

ETC Group - Monitoring Power, Tracking Technology, Strengthening Diversity.

Human Rights / Farmers' Rights



Farmers' Rights, endorsed by FAO in 1989, recognizes that farmers and rural communities have contributed greatly- and continue to contribute- to the creation, conservation, exchange and enhancement of genetic resources, and that they should be recognized and strengthened in their work. The ETC Group believes that Farmers' Rights must be recognized at the international level, and that its definition should be expanded by the human rights community as part of the Right to Food. ETC Group is concerned about the erosion of Farmers' Rights and Human Rights, and about the impact of new technologies on democracy and dissent.

Latest Publications

[Who Will Feed Us? Questions for the Food and Climate Crises](#)

Type: Communiqué
Date: 12/14/2009
Language: English

Download PDF:

4.5MB

Who Will Feed Us?

2009's most important intergovernmental meeting on the climate and food crises has already happened. In October, as climate negotiators were fighting in Bangkok and as the UN food agencies were jousting over a restructured response to the food crisis and plans for the World Food Summit, the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Commission on Genetic Resources met quietly in Rome to review the preparedness of the international community to adapt and develop crops, livestock, aquatic and microbial genetic resources used in food and agriculture to address climate change. The meeting also considered the political and corporate constraints that could prevent a major strategic shift to achieve our food security. The Rome Food Summit in November and the Copenhagen Climate Summit in December should pay attention. At stake is the answer to the most important question not being asked in... [Read more](#)

Categories:

[Press Release: LOOK BEFORE LEAPING!](#)

Type: News Item
Date: 12/11/2009
Language: English

Download PDF:

55.6KB

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEGOTIATORS warned to LOOK BEFORE LEAPING!

Civil Society Alarmed at Climate Technology Quick Fixes in Copenhagen

Categories:

[Declaration: Let's look before we leap!](#)

Type: News Item
Date: 12/10/2009
Language: English

Download PDF:

 188.4KB

Download PDF2:

 249.4KB

Technology transfer is one of the four key topics being discussed under negotiations on Long-Term Cooperative Actions in Copenhagen (the others are mitigation, adaptation and financing). The inter-governmental negotiating text that is under discussion contemplates various measures for accelerating the diffusion of technologies. It will most likely create an 'Action Plan' as well as a 'Technology Body' and various technical panels or innovation centres that will prove influential in the coming years in deciding which technologies get financial and political backing. We need to make sure the right technologies get the support they need and the wrong ones are discarded. That won't happen without a comprehensive social and environmental assessment process. We, civil society groups and social movements from around the world, understand the urgent need for real and lasting solutions to climate change. We recognise the deadly consequences that we all face... [Read more](#)

Categories:

[Media Advisory: On Behalf Of Ad Hoc Coalition: Let's Look Before We Leap!](#)

Type: News Item
Date: 12/08/2009
Language: English

Download PDF:

 104.1KB

ON BEHALF OF AD HOC COALITION: LET'S LOOK BEFORE WE LEAP!

MEDIA ADVISORY

Alert to climate negotiators:

LETS LOOK BEFORE WE LEAP!

GAPING OVERSIGHT: NO ASSESSMENT IN TECHNOLOGY TEXT

An international group of more than 150 civil society groups from 36 countries will release a joint declaration calling upon governments in Copenhagen to revamp the draft text on technology transfer, to ensure that the precautionary principle is

WHO: Third World Network and ETC Group with other signatories of declaration.

WHEN: Thursday, December 10 2009 at 9:00 AM

WHERE: BELLA CENTRE, Hall H, Asger Jorn Room, Copenhagen

This press conference will be webcast.

Check Read more

Categories:

["Wartmongers" Thwarted as Bumpy Pumpkin Patent Goes Flat](#)

Type: News Item
Date: 03/20/2009
Language: English

Download PDF:

 98.2KB

ETC Group Update March 20, 2009 www.etcgroup.org

"Wartmongers" Thwarted as Bumpy Pumpkin Patent Goes Flat

Last month, [ETC Group reported on a patent application](#)(1) under examination at the US Patent & Trademark Office (USPTO) in which Siegers Seed Company of Holland, Michigan, claimed invention of a "warted pumpkin...wherein the outer shell includes at least one wart..." On February 13, the USPTO put its 9-page verdict in the mail(2) rejecting all of the application's 25 claims.

