
Bursts of true life into the Convention on Biological Diversity

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is an international governmental process which looked pretty nice when it was born in 1992, under the UN Earth Summit that took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

By then it seemed that the world's governments had become aware of the Earth's looming future in case biodiversity loss under deforestation, biopiracy, agribusiness expansion, and so on, remained unchanged. So a mechanism --the CBD-- was put in motion, gathering every two years in high-level summits paralleled by civil society organization's events.

The CBD managed to resist corporate contamination a bit more than other fora (e.g. the Convention on Climate Change). However, little by little it has been increasingly hijacked by the industry's agenda until it has become a string of protracted sessions where documents full of brackets are delayed waiting for lobbies clinching their deals on issues that have direct impacts on peoples' present and future lives.

Over and over again social organizations have tried to make a breach in the wall participating in the spaces granted to them within the process. However, real effects at policy and implementation level have been few.

As a result, they have tried to make their way and insufflate true people's problems, worries, dreams --true people's lives-- into the CBD. And they have done so through imagination, participation, humour and

--why not?,- even anger.

Here follows a brief overview of some of the actions carried out at the current 9th Conference of the Parties (COP9) to the CBD, taking place in Bonn.

Sunday May 18

"Agrofuels create poverty and hunger"

Around 60 people protested against the large scale cultivation of crops for energy --which is disastrous for food supply and causes deforestation-- as a way of dealing with global warming. So far, the honest conclusion that a radical reduction of energy use is needed mainly in 'the West' is ignored by the mainstream media and policy makers.

At two petrol stations car drivers had to make a choice: 'petrol' to the right, 'food' to the left. Banners were stating "agrofuels, no solution for oil addiction."

Most drivers had some sympathy for the action but wanted to fill up petrol anyway this time.

The worker in the Shell station was furious about the counter information in front of her petrol station and called the police. After some discussions the action was allowed, although drivers had to be given more possibilities to go around the 'gate of choice'.

After two hours the group started to move again for a short demonstration ending on a field with a picnic with healthy and local food, as it is still possible. Amongst the activists were many people from Via Campesina, the international network of small farmers. For them and the millions they represent, the large scale introduction of agrofuels is a direct danger for their livelihoods and life.