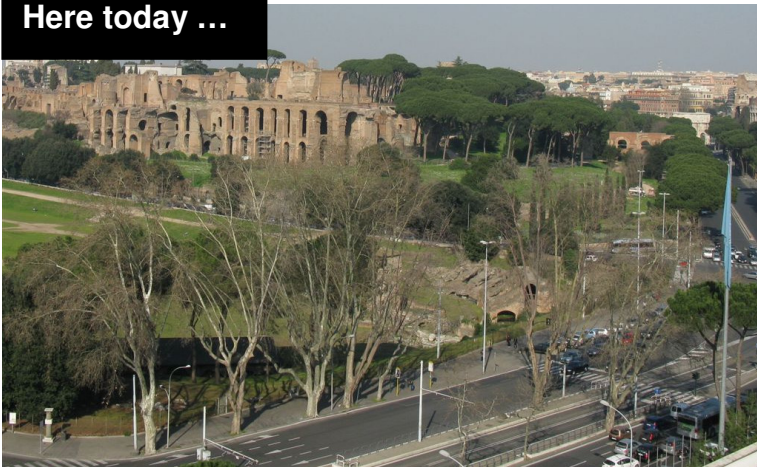


## **Deforestation on our (FAO)doorstep?**

*While Parties to the CBD discussed forest biodiversity at SBSTTA 13 inside FAO headquarters last month, deforestation continued apace ... even outside FAO itself. But were negotiators troubled by this flagrant destruction happening right before their eyes? Did the Parties even notice? Why of course they did! Now that SBSTTA 13 is done, dusted and tied up in brackets ECO can exclusively reveal that all the rumours were in fact true. According to insiders within the FAO and CBD secretariat this 'land use change' was an authorised part of a new climate change mitigation strategy agreed as an 'interlinkage' between the two UN bodies. Leaked papers seen by ECO sleuths show that these formerly unproductive trees are to now be replaced with a field trial of GE trees, containing biopirated genes that produce cellulosic ethanol that is truly 'carbon neutral'. The carbon offsets from this innovative financial mechanism will be set against the massive emissions (of hot air) produced at SBSTTA 13 (which exceeded all previous records). Offset revenue will also be used to expand production of the CBD's glossy "Business and Biodiversity Newsletter" and to subsidise FAO cafeteria meals in the face of rising food prices. Neither Ahmed Djoghlaif or Jacques Diouf were available for comment.*

**Here today ...**



**Chopped tomorrow ...**



Photos: Timberwatch  
[www.timberwatch.org.za](http://www.timberwatch.org.za)

### **... In ECO just after ...**

*Mulvany on agricultural biodiversity ..... pages 2-3*  
*Faizi on land tenure and agriculture ..... page 4*  
*Paul on agrofuels and brackets ..... page 5*  
*Peterman on GE trees ..... page 6*  
*Mitlacher on host country organizing ... page 6*  
*Carrere on the definition of forests ..... page 7*  
*Via Campesina women and invasives .. page 8*  
*Richartz and Page on marine systems . page 9*  
*Thomas on ocean fertilization ..... page 9*

### **About the 'ECO – just after'**

*ECO is published by the civil society community at most negotiations around the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This edition of ECO-just after follows up on SBSTTA 13<sup>th</sup> to the CBD, which took place at FAO in Rome in February 2008. The ECO is produced by the CBD Alliance, but the opinions, commentaries, and articles printed in ECO are the sole opinion of the individual authors or organisations, unless otherwise expressed. ECO will publish "just before" the 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties, and submissions are welcome from all civil society groups to [jdempsey@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:jdempsey@interchange.ubc.ca) by 20 April 2008.*

# Review of the Agricultural Biodiversity negotiations

*patrick mulvany - practical action*

## **These negotiations could have been visionary.**

They could have proposed a 'paradigm shift', as called for by FAO, towards biological intensification of agricultural systems and away from chemically dependent production of food. They did not. Small mercies that the SBSTTA recommendation still retains some reference to sustaining ecosystem functions related to agricultural biodiversity that are so essential for securing future food supplies.

