

[CBD newsletter for civil society]

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Message from Ahmed Djoghlaf

Ahmed Djoghlaf is the Executive Secretary of the CBD

Civil society and non-governmental organizations have been and continue to be actively involved in the work and implementation of the CBD. In promoting and implementing sustainable and equitable environmental and developmental objectives, civil society organizations have worked tirelessly to translate the ideas of the Convention into practice.

The role of civil society in the Convention is as important now as it was in its development and inception phases. It is only with the full involvement of stakeholders of biodiversity that we will collectively realize the Convention's goals and the 2010 Biodiversity Target.

Prepared in cooperation with the CBD Alliance, this newsletter will provide a forum for the variety of civil society organizations, large and small, implementing the Convention. It will help raise visibility and awareness of the important role of civil society as critical partners in the Convention. I hope it will facilitate the sharing of experiences and views; encourage further action; promote active partnerships involving civil society; and become a valuable resource and communication tool for civil society and CBD Parties. In so doing, it will be one important step in building, with the full and active engagement of stakeholders, a universal "Global Nature Alliance" for life on Earth. 🌱

Name this Newsletter
can you remove the brackets?

This newsletter needs a name. Suggestions can be received at:
cso.newsletter@cbd.int



CBD Alliance advisory board members in Rome. Left to Right: Simone Lovera (Global Forest Coalition), Isaac Rojas (Friends of the Earth Costa Rica), Andrei Laletin (Friends of the Siberian Forests), Ashish Kothari (Kalpavriksh), Joji Carino (Tebtebba), Christine von Weizsacker (Ecoropa), Susanne Gura (Coordination Working Group on Biological Diversity, German NGO Forum on Environment and Development) PHOTO: JESSICA DEMPSEY

Message from CBD Alliance Making the CBD Matter for Life on Earth

Jessica Dempsey (CBD Alliance); Ashish Kothari (Kalpavriksh)

The CBD Alliance is a loose network of representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), social movements, Indigenous Peoples organizations (IPOs), and local community groups, advocating for improved and informed participation in Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) processes. Jessica Dempsey is the current coordinator of the Alliance. Ashish Kothari is an advisory board member to the CBD Alliance and also a member of Kalpavriksh, a long-standing Indian NGO that is also the current host organization for the CBD Alliance.

Civil society welcomes the opportunity presented by this new CBD newsletter, to interface with government representatives and other stakeholders involved in the Convention. Through this newsletter, we will profile how civil society is both actively working to implement the Convention and promoting its effective and equitable implementation by governments and other stakeholders. It will also provide civil society views on policy.

The work of civil society is critical for biodiversity. Indigenous peoples and local communities (including farmers, fishers, hunter-gatherers, pastoralists, crafts-persons), and also non-governmental organisations, scientific institutions, and others, carry out research, advocacy, and on-ground conservation and sustainable resource management. They work for policy changes relevant to conservation, sustainable use, and equity, including protection against destructive commercial and industrial threats, recognition of rights, and land and economic reforms.

COP 9 is a critical juncture for the CBD, indeed for humanity. Hundreds of civil society representatives are gathered in Bonn to help ensure that the *CBD matters for life on earth*. Parties must implement the CBD nationally, and collectively ensure that 2010 target of stemming biodiversity loss is met *effectively and equitably*.

This newsletter will be a forum for all kinds of civil society groups, including those less well known and of smaller voice: small NGOs from the global south and north, indigenous and community organizations, and social movements. This inaugural issue gives a taste of what might come by profiling brief articles from La Via Campesina, Global Forest Coalition, the International Indian Treaty Council, and our German hosts—the German NGO Forum on Environment and Development. 🌱

This newsletter aims to present a diversity of civil society opinions. The views expressed in the articles are the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, its Secretariat or the CBD Alliance.

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Message from Jochen Flasbarth

Jochen Flasbarth is Director-General, Nature Conservation, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

Biological diversity represents the wealth of Earth and provides the foundations of life for the whole of mankind. However, biodiversity is currently vanishing at an alarming rate worldwide. When we protect global biodiversity and use it sustainably, we are safeguarding the natural resources we need for our own and the survival of future generations, and helping to protect the climate. This is what the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD is all about.

