
Statement in Support of the “Open Letter to CTNBio”

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FuturaGene, a biotechnology firm owned by Brazilian pulp and paper company Suzano, has requested authorization from the Brazilian Biosafety Commission (CTNBio) for the commercial release of its genetically engineered eucalyptus trees in Brazil.

[A letter has been issued by Brazilian and Latin American organizations](#) (including CEPEDDES; Terra de Direitos and the Latin American Network against Plantations) to CTNBio to urge them to deny this approval. As the Brazilian Open Letter explains, if approved, use of GE eucalyptus trees will aggravate the already well-known negative impacts that non-GE industrial eucalyptus tree plantations already pose to communities' livelihoods.

Below a statement in support to the open letter signed by organizations from around the world.

Statement in Support of the “Open Letter to CTNBio”:

The Campaign to Stop GE Trees, an international coalition of 248 groups from 49 countries, founded in 2004, supports a global ban on commercial deregulation of genetically engineered trees (also known as genetically modified trees) based on serious concerns about their impacts on biodiversity and human rights. The Campaign supports the position expressed herein, in solidarity with Brazilian and Latin American groups, calling upon CTNBio to pay heed to public resistance to GE trees and reject Futuragene's request for commercial approval of GE trees.

The Campaign is joined by the undersigned organizations from around the world that endorse the call for a global ban on the release of genetically engineered trees into the environment, as well as those scientists and organizations that are calling for a moratorium on the release of GE trees until they are proven to have no damaging social or ecological impacts. As no such proof of safety currently exists, but there is significant evidence to the contrary, the release of GE trees must be stopped.

It is, for example, well-documented that increasing the growth rates of plantation trees (as Suzano has done with their GE eucalyptus trees) results in the rapid expansion of plantations, not the opposite. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization between the years 1990 and 2010, the average yield of wood from plantations doubled, yet the amount of land occupied by those plantations increased over 60% from 97 million to 153 million hectares.

[\[http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1757e/i1757e.pdf, Table 5.5, page 94\]](http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1757e/i1757e.pdf)

Additionally, in 2008, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, to which Brazil is a signatory, called for the application of the Precautionary Approach regarding GE trees, and a comprehensive and transparent assessment of their long-term social and ecological risks prior to any open release into the environment. If CTN Bio approves the commercialization of the GE eucalyptus in question, this

decision would directly contravene decision IX/5(1) of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

The decision [IX/5 \(1\) of the UN CBD Conference of the Parties from 2008 states](#) [emphasis added]:

The Conference of the Parties, Urges Parties to:

- (r) Reaffirm the need to take a precautionary approach when addressing the issue of genetically modified trees;
- (s) Authorize the release of genetically modified trees only after completion of studies in containment, including in greenhouse and confined field trials, in accordance with national legislation where existent, addressing long-term effects as well as thorough, comprehensive, science-based and transparent risk assessments to avoid possible negative environmental impacts on forest biological diversity; [1]/
- (t) Also consider the potential socio-economic impacts of genetically modified trees as well as their potential impact on the livelihoods of indigenous and local communities;
- (u) Acknowledge the entitlement of Parties, in accordance with their domestic legislation, to suspend the release of genetically modified trees, in particular where risk assessment so advises or where adequate capacities to undertake such assessment is not available;
- (v) Further engage to develop risk-assessment criteria specifically for genetically modified trees;
- (w) Note the results of the Norway – Canada Workshops on Risk Assessment for emerging applications for Living Modified Organisms (UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/4/INF/13);
- (x) Welcome the decision of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol to establish an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment and Risk Management that is also mandated to address the issue of genetically modified trees;
- (y) Collaborate with relevant organizations on guidance for risk assessment of genetically modified trees and guidance addressing potential negative and positive environmental and socio - economic impacts on the conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity associated with the use of genetically modified trees;
- (z) Provide the available information and the scientific evidence regarding the overall effects of genetically modified trees on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity to the Executive Secretary for dissemination through the clearing-house mechanism;

[1]/ Where applicable, risks such as cross-pollination and spreading of seeds should be specifically addressed.

We therefore support the call to CTNBio and the Brazilian government made by Brazilian and Latin American groups to reject the application of Futuragene to commercially plant genetically engineered eucalyptus trees.

Signed:

The Campaign to STOP GE Trees (International)
Global Justice Ecology Project (US)
EcoNexus (Europe, UK)
Indigenous Environmental Network (North America)
Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (Canada)
Biofuelwatch (US, UK)
World Rainforest Movement

Co-Signed by:

