

## **! Brazil Wins!**

*As mentioned in plenary and working group yesterday, civil society organizations are monitoring Party interventions in the forest discussions. Treating it like the World Cup, Brazil has managed to completely obliterate the competition, even against other countries with large and biodiverse forests. Way to go Brazil! Below we present the top performers – we stopped counting at 22.00 hrs, as soon as Brazil reached 1 full hour of speaking.*

Country	# Interventions	Approximate Time
<b>Brazil</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>1 hour</b>
<b>Canada</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>16.5 min</b>
<b>Germany</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13 min</b>

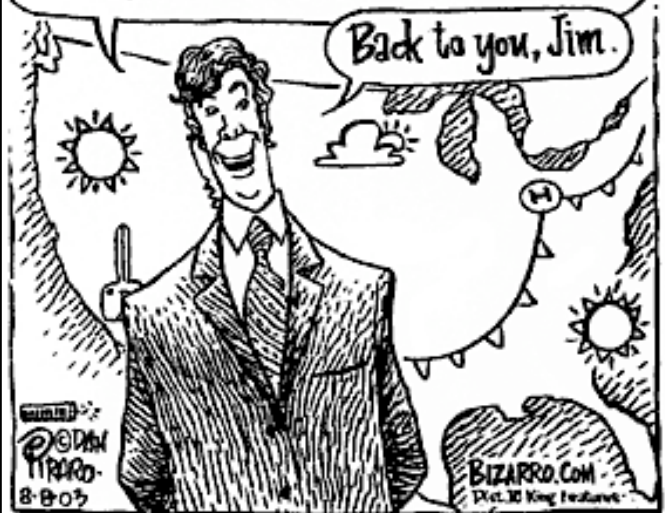
**NO GE TREES**  
**NO AGROFUELS**

Dismayed by the direction of SBSTTA 13 negotiations, many civil society groups gathered yesterday in front of the plenary with banners reading 'NO GE Trees' and 'No Agrofuels'. Representatives passed out copies of the *ECO*, which highlighted a letter signed by almost 150 organizations demanding a ban on GE tree field-testing. Photos of the event can be found at [www.cbdalliance.org](http://www.cbdalliance.org)

On GE trees many of us were encouraged by the positions of Liberia, backed up by other African countries. At writing, it is unfortunate that the text is in brackets, but many of us are looking forward (in a masochistic way) to discussing this issue further in COP 9. Ditto for agrofuels, as any references to them (also know as biofuels) are swimming in brackets. At least they remain on the agenda.

**BIZARRO** Dan Piraro

Our extended forecast includes global warming & the catastrophic end of the human race. But for the weekend, it's looking like sunny skies, mild temperatures, & a general apathy toward environmental concerns.



**While we have the floor, ECO and the CBD Alliance thank Swedbio, Hivos-Oxfam Novib Biodiversity Fund, and CIDA for their on-going support!**

# The Decline and Fall of the Roman SBSTTA?

*patrick mulvany, practical action*

At 2:00am Thursday morning, Delegates concluded their session by ditching the 'Vision' for the work of the CBD on Agricultural Biodiversity. As they left the building, the Moon entered a total eclipse. An Omen?

Not only is agricultural biodiversity still threatened but SBSTTA's decline may precede a fall unless COP takes a bold decision to ensure the primacy of sustaining agricultural biodiversity over the commodification of agriculture.

On Wednesday night, through tedious interventions, questioning and often deleting text that might, even slightly, challenge the unfettered growth in production of, and international trade in, industrial agricultural and livestock products including agrofuels, a few countries wore down any opposition in a long, repetitive, monolingual session.

The result is a limp paper that is literally 'visionless'. It is weaker than the documents produced 12 years ago at their second meeting held in Montreal in 1996. That meeting built upon the Rio process and recognised the importance of agricultural biodiversity, 'its distinctive features and problems requiring distinctive solutions'. Later that year in Buenos Aires, COP 3 agreed the first Decision on agricultural biodiversity. To this they attached Annex 1 which succinctly summarised the challenges to and benefits of agricultural biodiversity, translated four years later in Nairobi into a programme of work.

Now, in Rome, the UN's food and agriculture capital, SBSTTA 13 presaged another dynamic development of actions and policy - a 'paradigm shift towards biological intensification' as FAO described it in their opening speech and echoed in many lively interventions, Side Events, reports and posters throughout the week.