We have to speed up our efforts. Urgent progress is needed regarding the elaboration and negotiation of an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit sharing, the implementation of the CBD Programmes of Work on Protected Areas and Forest Biological Diversity, the adoption of a strategy for financial resources mobilisation and the linkages between biodiversity and climate change.

Ambitious goals can only be achieved through the concerted efforts and combined strength of all sections of society. We therefore need both national and international alliances between policy-makers, science, the economic sector and the public. My hope is for us to jointly struggle for arresting the continuing destruction of biodiversity by 2010, and to mark the beginning of a trend reversal. 🌱



Lively demonstration at COP-8, lead by Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST).
PHOTOS: JESSICA DEMPSEY



Protected Areas and Forest Protection can and must Align with Indigenous Rights

Estebancio Castro Diaz (Global Forest Coalition and International Indian Treaty Council)

Estebancio Castro Diaz (Kuna from Kuna Yala, Panama) is International Indian Treaty Council's Indigenous Rights and Bio-diversity Program Consultant and is Global Forest Coalition REDD and Indigenous Right campaigner. Estebancio is IITC's principle representative to the Convention on Biological Diversity Working Groups on Article 8j and related provisions, and Access and Benefit Sharing, as well as to the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore.

Indigenous Peoples, traditional spiritual practitioners and Indigenous organizations have the right to define, administer, protect and preserve their own protected areas and their own sacred places such as those connected to mother earth, water, animals and forests. They have the right to protect such areas from negative development and destruction. While Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity have made some ground connecting Indigenous rights with biodiversity conservation, there is still much to do, both in policy development and on the ground.

Mechanisms at both the international and national level need to be established and laws passed and enforced for the immediate protection and preservation of our sacred places, forests, rivers, cultural property and spiritual rights in perpetuity so that our sacred places and traditional knowledge will be protected for future generations and their descendents. It is imperative that Indigenous Peoples are *central* to the creation of any new protected areas. Commitment to the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and to their status as rightsholders, while often stated by governments and conservationists, is still not the norm in practice.

Many dams, oil fields and mines have negatively impacted on the culture of Indigenous Peoples.

These kinds of activities have destroyed those forests and sacred places that are used for traditional healing and ceremonial instructional purposes. Indigenous Peoples have the right to full involvement in development planning and to oppose agricultural, industrial and extractive development on their lands and territories undertaken without their free prior informed consent. A major concern is the current expansion of new agro-industrial monocultures, as such monocultures contribute to deforestation and degradation of natural ecosystems. Indeed, governments at the CBD should ensure that any definition of forests excludes monocultures, or plantations, which are wholly inimical to biodiversity.

Finally, 'innovative financial mechanisms' for conservation like carbon and biodiversity offsets must be opposed, as they provide an escape route to those most responsible for the destruction of the planet, and as they are often used by governments to continue carrying out activities in violation of the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. Parties to the CBD must re-focus its efforts on developing policies and practices that keep Indigenous and local communities at its core, not falling into the false and unsustainable trend of making biodiversity, or climate change "pay".

Sustainable family farming keeps diversity alive and cools down the earth! Stop privatisation of natural resources!

La Via Campesina is the international movement of peasants, small- and medium-sized producers, landless, rural women, indigenous people, rural youth and agricultural workers. Our member organisations are from 56 countries from Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas. The principal objective of La Via Campesina is to develop solidarity and unity among small farmer organizations in order to promote gender parity and social justice in fair economic relations; the preservation of land, water, seeds and other natural resources; food sovereignty; sustainable agricultural production based on small and medium-sized producers. www.viacampesina.org, viacampesina@viacampesina.org

The world's farmers, men and women, implement simple and efficient solutions to check both the loss of biodiversity and climate change:

- » Through sustainable family farming we fix carbon in soils, thus cooling down the earth;
- » By using local farm seeds we need less carbon-greedy inputs and can adapt to climate change;
- » In servicing local markets, we eliminate the need for long distance transport, reducing CO₂ emissions and saving fossil energy.

