



ETC Group
Media Advisory
14 October 2010
www.etcgroup.org

UN TO CONFRONT SCI-FI CLIMATE SOLUTIONS AT BIODIVERSITY MEETING Civil Society Calls for Precaution

As environment ministers from 193 countries take stock of the globe's dramatic loss of biodiversity at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Nagoya, Japan next week (18-29 October 2010), ETC Group warns that high-risk "technological fixes" that claim to hold the key for solving the climate crisis should be put on ice.

The global meeting, marking the International Year of Biodiversity, will debate a *de facto* moratorium on the release into the environment of synthetic life forms (a form of extreme genetic engineering marketed by industry as the building blocks of the "green economy") and on geoengineering activities (massive intentional manipulations of the Earth's systems). Existing international law has no adequate controls for these controversial new technologies.

ETC Group is releasing three new reports and hosting three side events in Nagoya on these technofixes, explaining the interests behind them and the risks inherent in their uncontrolled development.

1. Synthetic Biology: The CBD's scientific body that met earlier this year recommended prohibiting the release of machine-made organisms into the environment. Synthetic biology, or extreme genetic engineering, threatens fragile ecosystems through potential accidental releases. Biodiversity is further endangered by the commercialization of such organisms, led by transnational corporations seeking to commodify the remaining three-quarters of the world's terrestrial biomass that has not yet been brought under their control.

ETC Group's report *The New Biomasters: Synthetic Biology and the Next Assault on Biodiversity and Livelihoods* will be released on 1 November 2010; its findings will be discussed at a side event in Nagoya on 18 October (1:15 pm, Room 212A, Bldg 2, 1st floor). A pre-release briefing paper is available now at <http://www.etcgroup.org/en/node/5201>.

2. Geoengineering: The CBD's scientific body proposed earlier this year that states ensure that no climate-related geoengineering activities take place until risks and impacts are fully evaluated. If accepted, this proposal would prevent real-world experimentation of controversial planet-altering schemes such as ocean fertilization, stratospheric aerosols and cloud whitening.

Three influential reports on geoengineering are expected to be released in Washington in the coming weeks. Climate-hacking experiments are being opposed by a coalition of non-governmental organizations and individuals under the HOME campaign (www.handsoffmotherearth.org), among others.

ETC Group's report *Geopiracy: The Case Against Geoengineering* will be released 18 October and discussed at a side event in Nagoya on 19 October (1:15 pm, Room 234C, Bldg 2, 3rd floor). A pre-release briefing paper is available now at <http://www.etcgroup.org/en/node/5202>.

3. Patents terminate biodiversity. Under the guise of developing “climate-ready” crops, hundreds of sweeping, multi-genome patents have been filed in the past two years. Three corporations – DuPont, BASF, and Monsanto – account for two-thirds of them. Genetically engineered, “climate-ready” crops are a false solution to climate change that will increase farmers’ dependence on GM crops, jeopardize biodiversity and threaten food sovereignty. Governments meeting in Nagoya must put a stop to the patent grab.

ETC Group's report *Gene Giants Stockpile Patents on “Climate-Ready” Crops in Bid to Become Biomasssters* will be released and discussed at a side event in Nagoya on 25 October (4:30 pm, Room 236, Bldg 2, 3rd floor).

Contact information for ETC Group (NOTE DIFFERENT TIME ZONES)

At the CBD in Nagoya, Japan:

Pat Mooney: mooney@etcgroup.org (Mobile +1-613-240-0045)

Silvia Ribeiro: silvia@etcgroup.org (Mobile: + 52-1-55-2653-3330)

Neth Dano: neth@etcgroup.org (Mobile: + 63-917-532-9369)

In Auckland, New Zealand

Cindy Baxter, cindybax@gmail.com,

In Montreal, Canada:

Diana Bronson: diana@etcgroup.org (Mobile: +1-514-629-9236)

In San Francisco, USA

Jeff Conant: jefeconant@gmail.com (Mobile: +1 575 770 2829)

ETC Group or Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration

ETC Group is an international civil society organization. We address the global socioeconomic and ecological issues surrounding new technologies with special concern for their impact on indigenous peoples, rural communities and biodiversity. We investigate ecological erosion (including the erosion of cultures and human rights); the development of new technologies; and we monitor global governance issues including corporate concentration and trade in technologies. We operate at the global political level and have consultative status with several UN agencies and treaties. We work closely with other civil society organizations and social movements, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America. We have offices in Canada, USA, Mexico and Philippines.