COP 9 will have a lot of work to do, not only 'unbracketing' precautionary text on biofuels, climate change and perverse incentives. Parties will also need to insert new language that takes the programme of work forward to address the challenges of conservation, sustainable use and development of agricultural biodiversity, especially on-farm, where it can adapt to new challenges, such as climate change – both mitigation and adaptation.

COP 9 has much to build on, not least the landmark Decision III/11 and its Annex 1, see [www.ukabc.org/cop9agbiagenda.pdf](http://www.ukabc.org/cop9agbiagenda.pdf), and Decision V/5, with its programme of work and agreement, reconfirmed by COP 8, to a moratorium on the field testing and commercialisation of Terminator technology. Also the multiple efforts of countries and organisations and especially food providers themselves, emphasised by Indigenous Peoples and Via Campesina at SBSTTA 13, about their work on agricultural biodiversity and the constraints to their inalienable rights to use, develop, exchange and benefit from this.

It also has some text, while somewhat buried, could be given the oxygen of exposure as priority issues in the COP Decision. In the BOX on the following page - extracted from the 7 pages of text of the Agricultural Biodiversity Recommendations - are 8 points of interest that could be strengthened. None is particularly new - they are issues that have been discussed before. But each illustrates a key area for future work of the CBD if it is to achieve its mandate and sustain Life on Earth.

There is much left to do between now and COP 9. The good text must be defended and strengthened and preparations must be made to ensure rejection of any negative text, that is not in the recommendations at present but might be introduced e.g. on the transfer of 'new technologies' (i.e. biotechnology) or 'genetic modification' or 'Terminator/ GURTS' etc.

The major debates at COP 9 will centre on the bracketed text on agrofuels, climate change mitigation and perverse incentives. But on the latter, more should be done, to make clearer the ultimately self-defeating and biodiversity-reducing effects of supporting chemically-based intensive industrial food production systems and to **decide**, not only to remove perverse incentives, but to **increase incentives and support for biodiversity-enhancing agriculture, controlled by small-scale food providers.**

Let us hope Parties take up the challenge to make this Decision 'visionary' and competent to face up to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. **And that on Agrofuels, in particular, the potential Bonfire of Biodiversity can be prevented.**

To repeat the exhortation from the article in ECO 21(1) @ SBSTTA 13:

**“The Parties to the CBD need to seize this historic moment and:**

- **Put culture back into agriculture**
- **Put biology back into biodiversity**
- **Put food sovereignty, food providers and their social organisations at the centre of agricultural biodiversity policy and practice “**

*References for this article: ECO 21(5) article “The Decline and Fall of the Roman SBSTTA” [www.ukabc.org/sbbsta13\\_declineandfall.pdf](http://www.ukabc.org/sbbsta13_declineandfall.pdf) and ENB's summary report [www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/enb09427e.pdf](http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/enb09427e.pdf). Highlighted text of the Recommendation is available at [www.ukabc.org/sbbsta13.htm](http://www.ukabc.org/sbbsta13.htm). ECO 21(1) 'Food Providers hold the Key – the CBD has the Mechanism' [www.ukabc.org/foodprovidersholdkey.pdf](http://www.ukabc.org/foodprovidersholdkey.pdf)*

**ECO and the CBD Alliance thank Swedbio, Hivos-Oxfam Novib Biodiversity Fund, and CIDA for their on-going support!**

## **Civil Society Events – COP 9**

**16 May – Introduction to CBD + COP** [A comprehensive intro to the CBD for new civil society members]

**17 – 18 May – Civil Society Preparatory Meetings**

[Will focus on substantive issues, information sharing, and strategizing]

**INFORMATION: [www.cbdalliance.org](http://www.cbdalliance.org)**

**Selected text from CBD/SBSTTA/13/L.2**  
**Recommendations on the review of the Agricultural Biodiversity Programme of Work**

