



people's
Forest Forum

FRONTPAGE BAN ON GM-TREES WORKSHOPS DISCUSSION WHAT'S NEW?

Open petition for the UN Forum on Forests

GLOBAL BAN ON GM-TREES

We the signatories

wish to point out that

in the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity world leaders declared they were conscious "of the intrinsic value of biological diversity and of the ecological, genetic, social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational and aesthetic values of biological diversity and its components,

Conscious also of the importance of biological diversity for evolution and for maintaining life sustaining systems of the biosphere,

Affirming that the conservation of biological diversity is a common concern of humankind."

We recognize that

forests are a key factor sustaining the climate and the composition of the atmosphere.

We state that forests, along with the oceans, are key to the diversity of life on the planet - this diversity being the result of millions of years of evolution enabling the species to adapt to their surrounding ecosystems and the ecosystems to adapt to the surrounding climate.

We further wish to point out that genetic diversity within a species is part of the evolutionary original capital helping the species to survive in changing conditions, while species diversity within ecosystems is part of the capital helping the ecosystems to adapt to climate change.

We state that

the decision made in the context of the UN-lead Kyoto process to allow the use of genetically modified trees to tackle climate change is in contravention of the principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Trying to fight climate change by growing GM-trees would lead to the creation of vast plantations of cloned GM-trees on our planet. It would mean enormous losses in terms of diversity, while exposing these GM monocultures to disease, pests - and the effects of the ongoing climate change itself.

We believe that

the risks for biosafety involved in the introduction of genetically modified trees are such that they extend over state borders as well as generations, and should therefore not be taken at the present state of knowledge. Studies in population genetics show that genetic exchanges between trees can extend over whole continents. There is a real risk that by introducing GM-trees we would trigger a series of GM-contaminations spreading all over the forest cover on our planet. Other dangerous ecological scenarios include the potential metabolic incompatibility of GM-trees with their ecological surroundings, as well as genetically modified material being transferred to viruses and bacteria.

On the grounds of what has been stated above, we demand that the world reject the introduction of genetically modified trees.

In our view, we should be heading in the opposite direction. Instead of establishing plantations of genetically modified trees, we should strive to restore the forest cover of our planet towards its former riches and abundance.

Diverse, healthy and vital forests can best safeguard the ability of our living planet to adapt to the ongoing climate change. They also form the best basis for a diverse, healthy and vital forest economy, now and in the future.