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## [Open letter to the members of the Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#)

*The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 9) of the Convention of Biological Diversity is taking place in Bonn, Germany, from 19 to 30 May 2008. COP 9 will include a high-level ministerial segment organized by the host country in consultation with the Secretariat and the Bureau (from 28 to 30 May). The fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP 4) took place in Bonn, from 12 to 16 May 2008. Many organizations around the world will give a clear message against the expansion of monoculture tree plantations, agrofuels and GE trees.*

**Dear Sirs/Madams,**

We, the undersigned wish to express our deep concern over the impacts of large-scale monoculture tree plantations on the planet's biodiversity, as well as the more recent threat posed by the research on transgenic trees currently being conducted in a number of countries. At the same time, we wish to make a call for concrete measures to be adopted on these issues during the Ninth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in Bonn.

We would like to emphasize, first of all, that although large-scale monoculture tree plantations result in serious social and environmental impacts – and particularly on the biological diversity of forest areas– they officially continue to be defined as “forests” and included as a synonym for “forest cover”. We believe it is crucial for the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, as a body specializing in the preservation of biodiversity, to establish a clear distinction between forests and monoculture tree plantations, and to adopt a definition of forests that excludes these plantations.

At the same time, the Conference of the Parties to the CBD should make efforts to clearly distinguish the social and environmental benefits derived from forests and the harmful impacts that monoculture tree plantations entail for local communities and biodiversity.

The Conference of the Parties should also recognize the serious impacts on biodiversity of largescale monocultures intended for the production of agrofuels and place limits on their expansion. It should also call for an immediate moratorium on all political and financial support for such agrofuel production. This category includes monocultures for the production of biodiesel (oil palm, soybeans, sunflowers, jatropha, etc.) , ethanol (poplars, willows, eucalyptus trees, sugar cane, corn, etc.), and other biomass-based fuels. It should also recognize the increase of the use of agrochemicals and its impact on people's health and environment.

Additionally, the Conference of the Parties should prohibit the release of genetically modified trees – including field testing – which would not only contribute to the consolidation of a model of monoculture tree plantations that has proven to be destructive to biodiversity, but would also increase these impacts and pose new threats to

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biodiversity. The use of transgenic trees would even further aggravate the impacts already observed on biodiversity, water, land, forests and the communities that depend on them, and could trigger an ecological disaster for forest-based food chains.

The use of unreliable and dangerous “terminator” technologies, proposed as a solution for the possible genetic contamination of forests, would only worsen the problem by potentially resulting in the extinction of numerous species associated with the flowering and fruit-bearing of trees.

To summarize, we call on the members of the CBD to adopt measures to ensure that:

- monoculture tree plantations are excluded from the definition of forests
- all financial, political and technical support for monocultures for agrofuels is withdrawn in the light of their direct and indirect impacts on biodiversity and food sovereignty
- the release of transgenic trees and use of “terminator” technology is prohibited.

[See here the list of signatures](#)