**On-farm conservation (part of adaptation and capacity building)**

10. *Invites* Parties, other Governments, relevant international and regional organizations, local and indigenous communities, farmers, pastoralists and plant and animal breeders to promote, support and remove constraints to on-farm and *in situ* conservation of agricultural biodiversity through participatory decision-making processes in order to enhance the conservation of plant and animal genetic resources, related components of biodiversity in agricultural ecosystems, and related ecosystem functions;

**Participation:**

12. *Urges* Parties, other Governments, and relevant organizations, to engage indigenous and local communities, farmers, pastoralists, animal breeders and other stakeholders, including those whose livelihoods depend on the sustainable use and conservation of agricultural biodiversity, to apply the ecosystem approach to agriculture...

**Programme of Work:**

16. *Urges* Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations:

- (a) To strengthen dialogue with farmers, including through international and national farmers' organizations, as appropriate, in the implementation of the programme of work;
- (b) To promote opportunities for indigenous and local communities, and local stakeholders to participate in the development and implementation of national biodiversity strategies, action plans and programmes for agricultural biodiversity; and
- (c) To improve the policy environment to support local-level management of agricultural biodiversity;

**Thematic focus on Pollinators, Soil Biodiversity and Food and Nutrition**

23... to carry out further work and compile and disseminate information to improve the understanding of soil biodiversity, its interaction with above-ground biodiversity, and other soil functions, the various ecosystem services that it provides, and the agricultural practices that affect it, and to facilitate the integration of soil biodiversity issues into agricultural policies

**Climate Change:**

26. *Encourages* Parties and other Governments, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and indigenous and local communities and other stakeholders, to gather, information on lessons learned about the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity, and integrate these into climate-change adaptation [and mitigation] planning [and cross-sectoral planning in agricultural areas],

27. ... to gather and disseminate information, on:...

- (b) Ways and means to build resilience into food and agricultural livelihood systems as part of strategies for climate change adaptation, especially in communities of developing countries that are dependent on rain-fed agriculture for local food supplies;
- (c) how vulnerable communities, especially in developing countries, might adapt to the impacts of climate-induced changes in agricultural practice;

***(COMMENT: there is no call in this Recommendation to insert the above into the UNFCCC adaptation negotiations. A separate Recommendation on Climate Change gets closer to recommending this, but even there, Parties hold back... why?)***

**Agrofuels:**

***(COMMENT: the whole section on biofuels is bracketed and some Parties claim that some of the text was not even discussed at SBSTTA 13. There is also reference to the SBSTTA 12/7 recommendation on biofuels that will be brought in to the agricultural biodiversity debate at COP 9)***

[30 (c) *Requests* that Parties immediately adopt a precautionary approach by suspending the introductions of any new supportive measures for the consumption of biofuels...]

**Research:**

33. c) To further investigate the use of agricultural biodiversity to develop sustainable agricultural systems that contribute to improved livelihoods, enhance biodiversity and make use of its benefits, as well as conserving the most vulnerable and potentially useful species;

**General considerations**

34. *Welcomes* the adoption of the multi-year programme of work of the FAO Intergovernmental Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, whose implementation would also contribute to the implementation of the Convention programmes of , in particular the programme of work on agricultural biodiversity;

# The Role of Land Reforms Disregarded Again

s.faizi - india

One critical issue that was glaringly missing in the agrobiodiversity discussion in the SBSTTA is the need to reform agricultural land tenure as a means to enhance agrobiodiversity. Indeed land reforms, wherever undertaken with the necessary political will, have shown to have a triple impact: improving the genetic and species base of crops, significantly mitigating rural poverty and reducing pressure on natural habitats.

Both the feudal concentration and the fast growing commercial acquisition of farmland play a significant role in the erosion of agrobiodiversity, just as the apartheid's appropriation of farmlands did. Large holdings cultivate an extremely limited number of species if not outright monocultures, and more often than not cash crops meant for the export market. Smallholdings on the other hand have a wide range of crops, mainly food crops for subsistence and to meet local needs (1). Besides, smallholdings often have a significantly higher productivity per unit as they command the devoted attention of an entire family (2). The prevailing systemic denial of farmland to the landless and land-poor entrenches poverty on the one hand and on the other leaves these marginalized communities to increase the pressure on natural habitats for livelihood, in addition to causing the erosion of agrobiodiversity.

