

Open letter by CBD Alliance members  
Bonn, 16.11.2017



To: UNFCCC party representatives and delegates,  
researchers in IPCC and UNFCCC stakeholders

### **Geoengineering is a distraction from the real priorities – Emission reductions**

Dear UNFCCC party representatives and delegates, dear researchers in IPCC and UNFCCC stakeholders,

NDCs submitted to the UNFCCC so far clearly fail the ambition needed to put us on track for limiting climate change to 1.5°C rise. As it becomes more and more evident that there is a lack of political will to substantially decrease climate gas output, discussions on how to reach the 1.5°C target agreed in Paris turn more and more to uncertain and unavailable technologies for removing carbon from the atmosphere, in short geoengineering. The draft IPCC AR6 also mentions this issue in its outline, and new geoengineering experiments are planned (see 13 November's ECO article "This is Not a Drill: Geoengineering is on the Rise" - [http://eco.climatenetwork.org/cop23\\_cmp13\\_cma2-eco7-5/](http://eco.climatenetwork.org/cop23_cmp13_cma2-eco7-5/))

Wishful thinking about technologies that may or may not one day become available carries the risk of legitimizing "business-as-usual-policies". They do not increase and may even decrease political will to address the root causes: powerful and unsustainable production and consumption patterns. They tend to postpone or replace pathways to systemic holistic change, which can deliver multiple benefits against climate change, biodiversity loss, and desertification. Without these benefits the 2030 Agenda is meaningless.

Proposals for geoengineering, including experiments, distract dangerously from the real priority – immediate unilateral reduction of emissions caused directly or indirectly by the global north, who bear most responsibility for them. Only this can build the trust we need to really tackle climate change and biodiversity loss.

Only yesterday, the executive secretaries of the three Rio Conventions issued a joint statement calling for assistance to address links between climate change, biodiversity and desertification threats. Civil society has long been making this connection and therefore, the members of the CBD Alliance present at this meeting would kindly inform or remind delegates that the issue of geoengineering has been extensively discussed at the CBD COPs since 2008 and that, as a result, any kind of geoengineering has been subjected to a moratorium (CBD decision X/33, paragraphs 8 w and x). This has been scrutinized at following COPs which have always reaffirmed the moratorium (CBD decision XIII/14, para 1) since.

With the exception of the US, the parties to CBD and UNFCCC are the same, and both conventions are nearly universal. We therefore urgently call on the parties of the UNFCCC to respect the CBD decisions agreed by consensus by their own governments, which apply to them as well. *Pacta sunt servanda*, as the Vienna Convention on the law of treaties rightly points out in its article 26: "Every treaty in force is binding upon the parties to it and must be performed by them in good faith".

Thank you and best regards,

(see list of signatories on following page)

## **List of signatories - CBD Alliance members:**

BUND – Friends of the Earth Germany

Pro Natura – FoE Switzerland

Friends of the Earth International

Econexus

ARA

Attac France

FERN

Global Nature Fund

New Wind Association (Finland)

Centar za životnu sredinu– FoE Bosnia

Ethological Society of India

ICCA Consortium

USC Canada

Ecoropa

SAN Germany

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Pro REGENWALD

Gesellschaft für ökologische Forschung

Mangrove Action Project