
[Open letter to all members of the Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\) Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice](#)

February, 2008

The undersigned, members of organizations from countries where research on the genetic modification of trees is being carried out, or has been recently, would like to express in this letter some of the reasons of our deep concern.

First of all, our concern is based on the fact that the genetic manipulation being undertaken is aimed at consolidating and further expanding a model of monoculture tree plantations that has already proven to result in serious social and environmental impacts in many of our countries.

In addition, the use of transgenic trees will further aggravate the proven impacts on water resources, since one of the traits that researchers are attempting to introduce is faster growth, which would mean even greater consumption of water by tree plantations.

At the same time, research is being undertaken to introduce genes that will make the trees more resistant to cold temperatures, for the purpose of planting them in colder regions and at higher altitudes in the mountains. This would lead to social and environmental impacts in areas that until now have not been affected by the impacts of current tree monocultures.

Research is also underway to develop trees with insecticide properties, in order to make them resistant to insects like the pine shoot moth (*Ryacionia buoliana*). This could result in the death of a large number of other insect species, with consequent impacts on local fauna's food chains and perhaps even on the pollinization of native flora species that depend on those insects.

Research is also being undertaken to introduce genes that would increase the trees' resistance to the herbicide glyphosate, which would lead to even more serious social and environmental impacts, including the destruction of local flora and impacts on human health.

Additionally, research is being carried out to develop eucalyptus trees with a higher cellulose content for the production of cellulose for paper and for the production of ethanol. This would mean reducing the amount of lignin, the component that provides trees with structural strength, thus making them more susceptible to suffering -as well as causing- serious damage during wind storms.

It is important to note that the last Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-8) adopted decision VIII/19 (Forest biological diversity: implementation of the programme of work), which "recommends Parties to take a precautionary approach when addressing the issue of genetically modified trees."

This decision is founded on COP-8's recognition of "the uncertainties related to the potential environmental and socio-economic impacts, including long-term and transboundary impacts, of genetically modified trees on global forest biological diversity, as well as on the livelihoods of

indigenous and local communities, and given the absence of reliable data and of capacity in some countries to undertake risk assessments and to evaluate those potential impacts.”

We therefore wish to call upon you to recommend the Convention on Biodiversity Convention to definitely ban GE trees -including fields trials – because of the serious risks they pose on the Planet’s biological diversity.

SIGNS

21st Paradigm, USA

A SEED Europe, The Netherlands

Acción Ecológica, Ecuador

AG Wald der Fom Umwelt und Entwicklung, Germany

Agenda 21 Anil&Azul - Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Agenda Regional de La Araucanía, Chile

Agrupación ambientalista Koyam Newen, Chile

Agrupación de jóvenes profesionales mapuche Konapewman, Chile

Alianza por una Mejor Calidad de Vida (RAP-Chile), Chile

Amigos de la Tierra España – Friends of the Earth Spain, Spain

AOPA - Associação para o Desenvolvimento da Agroecologia, Brazil

Argonautas Ambientalistas da Amazônia, Brazil

AS-PTA Assessoria e Serviços a Projetos em Agricultura Alternativa, Brazil

Associação de Programas em Tecnologias Alternativas-APTA, Brazil

ASSOCIAÇÃO GAÚCHA DE PROTEÇÃO AO AMBIENTE NATURAL - AGAPAN, Brazil

B.C. Food Systems Network, Canada

Bergwaldprojekt, Germany

Biofuelwatch, United Kingdom

BUND - Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz in Deutschland / Friends of the Earth Germany

CAA - Centro de Agricultura Alternativa, Brazil

Californians for GE-Free Agriculture, USA

Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN), Canada

Caney Fork Headwaters Association, USA

Carbon Trade Watch, International

CAXTIERRA (Comisión de Apoyo X Tierra), Uruguay

Centro de Agricultura Alternativa do Norte de Minas - CAA NM, Brazil

Centro de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos – CDDH, Brazil

Centro de Estudos Ambientais (CEA), Brazil

CENTRO ECOLOGICO BORDE RIO, Chile

Centro Federal de Educação Tecnológica de Rio Pomba (CEFET-Rio Pomba), Brazil

CLOC (Coordinadora LatinoAmericana de las Organizaciones del Campo), Republica Dominicana

Coalition for Safe Food, Powell River, British Columbia, Canada

COATI - Centro de Orientação Ambiental Terra Integrada - Jundiaí, Brazil

CODEFF / Amigos de la Tierra, Chile

Comissão Pastoral da Terra - Diocese Itabuna/Bahia, Brazil

Coorporación Unión Araucana "XAPELEAI TAIÑ KIMVN", Padre Las Casas, Chile

Crescente Fértil, Brazil

Cumberland Countians for Peace & Justice, USA

Development Fund, Norway

Dogwood alliance, USA

Down to Earth - the International Campaign for Ecological Justice in IndonesiaUnited Kingdom