The Kerala state of India is a good example of the biodiversity-land reform linkage. Kerala put in place a comprehensive land reform project in the early 70s based on a farmland *redistribution* law, and this has been central to what has come to be called the Kerala model of development characterized by high social indices upon fairly low investment (but now increasingly under threat). Although the state has one of the highest population densities in the world its smallholdings maintain a high diversity of crops(3). Further, when population pressure prompted a migration to the upland forests in the 70s, its intensity was considerably reduced by the land reforms. However, such a reform is largely unthinkable in most other parts of India or the rest of south Asia even today, as the resistance to change will be fierce.

The staggering 65 per cent of Japan's- a high population density country- terrestrial area under forest cover owes it largely to the forced land reforms in the post world war two period. Nicaragua's land reforms in the 80s -shelved later with the change in

government- was followed by a reduction in forest encroachments. Cuba's smallholdings were central to shaping its success in expanding agrobiodiversity and reducing the use of agrochemicals in the post-Soviet period. On the other hand, apartheid's appropriation of farmlands created the twin crises of accelerating rural poverty and biodiversity degradation in southern Africa.

Unfortunately land tenure reform as a vital tool in biodiversity conservation has been kept off the agenda of the CBD process, and is yet to be given its rightful place in the biodiversity discourse itself. Few biodiversity-related studies mention this as an issue to be addressed. One exception is the Global Biodiversity Strategy published in the run up to the UNCED (4). And an IUCN paper (5) on economics and biodiversity does argue for securing land tenure for the peasants as a means to enhance ecological integrity, although its postulation on the so called ecoagriculture (6) has been criticised by one of IUCN's own Commissions as a Trojan horse for multinational corporations (7). The ubiquitous World Bank speaks about it too, but for them land reforms means market-driven commercial accumulation of land which can only accentuate the biodiversity crisis. It is my fervent hope that this critical biodiversity issue, which will scare many a Southern government supported by feudal political formations, will soon find its way to the CBD agenda.

*(On this subject of land redistribution see also page 8 about a recent action by Via Campesina Women in Brazil)*

NOTES (1) See for eg. Leonard, R. et al (Edrs) *Land Struggles*. LRAN Briefing Paper Series. 2007. Land Research Action Network; Donald, P.F. Biodiversity impacts of some agricultural commodity production systems. *Conservation Biology* 18: 1-29, 2004. (2) Rosset, P. *The Multiple Functions and Benefits of Small Farm Agriculture*. Food First Policy Brief. No.4. 1999. Institute for Food and Development Policy. (3) See for eg. Kumar, M.B, et al. Diversity, Structure and standing stock of wood in the homegardens on Kerala. *Agroforestry Systems* 25.3. 243-262 1994; Jose, D and Shanmugaratnam, N. Traditional homegardens of Kerala: a sustainable ecosystem. *Agroforestry Systems* 24.2. 203-213. 1993 (4) World Resources Institute, et al. *Global Biodiversity Strategy: Guidelines for action to save, study and use Earth's biotic wealth sustainably and equitably*. 1992. WRI. (5) Mc Neely, J.A. *Economics and Biological Diversity*. 1988. IUCN (6) Mc Neely, J.A. and Scher, S.R. *Ecoagriculture: Strategies to Feed the World and Save Wild Biodiversity*. 2003. Island Press (7) Altieri, M. *Agroecology versus Ecoagriculture*. 2004 CEESP Occasional Papers. Issue 3. Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy.

