



Forest Cover

Issue no.43, June 2013

About Forest Cover

Welcome to the forty-third issue of Forest Cover, newsletter of the Global Forest Coalition (GFC). GFC is a world-wide coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs). GFC promotes rights-based, socially just and effective forest policies at the international and national levels, including through building capacity of NGOs and IPOs in all regions to influence global forest policy.

Forest Cover is published four times a year. It features reports on important inter-governmental meetings by different NGOs and IPOs and a calendar of future meetings. The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Global Forest Coalition, its donors or the editors.

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Ex-Silvis: Talking about Non-Market based Approaches to the Sustainable Management of Forests

By Andrey Laletin, Global Forest Coalition Chairperson and Friends of the Siberian Forests, Russia and Isis Alvarez, Global Forest Coalition, Colombia



Entrance at the UNFF-10. Photo; I.Alvarez

Following a decision taken at the 9th United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF 9) back in 2011, the second Major Groups-Led Initiative (MGI) in support of the UNFF took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 18-22 March (MGI 1 took place in Accra, Ghana, before UNFF 9).

This important workshop marked an important step in terms of the Major Groups' coordination of work and activities focused on improving effective participation at the 10th Session of the UNFF (UNFF 10), which was held a few weeks later, 8-19 April, in Istanbul, Turkey.

The main focus of the MGI 2 workshop was developing policy recommendations for UNFF 10 on the theme 'Forests and Economic Development'. At the end of the so-called 'Crafting the Path for Forests to Contribute to Sustainable Development' workshop a comprehensive communiqué was issued¹. This addressed several aspects relating to forest governance, the role of forest products and services, community-based forest management, financial issues, legal and policy frameworks, and rights-based approaches, among others. These recommendations were also

presented at a very well attended Multi-stakeholder Dialogue (MSD) at UNFF 10 and many recommendations were reflected in the UNFF 10 outcome document.

During UNFF 10, which started with a Ministerial segment, contentious issues such as Means of Implementation (MoI) took longer to negotiate than expected. One of the reasons was the split that emerged between G77 countries in Working Group 1, because the African Union supported New York rather than Nairobi as the venue for UNFF 11.

One key outcome of UNFF 10 was the fact that various governments expressed a preference for non-market based approaches rather than the infamous 'market-based approaches' pushed by developed countries and rather popular in former UNFFs. Interestingly, during the Forum — which is formally the most important UN body on forests — there was remarkably little talk about Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) schemes. Indeed, in line with their resistance to market-based approaches to forest and biodiversity funding, expressed at Rio+20, the G77 challenged terms like 'natural capital' and expressed caution if not skepticism regarding market-based approaches to forest finance. Instead, they spent a great deal of time discussing a potential global forest fund, and more support for forest conservation through the Global Environment Facility (the financial mechanism of the CBD and UNFCCC). The final document also reflected numerous recommendations about exploring non-market based approaches. In fact, the new report by the Global Forest Coalition on 'Non-market-based Approaches to Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation'², which was launched at a side event held during the forum, may have played an important role in this final outcome.

Regarding the post-2015 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) discussions, the G-77/China called for a specific Goal on forests, which should be based on the 2002 Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and Agenda 21. The rationale for this is explained in the UNFF Policy Brief on 'Natural Resources: A Cross-Cutting Sustainable Development Goal in the Context of the post 2015 UN Development Agenda'³. In order to devise an

¹ Communiqué (in hard copy) of the Report of Workshop Proceedings: Major Groups-Led Initiative in Support of the United Nations Forum on Forests – Forests and Economic Development: Crafting the Path for Forests to Contribute to Sustainable Development. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. 18-22 March, 2013.

