

16 July 2019

Dear Director General/President/Council Member/Director

Genetic engineering of wild species and ecosystems

We write regarding the Genetic Frontiers for Conservation report, published on your website on 9th May 2019.

We note that the genetic engineering of wild species and their release into the environment is a significant step beyond the current applications of this technology (which is currently mainly used in GM crops in North and South America), since it involves a deliberate attempt to genetically engineer entire ecosystems, with consequences that are unpredictable and potentially irreversible.

We welcome your recognition of the need for a “balanced, fact-based debate around this important but controversial topic”. However, we note that the majority of the contributors to the Genetic Frontiers for Conservation report, including the chair of the taskforce and technical group, are well-known advocates of genetically engineering wild species and releasing them on a large scale into the environment, and that the key case studies were written by the proponents of these technologies.

We understand that the report was commissioned under Resolution 086 to inform a new IUCN policy on conservation and synthetic biology, which IUCN Members will vote on during the IUCN World Conservation Congress in June 2020. As such, the report provides an interesting but regrettably one-sided perspective, which is inadequate to inform your policy discussions and is out of step with the precautionary tone of Resolution 086. We respectfully suggest that you now move to commission an equal and equivalent report by those who advocate a precautionary approach which questions the wisdom of genetically engineering wild ecosystems in this way, thus bringing the assessment in line with Resolution 086. Until that is done, no policy should be formulated.

We are sending this letter to all Council members and making it public. We request that you also circulate it to all your Members to ensure that the debate about the potential use of these technologies is as inclusive as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Acción Ecológica
Acción Ecológica, Ecuador
Acción por la Biodiversidad, Argentina
African Biodiversity Network (ABN)
African Centre for Biodiversity
Agrar Koordination
Agrecol Association
AgroEcology Fund
Alaska Trollers Association
Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA)
Alliance for Sustainable & Holistic Agriculture (ASHA)
Alliance Suisse pour une agriculture sans génie génétique
Alianza Hondureña frente al Cambio Climático AHCC- Honduras
Andhra Pradesh Vyavasaya Vruthidarula Union-APVVU, India
AP Agricultural Workers Union (APVVU)
Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (APN)
Arbeitsgemeinschaft bäuerliche Landwirtschaft (AbL) e.V.
Asamblea de Pueblos del Sur, Ecuador
Associação Brasileira de Agroecologia, Brasil
Asociación Nacional para el Fomento de la Agricultura Ecológica ANAFAE-Honduras
Association Ouest Africaine pour le Développement de la Pêche Artisanale (ADEPA)
Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (BELA)

Bangladesh Food Safety Network
Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA) - The Environment movement in Bangladesh
BARCIK Bangladesh
Beyond GM
Biodiversity and Biosafety Association of Kenya (BIBA Kenya).
Biofuelwatch
Biorespect
Biowatch South Africa
BUND Naturschutz in Bayern (BN; Friends of the Earth Bavaria)
Bundesverband Naturkost Naturwaren e.V. (BNN)
Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN)
Caritas Dalat, Vietnam
Caritas Zambia
Center for Food Safety
Center for Human Ecology Studies of Highlands
Center for Indigenous Knowledge Research and Development (CIRD), Vietnam
Center for Research and Documentation Chile-Latin America (FDCL)
Centro Ecológico, Brasil
Centro Internazionale Crocevia
Chetana Society, India
CIWF
Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group (CAG), Chennai
CN Tunisie WMW
Coalición Nacional de Redes y Organizaciones Ambientales CONROA- Honduras
Coalition for the Protection of African Genetic Heritage (COPAGEN)
Comité Ouest Africain de Semences Paysannes (COASP)
Commons for EcoJustice
Community Alliance for Global Justice/AGRA Watch
Community Entrepreneur Development Institute (CENDI), Vietnam
Community Knowledge Systems (CKS)
Comparing and Supporting Endogenous Development (COMPAS) Africa
Consumers' Association of Penang, Malaysia
Consumers Union of Japan
Corporate Europe Observatory
CRIIGEN
Critical Scientists Switzerland (CSS)
Dachverband Kulturpflanzen- und Nutztiervielfalt e.V.
Deutscher Naturschutzring (DNR) e.V.
DIOBASS Platform in Kivu/DR Congo
Eastern and Southern Africa Pastoralist Network (ESAPN)
Eastern and Southern African Small Scale Farmers' Forum (ESAFF)
EcoNexus
ELTE Nature Conservation Club, Hungary
ESAFF Lesotho
ETC Group
Ethiopian Society for Consumer Protection - ETHIOSCOP
European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental Responsibility (ENSSER)
FAHAMU
Fahamu Africa
FAITH ACTION NETWORK
Fambidzanai Permaculture Centre
Farm-Saved Seeds Network (FASSNET)
Federación Costarricense para la Conservación del Ambiente, FECON
Fédération Agroécologique du Bénin (FAEB), Cotonou - Bénin
Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in West Africa (FECCIWA)
FENEV/RDC
FIAN International
Florida Keys Environmental Coalition
Fonds für Kulturpflanzen-Entwicklung
Food Sovereignty Ghana
Forest & Bird (the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society of New Zealand)
Forum Environment & Development (Forum Umwelt und Entwicklung)
Freie Saaten e.V.
Frie Bønder Levende Land, La Via Campesina Denmark