# Agrofuels at SBSTTA 13

helena paul - econexus

## Summary

**Bracket fungus spreads with remarkable speed in forest discussions ... Biodiversity is in square brackets and may be deleted ...**

## The context for agrofuel discussions

SBSTTA 13 was a rather shocking example of how the Convention as a whole is being pushed in the direction of a trade – or trade-off – agreement. The SBSTTA was almost devoid of scientific discussion and entirely about negotiations. We were left with a record number of square brackets in the different texts.

SBSTTA is thus in danger of becoming a mere preamble to the political struggles of the COP, rather than being a forum to really discuss the issues. This was the subject of complaints, most notably from Sweden and Mexico, plus Greenpeace and ETC Group. It seems that the Bureau is also concerned. Sweden noted that when we are on the brink of a mega-extinction event of which we humans are largely the cause, to spend time arguing about whether to use the word “urges” or the word “invites” in a document seems sadly irrelevant.

## Results for Agrofuels

Agrofuels featured in several of the SBSTTA documents, most notably:

- The review of implementation of the programme on Agricultural Biodiversity,
- The review of implementation of the programme on Forest Biodiversity
- New and Emerging Issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of Biodiversity.

The last document is designed to establish rules about how new issues should be raised for discussion by the Convention and so is critical to getting agrofuels on the COP agenda as soon as possible, or at least (as some noted) before it completely ceases to be a “new and emerging issue”.

At the end of SBSTTA, each of the three documents was left with different options in square brackets that will have to be thrashed out in Bonn. This serves to highlight the importance of the Bonn meeting, where it will no doubt be very tough to reach consensus. However, agrofuels have definitely not been removed from the discussion.

Indeed Brazil, which filibustered (good old US term for wasting everyone’s time with long-drawn out interventions) all the way through, is going to make a formal complaint about the process with regard to agrofuels. This highlights the fact that they did not get their own way in the process. Some feel that Brazil wishes to undermine the CBD completely, appearing to prefer the United Nations Forum on Forests. Although it is important to note that Brazil’s large delegation was ably assisted by Canada in particular.

When challenged over the number of interventions it had made (approximately one hour in a total of six hours of discussion) Brazil’s response was that it was intervening in proportion to the amount of forest and biodiversity under its sovereignty. But a more important statistic on the agrofuel issue is likely the amount of ethanol Brazil produces... Many witnesses will be hoping that it uses its skills more positively at COP9.



“We are trying to get cars to eat bread and people to eat oil”

Source: *El Roto, El Pais, Madrid, 2007*

# GE Trees – report on debate at SBSTTA

*anne peterman – global justice ecology project*

The delegations of the African Group ensured that the previous COP-8 decision regarding genetically engineered trees was not watered down. In fact, African delegations proposed a strengthening of the decision, proposing language that basically called for a suspension of GE trees field trials until sufficient impact assessments have been carried out, including environmental, cultural and socio-economic impacts. Furthermore, the proposal includes a request to ask the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety for consideration and advice.

Brazil, on the other hand, joined Australia to push for a weakening of the COP-8 decision, specifically by inserting a reference to Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration. This was supported by Canada. The inclusion of Principle 15 would punch huge holes in the application of the Precautionary Principle/Approach. Principle 15 states, "In order to protect the environment, the precautionary

approach shall be widely applied by States *according to their capabilities.*" [emphasis added]. It continues with a further loophole stating, "Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing *cost-effective* measures to prevent environmental degradation."

The first sentence of Principle 15 effectively excuses developing countries from having to use the precautionary approach. Since many of the countries being targeted for commercial GE tree plantations are in the developing world, this loophole would enable countries to ignore the precautionary approach with regard to GE trees. The second sentence of the Principle, however, is even more insidious.

Because industry's public relations machine has been promoting GE trees as a way to protect the environment—either through

"reforestation" efforts or by protecting natural forests from being cut through their ability to produce "more wood" on "less land" (the ArborGen motto). ArborGen is the world's leading developer of genetically engineered trees and the Brazilian delegation to SBSTTA included a representative from ArborGen. By framing GE trees as a way to stop the logging of natural forests (though this assertion has absolutely no basis in reality), Principle 15 could allow industry or countries to ignore or bypass the precautionary approach and go ahead with releases of GE trees...

