

Biofuels: A Disaster in the Making



The undersigned NGOs, Indigenous Peoples Organizations, farmer's movements and individuals call upon the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change to immediately suspend all subsidies and other forms of inequitable support for the import and export of biofuels.

We recognize that the local production and consumption of biomass plays an important role in sustainable livelihood strategies of, in particular, rural women in developing countries. Certain small-scale and strictly regulated sustainable forms of biofuel production can be beneficial at the national level. However, the modalities of biomass consumption and production must be carefully analyzed in conjunction with communities, to introduce adaptive measures that will maintain and enhance the patterns of sustainability, while avoiding negative impacts on health and the adverse effects inherent to increases in demand or changes in socioeconomic settings. Solar energy often offers a sustainable alternative to traditional biomass.

Meanwhile, international trade in biofuels is already causing a negative impact on food sovereignty, rural livelihoods, forests and other ecosystems, and these negative impacts are expected to accumulate rapidly. Large-scale, export-oriented production of biofuel requires large-scale monocultures of trees, sugarcane, corn, oilpalm, soy and other crops. These monocultures already form the number one cause of rural depopulation and deforestation worldwide. The rapidly increasing demand for these crops as a source of biofuel will lead to:

- increased land competition leading to further land concentration, the marginalization of small-scale agriculture and the widespread conversion of forests and other ecosystems;
- arable land that is currently used to grow food being used to grow fuel, leading to staggering food prices and causing hunger, malnutrition and impoverishment amongst the poorest sectors of society;
- rural unemployment and depopulation;
- the destruction of the traditions, cultures, languages and spiritual values of Indigenous Peoples and rural communities;
- the extensive use of agro-chemicals, which deteriorate human health and ecosystems
- the destruction of watersheds and the pollution of rivers, lakes and streams;
- droughts and other local and regional climatic extremes; and
- the extensive use of genetically modified organisms leading to unprecedented risks.

These effects will have particularly a negative impact on women and Indigenous Peoples, who are economically marginalized and more dependent on natural resources like water and forests.

Biofuels are a disaster in the making. Existing legally binding standards, regulations and enforcement mechanisms in the (potential) production countries are absolutely insufficient to prevent the above-mentioned impacts. International demand for biofuels is already surpassing supply in key countries like Malaysia and Brazil, giving an important push to the expansion of destructive crops like oil palm and sugar cane. Initiatives to produce these monocultures "responsibly" are rejected by many NGOs

and social movements in the production countries themselves, who have emphasized that the above-mentioned negative social and environmental impacts are inherent to the large-scale production of monocultures.

There is nothing green or sustainable to imported or exported biofuel. Instead of destroying the lands and livelihoods of local communities and Indigenous Peoples in the South through yet another form of colonialism, we call upon Northern countries to recognize their responsibility for destroying the planet's climate system, to reduce their energy consumption to sustainable levels, to pay the climate debt they have created by failing to do so until now and to dramatically increase investment in solar energy and sustainable wind energy.

We also call upon all governments to develop and effectively enforce environmental and social standards and regulations that ensure that national biofuel production industries do not destroy the livelihoods and ecosystems of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Corporations should be held strictly liable for any social and environmental damage that has occurred and they should be effectively prosecuted if they do not uphold environmental and labor laws.

Signed: (for additional signatures contact Global Forest Coalition, simonelovera@yahoo.com)

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| Global Forest Coalition | CORE, India |
| Pacific Indigenous Peoples Environment Coalition | Red America Latina Libre de Transgenicos |
| Institute of Cultural Affairs, Ghana | Sobrevivencia/Friends of the Earth-Paraguay |
| Oilwatch | CENSAT Agua Viva/Friends of the Earth-Colombia |
| International alliance of Indigenous and Tribal People of the Tropical Forest | Friends of the Earth-Western Australia |
| World Rainforest Movement | Groundwork/ Friends of the Earth-South Africa |
| Global Justice Ecology Project | RAPALMIRA |
| Friends of the Earth-Latin America and the Caribbean | RAP-AL Colombia |
| Indigenous Nationalities International centre for development, Nepal | Acción Ecológica, Ecuador |
| ICTI, Indonesia | Instituto de Estudios Ecologistas del Tercer Mundo, Ecuador |
| Inter-Mountain Peoples'Education and Culture in Thailand Association, Thailand | Fundacion para la Promocion del Conocimiento Indigena, Panama |
| Namanga Urban Community | FASE-ES, Brazil |
| Environmental Group, Kenya | Ecological Society of the Philippines |
| Ethnic Minority and Indigenous Rights Organisation of Africa | Forest Peoples Programme, UK |
| Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee - East Africa | Asociación Indígena Ambiental, Panama |
| Prakuyo Community, Tanzania | Worldforests, Scotland |
| Consejo Indigena Mesoamericano - CIMA | Bhartiya Kissan Union |
| FOAG/COICA-France | Robin Wood, Germany |
| Simba Maasai Outreach Organisation, Kenya | Sarhad Conservation Network, Pakistan |
| Galesa Environment Conservation Organisation, Kenya | Centre Internationnal d'Etudes Forestières et Environnementales, Cameroon |
| | GM Watch |
| | REDES/ Friends of the Earth-Uruguay |
| | SAM/Friends of the Earth Malaysia. |

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 KEPS/HKCA, Pakistan
 Lismore Climate Action Group, Australia
 Rainforest Information Centre, Australia
 Biowatch, South Africa
 Munloch Vigil, Scotland
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 Timberwatch, South Africa
 Fundacion Ambiente Total del Chaco,
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 Corporate Europe Observatory
 Costa Carrera, Chile
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 Bezirksverband der Grünen Jugend
 Unterfranken, Germany
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 Germany
 Climate Change Action Network, Australia
 Big Scrub Environment Centre, Australia
 Genethics Foundation
 XminY Solidarityfund, Netherlands
 Amigu di Tera / FoE Curaçao
 PENGON/ Friends of the Earth-Palestine
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 Yakshi , India
 Andhra Pradesh Adivasi Aikya Vedika,
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 Friends of the Earth- Ghana
 LIFE e.V., Germany
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 IUCN Commission on Environmental,
 Economic and Social Policy
 Maudesco/Friends of the Earth-Mauritius
 CESTA/Friends of the Earth-El Salvador
 Friends of the Earth-Nepal
 CELCOR-Friends of the Earth Papua New
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 Friends of the Earth-Finland
 Pembina Institute
 Blue Planet Project
 Lewis District Green Party
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 Hungary
 South African Climate Action Network
 Safe Food Coalition, South Africa
 Progressio, UK
 Friends of the Oldman River, Canada
 Pacific Institute of Resource Management,
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