SBSTTA could have built on all these calls for change that reinforce what, especially women, farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, forest dwellers and other food providers have been doing and saying since the dawn of civilisation: we need to work with nature, nurture the land and waters and agricultural biodiversity, using biologically-based agriculture, livestock production and fisheries that provide healthy local food for people and healthily functioning ecosystems.

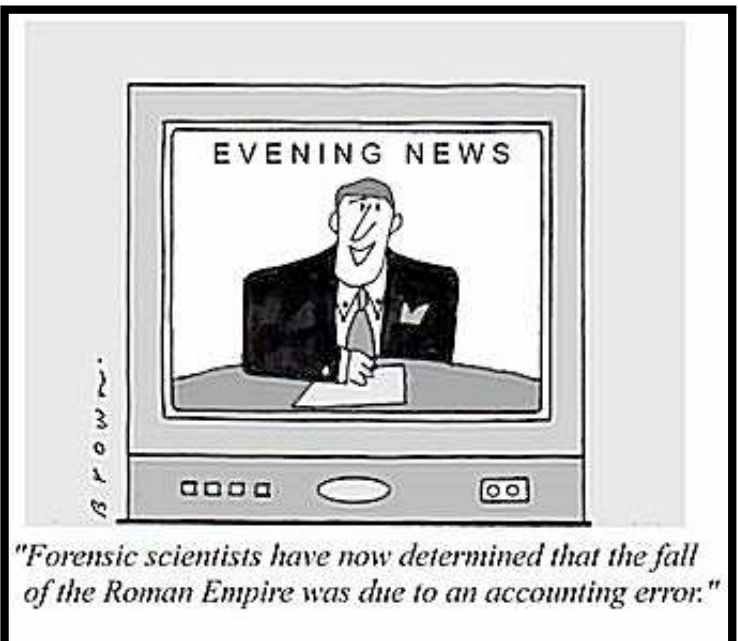
SBSTTA could have championed this – a move that would also help agriculture to adapt to and mitigate climate change. It could also have moved policy

decisively against carbon-consuming and agrochemically-driven production of commodities and agrofuels, that pollutes water, degrades land, contaminates foods and feed and creates dependency on remote and powerful corporations.

But there's not even a sniff of a paradigm shift and, worse:

- There is no strong call to insert agricultural biodiversity policies and actions into the UNFCCC adaptation / mitigation discussions.
- Ecosystems are mostly described as providing 'services' not 'functions', emphasising economic primacy over ecology.
- And on agrofuels, rather than abstention, SBSTTA may recommend to COP that there is a need to 'develop a tool to accurately assess... the degradation of ecosystems due to policy measures that increase the demand for biofuels'. No call for an immediate moratorium in sight! Watch out for a BonnFire of Biodiversity at COP 9.

Will Parties take the bold step to rewrite this potentially regressive SBSTTA recommendation and, in Bonn, agree a visionary decision on agricultural biodiversity that will secure our future food, livelihoods and Life on Earth?



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# Synthetic Biology and Agrofuels

*etc group*

An article appearing in yesterday's issue of the journal *Nature* explains why it is critically important for the CBD's SBSTTA to understand the issue of synthetic biology and its connection to agrofuels. ("Not your father's biofuels," *Nature*, Vol. 451, 21 Feb. 2008).

With grudging recognition that first-generation agrofuels are neither economical nor ecological, investors are turning to **synthetic biology** tools for the next alternative fuel fix. Synthetic biology refers to the design and construction of living organisms using synthetic DNA.

Synbio aims to re-engineer the enzymes, fungi and bacteria that break down the biomass and produce the fuel. For example, in October 2007 Genencor, Inc., a division of Danisco – a multinational food ingredient and sugar producer – began selling an enzyme cocktail that the company says is formulated to break down cellulose and hemicellulose for fuel. Other researchers in the field of synthetic biology aim to turn microbial cells into "living chemical factories" to induce them to manufacture substances they would not produce naturally. Dupont and Genencor engineered the cellular machinery of *E. coli* bacterium; when the modified bacterium is mixed with corn in fermentation tanks, it produces a bio-based fiber called Sorona.