It is thus important that the mention of Principle 15 should be deleted from any text. Furthermore it is central for COP9 in Bonn that civil society and all involved come together for a strong and binding moratorium on the release of GE trees. Nothing less than the global forest ecosystems are at stake!

## NGOs build bridges from COP 9 to COP 10

*guenter mitlacher – german NGO focal point for COP 9*

How can NGO involvement in the CBD process be bridged to COP 10? To discuss ways and means Japan Committee for IUCN Vice-chair Prof Masahito Yoshida and Secretary Teppei Dohke met with German NGO Focal Point Guenter Mitlacher and Hajo Mader Board Member of NABU (Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union from Germany) at SBSTTA 13. Also attending the meeting was Japanese delegation member Atsuhiro Yoshinaka and Jochen Flasbarth and Carlos Novella-Martin of the German delegation. Guenter Mitlacher reported on the good experiences so far with an NGO Focal Point in Germany, as the host country of COP 9. Being an anchor for information, communication and logistics is well recognized in the national and international NGO community. And Jochen Flasbarth added that the German Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety supported this idea and provided funds to establish that national COP focal point. This relationship led to many opportunities for idea exchange between NGOs and the responsible ministry. Professor Yoshida of Japan Committee for IUCN explained that Japanese NGOs would like to follow up with that idea. IUCN Committee will inform other NGOs in Japan and talk about a similar network to be established for COP in Nagoja. Mr. Yoshinaka explained that the Ministry of the Environment Government of Japan is planning to convene a forum with different stakeholders like business, NGOs and others to discuss major issues for COP 10. The NGOs of Japan and Germany decided to collaborate more closely in the whole process.

# The invading FAO “forests”: a problem for the CBD

ricardo carrere - world rainforest movement

Invasive alien species are a major cause of biodiversity loss in forests and other ecosystems, but the issue of invasive alien tree plantation species is rarely mentioned or addressed at the Convention on Biological Diversity level, in spite of the fact that the main plantation species - eucalyptus, pines and acacias- have already become invasive in many countries (e.g. in South Africa, Swaziland, Chile, USA, Uruguay, Argentina and others).

In the case of South Africa –a country hosting an incredibly rich biodiversity- tree plantations have invaded some 2 million hectares, while another 2 million hectares of land have been invaded spontaneously by plantation tree species. The former are clearly tree plantations –straight rows of even-aged monocultures of mostly pines and eucalyptus- while the latter are clearly the result of the invasive nature of species of pines, eucalyptus and acacias. (1)

Although there are many definitions about the meaning of the concept “alien invasive species”, perhaps the most accepted one defines them as non-indigenous species that adversely affect the habitats they invade economically, environmentally or ecologically.

For any “adversely affected habitat” it doesn’t matter much how the invasion occurred: if the wind, water, birds or animals brought in the seeds of plant species that later spread spontaneously in that habitat or if those species were introduced by plantation companies and resulted in adverse

economic, environmental or ecological effects.

In line with the above, all large-scale, monoculture alien tree plantations are considered to be invasive by many local communities (2) whose habitats – and therefore also livelihoods- are negatively affected by such plantations. Because of the impacts on biodiversity resulting from the large scale planting of alien species as monocultures, they should also be addressed as dangerous invasive alien species by the Convention on Biodiversity.

*And what about spontaneous invasions of tree plantation species? How can plantation companies be allowed to continue to plant tree species that have already proven to be invasive? The only reason for such ecological absurdity – which runs counter to biodiversity conservation commitments – is corporate interest.*

To make matters worse, both cases –monoculture alien tree plantations and invasive alien tree plantation species- are officially classified as “forests”. According to the FAO (3), a forest is simply an area of land covered (even partially and eventually) by trees: “Land spanning more than 0.5 hectares with trees higher than 5 meters and a canopy cover of more than 10 percent, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ. It does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or urban land use”. Going more into detail, the FAO (4) defines “planted forests” as “land in which trees have been established through planting or

seeding” and “plantation forests” as “land of introduced species, and in some cases native species, established through planting or seeding.”

