

Statement from Indigenous Forum

Below is the response of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity regarding last week's WGPA meeting. It calls on Parties to the CBD to foster the fullest participation of Indigenous peoples, local communities, and civil society in CBD processes at the international, national and local levels.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

[Last week], the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) withdrew from the Working Group on Protected Areas because indigenous peoples were not given the floor on matters of concern to them in a timely manner. This led to missed opportunities for indigenous peoples' comments and proposed text to be appropriately discussed and reflected in the conference room papers (CRPs).

In light of the seriousness of this issue to us, and after evaluating our participation in the CBD process as a whole, and the impacts of its decisions to our lives, the IIFB ... decided to maintain this withdrawal for the duration of the Working Group meeting.

We deeply appreciate the meeting between the IIFB representatives and the Bureau to address our

concerns, which subsequently resulted in the Chairman's announcement to allow indigenous and local communities and civil society to intervene in a timely manner on issues that relate to us. However, our right to full and effective participation remained unfulfilled. The IIFB therefore reaffirmed the decision to maintain the withdrawal and decided to continue to use the remaining time to discuss possible ways forward towards achieving full and effective participation in all future meetings of the CBD.

We appreciate the support of the Parties who have worked so hard with us and have understood and respected our decisions. We recognize that this is a process of understanding and mutual respect and trust.

We affirm that the CBD belongs to all of us – the Parties and the broader society, as set out in the CBD Strategic Plan. Therefore, our involvement and full and effective participation in this process is vital. The IIFB remains committed to the implementation of the CBD and we will continue to devote our efforts towards the protection of peoples and the planet.

Since the preamble of the CBD also recognizes the close relationship between biodiversity and indigenous peoples, we ask Parties and governments to take our views and concerns seriously, especially on this critical issue of protected areas.

We call on all Parties to work harder to foster the fullest participation possible for indigenous and local communities, and civil society, at all levels of the CBD implementation. This is our common responsibility.

Today's ECO

1. **IIFB speaks**
2. **Ocean Nourishment**
3. **GURTs**
4. **SBSTTA notes**

**ECO and the CBD Alliance thank
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****!!ATTENTION!!****

Agricultural Biodiversity CRP

Read between the lines!

Censortariat dumps text without debate.

Compare SBSTTA13/2 and CRP 1.

Ocean Nourishment: Sacrificing the Marine Environment for Profits

- Southeast Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment -

Global warming is undoubtedly the defining environmental problem today and in the near future. The unfolding catastrophes and dangers associated with global warming has made efforts at finding solutions and mitigating the problem a primary priority. However, there are solutions that help to fix the problem and there are purported ones that only make the situation worse. Ocean nourishment belongs to the latter category.

Late last year, the Sulu Sea in the Philippines became the subject of global attention when it was learned that an Australian company, the Ocean Nourishment Corporation (ONC), was preparing to dump hundreds of tons of urea fertilizers in those waters as part of its patented carbon sequestration technology called ocean nourishment. Ocean nourishment involves the release of urea or nitrogen fertilizers into seawaters to induce massive growths of phytoplanktons that could absorb atmospheric carbon dioxide before trapping them into deep ocean. This carbon sequestration technology supposedly would lessen carbon dioxide presence in the atmosphere and therefore help reduce global warming.

Ocean nourishment has been roundly criticized by scientists and environmentalists as an unproven and environmentally hazardous technology. It has not been shown that carbon can be sequestered effectively and permanently in this manner. On the contrary, there is scientific concern that the opposite may happen, that the massive concentrations of phytoplankton will increase carbon dioxide in the

atmosphere as a result of increased numbers of carbon-respiring plankton predators. Moreover, large phytoplankton concentrations will likely cause major ecological imbalances such as harmful algal blooms that are destructive to marine life and fisheries. Not only will marine biodiversity be adversely affected by fertilization but local economies dependent on fisheries would suffer tremendously. The Sulu Sea is an especially vulnerable area since it consists of major fishing grounds, is host to one of the richest marine biodiversity on earth and is where the UNESCO world heritage site, the Tubbataha Reef, is located.

If not for the ruckus raised by Philippine environmentalists and civil society organizations, ONC's Sulu Sea fertilization plan would have been allowed by government to be carried out despite the absence of environmental impact assessment and public consultations. In fact, there was already initial government approval for the project but protests forced government to step back. Since then, scientists, local and national government officials, and communities have all expressed opposition to ocean nourishment and questioned ONC's work in the Philippines. Ocean nourishment has been put on hold in the Philippines.

