



Press Release
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Civil Society Calls for a Moratorium on Geoengineering Experiments

Extreme Risk Demands Extreme Precaution urges Civil Society Group at UN Ministerial

Nagoya, Japan -- One of the hottest issues before the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Nagoya, Japan is a set of crucial decisions that could bring about a moratorium on proposed experiments in geoengineering, a set of high-risk climate technofixes. At the opening plenary of the conference, the CBD Alliance on behalf of civil society organizations called for a moratorium on geoengineering experiments.

Releasing a critical report on the subject today, the ETC Group called for governments to support the moratorium. The group argues that geoengineering experiments, due to their unprecedented scale, are both beyond the parameters of real-world scientific testing and beyond the scope of current international law. A handful of OECD countries and corporations are pushing for massive “technofix” experiments rather than reducing emissions at home.

“Some of the proponents of these technologies think it’s easier to ‘manage the sun’ than get people to take a bus,” said Pat Mooney, Executive Director of ETC Group, in Nagoya.

Earlier this year, the CBD’s scientific body proposed a ban on climate-related geoengineering activities that will go beyond the 2008 moratorium on ocean fertilization, to include solar radiation management techniques such as the release of stratospheric aerosols and cloud whitening, until all of the inherent risks and impacts have been fully evaluated.

Civil society organizations gathered this week in Nagoya are urging governments from 193 countries to ratify the proposal and put such experiments on hold. ETC Group’s 52-page report, *[Geopiracy: The Case Against Geoengineering](#)* makes the case for a moratorium, calling geoengineering, “a political strategy aimed at letting industrialized countries off the hook for their climate debt.”

Confronted by rising global alarm over climate chaos, nations have the choice of adopting socially responsible policies to dramatically cut fossil-fuel use or to seek silver-bullet solutions. ETC Group’s new report offers summaries of the various geoengineering proposals, and details their potential impacts on biodiversity and on equitable climate change solutions.

“Scientists can do research on computer models and in the lab, but they have no right to do real-world experiments on Mother Earth without any prior inter-governmental discussion and agreement that involves the participation of people who will be directly affected,” said Neth Dano, Programme Manager for ETC Group in the Philippines.

“Opting for geoengineering flies in the face of precaution,” the report states. “Even those who would like to see large-scale investment in the field are quick to acknowledge that we do not know enough about the

Earth's systems to risk real-world geoengineering experiments.”

A key message of the report is that geoengineering is not simply a cheap technofix for climate change, but a political smokescreen that will be deployed by wealthy nations to avoid undertaking real domestic emission reductions and commitments to help the global South fend off impending catastrophe. Given that only the world's wealthiest countries have the spending capacity to engage in large-scale climate manipulation, the report asks, who will have the right to set the global thermostat?

The report contends that several international treaties could be violated by geoengineering, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Environmental Modification Treaty (ENMOD), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Tom Goldtooth, Director of the North America based Indigenous Environmental Network, said, “These kinds of dangerous experiments, promoted by a small group of scientists and rich industrial countries, are a continuation of the technological nightmare that's been imposed on our peoples for five centuries. Contrary to fixing the problems, geoengineering threatens to wreak more havoc on our biosphere and our communities. It needs to be stopped.”

The report *Geopiracy: The Case Against Geoengineering* is available online at <http://www.etcgroup.org/en/node/5217> and will be discussed at a side event at the CBD meeting in Nagoya on Tuesday, 19 October (1:15 pm, Room 234C, Bldg 2, 3rd floor). A press conference on the report is also organized on 19 November, at 5:15 pm (COP 10 International Press Conference Room, Room 3f, Building 3). A short briefing paper is also available at <http://www.etcgroup.org/en/node/5202>.

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ETC Group or Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration 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 the Philippines.

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