Going back to the South African example, this means that the invasion of local ecosystems by alien tree species and the establishment of large-scale alien tree monocultures should be welcomed because they increase “forest cover”.

That is absurd from an ecological point of view and particularly ridiculous from a biodiversity conservation perspective. This is therefore something that has to be urgently changed and the above shows that there are three different issues that need to be addressed by the CBD:

- the adoption of a meaningful definition of forests focused on biodiversity and people
- the adoption of policies for stopping the spread of invasive tree plantation species
- the adoption of policies for preventing the promotion of large scale monoculture tree plantations

The question is: will biodiversity conservation concerns prevail over corporate interest?

Notes:

(1)<http://www.wrm.org.uy/bulletin/44/SouthAfrica.html>

(2) Testimonies of the “The green invasion”

<http://www.wrm.org.uy/plantations/video.html>

(3)[http://www.fao.org/docrep/007/ae156e/AE156E03.htm#P527\\_23818](http://www.fao.org/docrep/007/ae156e/AE156E03.htm#P527_23818)

(4)[http://www.fao.org/docrep/007/ae156e/AE156E04.htm#P994\\_47786](http://www.fao.org/docrep/007/ae156e/AE156E04.htm#P994_47786)

# Via Campesina women battle invasives with their own hands

## ***Out with invasives, in with justice***

On Tuesday, 4 March, around 900 women of the Via Campesina occupied the Tarumã Farm, 2,100 hectares big, in the municipality of Rosário do Sul, at about 400 km from the state capital Porto Alegre. They arrived at the area at about 6 am and started immediately to cut down eucalyptus trees and to plant native trees seedlings.

In their press release, the women declare that: "Our action is legitimate. It is Stora Enso that is acting illegally. Planting this green desert in the border region is a crime against the legislation of our country, against the 'pampa' (type of grassland) biome and against the food sovereignty of our state that stays with every time less land to produce food crops. We are cutting what is bad and planting what is good for the environment and for the people of Rio Grande do Sul".

This action was taking place among other activities organised for the International Women Day on the 8th of March. Women farmers are the most affected by the current export-oriented agriculture model based on the plundering of natural resources and the exclusion of small farmers by transnational companies.

## ***About Stora Enso***

The Stora Enso company is a Swedish Finnish company and according to the Brazilian legislation (law nr. 6.634 from 1979; and Article 20, par. 2 from the Brazilian Constitution) foreigners are not allowed to buy lands in an area of 150 km from

the Brazilian border with other countries. But this multinational is buying tens of areas in Rio Grande do Sul close to the border with Uruguay where the company also has plantations. The aim is to form a plantation area of more than 100 thousand hectares and implement pulp mills in the region.

Initially Stora Enso acquired lands in the name of the Derflin Company, a company linked to Stora Enso with the task of buying raw materials for the company. Since Derflin is also a foreign company, it was not able to legalize the lands. Therefore Stora Enso created a supposed company: the 'Agropecuária Azenglever', property of two Brazilians: João Fernando Borges and Otávio Pontes (respectively forest director and vice-president of Stora Enso for Latin America). At present, these two people are the biggest landowners in the Rio Grande do Sul state.

There is a federal police investigation going on to investigate this crime of Stora Enso, but in the meanwhile Stora Enso is acting freely.

## ***What do the women want?***

The women demand:  
- the cancellation of the acquisition of lands realized by Stora Enso in the border region and expropriation of these areas for land reform. Considering just the 45 thousand hectares registered by Azenglever, 2,250 families could be settled, creating 6,750 direct jobs. At present 2,500 families are living in tent camps in Rio Grande do Sul and the responsible state agency (INCRA) affirms that they do not

have lands to create new settlements.

- To withdraw the law proposals in the Senate and the Parliament which propose the reduction of the border region (in which foreigners are forbidden to buy lands). According to the women, this measure will only benefit foreign companies such as Stora Enso.