² <http://globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Non-Market-Based-Approaches-to-Deforestation.-Report.pdf>

³ www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/session_documents/unff10/PolicyBrief-NaturalResources.pdf



integrated, unified, efficient and feasible development agenda based on sustainable development for post-2015 such an approach would have to:

- recognise the interconnectedness of the economic, social and environmental benefits of each action;
- recognise the different levels of development among countries;
- maintain the momentum of achieving poverty eradication and food security;
- address the cross-cutting impacts of conflicts, disasters and inequalities in all goals; and
- make use of the cross-cutting multifunctional role of natural resources for economic growth, social inclusiveness, poverty eradication, environmental sustainability and peace and security.

To this end, the proposal is to create a cross-cutting goal on natural resources that is integrated across the post-2015 UN development agenda.

This shows that forest policy makers may decide that carbon markets (and other market-based approaches) can't be trusted. They might choose to put the rights, needs and role of the most marginalised people back at the heart of the sustainable management of forests instead.

Looking forward to UNFF 11 in 2015, the Forum will return to the question of whether it should start negotiating a legally binding instrument on forests. European countries have already gone ahead and are about to finalise negotiations on their own Forest Convention, which has been severely criticised by European NGOs.



Major Group representatives during the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue (MSD) at the UNFF-10, Istanbul, Turkey. Photo: I. Alvarez

The 'Whatever Approach' to REDD+

By Coraina de la Plaza, Global Forest Coalition, Netherlands and Simone Lovera, Global Forest Coalition, Paraguay

A new session of the world's climate change negotiations took place in Bonn 3-14 June, with meetings scheduled for the 38th sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI), the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), and the second part of the second session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP 2-2).

These three UNFCCC bodies met with the intention of advancing negotiations on, among other topics, REDD+ safeguards, national forest monitoring systems, REDD+ reference levels, drivers of forest loss, a potential new market mechanism, non-market based approaches, agriculture, and a potential post-2015 legal instrument in general. The purpose was to create more solid ground with a view to enabling further progress in the negotiations at the 19th Conference of the Parties (COP 19) in Warsaw, Poland in November 2013. However,



despite the dramatic news released just prior to the meeting — that CO₂ concentrations had already reached the critical 400 ppm level — the climate talks have, once again, proved deeply disappointing in many ways.

For a start, the SBI did not meet at all, despite the financial costs of and CO₂ emitted by all the people that had flown to Bonn for it. This was because countries disagreed about the meeting's agenda. A small group of countries led by Russia insisted on adding a new agenda item on rules and procedures, out of frustration about the procedure during the chaotic closing plenary at the last Climate COP in Doha, where they had been squarely ignored by the chairperson. Russia's motivation for hijacking the SBI meeting might have been questionable, but their frustration at being ignored during the climate talks was shared by many other developing countries and observers alike.

In discussions on agenda items like REDD+ and 'the New Market Mechanism', it seemed clear that the Chairs had been instructed by the Secretariat to ignore any comments or questions from developing countries that might lead to complications, clearing the way for a market mechanism to be set up and pilot projects started as soon as 2014. Happily, most developing countries rightfully insisted there was a need to evaluate experiences with existing market mechanisms first. A series of workshops on new markets, non-market mechanisms and a 'framework for various approaches' will be organised at COP 19. However, even reaching consensus on the questions to be asked at those workshops turned out to be controversial, in keeping with the overall atmosphere of distrust that pervaded the Bonn meetings.

For those who have followed the UNFCCC negotiating process over the years, it will unfortunately come as no great surprise that very little progress was made under the SBSTA, the ADP and the related workshops and roundtables. Regarding the talks on agriculture, there seemed to be some agreement that any potential work should focus on adaptation and food security, as this was clearly seen as the main challenge in the agricultural sector, with mitigation being a useful co-benefit. The known concerns about the pernicious effects of agricultural subsidies in developed countries were also raised again by a few developing countries, although there was little mention of bioenergy subsidies. During the workshops, however, the speakers selected by the Secretariat were provided with ample opportunity to promote dangerous technologies like carbon capture and storage (CCS): countries seemed intent on making sure they can use 'whatever' kind of mitigation methods they like, be it bioenergy, nuclear energy, big hydro or CCS.