If the vision of syn bio fuels advances, and the demand for plant biomass dramatically increases, it raises a host of environmental and social concerns. What happens when *all* plant matter becomes a potential feedstock for fuel? Who will decide what

qualifies as agricultural waste? *Whose* land will grow the feedstocks for synthetic biology's new generation of agrofuels? The article in yesterday's *Nature* suggests that, "all these approaches [synthetic biology] might be tailored to **marginal lands** where the soil wouldn't support food crops." (emphasis added)

Not so fast! Who decides what is considered "marginal" land? At a May 2006 meeting of synthetic biologists in Berkeley, California, Nobel Laureate Dr. Steven Chu pointed out that there is "quite a bit" of arable land suitable for rain-fed energy crops, and that Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa are areas best suited for biomass generation (see article below on Jatropha).

The rush to plant energy crops in the global South threatens to shift so-called "marginal land" away from food production, a trend that is already displacing farmers and indigenous peoples, introducing new monocultures and compromising food sovereignty – with disastrous consequences for biodiversity and the environment.

In the name of moving "beyond petroleum," Big Oil, Gene Giants, governments, synthetic biology start-ups and others are forming partnerships that will extend corporate control over more resources in every part of the globe – while keeping the root causes of climate change intact. Multinational corporations that are investing in synthetic biology to produce biofuels include, for example: BP, Cargill, Chevron, Dupont, Royal Dutch Shell, Virgin Fuels.

## Jatropha. Greenwashing with "Bio"fuels

*susanne gura - league for pastoral peoples*

In Bonn, the negative impact of agrofuels, pesticides, and GMOs on biological diversity will be on the agenda. One emerging agrofuel is Jatropha, an oil plant of tropical and subtropical regions. Bayer recently presented its cooperation with DaimlerChrysler and the agroprocessor ArcherMidlands, and the three corporations are jointly pushing cultivation of Jatropha.

Jatropha can be cultivated in marginal areas, that is, according to Bayer, "not suited to food production". It is, however, planning to grow Jatropha in areas that are intensely used by local communities, for grazing livestock, and for collection of wild foods and medicines. A hectare of such land can provide ~ ten fillings per year, while it can also contribute considerably to food security of a large family. FAO for several decades has underlined the role of such resources for poverty alleviation, especially since 70% of the poor are keeping livestock. Jatropha plantations would drive vulnerable groups away from this land.

In India, three quarters of the so-called "wastelands", i.e. up to 11 million hectares, are slated for replacement by agrofuels. Bayer and others will deliver the technologies, especially seed and herbicides, and it is expected that GMO-based herbicide resistance will be used. With that, farmers may become dependent of seed corporations in the same way as with GMO

maize, GMO soya, and GMO cotton.

Already, in India agrofuels are produced by smallholders under contract, where inputs and credit is provided by the same company that buys the product, e.g since 2005 by Labland Biotech in Mysore, that sells the Jatropha oil to the British agrofuel giant D1 (1). Farmers usually are in an unfavorable negotiating position. They hope for a fixed income, but often become indebted instead. Jatropha fruits don't ripen at the same time and are not suitable to mechanical harvest. When job creation is stressed, as BAYER does in its publication, *it should be asked what the income is like, and especially, whether the land was used for food purposes before.*

BayerCropScience together with its partner Monsanto are abusing the United Nations as advertising platform for their technologies. Bayer has a memorandum of understanding with the UNCCD Secretariat (seated in Bonn, Germany) since 2002. As far as known, Bayer provides several PCs, and in return, is allowed advertising inside the UNCCD convention halls and has direct access to the delegates. The former German UNEP Secretary General started cooperation with Bayer in 2004. The UNEP Youth Conference 2007 was funded by Bayer and held at Bayer headquarters in Leverkusen. (*cont. p. 4*)

# Notes from SBSTTA

## Protecting the world's forests needs more than just money

*Organizations present in Bali for the UNFCCC meetings presented a declaration (endorsed by 75 organizations) regarding the 'Reducing Emissions from Deforestation' (RED) proposal, as a way to deal with 18-20% of annual carbon emissions caused by deforestation. Below are excerpts from this declaration.*

...Governments and intergovernmental organisations, including the World Bank, have responded [to deforestation] by submitting a number of proposals concerning 'Reducing Emissions from Deforestation' (RED) and, in the case of the Bank, a proposal to launch a Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). However, these proposals, especially those that argue that forests should be included in carbon markets as offsets, fall far short of what is needed to combat climate change swiftly and effectively.