## ***Women violently evicted***

However, on the evening of the occupation, the Military police from Rio Grande do Sul violently expelled the women from the Via Campesina. According to the news, 800 women were arrested and as many as 50 wounded. 250 children present in the camp were separated from their mothers. The tents were destructed and the women's tools were taken from them.

The eviction happened so quickly because Stora Enso already had a permit of the Court in the Rio Grande do Sul state that it would not need any court decision to take supposed 'invaders' from their land. More information in Portuguese can be found at <http://www.mst.org.br/mst/pagina.php?cd=5032>

One noteworthy detail is that the State governor who gave permission for the violent police action received some 500.000 Reais in financial support for her election campaign from different plantation companies, including Stora Enso.....

(info taken from ASEED Europe [http://www.aseed.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=531&Itemid=1](http://www.aseed.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=531&Itemid=1) and Via Campesina press releases <http://www.viacampesina.org/>)

# Oceans in peril – bracketing the high seas

*saskia richartz and richard page - greenpeace*

As with other issues discussed at this year's SBSTTA, the negotiations on marine and coastal biodiversity were frustrating. In spite of there being only one substantive decision that officials needed to agree on – i.e. to adopt the scientific criteria and steps for the identification of marine areas in need of protection – negotiators managed to insert 43 sets of square brackets on just 5 pages of text (excluding Annexes), including 4 bracketed paragraphs and three bracketed Annexes.

What this shows is that Parties are deeply divided over even the simplest of questions, namely whether to protect marine areas in open ocean waters and deep-sea habitats on the basis of the best available science or not.

Brazil, Argentina, Cuba, Iceland, Japan, China, Peru and Uruguay were clearly trying to torpedo attempts to move beyond rhetoric to a situation where states can actually begin to identify areas in need of protection in the international waters of the high seas on the basis of criteria which have been developed over a number of years by a large number of recognised experts from around the world.

And we are not talking small fish: 80% of life on this planet lives in the sea. The high seas cover almost half of this planet, more than the entire land area that we are so familiar with. Yet these international waters beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, are the least regulated and least protected places in the world.

High seas fisheries have grown rapidly in the last thirty years as a result of declining nearshore stocks and the escalating value of prime fish like tuna on world markets. They are removing fish at rates far beyond those at which populations can replace themselves. As a result populations of large, ocean-going fish like swordfish, tuna, marlin and sharks have plummeted, falling on average to one tenth of their abundance in the 1950s. Some species, like the large oceanic whitetip shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*) could be a hundred to a thousand times less common than they were fifty years ago.

Moreover, trawls and gillnets now penetrate to depths of 2000m, while longlines can fish to 3000m. In the cold stillness and dark of the deep, these fisheries are targeting species that live slowly and reach

great ages. Because their population growth rates are so slow, deep-sea fish are even more vulnerable to overfishing. In addition, deep sea fishing is doing untold damage to seabed habitats, tearing up corals, sponges and seafans and leveling myriad other species.

Knowing this, it is hard to understand how come the African group and India are not taking the same position as the small island states and calling for swift adoption of the criteria. The criteria are scientifically sound and provide the essential tool for identifying a global network of marine protected areas that would safeguard the future of a sizeable proportion of our global heritage.

Not agreeing on scientific criteria for the establishment of protected areas in an area that covers half of this planet would simply make a mockery of the CBD's role and commitment to the protection of biodiversity. There is no time to waste, Parties must pull up their socks and act on their commitment to establish a global network of marine reserves by 2010 (decision VII/28).

## Ocean Fertilization and Geo-Engineering

*jim thomas - etc*

Should there be an international moratorium on ocean experiments intended to alter the climate? That is a question that parties to Convention on Biological Diversity will now have to address at CoP9. SBSTTA 13 ended with several strong proposals reflecting concern on ocean fertilization, a new issue for the CBD, urging parties to act with utmost caution and even a proposal for a moratorium (albeit in those ubiquitous square brackets).