Ecodevelop - Publikation und Dienstleistung für ökosoziale Entwicklung, Germany

Ecologistas en Acción, Madrid, Spain

ESPLAR - CENTRO DE PESQUISA E ASSESSORIA, Brazil

ETC Group, Canada

Fair-Fish, Switzerland

Federação de Órgãos Para Assistência Social e Educacional - FASE/ES, Brazil

Federation of Alberta Naturalists, Canada

FERN, United Kingdom

FoE Australia

FoE Czech Republic

Forest Caucus Steering Committee of the Canadian Environmental Network, Canada

Forest Peoples Programme, United Kingdom

Fórum Carajás, Brazil

Fórum de Mulheres do Espírito Santo, Brazil

Fórum em Defesa da Zona Costeira do Ceará, Brazil

Forum Ökologie & Papier, Germany

Friends of the Earth (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), United Kingdom

Friends of the Earth Australia

Friends of the Earth Europe

Fundação Vitória Amazônica, Brazil

Fundacion Sociedades Sustentables de Chile, Chile

Gaia Foundation, International

GE Free New Zealand, Aotearoa/New Zealand

GEEMA - Grupo de Estudos em Educação e Meio Ambiente, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

GENANET - focal point gender, environment, sustainability, Germany

Gene ethical Network, Germany

Gesellschaft für Ökologische Forschung, Munich, Germany

Global Forest Coalition, International

Global Justice Ecology Project, International

GM Freeze, United Kingdom

GM-Free Dorset Campaign, United Kingdom

Green Press Initiative, USA

Greenpeace, International

Grupo Ambientalista da Bahia - Gambá, Brazil

Grupo Mamangava, Brazil

GT Ambiente / AGB-Rio e AGB-Niteroi, Brazil

IDESA (Instituto de Desenvolvimento Social e Ambiental), Brazil

Indiana Forest Alliance, USA

Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN), USA/Canada

Institute for Responsible Technology, USA

Institute for Social Ecology, USA

Instituto Ambiental Viramundo - Ceará, Brazil

Instituto para o Desenvolvimento Ambiental - IDA, Brazil

International Tribal Association, USA

Kentucky Heartwood, USA

Latin American Network Against Monoculture Tree Plantations, International

Les Amis de la Terre (Friends of the Earth France), France

Mapuexpress informativo digital mapuche, Chile

MIRA-SERRA, Brazil

Movimento de los Trabalhadores Rurales sin Tierra de Brasil - MST, Brazil

Muslim Aid, United Kingdom

Nandor Tanczos, Member of Parliament, Green Party, Aotearoa/New Zealand

NEADist - Núcleo de Educação Ambiental Continuada e à Distância, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Network for a free GE LAtin America, International

Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility, United Church of Christ, USA

Nguallen Pelu Mapu / protectores de la tierra, Chile

Northern Heritage Association, Finland

Northwest Resistance Against Genetic Engineering, USA

Northwoods Wilderness Recovery, USA

OroVerde - Tropical Forest Foundation, Germany

Pacific Indigenous Peoples Environment Coalition (PIPEC), Aotearoa/New Zealand

Plataforma Transgenicos Fora (Portuguese GM-Free Coalition), Portugal

Prairie Red Fife Organic Growers Cooperative Ltd., Canada

Prodema - UFC, Brazil

RAE - Rede de Educação Ambiental Escolar, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Rainforest Relief, USA

Red por una América Latina Libre de Transgénicos, Ecuador

Rede Ambiental do PiauÃ - REAPI, Brazil

Rede de Educadores Ambientais da Baixada de Jacarepaguá, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Rede de Integração Verde, Brazil

Rettet den Regenwald, Germany

Rising Tide North America, USA

Robin Wood, Germany

Safe Alternatives for our Forest Environment (SAFE)USA

Sierra Club, USA

Sindicato dos Trabalhadores de Rio Pardo de Minas - MG, Brazil

Sociedade Angrense de Proteção Ecológica, Brazil

Society for a Genetically Engineered British Columbia, Canada

Soil Association, USA

Stop GE Trees Campaign, International

Terra de Directos, Brazil

UITA - Unión Internacional de Trabajadores de la Alimentación y la Agricultura, International

Union of Ecoforestry in Finland

Union paysanne, Québec, Canada

UNORCA - Unión nacional de organizaciones regionales campesinas autónomas, Mexico

Via Campesina Brazil

Vía Campesina Caribe

Via Campesina Internacional/América del sur

Wak Kalola, M.A., Université d'Ottawa, Canada

Washington Biotechnology Action Council, USA

Wild Virginia, USA

Women's Environmental Network, United Kingdom

World Development Movement, United Kingdom

World Rainforest Movement, International

Worldforests, Scotland

Worldview, USA

Xarxa de l'Observatori del Deute en la Globalització, Catalunya, Estado español