In general where agreement was reached it was so astonishingly vague that it should really be seen as an insult to international law, given the urgency of the climate crisis. The draft texts on reference levels and safeguard information systems for REDD+, for example, exemplify the 'Whatever Approach' which countries seem to adopt to REDD+ nowadays: they seem intent on allowing themselves to submit any information they please when it comes to how they address safeguards or what their 'business as usual' deforestation rates would be. As a result, under the current drafts, it would be virtually impossible to verify whether safeguards have been adhered to, or whether deforestation has indeed been reduced.



Negotiations of three of the UNFCCC bodies held in Bonn in May. Photo: Coraina de la Plaza

Important issues such as drivers of forest loss were also 'addressed' during the meetings, but only through similarly vague and nonsensical statements that merely served the purpose of pushing this potentially complex issue off the agenda again. Many countries clearly want to avoid discussion on this topic. Even the chair of the meeting stated openly in a meeting with observers that the 'drivers of forest loss' would be better addressed outside the REDD+ process — making it crystal clear that REDD+ is not about addressing the factors that actually drive forest loss.

Meanwhile, the ongoing uncertainty about whether and how countries will reduce forest loss is matched by a parallel lack of clarity about whether and how they will be paid for their (unverifiable) 'results'. The workshops on coordinating support for the implementation of REDD+ and REDD+ finance showed, above all, the nervousness of many developing countries when it comes to the future of REDD+ finance. Old claims such as the need for a REDD Committee to oversee, address and facilitate the implementation of REDD activities was brought back to the fore by the Coalition for Rainforest Nations, but other countries rightfully queried this; what can yet another



committee bring to the table, if they do not have the ability to define who will pay for 'results-based actions' to reduce forest loss?

On the top of this failure to move forward in any real and specific way, the meetings were characterised by a stark lack of transparency. The corridors resounded with complaints and concerns about the increasingly limited role accorded to observer organisations. However, one positive development in this respect was the announcement by Venezuela that they would organize a 'pre-COP' meeting in October 2014 that would pay specific attention to the inputs of major groups and innovative ideas for developing more sensible climate agreements.

Another small step forward has been the growing interest in non-market based approaches, which was effectively placed on the agenda by Bolivia in 2012, and 'non-carbon benefits.' This was illustrated by good attendance at GFC's side-event on 5 June, where speakers including Ravi Prabhu of ICRAF, Susanne Gura, a researcher with Econexus, and Grace Balawag of Tebtebba highlighted non-market based approaches including respect for Indigenous rights and territories and areas conserved by Indigenous Peoples and local communities (ICCAs) and addressing drivers of forest loss through demand-side measures including reducing meat consumption, as examples of measures that have proven effective in reducing forest loss.

Now that carbon markets have failed so dramatically, more and more countries seem willing to consider and discuss such non-market based and non-carbon based approaches. Let's hope that this topic is not brushed aside, twisted or 'infected' by the mentioned tendency of many climate negotiators to embrace a 'whatever approach' to any policy or measure that could potentially address one of the biggest crises humanity has ever faced.

World Social Forum: A Reflection on the Climate Space

The Fight to Solve Climate Change is an Expression of the Struggle between the Forces of Capitalism and the Forces of Humanity

By Pablo Solón, Focus on the Global South, Thailand

It was the first time there was an entire 'space' dedicated to climate change in a World Social Forum (WSF). During the three days at the WSF in Tunisia (26-30 March), 13 events were organised covering different aspects of climate change (fossil fuels, water, migrations, employment, food, mining, false solutions such as carbon markets and REDD, systemic alternatives, etc.). The methodology agreed by the 20 organisations⁴ that prepared the event did not follow the logic of the United Nations negotiations but the daily interests of the people. The goal was to discuss how to strengthen the links between social and environmental struggles. The plan was to start from the impacts and the existing struggles, in order to deepen our ideas and shared understanding about the alternatives and create action strategies to address climate change effectively. This article provides just a glimpse of this symphony of voices and proposals.

