Mesa Watershed project is spearheaded by the Bantay Kalikasan (Environment Watch), which gathered five million signatures to help pass the Philippines Clean Air Act in 1999. The 6,600-acre La Mesa Forest, next to the Sierra Madre ranges in Luzon, provides many benefits, and acts as the largest CO<sub>2</sub> sink in the national capital region.

Eight years ago, La Mesa Watershed was badly denuded by rampant burning of trees so that the area could be turned into illegal vegetable gardens. But the watershed has been reforested an average of 617 acres every year. The planting involves only indigenous trees such as Narra, Kamagong and Molave. Now there are about 40 different endemic species planted in the watershed. CONTACT: Bantay Kalikasan, (011)415-2227-410-9670, [www.abs-cbnfoundation.com/kalikasan/baterya.htm](http://www.abs-cbnfoundation.com/kalikasan/baterya.htm). —*Angelo Palmones*

## AFRICA



### Nigeria: An End to Gas Flaring

Gas flaring, or the burning off of natural gas by-products into the atmosphere, has been going on in the oil-rich Niger Delta of Nigeria for more than 40 years. Oil companies like Mobil, Shell, Chevron, Total and Agip have all made profits from the oil resource in Nigeria, while the local communities have been left to face the pollution and the greenhouse gas emissions. According to Climate Justice, "The flares contain a cocktail of toxins that affect the health and livelihood of local communities, exposing Niger Delta residents to an increased risk of premature deaths, childhood respiratory illnesses, asthma and cancer." The group also reports that flaring has been technically illegal in Nigeria since 1984.

Flaring in Nigeria releases more CO<sub>2</sub> than the combined total of all other climate-related emissions in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Nigeria, more gas is flared than anywhere else in the world—20 percent of global totals.

Due to increasing pressure from local and international