

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

February, 2008

The undersigned, members of organizations from countries where research on the genetic modification of trees is being carried out, (or has in recent years), 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 to 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.

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Country</i>
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	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	Intenational
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 - Jundiá	Brazil
CODEFF / Amigos de la Tierra, Chile	Chile
Comissão Pastoral da Terra - Diocese Itabuna/Bahia	Brazil
Cooperación 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 Indonesia	United 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	Australia
FoE Czech Republic	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	Australia
Friends of the Earth Europe	Europe
Fundação Vitória Amazônica	Brazil
Fundacion Sociedades Sustentables de Chiue	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	Brasil
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
Movimiento de los Trabajadores 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 Direitos	Brazil
UITA - Unión Internacional de Trabajadores de la Alimentación y la Agricultura.	Internacional
Union of Ecoforestry in Finland	Finland
Union paysanne, Québec	Canada
UNORCA - Unión nacional de organizaciones regionales campesinas autónomas	Mexico
Via Campesina Brazil	Brazil
Vía Campesina Caribe	Republica Dominicana
Via Campesina Internacional/América del sur	International
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	Cataluña, Estado español