

***The Voice of the NGO Community in the
International Environmental Conventions***

VOLUME 16, ISSUE 1

JULY 2, 2007

AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET AT WWW.CBDALLIANCE.ORG AND WWW.UKABC.ORG

Indigenous Peoples Call for Ban on Agrofuel Exports

the Indigenous Peoples caucus

Indigenous Peoples are profoundly concerned not only about climate change but also about false solutions to climate change imposed by governments and industry. In the name of developing alternative energy, large-scale monoculture agrofuel production is being aggressively promoted to satisfy the demand in rich Northern countries that refuse to change their patterns of overconsumption and reduce GHG emissions at source.

Indigenous Peoples call for an immediate ban on agrofuel exports because large scale monoculture plantations have systematically violated Indigenous Peoples' rights, expropriated our ancestral lands and territories, increased poverty, destroyed biodiversity and cultural diversity, exploited our peoples as cheap labour, poisoned our land with agrottoxics, damaged our health, exacerbated racism, and diverted land previously used for food production. Furthermore, according to carbon and energy balance studies, large-scale agrofuel production does not reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

[image deleted for copyright reasons]

Delegates –

It is time to assert our Convention within the climate monolith!

Today's ECO:

- 1. IPOs say no to agrofuel exports***
- 2. Geoengineering: technofix again!***
- 3. 20 years of agrofuels in Brazil***
- 4. Agrofuels by numbers***

ECO thanks SwedBio for their on-going support!

ECO has been published by the NGO (non-governmental organisation) community at most Conferences of Parties to International Environmental Conventions. It is currently being published at the 12th Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Paris, France coordinated by the CBD Alliance. The opinions, commentaries, and articles printed in ECO are the sole opinion of the individual authors or organisations, unless otherwise expressed. **SUBMISSIONS:** Welcome from all civil society groups. Please give to Jessica Dempsey or Swati Shresth at morning civil society meetings or at jdempsey@interchange.ubc.ca.

'Geoengineering': A Climate 'Sell-ution'

Iron Dumping Scheme Targets Ocean Near Galapagos

etc.

'Geo-engineering' refers to the intentional, large-scale manipulation of the environment by humans to bring about environmental change, particularly to counteract the undesired side-effects of other human activities (like climate change).

It sounds like science fiction – but it's not. In August 2006 Nobel-prize winning scientist, Paul Crutzen, called for active research into the use of "sub-micrometer"-sized sulfate-based aerosols to reflect sunlight in the stratosphere in order to cool the earth. Others have proposed sucking excess carbon dioxide out into space. In April 2007 billionaire Richard Branson refueled interest in geo-engineering with the announcement of a \$25 million prize to find a viable technology to remove greenhouse gases. At least 9 national governments and the EU have supported experiments to spread iron particles on the ocean surface to nurture plankton and sequester carbon dioxide.

Geo-engineering for Profit: Claiming to protect the planet from greenhouse gases, geo-engineer, Planktos Inc., a for-profit geoengineering company with offices in the U.S. and Canada, is poised to dump 100 tons of iron particles in the Pacific ocean west of the Galapagos islands – an act that many believe will violate national and international ocean protection laws, and potentially cause serious damage to the ocean ecosystem.

Planktos, Inc. is in the business of selling carbon credits to individuals (and companies) who want to "offset" their personal climate change impact. The company claims that iron particles dumped in the ocean will stimulate growth of phytoplankton and draw carbon dioxide (a climate changing gas) out of the atmosphere, a scheme that will allow the company to make money from carbon trading.

Last month, the scientific working group of the International Maritime Organization's London Convention, which regulates dumping at sea, warned in a consensus "statement of concern" that iron fertilization of ocean surfaces – as an attempt at commercial carbon sequestration – has environmental risks and lacks scientific evidence of effectiveness.

Galapagos National Park authorities also express concerns about the proposed dump by Planktos, asserting that it is "scientifically dubious, environmentally dangerous and capable of altering marine food chains." According to Pablo Barriga, Project Coordinator of FUNDAR Galapagos, a non-profit organization that supports sustainable development and conservation of the islands, "It is imperative that the impacts and legitimacy of Planktos' experiment are carefully

Claiming to protect the planet from greenhouse gases, Planktos' ship is poised to dump 100 tons of iron particles in the ocean near the Galapagos Islands.



scrutinized by intergovernmental bodies. For us it is clearly immoral for a company in pursuit of profits to conduct this kind of experiment so close to a World Heritage site. This is absolutely unacceptable," said Barriga.

