SOCIAL & POLITICAL RISKS OF ROADS

1. Environmental impact assessments (EIAs) for road projects are often inadequate

- Ineffective EIAs risk environmental damage, social protests, and potential legal action
- Road projects that span multiple political boundaries may require several EIAs
- Many EIAs focus only on direct, localized effects of projects while ignoring their indirect or cumulative effects
- Local EIAs are usually inadequate for rare or wide-ranging wildlife species
- Many road EIAs place the burden of proof on road opponents, who are limited by inadequate information on rare species and ecosystem services
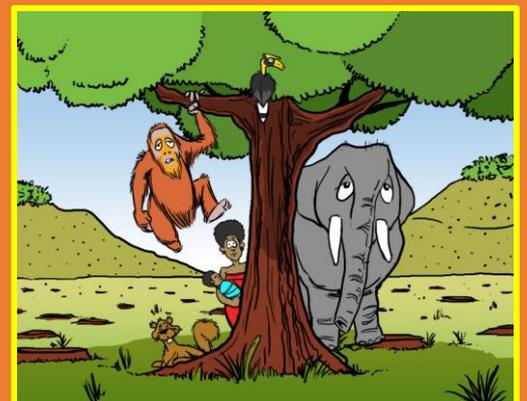- Poor EIAs increase financial risks for road proponents and funders

2. Roads bring serious social risks

- Roads in forested areas often increase illegal logging, mining, poaching, smuggling, and drug production
- Illegal practices associated with roads can rob governments of direly needed revenues and increase policing costs
- Roads can cause social unrest by promoting rapid immigration of outsiders, the forced relocation of local residents, and high expectations of financial rewards by residents
- An influx of migrant workers for road construction can increase prostitution, disease risk, and black-market trade
- People living near roads have higher risks of communicable diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, and HIV/AIDS
- Road accidents claim many lives and 1-3% of the Gross Domestic Project of nations
- Roads increase invasions of exotic species; the venomous Fire Ant moves 60 times faster along roads than through intact forests

3. Roads can imperil Indigenous groups

- Diseases carried along roads can greatly threaten isolated indigenous peoples
- Roads in tribal areas can encourage outside colonists who illegally invade land, bringing diseases, alcohol abuse, prostitution, and social conflict
- Rapid social changes brought by new roads threaten many traditional cultures
- Intense poaching along roads means traditional hunters may need to roam further to find prey and use modern weapons such as rifles and wire snares
- By introducing a cash economy, roads can force indigenous tribe members to become commercial poachers

THE GREATEST SOCIAL AND POLITICAL RISKS COME FROM BUILDING ROADS INTO REMOTE INDIGENOUS LANDS