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## [Open letter to SBSTTA on the issue of GM trees](#)

The undersigned participants of SBSTTA or of meetings leading up to SBSTTA wish to share their concerns about the issue of genetically modified trees within the process of the Convention of Biological Diversity. As you know, the last Conference of the Parties passed Decision VIII/19, which recognized “the uncertainties related to the potential environmental and socio-economic impacts, including long-term and transboundary impacts, of genetically modified trees on global forest biological diversity, as well as on the livelihoods of indigenous and local communities, and given the absence of reliable data and of capacity in some countries to undertake risk assessments and to evaluate those potential impacts”.

Among other things, it recommended Parties “to take a precautionary approach when addressing the issue of genetically modified trees”.

The above recommendation seems to have been basically ignored by a number of countries, where either official research centers or private companies continue carrying out work on genetic modification of trees and are even planning to carry out field trials, such as the current case of the company ArborGen, which is seeking permission for field trials of flowering eucalyptus trees in the US.

Research in genetic modification of trees is currently being carried out –disregarding the COP’s decision- in at least the following countries Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States.

Given that the COP8 Decision gave SBSTTA the task of assessing “the potential environmental, cultural, and socio-economic impacts of genetically modified trees on the conservation and sustainable use of forest biological diversity, and to report to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties”; and given that the rush to produce biofuels is being used to promote the rapid commercial development of genetically modified trees, we appeal to SBSTTA to:

- insist on compliance by all countries with the precautionary principle as agreed upon at COP8
- recommend a ban on GM trees on the basis of their potential impacts on forest biological diversity

*Global Justice Ecology Project*  
*World Rainforest Movement*  
*Global Forest Coalition*  
*Sobrevivencia/FOE Paraguay*  
*STOP GE Trees Campaign, North America*  
*NOAH-Friends of the Earth Netherlands*  
*Africa-Europe F & J Network*  
*Friends of the Earth Europe*  
*Friends of the Earth Malaysia*  
*CENSAT-Aguaviva FOE Colombia*

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*Indigenous Information Network, Kenya*

*Nordre Folkcenter for Renewable Energy, Denmark*

*Friends of the Siberian Forests, Russia*

*CELCOR/FOE Papua New Guinea*

*Pro REGENWALD, Germany*

*Robin Wood, Germany*

*Friends of the Earth—England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

*Consumers Association of Penang, Malaysia*

*Comision Intereclesiastica de Justicia y Paz, Colombia*

*Consejo Comunitario de la Cuenca del Currarado*

*Ole Siosiomaga Society Incorporated (OLSSI) Samoa*

*Fundación para la Promocion del Conocimiento Indigena, Panama*

*ICTI-Tanibar, Indonesia*

*PIPEC, Pacific Indigenous Peoples Environment Coalition, New Zealand*

*FERN*

*International Alliance of the Indigneous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests*

*Corporate Europe Observatory*

*Greenpeace International*

*Ecologica Movement BIOM, Kyrgyzatan*

*CORE – Centre for Organization Research & Education, Northeast Region India*

*EQUATIONS*

*Ecological Society of the Philippines*

*Timberwatch Coalition, South Africa*

*Forest Peoples Programme, UK*

*MST – Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement*

*Viola, Russia*

*Ecoropa, Germany*

*ETC Group*

*Asociación Indígena Ambiental*

*Umwelt-und Projehtwerhstatt, Germany*

*Global Environment Centre, Malaysia*

*Washington Biotechnology Action Council, U.S.*

*BUKO Campaign against Biopiracy, Germany*

*The Gaia Foundation, UK*

*HATOFF Foundation, Ghana*

*Tebteba Foundation, Philippines*

*Nature Tropicale, Benin (West Africa)*

*Jeunes Volontairs pour l'Environnement, Togo*

*Biofuelwatch, UK*

*Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum*

*NABU – Nature and Conservation Union, Germany*

*BUND – Friends of the Earth Germany*

*Indigenous Network on Economics and Trade, Canada*