Carbon trading and offsetting are being used as a smoke-screen to ward off legislation and delay the urgent action needed to cut emissions and develop alternative low-carbon solutions. At the same time they encourage businesses, governments and people to continue with or even increase unnecessary polluting activities - reducing life to a commodity to be bought and sold.

... The UNFCCC's project- and trading-based emissions reductions schemes to date have been totally ineffective in terms of their ability to significantly reduce emissions. The UNFCCC's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which was launched in Kyoto in December 1997, was intended to allow countries with emissions reductions targets under the Kyoto Protocol to invest in projects that lead to developing countries being able to reduce their emissions more cheaply. The CDM has not worked. Projects have tended to lead to excessive profits for business, whilst generating investment for many projects that would have happened anyway. Several years of carbon trading have not stopped

increasing rates of greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, studies show they may be resulting in an overall increase in emissions. Many projects are not 'clean' nor are they leading to poverty alleviation or sustainable development as intended.

The World Bank has an equally appalling track record in relation to carbon funding, not least because it continues to fund oil, gas and mining projects, despite recommendations from its own review which suggested most of these projects be rapidly phased out; and as a broker it has a vested interest in promoting carbon trading. Its planned FCPF -intended to channel carbon finance from donors to recipient countries- could also have serious negative social and environmental impacts.

Carbon financing is proving intensely inequitable. Forests are the home and source of livelihoods for over 1.6 billion people, including Indigenous peoples (IPs), and forest-dependent communities. Wealthy companies and countries are able to buy the right to continue to pollute, whilst poor communities often find themselves locked into unfavourable, long-term commercial contracts. Furthermore, forest-dependent IPs and local communities have already found that it is they who may have to bear the real cost of climate mitigation projects based on carbon finance, while garnering none of the benefits. Some carbon finance projects are subsidizing industrial tree plantations at the expense of communities, ecosystems and food production.

The proposed RED policies could trigger further displacement, conflict and violence, as forests themselves increase in value they are declared 'off limits' to communities that live in them or depend on them for their livelihoods. Women and IPs are the least likely to profit from the destruction of forests and therefore also the least likely to receive compensation.

...Carbon markets, like other commodities, are also proving notoriously volatile. Far from creating a predictable commercial environment and financial flows, the European Union's Emissions Trading Scheme Phase I, for

example, has had "very questionable effects" on "the extent to which emissions are reduced, and the extent to which it provides a stable and effective carbon price" (UK Environmental Audit Committee, 28 February 2007). The protection of forests and our climate is essential to all our futures and should not be subject to the vagaries of the market.

***The declaration goes onto proposal recommendations to governments. The full declaration will be presented in a SIDE EVENT taking place TODAY at LUNCH in the AUSTRIA Room.***

## *Jatropha, continued from p. 3*

At the same time, Bayer as the world's largest pesticide producer contributes massively to soil erosion and biodiversity loss. Although the company has announced in 1995 to stop sales of all extremely hazardous (class 1a) and highly hazardous (class 1b) pesticides, it continues to sell them in developing countries.

In India, 30 smallholders have lost their lives in land struggles due to agrofuels introduction in 2006 alone, according to the environmental journal Down to Earth (2). The Right Livelihood Awardee Vandana Shiva criticized that smallholders were threatened with jail to hand over their rice paddies to agrofuel production (3). In Patnagar, fertile land was sold to companies for Jatropha cultivation(4). It was estimated that by October 2007, 500.000 to 600.000 ha were cultivated with Jatropha.

The State Bank of India gave a billion credit to the Indian DI partner to finance Jatropha cultivation by smallholders (5). It is well known that such credits led to widespread indebtedness of smallholders during the Green Revolution of the Seventies as well in the more recent Livestock Revolution. **Notes:**

(1)<http://www.hindu.com/2005/04/24/stories/2005042410950300.htm>

(2)[http://www.downtoearth.org.in/full6.asp?foldemame=20060915&filename=news&sec\\_id=4&sid=51](http://www.downtoearth.org.in/full6.asp?foldemame=20060915&filename=news&sec_id=4&sid=51)

(3)<http://www.navdanya.org/news/5dec07.htm>

(4)<http://www.newindpress.com/NewsItems.asp?ID=IEQ20070403005640&Page=Q&Title=ORISSA&Topic=0>

(5)<http://www.commodityonline.com/news/topstory/newsdetails.php?id=316>