
[Message from Bratislava to Kyoto on tree plantations](#)

The fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity took place in Bratislava from 4-15 May. Among its many decisions, we wish to highlight one related to forest biological diversity which "Notes the potential impact of afforestation, reforestation, forest degradation and deforestation on forest biological diversity and on other ecosystems, and, accordingly, requests the Executive Secretary to liaise and cooperate with the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change . to achieve the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity."

What is the coded message behind such apparently obscure phrasing? The Climate Change Convention process is actively promoting tree plantations as one of the major mechanisms to act as carbon sinks to counteract fossil fuel emissions. Article 2 of the Kyoto Protocol states that:

"1. Each Party included in Annex I [those responsible for major fossil fuel emissions], in achieving its quantified emission limitation and reduction commitments under Article 3, in order to promote sustainable development, shall:

(a) Implement and/or further elaborate policies and measures in accordance with its national circumstances, such as:

(ii) Protection and enhancement of sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol, taking into account its commitments under relevant international environmental agreements; promotion of sustainable forest management practices, afforestation and reforestation;"

The terms "afforestation and reforestation" in fact mean millions of hectares of monoculture tree plantations of fast growing species, particularly eucalyptus. Under this light, the Bratislava meeting's message becomes clear: if such plans are implemented, this will certainly affect biodiversity in forests and in other ecosystems.. Forests will be substituted by efficient "carbon sinks" composed of few fast growing species and there is therefore an antagonism between the aims of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the mechanism put forward by the Climate Change Convention. We share, welcome and support such concern.