
[Sign-on letter to CBD urging a ban on genetically modified trees](#)

At its last Conference of the Parties (COP8), the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted a very important Decision (VIII/19), "Recommending Parties to take a precautionary approach when addressing the issue of genetically modified trees".

That Decision 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".

This is a very important step in the right direction, which needs to be supported against the pressure that will be put on the CBD by the powerful pro-GM tree lobby.

Given that the COP8 Decision has invited everyone "to provide relevant views and information to the Secretariat for inclusion in this assessment", a number of organizations have produced a joint letter to be sent to the Secretariat providing information and analysis on the issue and calling for a "mandatory decision declaring an immediate ban on the release of GM trees."

The letter concludes that "GM trees have no role to play in the conservation of global forest biological diversity and, on the contrary, are likely to reduce forest biodiversity, with attendant social consequences. The high risks indicated by the available though incomplete science show that the technology could result in the extinction of forest plant and animal species with severe negative impacts on biodiversity" and urges the CBD "to move forward from the current recommendation to Parties to take a precautionary approach, to a mandatory decision declaring an immediate ban on the release of GM trees."

The full letter is available at: <http://www.wrm.org.uy/subjects/GMTrees/LetterCBD.html>

If you wish to sign on to this letter, please send a message to STOP GE Trees <info@stopgetrees.org> before November 15th!