"The good news is that the USPTO rejected all claims in the warty pumpkin patent application," says Silvia Ribeiro from ETC Group's Mexico office. "And also that in her decision, the patent examiner cited a catalogue from Seed Savers Exchange – a non-profit organization that preserves and distributes heirloom seeds.... [Read more](#)

Categories:

[À qui appartient la nature?](#)

Type: Communiqué
Date: 11/12/2008
Language: French

Download PDF:

 1.4MB

À qui appartient la nature?

Pouvoir des grandes sociétés et ultime frontière de la marchandisation du vivant

TII y a trente ans, l'humanité avait un problème; la science avait une obsession; et l'industrie tenait une occasion. Notre problème était l'injustice. Les rangs des affamés ne cessaient de grossir et les rangs des agriculteurs, de s'affaiblir. De son côté, la science était obsédée par la biotechnologie – la possibilité de modifier génétiquement les cultures et le bétail (et l'être humain) pour les doter de traits qui allaient régler tous nos problèmes. L'industrie agroalimentaire tenait l'occasion de prélever l'énorme valeur ajoutée tout au long de la... [Read more](#)

Categories:

["Failure as Usual" Food Summit](#)

Type: Other
Date: 06/26/2008
Language: English

Download PDF:

 457.3KB

June 2008 ETC Group Translator Ciao FAO: Another "Failure-as-Usual" Food Summit Contrary to the opinion of many, June's Food Summit actually did something. It signaled the beginning of the end for the multilateral system as we know it. Over the next six months the food emergency - and the international institutions designed to address it - could get worse. The full text offers a line-by-line interpretation of the Food Summit's final declaration. Issue: During the 3-5 June 2008 World Food Summit, governments patched together sufficient funds to keep the lid on food rebellions for a few months but all the fundamental and long-term institutional and financial problems remain. In Rome, governments opted for a mythical "techno-fix" led by agribusiness in collaboration with the Gates Foundation and other philanthro-capitalists. These "klepto-mandates" are usurping the multilateral system. There is also a clear power shift away from the... [Read more](#)

Categories:

[Captain Hook Awards for Biopiracy 2008](#)

Type: News Item
Date: 05/20/2008
Language: English

Download PDF:

 110.8KB

Download PDF2:

 4.1MB

(PDF2 above contains the complete poster)

News Release Coalition Against Biopiracy Wednesday, 21 May 2008 www.captainhookawards.org www.etcgroup.org

Captain Hook Awards for Biopiracy 2008

The Coalition Against Biopiracy* exposes Hooks and celebrates Cogs

Winners announced at the UN's Biodiversity Convention in Bonn

Today the world learned which corporations, governments, institutions and individuals earned a spot in biopiracy's hall of

ceremony during the Ninth Conference of the Parties (COP9) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Bonn, Germany.

"The Maritim Hotel, where the CBD meets this week and next, was the perfect place to... [Read more](#)

Categories:

[Patenting the "Climate Genes" ...and Capturing the Climate Agenda](#)

Type: Communiqué
Date: 05/13/2008
Language: English

Download PDF:

 766.4KB

Communiqué May/June 2008 Issue # 99

Patenting the "Climate Genes"... And Capturing the Climate Agenda

Issue: The world's largest seed and agrochemical corporations are stockpiling hundreds of monopoly patents on genes in plants that the companies will market as crops genetically engineered to withstand environmental stresses such as drought, heat, cold, floods, saline soils, and more. BASF, Monsanto, Bayer, Syngenta, Dupont and biotech partners have filed 532 patent documents (a total of 55 patent families) on so-called "climate ready" genes at patent offices around the world. In the face of climate chaos and a deepening world food crisis, the Gene Giants are gearing up for a PR offensive to re-brand themselves as climate saviours. The focus on so-called climate-ready genes is a golden opportunity to push genetically engineered crops as a silver bullet solution to climate change. But patented techno-fix seeds... [Read more](#)