The Climate Space showed in a very concrete way that climate change is not a purely environmental issue. Consequently, it cannot be solved with a campaign that is narrowly focused on the climate crisis. Climate change is a product of the capitalist system and its logic of unlimited growth and profit maximisation. To tackle climate change we must replace this flawed logic with an alternative framework that reaffirms the importance of natural heritage to the user as being more important than the exchange/market value, and puts everybody's welfare over and above profit for a few. We need a system that recognises nature not as raw materials but as our home, our Mother Earth. A system that preserves the vital cycles of nature, including forests and oceans, and respects planetary boundaries. A system that seeks balance and harmony rather than excessive growth. In other words, to get out of the current climate crisis it is necessary to break the vicious cycle of capital.

⁴ Alliance of Progressive Labor Philippines, Alternatives International, ATTAC France, Ecologistas en Acción, Environmental Rights Action, Nigeria, ETC Group, Fairwatch, Italy, Focus on the Global South, Global Campaign to Dismantle Corporate Power and end TNCs' impunity, Global Forest Coalition, Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, Grupo de Reflexão e Apoio ao Processo do Fórum Social Mundial, Indigenous Environmental Network, La Via Campesina, No-REDD Africa Network, Migrants Rights International, OilWatch International, Polaris Institute, Social Movements for Alternative Asia and Transnational Institute.



This debate, seemingly abstract, acquires flesh and bone when specific topics are discussed and this is what happened at the Climate Space.

Let's take the example of fossil fuels. Several international studies have mentioned that in order to control greenhouse gas emissions it is essential to keep more than two-thirds of the oil, coal and gas reserves underground. But applying this measure conflicts with the powerful interests of corporations and states who own this capital and want to maximise their profits.

Limiting greenhouse gas emissions will not be possible if society does not regain control of these reserves and curb exploitation. But transnational corporations and governments that control the reserves will fight to the death to preserve their capital. They will respond in whatever way they can, from utilising the media to unleashing the forces of repression. Their main strength, however, is our greatest weakness: the hyper-consumerist mentality that has permeated many sectors of humanity. It is not possible to keep more than two-thirds of fossil fuels underground if we do not leave behind the 'nightmare' of the American dream of a car for every family/person, and adopt real solutions.

Part of the solution to climate change is to forge cities and countries with strong public transportation systems, which would make individual cars unnecessary. The true alternative is not solar-powered individual cars or other wrongly-called 'renewable energies' based on biomass, availability of land and other resources, but the reconfiguration of the public and individual space. The challenge is to regain control over industries, to ensure efficient transportation rather than fulfillment of shareholders' ambitions to create profit.

Our fundamental task is to unpack the climatic and environmental dimensions that are intrinsic to every social struggle. Increasingly, struggles that generated reformist demands have become subversive, in that capitalism seeks higher levels of profit at the expense of human beings, forests and nature in general. The future of humanity and vital cycles of nature depend on this great battle that is taking place in different ways around the globe. The main task is to link climate activists and strengthen the joint struggles seeking for an articulation of national, regional and global movements and thus, contribute to making them more organic and sustained, with a broader systemic vision. *For more information, please visit: <http://climatespace2013.wordpress.com/>*



Closing plenary at the Climate Space during the World Social Forum in March, Tunis, Tunisia.

Photo: I. Alvarez

Proposals from the High Level Panel Threaten to Give our Future Away to Corporations

By Norma Maldonado, Asociación Raxch' och' Oxlaju Aj, Guatemala

Many who decide to play the UN's game think that UN consultations with civil society are a privilege, allowing people around the world to speak up and be heard. I do not want to jinx these hopes, but I have always doubted whether the United Nations would really release a report containing what civil society — including Indigenous Peoples' and local community organisations — have asked for, suggested and proposed to the UN's 'High Level Panel' (HLP) on the Post-2015 development agenda.