The solutions promoted by corporate-interests—and those all too often chosen by governments—are, to the contrary, all based on *privatisation* of natural resources and knowledge, on the *destruction* of humus which stocks carbon in soils, on *inordinate consumption* of fossil energy (inputs, transport) and on a senseless waste of plant proteins in industrial livestock farms.

These so-called "solutions" destroy rural and indigenous communities. By expanding agrofuel production, use of GMOs, patents on life, forest monocultures, and supposedly "protected" areas, those men and women, who have been protecting and renewing biodiversity for thousands of years are thrown off the land. This worsens environmental crises.

We have to choose between the profits of corporations and sustainable family farming which can save our planet!

La Via Campesina calls on the government officials and Ministers who will take part in the negotiations of the Convention on Biological Diversity

- » to act responsibly;
- » to resist pressure exerted by corporate-interests;
- » to recognize the right of local people to freely dispose and manage sustainably natural wealth and resources; and to recognize the right to food sovereignty. 🌱



Participants at the Planet D



Some civil society representatives pretending to be trees in Rome, Italy just prior to the 13th SBSTTA.

PHOTOS: JESSICA DEMPSEY

Protecting Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Global Gene Negotiations

Le`a Malia Kanehe

*Le`a is Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) and works as Legal Analyst for the Indigenous Peoples Council on Biocolonialism, an Indigenous non-profit organization based on the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe Reservation in Northwestern Nevada (USA). IPCB was created to assist Indigenous peoples in the protection of their genetic resources, Indigenous knowledge, and cultural and human rights from the negative effects of biotechnology. See www.ipcb.org. For more information, please email lkanehe@ipcb.org. A version of this article was first published in English in the journal *Development and Cooperation* and in German in its twin publication *Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit*, May 2008.*

For decades now, the biotechnology industry as well as private and governmental researchers and their institutions have claimed patents over our seeds, our medicines, and applications of our ancestral knowledge related to the use of the flora and fauna from our traditional territories, and packaged all of these for sale on the global market for pharmaceutical, cosmetic, chemical, industrial and other uses. Proponents of the

Convention on Biological Diversity's proposed international regime on access and benefit sharing (ABS) are promoting it as a measure to end this biopiracy. However, many Indigenous peoples recognize this process as "biocolonialism"—the extension of the forces of colonization to the biological resources that Indigenous peoples have nurtured over millennia. In this context, the anticipated ABS regime can be understood as just another application

of western law to legitimize theft from Indigenous peoples and local communities.

Based on negotiations since COP7 in 2004, Parties now have several optional texts and measures before them related to the objectives, scope, nature and elements of the regime as they head into COP9 and towards a proposed completion of the negotiations and adoption of the regime by 2010 at COP10. Although the North and South are often divergent on the issues under negotiation, one principle that they do agree on is that states hold sovereignty over genetic resources within their boundaries and therefore, they agree that the regime must vest states with the right to determine access to such resources.

However, this common agreement also represents a common failure to fully recognize and protect the rights of Indigenous peoples to legal ownership over our traditional territories and the related decision-making power to determine access to and use of genetic material that has originated

from our lands and waters.

Tremendous progress would be made if all Parties would acknowledge the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2007 as the international minimum standard for the protection of our rights to own, control access to, and determine appropriate utilization of genetic resources and Indigenous knowledge. An ABS regime without integration of these standards would mean biocolonialism continues.

The process in the CBD is a negotiation about genes and traditional knowledge. In many cases, these genes arise from our territories, lands and waters and the knowledge related to those genes is ours. Therefore, any decision making about the rules to regulate the buying and selling of those genes and Indigenous knowledge must include our right to make our own decisions about what will be the best path for our future generations based on our own cultural and spiritual beliefs and related customary and/or codified laws. ✎



Biodiversity demonstration, Bonn, 12 May 2008. PHOTO: C. GIBB

How to get involved in the CBD Alliance?

The CBD Alliance facilitates preparations and communications for many civil society organizations during CBD negotiations and in the intersessional periods. All civil society groups are welcome to be involved by:

- » Coming to morning meetings at COP 9—the CBD Alliance will facilitate morning CSO meetings, every day, from 8:45–9:45 in the Gustav Stresemann Institute.
- » Joining the CBD Alliance list serve, to stay connected through the intersessional period. Send a note to jdempsey@interchange.ubc.ca
- » For more information on the Alliance and ECOS, please go to www.cbdalliance.org or contact current project facilitators —Jessica Dempsey jdempsey@interchange.ubc.ca and Swati Shresth swatishresth@yahoo.com.

