



### **Local – Diverse – GMO free – grassroots**

Loss of biodiversity and climate change are arguably the most formidable ecological threats humankind has ever faced. These two closely interdependent phenomena may be seen as natural catastrophes threatening our civilisation. However, they are both themselves the effects of the dominant form of civilization. Can these truly global challenges be met by the same set of technological and political principles and means that actually led us to this critical point of human as well as natural history? *Food and agriculture lie at the very heart of the problem. Further acceleration of present trends to industrialise, homogenize and globalise industrial food production are certainly not the solution but rather a recipe for disaster.*

During COP/MOP 4, just 200 meters down the road at the “Gustav Stresemann-Institut”, 700 representatives from 100 countries will celebrate natural and agricultural biodiversity, the cultural diversity of food and agriculture and discuss how farmers, consumers, food producers and their communities can cooperate to enrich and defend this diversity. They are part of a global movement coming together from different directions for the common cause of defending diversity against destructive and threatening tendencies in agricultural production, land use and food production. Indigenous as well as small and subsistence farmer communities, organic and urban farmers and gardeners, consumers, environmental organisations, social movements for human and especially for womens rights, critics of globalization, development organisations, scientists, GMO-free regional and local governments are fighting against the introduction of GMOs in their territories and many more.

***Their common political denominator is  
“diversity against monocultures”!***

### **Demonstration**

We invite all of you to join Monday’s demonstration starting at **11 am TODAY** in the Rheinauen. A **manifestation** will be held around **12:00** opposite to the Maritim hotel (around the stage).

The demands are:

- **for the human right to adequate, diverse and healthy food – against the misuse of agriculture for agro-fuel, and other raw materials for international speculation;**
- **for the right of consumers and farmers to decide – against genetic experiments with our food and our environment;**
- **for the free exchange of seeds and agricultural know-how – against patents on life forms and bio-piracy;**
- **for the preservation of regional diversity – against agro-industrial monocultures and the worldwide death of farmers;**
- **for biological diversity – regional, fair and GMO-free!**

**Farida Akhter**, Ubinig, Bangladesh, **Vandana Shiva**, Navdanya Seed Movement, India, **Percy Schmeiser**, farmer sued by Monsanto, Canada, **Maya Graf** National Councillor, Switzerland, **F.-W. Graefe zu Baringdorf**, AbL, Member of the European Parliament, **Dorothee Lindenkamp**, peasant woman, Germany, **Ibolya Tamás és Gedó**, European Seeds Network, Hungary, **Vieira Gentil Couto**, La Via Campesina, Landless Workers Movement (MST), Brazil, **Ulrich Kelber**, Social Democratic Party, Member of Parliament, Germany, **Hubert Weiger**, president of Friends of the Earth Germany, **Claudia Warning**, chairwoman of the Caucus of German development organizations (VENRO), **Lamine Biaye**, Association Sénégalaise de Producteurs de Semences Paysannes, Sénégal, **Nicolas Supiot**, Réseau Semences Paysannes, France, **Benny Haerlin**, Save our Seeds, Germany, **Susanne Mähne**, anti-GMO activist, Germany

### **Festival of Diversity**

From 2 pm into the night there will be a great international Festival of diversity in the Rheinauen (15 minute walk from the Maritim). You are all cordially invited to join the celebrations, taste the diversity, See films and theater and dance to the music of the world.

# Friends of liability and redress?

Lim Li Lin, Third World Network

Four extra days of gruelling negotiations on liability and redress have still not yielded concrete results. Exhausted delegates finally poured out of the meeting room at 10.15 on Saturday (10 May) night having made some progress with whittling down the voluminous text, but still with a long and difficult task ahead of them during the next week.

(The 'Friends of the Co-Chairs' group is expected to meet on the first day of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP) to the Biosafety Protocol, and continue throughout the week.)

The 'Friends of the Co-Chairs' group was constituted in Cartagena in March, at what was supposed to be the final meeting of the working group negotiating the liability and redress regime under the Biosafety Protocol. It comprises 6 representatives each from Asia Pacific, Africa and GRULAC regions, as well as 2 representatives each from the EU and CEE, and Norway, Switzerland, New Zealand and Japan. Unable to conclude negotiations in Cartagena, the group was then scheduled to meet from 7-9 May in Bonn, prior to MOP.

Under the Protocol, an international regime on liability and redress addressing damage from the transboundary movement of living modified organisms (LMOs) (as GMOs are known under the Protocol) should be agreed upon and concluded by 2008. In other words, the MOP should adopt the final liability and redress regime in Bonn.

Civil society representatives have been present outside the negotiating room, throughout the 'Friends of the Co-Chair' meeting, which began on Wednesday (7 May), to lend support to the negotiators who were championing

a strong liability and redress regime. The presence of so many civil society representatives also demonstrated the importance of the issue to the public. The agreement being negotiated in the small, closed door meeting will have very important ramifications for consumers, farmers and ecosystems around the world.

The presence of delegates from non-Party countries was also notable. Argentina, the US and Canada (the biggest producers and exporters of GMOs), all spent time hanging around outside the closed doors of the meeting.

Representatives from the industry, from CropLife International and Monsanto, were also present. The biotechnology industry had presented a "Compact" proposal in an open session during the meeting. The contractual compensation mechanism that they had proposed is a contract between various biotechnology companies including BASF, Bayer CropScience, Dow Agrosciences, DuPont, Monsanto and Syngenta to pay for "actual" damage to biological diversity, if their product is responsible.

The terms of the compact and its governance are defined by the companies that are members of the Compact. ***If the proposal is accepted, countries would literally be signing away their rights.*** It represents a privatization of international law,

and would set a very dangerous precedent by relegating States to 'third party beneficiaries'. The corporations here are redefining roles – they create the rights and obligations, and 'allow' States to enforce these rights.

***The Compact should be dismissed with the contempt it deserves!***

## About the ECO

ECO is published by the NGO (non - governmental organisation) community at the most Conferences of the Parties to International Environmental Conventions. It is currently being published at the most COP/MOP 4 to the Convention Biological Diversity coordinated by the CBD Alliance. The opinions, commentaries and articles printed in ECO are the sole opinion of the individual authors or organisations, unless otherwise expressed.  
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## Planet Diversity Special public events

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> - 19 h** - Circus tent at the festival

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> - 20:30** at the GSI: Presentation of the film "Monsanto with poison and genes" with film maker Marie Monique Robin

**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> - 21:00** at the GSI: "HARD RAIN" world famous show with pictures from mark Edwards, lyrics Bob Dylan.