This panel was charged with preparing a report as an input to negotiations on new Sustainable Development Goals to replace the expired Millennium Development Goals in 2015. The panel's final publication confirmed my doubts. It is indeed the case that the high-level delegations sent to different countries around the world have not dared to change the underlying agenda and content of the Millennium Development Goals, which have failed in many aspects, especially as far as environmental sustainability is concerned. These delegations did listen to civil society, but only as one listens to the rain.



The structural issues are not changed because they are framed and determined *a priori* and *de facto*, perpetuating the current economic model even though it has collapsed in dramatic fashion. Those who caused the collapse seem to be virtually untouchable, and although they are responsible for current economic dilemmas, it seems the UN dares not mention them, much less hold them accountable.

For the UN, it is better to continue with business-as-usual, allowing 'its ears to be tickled' with soft words like 'green economy.' Their intention is not to question or reconsider what they have been doing so badly, but to perpetuate opportunities for enrichment through the misery of the majority.

Let's take the most immediate example of land grabbing, which is escalating across the world. Even Europe is not off the hook. Entire communities are being displaced from the lands they depend on for survival, so that those lands can be given away and used for activities that will generate profits for local and foreign investors.

The current mechanisms that the UN uses to publicly demonstrate its concern about the current crisis, including the persistence of hunger and the serious impacts of climate change, are the 'Post-2015' process and the proposed Sustainable Development Goals.

The 'Post-2015' agenda replaces the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) formulated in 2000 (which were measured using national targets and indicators that expire in 2015). The High Level Panel dealing with this issue has been co-chaired by Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia and President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia.

However, the report of the High Level Panel⁵ does not address economic and environmental issues or policies in a way that will actually resolve current problems. Rather, it is a technocratic approach that creates no obligations for countries and agencies regarding the environmental debt.

After the publication of the report on 30 May, many organisations reacted⁶ with claims that it hands too much power and influence over to the private sector, that there is no 'watch-dog' mechanism, and that it threatens to delay the realisation of essential human rights and women's rights. The 'Reflections on the HLP post-2015 report - by far not good enough!' by the Women's Major Group⁷, analyses each of the proposed goals and concludes that the report shouldn't be taken as a basis for developing the post-2015 agenda. It elaborates on the issue that goal-setting could end up being too reductive, preventing an integrated approach to sustainable development, especially with respect to the realisation of essential human rights and women's rights. Furthermore, there are several contradictions between the goals and the current economic model, including the promotion of economic growth while ignoring planetary boundaries, and the aim of reducing poverty (by 2030!) while considering nature a capital asset (making it more costly and tradable).

An excerpt from the women's major group reaction on the HLP report firmly states that *"the report fails to recognize that territories and areas conserved by Indigenous Peoples and local communities play a key role not only in forest conservation, but in soil, coastal and marine conservation, and in ecosystem conservation in general, and that these territories and areas should be legally and politically recognized and supported... Direct and indirect replacement of natural forests by monoculture tree plantations is one of the main threats to the world's biodiversity. In this respect, it is also crucially important to ensure a 'land degradation neutral' or 'net deforestation' approach does not lead to offsetting natural forest loss and soil degradation in one location through tree planting, including with invasive and/or exotic species, elsewhere. We are also concerned about the emphasis on valuation, partnerships, REDD+ and other 'green economy' approaches under goal 9, which trigger the commodification and corporate take-over of nature to the detriment of women and other groups."*



'Advancing the post2015 Sustainable Development Agenda' event held from 20 to 22 March in Bonn, Germany. Photo: Nora Erdmann.