Categories:

[News Release: Gene Giants Grab "Climate Genes"](#)

Type: News Item
Date: 05/12/2008
Language: English

Download PDF:

 115.0KB

ETC Group News Release Tuesday, May 13, 2008 www.etcgroup.org

Gene Giants Grab "Climate Genes"

Amid Global Food Crisis, Biotech Companies are Exposed as Climate Change Profiteers A [report](#) released today by Canadian-based civil society organization, ETC Group, reveals that the world's largest seed and agrochemical corporations are stockpiling hundreds of monopoly patents on genes in plants that the companies will market as crops genetically engineered to withstand environmental stresses associated with climate change - including drought, heat, cold, floods, saline soils, and more. ETC Group's report warns that - rather than a solution for confronting climate change - the promise of so-called "climate-ready" crops will be used to drive farmers and governments onto a proprietary biotech platform. "In the face of climate chaos and a... [Read more](#)

Categories:

Language: English

Download PDF:

 115.7KB

For immediate release – endorsed by the civil society and farmers’ organizations present at FAO Thursday, 1 November 2007

Farmers Call for Suspension of Seed Treaty

Governments fail to meet minimal Treaty obligations UN conference told

Farmers’ organizations who were invited to attend a United Nations meeting on the Treaty that governs the exchange of crop seeds for research and plant breeding late yesterday told the assembled governments that the Treaty would have to be suspended. Speaking on behalf of 30 farmers’ and other civil society organizations, Ibrahima Coulibaly of ROPPA (regional farmers’ organization of West Africa) said that, “the Treaty, hosted in Rome by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), must halt the exchange of crop germplasm – the critical material for plant breeding. The suspension should remain in effect until governments meet the minimal obligations of the... [Read more](#)

Categories:

[Les semences-suicide – La suite : le Transcontainer de l’UE transforme Terminator en zombie](#)

Type: News Item
Date: 06/13/2007
Language: French

Download PDF:

 133.8KB

ETC Group lance aujourd’hui [Terminator -La suite](#), un communiqué sur une nouvelle recherche en rapport avec les semences-suicide et autres technologies relatives aux semences GM (génétiquement modifiées) qui constituent une menace inacceptable pour les agriculteurs, la biodiversité et la souveraineté alimentaire.

ETC Group nous parle aujourd’hui d’une nouvelle cuvée de technologies du génie génétique, présentées comme une solution biosécuritaire à la dissémination non désirée des transgènes de cultures, arbres et plantes pharmaceutiques GM. En pratique, la commercialisation de ces technologies permettra aux multinationales des semences d’affermir leur emprise sur les semences exclusives et de gruger les droits des agriculteurs.

[Read more](#)

Categories:

[Terminator: The Sequel](#)

Type: Communiqué
Date: 06/13/2007
Language: English

Download PDF:

 1.1MB

Despite the fact that governments re-affirmed and strengthened the United Nations' moratorium on Terminator technology (a.k.a. genetic use restriction technology [GURTs]) in March 2006, public and private sector researchers are developing a new generation of suicide seeds – using chemically induced “switches” to turn a genetically modified (GM) plant's fertility on or off.

Issue: Under the guise of biosafety, the European Union's 3-year Transcontainer Project is investing millions of euros in strategies that cannot promise fail-safe containment of transgenes from GM crops, but could nonetheless function as Terminator, posing unacceptable threats to farmers, biodiversity and food sovereignty. Terminator technology – genetic seed sterilization – was initially developed by the multinational seed/agrochemical... [Read more](#)

Categories:

[Suicide-Seed Sequel: EU's "Transcontainer" Turns Terminator into Zombie](#)

Type: News Item
Date: 06/13/2007
Language: English

Download PDF:

 142.0KB

** also available in french** ETC Group today releases “Terminator: The Sequel,” a Communiqué reporting on new research related to “suicide seeds” and other genetically modified (GM) seed technologies that pose unacceptable threats to farmers, biodiversity and food sovereignty.