The U.S. government advises that the iron fertilization projects proposed by Planktos,

Inc. "should be evaluated carefully by any state that has appropriate jurisdiction over this activity." According to a submission by the U.S. government to the London Convention, Planktos has not received any authorizing permits from the applicable U.S. authorities nor undertaken any environmental impact assessment. On 23 May Planktos informed the U.S. government's Environmental Protection Agency that, "the company will use a non-United States flagged vessel for releasing the iron so as not to be subject to regulation under the United States' Ocean Dumping Act."

It is rank hypocrisy that Planktos, which claims to be a 'green' company, is now planning to 'outsource' their dumping to a foreign ship in order to evade U.S. environmental oversight. Clearly the only 'green' that Planktos cares about is the money they hope to make by selling carbon credits.

Planktos is not the only company hoping to profit from commercial-scale iron dumping. GreenSea Ventures, Inc. conducted two early experiments on ocean fertilization in the Gulf of Mexico in 1998. Michael Markels, a board member of GreenSea Ventures, holds at least 5 patents and patent applications related to iron fertilization of the ocean for sequestering CO₂. A new company, San Francisco-based Climos, will also reportedly work on ocean fertilization for controlling atmospheric carbon.

The overwhelming scientific conclusion based upon numerous governmental and intergovernmental experiments is that iron seeding is risky, and may only temporarily sequester carbon dioxide.

Under its proposal to intergrade biodiversity and climate change activities, (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/7), civil society organizations are calling on SBSTTA 12 to recommend:

ii) Identify climate change adaptation and mitigation options, including an urgent review of geoengineering activities that pose potential threats to biodiversity, and to recommend a moratorium on commercial ocean fertilization activities until the impacts are fully assessed.

Side-event on Geoengineering and Planktos' Ocean Dumping Scheme
Monday, 2 July, 13:15
Room: SALLE VI (SS foyer)

Agrofuels – what are they good for?

Lessons learned from Brazil

mateus trevisan, Movimento Sim Terra (MST), Brazil

Agrofuels and climate change are two closely interrelated themes in the current debate on environment and development in Brazil. Brazil has a history of agrofuel production, esp. soy and sugar cane (ethanol) with production systems that are characterized by:

- large monoculture plantations.
- concentration of land/property, means of production and wealth.
- intensive mechanization and low rates of employment creation.
- The intensive use of oil derivatives like fertilizers
- The increasing use of agrotocics, especially in the cultivation of GM crops.

This agricultural system was implemented in the past 30 years as a result of the so-called green revolution and it has had serious impacts on the people and the environment.

At this moment a vast part of Brazil is already covered with the three main monocultures used for agrofuel and agro-energy production: 22.2 million hectares of soy, 6.2 million hectares of sugar cane, and 3 million hectares of eucalyptus. This equals 314,000 square kilometers of land, an area more than the combined area of the Benelux and UK. The current rapid expansion of monocultures has encouraged illegal logging and land conversion with new sugar, soy or eucalypt plantations colonizing lands that were used for agriculture and other subsistence activities. Of the 204 million hectares of original Brazilian *cerrado* land, 57% has already been totally destroyed and half of what is left is strongly altered. In the past 5 years, 107,000 square kilometers of the Amazon forests were converted into agricultural pastures and soy monocultures.

This expansion of monocultures has led to the expulsion of small farmers from their lands, often in a violent manner. From 1960 to 2005, 60% of the rural population has had to migrate to the cities. In 2006 alone, 10 million persons were involved in land conflicts involving a total of 25 million hectares of land, and from 1996 to 2006 there were 386 assassinations of farmers' and workers' leaders in Brazil alone. There is an increased concentration of lands in the hands of large landholders: 1% of the

landowners own 46% of agricultural lands. Meanwhile, large plantations only provide 2.5% of agricultural employment in Brazil, medium farms 10.2%, while small farms provide 87.3% of all agricultural jobs. *The most important crops for agrofuel production result in miniscule employment.* In 2000, eucalypt only provided one job per 100 hectares of cultivated land, soy provides an average direct employment of 2 jobs per 100 hectares of land, and sugar cane only 10 jobs per 100 hectares of land. Meanwhile, manioc, a very important food crop, provides 38 jobs, coffee provides 49 jobs and tomato production provides up to 245 jobs per 100 hectares of land. Moreover, the employment provided by some of these monocultures has been decreasing instead of increasing. The soy sector offers a clear example of this trend:

Year	Production of soy (in tonnes)	Jobs (thousand)
1985	18,278	1694
1996	23,190	741
2004	49,792	335

The sugar cane industry, which is the main industry targeted for expansion by the agrofuel sector, is also known for its degrading labour conditions. In the Ribeirao Preto region, in the interior of Sao Paulo, the average production per worker is 12 tons per day, which is double the average production that was reported in 1980. Cutters receive only 1 Euro per ton sugar cane cut, leading to people literally working themselves to death: In 5 years, 1383 workers died in sugar cane plants and plantations. *(continued next page)*

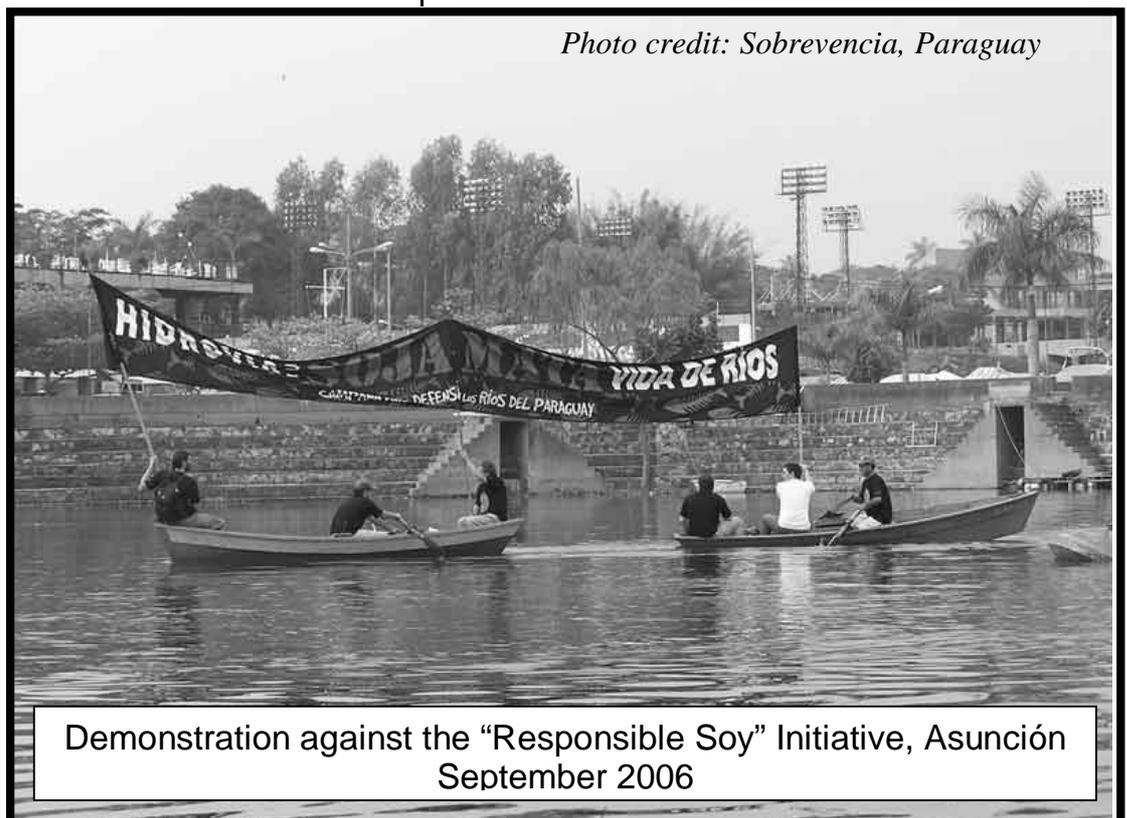


Photo credit: Sobrevencia, Paraguay

**Demonstration against the “Responsible Soy” Initiative, Asunción
September 2006**

Agrofuels by Numbers

- (1) Factor increase of venture capital investment in agrofuels between 2004 – 2007: 8 fold.
- (2) EU target for agrofuels by 2020: 10 percent of all transport fuel.
- (3) Amount of Europe that would need to be farmed in order to meet that target: 70 %
- (4) Carbon emission standard the European Commission intended to tell car companies in February 2007: 120 grams of carbon/ per kilometer by 2012.
- (5) Carbon emission standard the European Commission decided upon after heavy lobbying by car manufacturers: 130 grams of carbon/ km. (It also announced it would make up the shortfall through agrofuels!)
- (6) *Total* amount of agrofuels to be produced over the next 23 years worldwide (estimated by the International Energy Agency): 147 million tons.
- (7) *Yearly* increase in oil demand, worldwide: 136 million tons.
- (8) Amount of jobs created by farming manioc, coffee, and tomatos (respectively): 38, 49, and 245 per 100 hectares.
- (9) Amount of jobs created by a sugarcane plantation: 10 per 100 hectares.
- (10) Amount of jobs created by a eucalyptus and soy plantation (respectively): 1 and 2.
- (11) US target for biofuels by 2017: 24% of nation's transport fuel.
- (12) Amount of agrofuel subsidies in the US as estimated by Global Subsidies Initiative: between US\$5.5 billion dollars to US\$ 7.3 billion dollars.
- (13) Potential acreage of Brazil that could be 'efficiently' put under agrofuel production, according to a consultant for the Inter-American Development Bank: 120 million hectares!
- (14) Amount of water (in litres) it takes to produce a litre of sugar-cane ethanol in India: 3,500.
- (15) Year by which UNEP and UNESCO suggest 98% of Indonesia's rainforest will be degraded or gone by: 2022.