Friends of the Earth Australia
Friends of the Earth–Africa
Friends of the Earth-Ghana
Friends of the Earth International
Friends of the Earth USA
GE Free NZ in Food and Environment
Gen Au-Rheinau
GENE CAMPAIGN, INDIA
Gene Ethics
Gen-ethische Netzwerk e.V. Berlin, Germany
GeneWatch UK
Getreidezüchtung Peter Kunz (gzpk)
Global Justice Ecology Project
Global Justice Now!
Global Youth Biodiversity Network
GLOBAL 2000 - Friends of the Earth Austria
GM Freeze
GMWatch
GRAIN
Greenpeace
Groundswell West Africa (GWA)
Growth Partners Africa -GPA
Grupo Semillas, Colombia
Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF)
Hope for Rural Women Assembly
HORTUS OFFICINARUM
IFOAM - Organics International
Initiative for GE-free seeds and breeding (IG Saatgut)
INKOTA-netzwerk e.V.
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Initiative for GE-free seeds and breeding (IG Saatgut)
International Center for Technology Assessment
Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC)
Institut Africain pour le Développement Economique et Social (INADES-Formation)
Institut Panafricain pour la Citoyenneté, les Consommateurs et le Développement (CICODEV Africa)
Instituto de Estudios Ecologistas, Ecuador
International Tree Foundation
Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement (JVE) International
JINUKUN (Réseau national pour une gestion durable des ressources génétiques)
Justica Ambiental - Friends of the Earth Mozambique
Justice Pesticides
Kasisi Agricultural Training Center
Kenya Agricultural Policy Network -KAPN.
Kenya Food Rights Alliance-KFRA
Kikandwa Environmental Association Mityana District, Uganda
Kleinbauern-Vereinigung VKMB
La Via Campesina Africa
La Via Campesina Southern and Eastern Africa
Les Amis de la Terre-Togo
Livelihood Sovereignty (LISO)
Logos Environmental
MASIPAG, Philippines
Movimento Ciência Cidadã, Brasil
NABU e.V.
Nammazhvar ecological agriculture research and training centre
National Agricultural Workers Forum (NAWF)
National Centre for Labour (NCL)
National Family Farm Coalition
Nayakrishi Andolon Bangladesh
Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organizations of West Africa (ROPPA)
NeverEndingFood
NOAH - Friends of the Earth Denmark
North American Marine Alliance
Northeast Organic Farming Association Interstate Council

Oficina de Derechos de la Naturaleza, Ecuador
OGM dangers
Organic Consumers Association
Organic Farmers Market, Chennai
Organisation Beninoise pour la Promotion de l'Agriculture Biologique (OBEPAB)
Organización de Mujeres Campesinas e Indígenas CONAMURI - Paraguay
PAN Africa
Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Association
Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Zimbabwe
Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia (PFE)
PELUM Kenya
PELUM Swaziland
People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS)
People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS)-Africa
People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS)-Europe
Pesticide Action Network North America
Physicians and Scientists for Global Responsibility New Zealand Charitable Trust (PSGR NZ)
Plate forme Sous Régionale des Organisations Paysannes d'Afrique Centrale (PROPAC)
PLANT (Partners for the Land & Agricultural Needs of Traditional Peoples)
Pomologen-Verein
Practical Action
Pro Natura-Friends of the Earth Switzerland
Rainman Landcare Foundation and Biological Systems Laboratory
Red Agroecologica Loja, Ecuador
Red de Coordinación en Biodiversidad, Costa Rica
Red de Ecologistas Populares, Ecuador
Red Nacional de Agricultura Familiar - RENAF Colombia
Red por una América Latina Libre de Transgénicos, Ecuador
Regeneration International
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Réseau Africain pour le Droit à l'Alimentation (RAPDA –Togo)
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Rythu Swarajya Vedika
Safe Food Alliance, Tamil Nadu
Sahabat Alam Malaysia/Friends of the Earth Malaysia
Salva la Selva, Spain
Save Our Seeds (SOS)
Schweizer Allianz Gentechfrei (SAG)
Sciences Citoyennes
Scientists for Global Responsibility
Seed Savers Network, Kenya
Slow Food Deutschland
Social Policy Ecology Research Institute (SPERI), Vietnam
Society for International Development (SID)
STOP Genetically Engineered Trees
Stop Golden Rice Network
Sustainability Council of New Zealand
Swift Foundation
SWISSAID
TABIO
Tamil Nadu green movement
Tamil Nadu organic farmers federation
TCOE
Telangana Agricultural Workers Union (TVVU)
TERRE A VIE
Testbiotech
Thalanmai Uzhavar Iyakkam, Madurai
Thamizhaga Vivasayegal Sangam, Erode
Thanal
Tharcharbu Iyakkam, Sirkali
The Bioscience Resource Project

The Faith and Justice Network of the Mano River Basin Countries of West Africa
The Gaia Foundation
Third World Network
Thousand Currents (formerly IDEX)
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UCCSNAL
Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development
Union Africaine des Consommateurs (UAC)
Vanagam
Via Organica
Washington Biotechnology Action Council
We are the Solution (WAS)
World Neighbours
Zambia Alliance for Agroecology and Biodiversity
ZIMSOFF
Zukunft säen!
Zukunftsstiftung Landwirtschaft

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