What has become clear though is that ocean nourishment is no solution to global warming but is really another attempt to exploit the global warming problem by getting into the lucrative carbon trading market. ONC has made no secret of its plan to sell its technology on the carbon market. Such barefaced attempts to sacrifice the environment

for profits in the name of mitigating global warming must be opposed and denounced. It is not only the Sulu Sea that's being threatened but there are also other ocean fertilization activities and plans in other parts of the world's seas.

The London Convention on Marine Dumping has expressed grave concern over the ecological risk of ocean fertilization and sounded the need for oversight on these technologies due to their large-scale impacts on the environment. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has noted that "ocean fertilization remains largely speculative, and many environmental side effects have yet to be assessed". We believe the 13th SBSTTA, which has mandate on marine biodiversity issues, is in a position to lend its voice to growing global concerns about the impact of ocean nourishment to marine biodiversity. We therefore call on the SBSTTA to make recommendations for the COP to adopt precautionary approach measures on ocean nourishment initiatives, limiting any experiments on this technology to laboratory conditions whilst scientific issues are debated and resolved. Moreover, SBSTTA can make similar recommendation towards international oversight mechanisms to regulate such technologies including other so-called geo-engineering initiatives whether they take place in national and international territories due to their possible wider and long-term global impact. We hope and believe that the 13th SBSTTA can contribute towards this goal of protecting the world's biodiversity.

Civil Society Meetings – Daily – 9.00 hrs – Red Room (level 1 by documents desk)

For more information on the CBD Alliance, see www.cbdalliance.org.

Farmers and Communities Speak on Gurts

Community Biodiversity Development Conservation Network

For millennia, farmers and communities have conserved, utilized and developed agricultural biodiversity to secure the food needs of local communities and the world. The central role of farmers in agro-biodiversity conservation and sustainable use is based on their customary rights to save, share, exchange and improve genetic resources. As CBDC Network, farmers and communities in Asia, Africa and Latin America are operationalizing Farmers' Rights through initiatives in conserving crops and varieties, local seed production and marketing, community seed exchanges, farmers' plant breeding, among others. These efforts are contributing not only to genetic and biological diversity but to enhancing economic security in agriculture.

Consider the following statistics: In An Giang, a province in Vietnam, farmers' seeds production involving about 100 farmers' seed clubs was valued by the province's Department of Agriculture and Rural Development at US\$1.4M in 2006 alone. In the Mekong Delta, a local academic research institution estimated the "social profit" contributed by CBDC-BUCAP farmers in the local seeds systems at US\$2.6M. The contribution of farmers' seeds systems in Vietnam is such that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) is in the process of developing a national policy to support on-farm conservation and sustainable use done by farmers.

From 1993 – 2005 (15 years) Lao's National Agriculture Research Centre released 17 glutinous rice varieties nationally. In contrast, farmers of CBDC-BUCAP Network in Lao PDR produced from 2000 to 2006 (6 years) in only five provinces, 86 farmer varieties through participatory plant breeding and

selection. From 1994 – 2004 (10 years), the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRICE) released 55 inbred lines nationally. In contrast, from 1998 – 2006 (8 years) farmers in one province alone produced 161 farmer varieties/populations from their own crosses utilizing traditional varieties.

However, these efforts, along with many other initiatives strengthening local agro-biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, are seriously threatened by GURTS or Terminator Technologies, which are designed to produce only sterile seeds. With Terminator Technology, farmers are unable to save, re-use and improve seeds, a traditional practice among farmers responsible for the great diversity of crops and varieties that feed humanity.

The loss of this traditional practice would lead to genetic erosion, undermine the resilience of farming communities, and lessen the ability of agro-biodiversity to adapt to adverse environmental and climatic changes as caused by global warming. More than 1.3 billion rural

people who rely on farm-saved seeds face grim prospects of loss of livelihood and increased poverty. The actual economic contributions of farmers' seed systems to local and national economies as cited above will be effectively lost as a result. Global food security would be endangered.

We therefore view with great concern the continuing development of GURTS or Terminator Technology by seed companies and the reported ongoing lobby by industry for the lifting of the *de facto* moratorium on GURTS earlier adopted by COP. We stand by the decision during the Eighth Conference of the Parties of the CBD that reaffirmed the *de facto* moratorium on further research and development of GURTS. We find the 13th SBSTTA an opportunity to reiterate our opposition to GURTS, in consonance with the voices of CSOs, farmers' and indigenous people's groups, and to call on Parties to remain firm behind the GURTS moratorium of the COP-CBD and for them to resist any efforts by lobby groups to overturn said moratorium.