The CBD Alliance would like to thank Swedbio, Hivos-Oxfam Novib Biodiversity Fund and CIDA for their generous support.

How to be involved in future newsletters

The CBD Secretariat hopes to put out the first 'full-length' newsletter in the fall of 2008, or prior to the next major meeting. Call for submissions will be posted on the CBD website, the CBD Alliance website, and through the CBD Alliance listserve and other networks - but ideas for articles can be sent now to the Secretariat at the email address provided below. A regionally balanced editorial board will help select articles. For more information please contact csnewsletter@cbd.int.

CBD Alliance contact person during COP 9:
Jessica Dempsey +49 (0)176-8505 5783
jdempsey@interchange.ubc.ca

UN-Biodiversity summit must be saved!

On 9 April 2008, environment and development associations addressed the German chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel in Berlin with an urgent plea. They called on her to start a diplomatic initiative at the highest political level to make the UN-Conference on Biodiversity in Bonn a success and to significantly reduce the extinction of species and loss of habitat by 2010. The text of their appeal is provided here.

Urgent appeal on the 9th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 19 – 30 May 2008 in Bonn, Germany

Dear Chancellor,

It is with great concern that we have observed the international preparations for the 9th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, scheduled to take place in the city of Bonn in May. In our view there is a high risk that the Conference could fail. We have experienced the use of negotiating strategies to take back former achievements. We have watched as a handful of states have acted

against the interests of the majority. We have seen however that a few delegations, including the Germans, have championed the preservation of biological diversity and an equitable balance between rich and poor countries.

We urgently need to make significant progress in protect the biodiversity on this planet. According to an IUCN assessment, 160 species reach extinction each day. Along with climate change, the preservation of biological diversity is one of the major responsibilities of the global community of states. Achieving the target of significantly reducing the loss of biological diversity by 2010 depends on a positive outcome of the upcoming conference.

This is our urgent appeal to you to start immediately a diplomatic initiative to ensure that the 9th Conference on Biodiversity is a success. Among other things the industrialized countries must provide financial support to assist developing countries in stemming the loss of biodiversity.

We need your commitment now!

With kind regards

Meena Raman, *Friends of the Earth International/BUND*
Michael Frein, *German Forum on Environment and Development*
Stefan Krug, *Greenpeace*

Berlin, 9 April 2008

NGO Focal Point for COP 9, Bonn 2008

Germany and the city of Bonn are hosting COP 9 and MOP 4 from 12 to 30 May 2008. We will be welcoming up to 1,000 members of NGOs and initiatives, local communities and Indigenous Peoples organizations (IPOs).

The NGO Focal Point for COP 9

and MOP 4 provides information and assistance for groups and initiatives to ensure a broad national and international attendance in Bonn. During the three conference weeks the NGO as well as the IPO Headquarter are located at the STRESEMANN Institute.

Our website www.biodiv-network.de offers information, conference proceedings, position papers and event notes in German, English and partially in Spanish.

The German NGOs created a special claim for COP 9 that will be your guide during the conferences. 🌱



Contact persons during COP 9: **Guenter Mitlacher** +49-(0)170-839 15 52; COP9@forumue.de
Cornelia Korte +49-(0)179-987 2977; c.korte@forumue.de



International Dialogue Forum 100 days before COP 9, Berlin, 7 – 8 February 2008. (L to R): Jochen Flasbarth, Round Table on ABS, Ahmed Djoghlaif

CBD Secretariat contact persons during COP 9:
Neil Pratt +49 (0)170-55 74 137 neil.pratt@cbd.int **Christine Gibb** +49 (0)228-39 175 134 christine.gibb@cbd.int

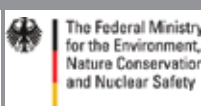
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413 St. Jacques, Suite 800, Montréal, Québec, H2Y 1N9 Canada

Tel. +1 514 288 2220 | Fax: +1 514 288 6588.
secretariat@cbd.int www.cbd.int

