

**A joint news release prepared by: ETC Group, Third World Network, SEARICE,
Corporate Watch and Greenpeace South East Asia**

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Pissing for Profit in the Pacific

*Geo-engineers prepare to pollute Philippine Seas as
International Ocean Dumping Body Meets*

As governments meet in London today to discuss whether the high seas should be used for large-scale iron dumping by companies promising a quick-fix for climate change, one private company is rushing ahead with a new ocean dumping scheme in Southeast Asia – this time with urea. Civil society groups have learned that Ocean Nourishment Corporation (ONC) of Sydney, Australia has been given a “go signal” by the Philippines government to experimentally dump hundreds of tonnes of industrially-produced urea, most likely into the Sulu Sea between Philippines and Borneo.

A coalition of international civil society groups today called on the governments of the London Convention – the UN body established to prevent marine dumping – to stop ONC from undertaking experimental ocean dumping of urea. The coalition is also calling for a moratorium on large scale and commercial geoengineering projects until there is public debate, intergovernmental oversight and thorough assessment of social, economic and environmental impacts.

“The global South is once again a dumping ground for risky technologies – this time our oceans are being threatened by high-risk geoengineering schemes that are rushing forward without public consultation or intergovernmental oversight,” said Neth Dano of Malaysia-based Third World Network. “A few months ago we learned that Planktos, Inc. wants to dump iron particles in the ocean near the Galapagos – now Southeast Asian coastal waters are the target for experimental urea dumping. It’s disgraceful that carbon-trading profiteers are marketing these experiments as humanitarian projects to feed hungry people and arrest climate change,” said Dano.

“This technology is dangerous and unacceptable because it could imperil our marine environment – the main source of survival and livelihood for poor fisherfolk in the Philippines,” said Ruperto Alerosa, chair of Kilusang Mangingisda – a fisherfolk movement in the Philippines. “Under Philippine law, experiments like this must undergo environmental impact assessment and the communities that would be affected must give informed consent. Proponents of this technology must comply with these laws and the Philippine government must enforce them,” said Alerosa.

Wilhelmina Pelegrina of SEARICE in the Philippines agrees, “Large-scale urea dumping is treating our oceans like a communal toilet. Our already endangered marine ecosystems are the lifeblood of our communities – and ONC must not be permitted to foul them for their own profit.”

In June the London Convention's scientific advisory body warned that large-scale plans to fertilise the ocean near the Galapagos using iron particles was environmentally risky and there is no scientific evidence it will be effective. That statement of concern is due to be discussed this week by the full meeting of governments who are parties to the London Convention. One private ocean fertilization company, Climos, will propose a voluntary code of conduct at the meeting.

Ocean Nourishment Corp. (ONC) is proposing a new technology that is similar to the one criticized by the London Convention. The company claims that by pumping kilo-tonne quantities of dissolved urea (a form of nitrogen) into the ocean their patented technology will provoke large plankton blooms and draw carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. They argue that urea dumping could tackle climate change and push up fish stocks. However, international scientific bodies, including the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have warned that toxic tides and lifeless oceans might instead result from such geo-engineering activities. Geoengineering refers to intentional large-scale manipulation of land, sea or stratosphere by humans to bring about environmental change.

“No one knows how many companies are lining up to promote geoengineering schemes that could introduce extreme hazards to people and the environment,” notes Jim Thomas of ETC Group. “The recent cases of Planktos and now ONC illustrate the vacuum in oversight and accountability. There are no regulations in place to govern geoengineering and no intergovernmental body has the mandate to decide when or if large-scale manipulations of the earth, sea and atmosphere are acceptable or wise as a response to climate change,” said Thomas.

Concerned civil society groups are urgently requesting that the London Convention consider ONC's urea dumping plans. Dr. David Santillo of Greenpeace International's Science Unit who is attending the London Convention meeting said, “The scientific advisory body to the London Convention have unanimously shown their grave concern for the ecological risks of ocean fertilisation. We are calling on parties to act to prevent reckless carbon profiteers such as ONC from carrying on regardless.”

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Note to editors: A 3-page backgrounder on this issue, prepared for the London Convention, is available at <http://www.etcgroup.org>