Agricultural Missions, Inc (AMI)	USA
ALDW Enterprises	USA
Allergy & Asthma Research Centre, Kolkata	India
Alliance for Global Justice	USA
Alliance for Humane Biotechnology	USA
anti- GMO committee of the Cyprus Federation of Environmental Organizations	Cyprus
Anti-Biomass Incineration Campaign/Energy Justice Network	USA
ASEED Europe	The Netherlands
Azafady	UK/Madagascar
Babes Against Biotech	
Bangladesh Krishok Federation	Bangladesh
Barnard-Boecker Centre Foundation	Canada
Beyond Copenhagen Collective	India
Biodiversity Conservation Center	Russia
Biofuelwatch	UK
BUND - Friends of the Earth Germany	Germany
Burning Books	USA
Caerhys Organic Community Agriculture	UK
Caney Fork Headwaters Association	USA
Canopy	USA
Capital R Consulting, LLC	USA
Carbon Trade Watch	UK
CEEweb for Biodiversity	
Center for Biological Diversity	USA
Center for Food Safety	USA
Centre for Community Economics and Development Consultants Society (CECOEDECON)	India
College of Medicine, University of Illinois,	USA
Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP)	Malaysia
Cornucopia Network/NJ/TN Chapter	USA
Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO)	Belgium
CSALT Citizens Seeking Alternatives to Log Terminals	USA
Cumberland Countians for Ecojustice	USA
Dogwood Alliance	USA
Earthcare Books	
EcoC2S (EcoCsquaredS)	USA
Ecological Farmers of Ontario	Canada
Ecological Society of the Philippines	Philippines
Ecologistas en Accion	Spain
Environmental Paper Network	UK

Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria	Nigeria
Essential Ecology	USA
Everglades Earth First!	USA
Fair World Project	USA
FDCL Forschungs- und Dokumentationszentrum Chile-Lateinamerika e.V	Germany
Fédération SEPANSO Aquitaine	France
FERN	UK
Find Your Feet	UK
Food & Water Europe	Europe
Food & Water Watch	USA
Food First/Institute for Food and Development Policy	USA
Forest Peoples Programme	UK
ForestETHics	USA
Forum Ökologie & Papier	Germany
Friends of the Earth Europe	Europe
Friends of the Earth International	International
Friends of the Earth Melbourne	Australia
Friends of the Earth Spain	Spain
Friends of the Earth Sweden	Sweden
Friends of the Siberian Forests,	Russia
Gen-ethical Network	Germany
Genetic Engineering Network (GEN)	UK
GeneWatch UK	UK
Gestos-HIV, Comunicação e Gênero	Brazil
Global Forest Coalition/CCRI	Thailand
Global GMO Free Coalition	International
Global Health Network	USA
GMO Free Oregon	USA
GMO Free USA	USA
GMO Free Windsor	Canada
GMO-Free Oahu	Hawaii, USA
GMWatch	
Green Party of the US	USA
Greenpeace France	France
Grupo AgrOrganico GAO	Dominican Republic
Heartwood	
Hnutí DUHA - Friends of the Earth Czech Republic	Czech Republic
House of Grace	USA
IBON International	Phillippines
Independent Consultancy on Women's Rights	
Institute for Responsible Technology	USA
Institute for Social Ecology	USA
International Tribal Association	International
J & J Enterprise	USA
Just Forests	Ireland
KONPHALINDO	Indonesia
Labour,Health and Human Rights Development Centre	Nigeria
Land Workers Alliance	UK
Lane County Energy Round-Up	USA
MADGE	Australia

Mangrove Action Project (MAP)	USA
Markinch	UK
Massachusetts Forest Watch	USA
Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility Of United Church of Christ	USA
NGO Ecosouthwest	Bulgaria
Nicaragua Network	USA
Nourish, Scotland	Scotland, UK
Nourishing Generations Educational Project	USA
Núcleo de Aveiro da Quercus - ANCN	Portugal
Ogiek People Development Program(OPDP),	Kenya
Ole Siosiomaga Society Incorporated (OLSSI)	Samoa
Organic Consumers Association	USA
Our Forests	USA
OurGreenChallenge.org	USA
PAIRVI,	India
PAN Europe	Belgium
Partner Suedmexikos e.V. http://partner.chiapas.eu/	Germany
PESTICIDE ACTION NETWORK ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (PAN AP)	Malaysia
Pesticide Action Network North America	USA
Plataforma Andalucía Libre de Transgénicos	Spain
Quercus - Associação Nacional de Conservação da Natureza	Portugal
Rainforest Relief	USA
REAL Cooperative	USA
Red de Accion por los Derechos Ambientales (RADA)	Chile
Red de Semillas "Resembradno e Intercambiando"	Spain
REDD Monitor	
Reforest the Earth	UK
RENICC	
Rettet den Regenwald e.V. (Rainforest Rescue),	Germany
Rising Tide North America	US
Rising Tide Vermont	USA
Robin Wood	Germany
Rochester Committee on Latin America	USA
Roots for Equity	Pakistan
Russian Academy of Sciences	Russia
Sacramento Label GMOs	USA
Sahabat Alam (Friends' of the Earth) Malaysia	Malaysia
Salva La Selva,	Spain
Save America's Forests	USA
Sierra Club	USA
South Florida Audubon Society	USA
Standing Together to Outlaw Pesticides	USA
Stockholm International Water Institute	Sweden
Sunray Harvesters,	India
Support for Women in Agriculture in Agriculture (SWAGEN)	Uganda
The Aurora Foundation	USA
The Blue Planet Project	International
The Corner House	UK
The Council of Canadians	Canada
The Haiku Aina Permaculture Initiative	Hawaii, USA

Third World Network	Malaysia
University of Kassel	Germany
Washington Biotechnology Action Coalition	USA
World Family	UK
World Temperate Rainforest Network	USA
Yôko Woldering, KoBra e.V.	Germany
Zelenyi Svit / Friends of the Earth Ukraine	Ukraine