⁵ www.post2015hlp.org/the-report/

⁶ <http://www.post2015hlp.org/outreach/outreach-stakeholder-responses-to-the-hlp-report/>

⁷ <http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Women-Major-Group-HLP-post-2015-report-Relections-June-2013.pdf>



In September 2013 the report will be discussed at a special UN General Assembly event; it will subsequently form an important input for the governmental negotiation process that is supposed to lead to a set of Sustainable Development Goals to be adopted in 2015. One can expect this effort to be acknowledged and acted upon because these actors' words carry more weight than the opinions of the public. Yet this report does not provide sufficient basis for the Post-15 agenda, and should not be used as an input for such a negotiation.

Both of these processes are supposed to include the active participation of all interested stakeholders. However, the consultation processes with civil society organisations are not binding and depend on the (seemingly very scarce) political willingness of governments to engage genuinely with the public.

Challenging these processes, which simply perpetuate the North's exploitation of the South, there is a new paradigm emerging from people in the Global South. Some of its main axes are food, wood and resource sovereignty, agro-ecology and the solidary economy, the defence of life and common goods, the affirmation of all threatened rights, rights to land and territory, and the end of the patriarchal order of society and respect for women's rights (*for more information see <http://peoplesgoals.org/>*).

Largest Protests against GE Trees at Industry Conference Target ArborGen, Biofuels

By Will Bennington, Global Justice Ecology Project, U.S.

In May, hundreds of activists descended upon Asheville, North Carolina, US for a week of major protests at the international bi-annual Tree Biotechnology conference. The conference, hosted by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), is a major gathering for GE tree industry representatives, researchers and policy makers.

The first victory came several weeks before the conference, when a field trip to an active forestry site was cancelled. Protest organisers believe the field trip was cancelled due to the threat of protests.

On Monday, the first full day of the conference, two Asheville residents disrupted a talk by Belgian tree engineer Wout Boerjian, entitled, 'Engineering Trees for the Biorefinery.' Laura Sorenson, a grandmother, and Steven Norris, a farmer and professor, were both arrested after the disruption. "We took dignified action today to directly confront the growing corporate control over our seeds, forests, and communities," Norris said. "We are sending a crystal clear message to the GE tree industry and its investors – expect resistance."

Activists are particularly concerned with the United States Department of Agriculture's recent announcement that they are preparing an Environmental Impact Statement regarding the deregulation of cold-tolerant genetically engineered eucalyptus trees developed by GE tree company ArborGen, which has offices in the US, Brazil and Australasia. They are jointly owned by some of the largest timber corporations in the world — International Paper, MeadWestvaco and Rubicon.



Left: 'Mad scientists' protest against ArborGen at GE trees Biotech Conference, Asheville, NC. Photo: Bennington/GJEP. Right: GE tree proponent Steve Strauss during same event. Photo: Langelles/photolangelle.org for GJEP.



Rubicon CEO Luke Moriarty has stated that ArborGen plans to sell half a billion GE eucalyptus seedlings annually for bioenergy plantations across the US South. Eucalyptus is highly invasive, flammable, and extremely water-intensive. If perfected in the US, these GE freeze-tolerant trees will expand the disaster of eucalyptus plantations around the world to regions currently too cold for conventional eucalyptus trees.

ArborGen, and their Brazilian competitor FuturaGene, were major sponsors of the conference. Both are seeking government approval for the commercial release of their GE tree 'products,' despite a decision by the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in 2008 that warned countries of the dangers of GE trees and urged them to use the Precautionary Approach with respect to GE trees, including confining all trials to the greenhouse.

A day before the conference began, on 25 May, millions of people around the world had also participated in a coordinated March Against Monsanto. In Asheville, ArborGen was a major focus of the March Against Monsanto, which was attended by over 1,000 people.

Tom Llewellyn of the REAL Cooperative drew the links between Monsanto and ArborGen during the march: "Many Monsanto employees have gone to work at ArborGen, including many of their executive staff. Monsanto was even an early partner in the forest biotechnology venture that later became ArborGen." Linking the GE tree industry to controversial GMO seed companies like Monsanto could have a crippling effect on investment and public acceptance of field trials and commercial applications.