NOTES from SBSTTA

Agricultural Biodiversity for Food Sovereignty

Guy Kastler from Via Campesina, Bouréima Dodo from ROPPA, Chau Duong from VietNam and more addressed nearly 40 people in a lively side event on Tuesday lunchtime on Agricultural Biodiversity for Food Sovereignty. They called for a paradigm change in agriculture and livestock raising to diverse, agroecological systems that are managed by small-scale producers, which can adapt to changes in climate. They also demanded public research that would meet future needs, especially at this time of global warming, rather than research for paradigm maintenance. They called on the CBD to promote agroecology in their Decision on agricultural biodiversity, to recognize their rights and to include them in decision making and actions.

For Via Campesina's statement, presentations, photos and a brief report:
see www.ukabc.org/sbstta13.htm

Nice work Liberia!

It was encouraging to hear many of the Africa Group, led by Liberia, come out so clearly with a call to apply the precautionary principle to GE trees and suspend their release globally until sufficient research is made available to show that they will not cause harm. They also noted that there is no

traditional knowledge to help address the issues raised by genetically engineered trees, including health impacts.

The representative of Burkina Faso also noted the scientific uncertainties around genetically engineered trees and the socio-economic, cultural and environmental impacts and also raised the vital issues of human and animal health. Burkina Faso, he noted, are highly dependent on forest products and are worried about pollution arising from any release of genetically engineered trees.

However, other countries spoke of using the case-by-case approach to genetically engineered trees, interpreted by many NGOs as being completely contrary to the spirit of the decision at COP8 in Curitiba.

Biofuel discussion

When it came to biofuels, Qatar expressed concern, saying that problems would emerge if biofuels were advanced on an industrial scale, using a commercial approach.

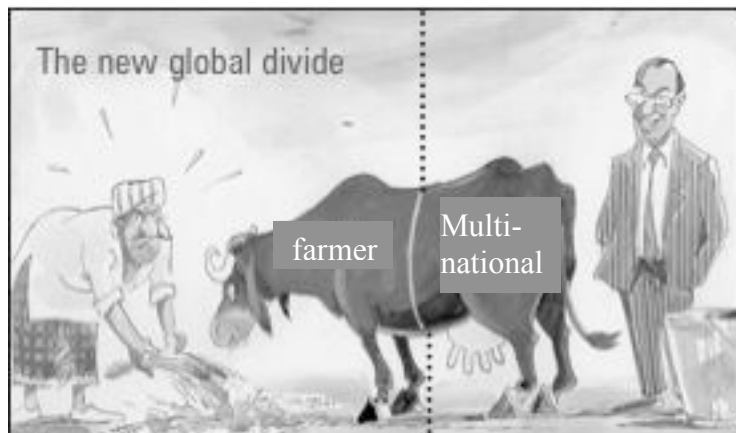
However, and quite shockingly, there were few other strong expressions of concern. This is in marked contrast to civil society's response around the world and the increasing scepticism expressed by scientists about the role biofuels can play for climate change mitigation. Indeed recent reports have indicated that biofuels may actually worsen the global warming they are

meant to reduce! This was strongly reinforced by a report in Science Daily on February 7th, which demonstrated that natural environments (including rainforests, peatlands, savannas, or grasslands) cleared for biofuels can release between 17 to 420 times *more* carbon than any saving from replacing fossil fuels.

Even worse, a number of governments at SBSTTA 13 are calling for the whole issue to be delayed until COP10 or beyond, on the pretext that more research and reports are needed. New and emerging issue this would no longer be!

Many representatives of civil society would say: we have more than enough research results already and it's clearly time to act. Especially since other reports show that biofuels also fulfil many of the criteria for invasive species (see Global Invasive Species Program dossier out on this), while genetic engineering is being widely used to develop them, including in the search for cheap ways to break down cellulose and turn it into so-called second-generation biofuels.

Many civil society representatives are wondering exactly how much research and science will be needed to convince Parties that they must take strong action on biofuels in order to fulfil the CBD mandate.



Source: Punjab Lok Sujag (2003): *The political economy of milk in Punjab, Pakistan. A people's perspective*