
[Open letter to SBSTTA on the issue of GM trees](#)

The undersigned participants of SBSTTA or of meetings leading up to SBSTTA wish to share their concerns about the issue of genetically modified trees within the process of the Convention of Biological Diversity. As you know, the last Conference of the Parties passed Decision VIII/19, which recognized “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”.

Among other things, it recommended Parties “to take a precautionary approach when addressing the issue of genetically modified trees”.

The above recommendation seems to have been basically ignored by a number of countries, where either official research centers or private companies continue carrying out work on genetic modification of trees and are even planning to carry out field trials, such as the current case of the company ArborGen, which is seeking permission for field trials of flowering eucalyptus trees in the US.

Research in genetic modification of trees is currently being carried out –disregarding the COP’s decision- in at least the following countries Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States.

Given that the COP8 Decision gave SBSTTA the task of assessing “the potential environmental, cultural, and socio-economic impacts of genetically modified trees on the conservation and sustainable use of forest biological diversity, and to report to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties”; and given that the rush to produce biofuels is being used to promote the rapid commercial development of genetically modified trees, we appeal to SBSTTA to:

- insist on compliance by all countries with the precautionary principle as agreed upon at COP8
- recommend a ban on GM trees on the basis of their potential impacts on forest biological diversity

Global Justice Ecology Project
World Rainforest Movement
Global Forest Coalition
Sobrevivencia/FOE Paraguay
STOP GE Trees Campaign, North America
NOAH-Friends of the Earth Netherlands
Africa-Europe F & J Network
Friends of the Earth Europe
Friends of the Earth Malaysia
CENSAT-Aguaviva FOE Colombia

(more)

Indigenous Information Network, Kenya

Nordre Folkcenter for Renewable Energy, Denmark

Friends of the Siberian Forests, Russia

CELCOR/FOE Papua New Guinea

Pro REGENWALD, Germany

Robin Wood, Germany

Friends of the Earth—England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Consumers Association of Penang, Malaysia

Comision Intereclesiastica de Justicia y Paz, Colombia

Consejo Comunitario de la Cuenca del Currarado

Ole Siosiomaga Society Incorporated (OLSSI) Samoa

Fundación para la Promocion del Conocimiento Indigena, Panama

ICTI-Tanibar, Indonesia

PIPEC, Pacific Indigenous Peoples Environment Coalition, New Zealand

FERN

International Alliance of the Indigneous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests

Corporate Europe Observatory

Greenpeace International

Ecologica Movement BIOM, Kyrgyzatan

CORE – Centre for Organization Research & Education, Northeast Region India

EQUATIONS

Ecological Society of the Philippines

Timberwatch Coalition, South Africa

Forest Peoples Programme, UK

MST – Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement

Viola, Russia

Ecoropa, Germany

ETC Group

Asociación Indígena Ambiental

Umwelt-und Projehtwerhstatt, Germany

Global Environment Centre, Malaysia

Washington Biotechnology Action Council, U.S.

BUKO Campaign against Biopiracy, Germany

The Gaia Foundation, UK

HATOFF Foundation, Ghana

Tebteba Foundation, Philippines

Nature Tropicale, Benin (West Africa)

Jeunes Volontairs pour l'Environnement, Togo

Biofuelwatch, UK

Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum

NABU – Nature and Conservation Union, Germany

BUND – Friends of the Earth Germany

Indigenous Network on Economics and Trade, Canada