(1-3 cited by Eric Holt-Gemenez, *The Great Biofuel Hoax*, printed in *Alternet* www.alternet.org/story/54218); 4-5 cited by George Monboit, *A lethal solution*, *Guardian* 27 March 2007, but see also *Commission Of The European Communities*, 7th February 2007. *Results of the review of the Community Strategy to reduce CO2 emissions from passenger cars and light-commercial vehicles. COM 19 final.* http://ec.europa.eu/environment/co2/pdf/com_2007_19_en.pdf; 6-7 cited by Holt-Gemenez – see above; 8 cited by Trevisan, *this issue of ECO*; 9-10 cited by *Grain, Special Issue on Agrofuels*. July 2007; 11 cited by Monboit – see above; 12 cited by *Grain*, but see also Doug Koplow, 'Biofuels: at what cost? *Global Subsidies Initiative* tinyurl.com/2s5mpw; 13 cited in *Grain*, but see also Garten Rothkopf, 'A Blueprint for Green Energy in the Americas', report prepared for the Inter-American Development Bank, 14 cited in *Grain*, but see also report by the International Water Management Institute, 'Biofuels: implications for agricultural water use'; 15 cited in *Monboit*, but see also *UNEP and UNESCO ebruary 2007. The Last Stand of the Orangutan. State of Emergency: Illegal Logging, Fire and Palm Oil in Indonesia's National Parks.* http://www.unep-wcmc.org/resources/PDFs/LastStand/full_orangutanreport.pdf

**civil society meetings
every morning 9-10
see daily schedule for room**

(Brazil experience continued from pg. 3)

The expansion of monocultures has increased large scale rural unemployment, which also contributes to increased rural and urban poverty as small farmers alienated from their lands seek livelihood in cities. The migration of small farmers is a critical threat to food sovereignty, as family farms are responsible for 60% of the food production in the country.

Another major problem associated with the expansion of agrofuel monocultures is the increased use of agrochemicals. This is affecting the health of workers and local residents, particularly when aerial fumigation was used. Brazil is amongst the main consumers of agrochemicals in the world. Of the 150,000 tonnes of pesticides that is being consumed annually in Brazil, sugar cane cultivation is responsible for the use of 20,000 tonnes. Monocultures often monopolize freshwater resources in the region. For instance, to produce 18 million tons of soy in

Brazil, 45 cubic meters of freshwater is required. In comparison: the total worldwide domestic consumption of water is estimated at 65 cubic meters.

It is ironic and that this kind of adverse human and environmental impact is caused by a sector that is touted by industrial interests as a *solution* to climate change. In reality it has proven to be a major source of carbon emissions contributing to direct and indirect deforestation and other forms biodiversity destruction. Deforestation alone is known to be responsible for around 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, many cultivations require tremendous amount of fossil fuels: It is estimated that 4.4 barrels of oil are needed to produce one hectare of soy, which means that the Brazilian soy sector alone is consuming $4.4 * 22 = 96.8$ million barrels of oil per year ! If this is a solution to climate change, we invite you to take cyanide the next time you have the flu...