Three days later, on 28 May, over 200 activists from around the US descended upon the conference centre during the largest protest against the GE tree industry to date. Citing concerns over the devastating impacts that GE eucalyptus, pine and poplar plantations would have on the biodiverse forests of the world, the crowd rallied for four hours outside the conference, chanting slogans such as "GE trees – tear 'em up, ArborGen – shut 'em down!"

As protests raged outside, FuturaGene, a Brazilian/Israeli company, held a panel discussion entitled, 'Forest Biotech at the Crossroads: What Does the Future Hold.' The panel was mired by debate about public opposition to the GE tree industry.

Adam Costanza of the Institute for Forest Biotechnology and formerly with International Paper explained his interpretation of the public's opposition to GE trees. "Public perception is not awareness," he argued. "Regarding those with ethical questions [about GE trees], facts are not useful for them," adding that "concerns are not based on science."

On 30 May, three demonstrators were brutally arrested after attempting to wrap a bus full of conference attendees in 'GMO caution tape.' The buses were headed to a dinner at the Biltmore Estate, a pillar of modern industrial forestry in the US.



Johanna Anderson arrested during demonstration at the GE Trees Biotech Conference. Photo: Langelle/photolangelle.org for GJEP.

Johanna Anderson, a local organiser with Katuah Earth First!, was among those arrested. "Trees should not be burned for fuel – this is a false solution to climate change," she said. "Monoculture plantations for bioenergy are already displacing Indigenous Peoples and local communities all over the world, and will have a major impact on rural livelihoods and biodiversity here in the US South." Will Bennington, a campaigner with Global Justice Ecology Project and the Campaign to STOP GE Trees, was also arrested.

Our challenge will not stop here. A grassroots campaign to prevent GE tree plantations from devastating the southern US was launched during this week of action against the Tree Biotechnology conference, and activists are committed to stopping all proposed applications of GE trees in the region.



After her arrest on Monday, Laura Sorenson said, “We know that GE trees are a disaster for forests and biodiversity. With predictions of worsening extreme weather in our region, the last thing we need are highly flammable and invasive plantations of water-hungry eucalyptus trees. As a grandmother, I see no future in this for my grandchildren.”

The next Tree Biotechnology conference will take place in Florence, Italy, in 2015.

The week of protests against the Tree Biotechnology 2013 conference was organised by the Campaign to STOP GE Trees, Katuah Earth First!, Croatan Earth First!, REAL Cooperative, Everglades Earth First! Global Forest Coalition, and Global Justice Ecology Project.

For more photos and coverage from the week of protests, visit treebiotech2013.org
To sign the petition demanding a ban on GE trees, visit globaljusticeecology.org/petition.php

Calendar of Forest-Related Meetings & Events

August

- 19 – 23 August, X Congreso Latinoamericano de reservas privadas y de pueblos originarios, Región de los Ríos, Chile
- 26 – 30 August, 6th Annual International ESP Conference 2013, Ecosystem Services Partnership, Bali, Indonesia (http://www.esconference.org/ESP_Conference)

September

- 9 - 13 September, Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC) - 28th Session, FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbeans, Guyana, Georgetown (<http://www.fao.org/forestry/31106/en/>)
- 22 – 25 September, UN General Assembly

October

- 7 - 11 October, Eighth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity, CBD, Montreal, Canada (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/lists/events-scbd.pdf>)
- 14 – 18 October, Seventeenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), CBD/UNEP, Montreal, Canada. (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/lists/events-scbd.pdf>)

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This newsletter was made possible through financial contributions from Swedbio, and Siemenpuu. The views expressed are not necessarily those of our donors.



*Women's Major Group Members during the 'Advancing the post2015 Sustainable Development Agenda' event held from 20 to 22 March in Bonn, Germany.
Photo: I. Alvarez.*