Today ETC Group reports on a new crop of genetic engineering technologies that are being promoted as a biosafety solution to the unwanted spread of transgenes from GM crops, trees and pharmaceutical-producing plants. In practice, these technologies, if commercialized, will allow the multinational seed industry to tighten its grasp on proprietary seeds and to restrict the rights of farmers.

The 28-page Communiqué begins with an examination of [the European Union's...](#) [Read more](#)

Categories:

[Bill to Ban Terminator Introduced in Canada](#)

Type: News Item
Date: 05/30/2007
Language: English

Download PDF:

 83.7KB

Download PDF2:

 76.2KB

News Release ETC Group May 31, 2007 www.etcgroup.org

Bill to Ban Terminator Introduced in Canada

A bill to prohibit field testing and commercialization of Terminator seed technology was introduced in the Canadian Parliament today. Terminator refers to plants that are genetically engineered to render sterile seeds at harvest - a technology that aims to maximize seed industry profits by preventing farmers from re-planting harvested seed. "Canada needs to pass this bill into law because genetic seed sterilization is dangerous and blatantly anti-farmer - suicide seeds

the National Farmers Union. Initially developed by the US Department of Agriculture and multinational seed companies, "suicide seeds" have not been commercialized anywhere... [Read more](#)

Categories:

[REVOKED!! Monsanto Monopoly Nixed in Munich](#)

Type: News Item
Date: 05/03/2007
Language: English

Download PDF:

 111.8KB

ETC Group News Release 3 May 2007 www.etcgroup.org

REVOKED!! Monsanto Monopoly Nixed in Munich

but little joy in foiling soy ploy at this late date

Munich – The European Patent Office today put the brakes on Monsanto’s over-the-top corporate greed by revoking its species-wide patent on all genetically modified soybeans (EP0301749) – a patent unprecedented in its broad scope. ETC Group, an international civil society organization based in Canada, won its 13-year legal challenge against Monsanto’s species-wide soybean patent when an EPO appeal board ruled that the patent was not new or sufficient (i.e., the invention claimed was not sufficiently described for a skilled person to repeat it). The patent challenge was supported by Greenpeace and “No Patents on Life!” Dr. Ricarda Steinbrecher of UK-based EcoNexus also joined the opposition team in Munich as a... [Read more](#)

Categories:

[World's Top 10 Seed Companies](#)

Type: News Item
Date: 04/30/2007
Language: English

Download PDF:

 132.8KB

ETC Group April 30, 2007 www.etcgroup.org

The World's Top 10 Seed Companies - 2006

Based on 2006 revenues, the top 10 seed corporations account for 55% of the commercial seed market worldwide.

Concentration Trend Continues: According to estimates provided by industry analysts, Context Network, the value of the overall commercial seed market was \$22,900 million in 2006 (includes seeds purchased from public breeding programs).¹ By contrast, just two years ago, ETC Group reported that the top 10 accounted for 49% of the worldwide market. In 1996 - one decade ago - the top 10 seed companies accounted for 37% of the worldwide market - and Monsanto did not even appear on the list.

The market share of the top 10 seed companies is even greater when looking at the nonproprietary (patented?) seed market.

Categories:

[News Release: Food Sovereignty or Green Revolution 2.0?](#)

Type: News Item
Date: 04/16/2007
Language: English

Download PDF:
 131.7KB

ETC Group News Release April 16, 2007 www.etcgroup.org

Food Sovereignty or Green Revolution 2.0?

This time the "silver bullet" has a gun

ETC Group today releases a 16-page review of five new initiatives intended to launch what ETC dubs "Green Revolution 2.0" in Africa. Leading the charge is a plan to construct four Centers of Excellence together with a second initiative called the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. "The Green Revolution that followed World War II focused on semi-dwarf, high-yielding plant varieties" says Pat Mooney, ETC Group's Executive Director. "It was a one-size-fits-all, take-it-or-leave-it silver bullet," Mooney adds, "Africa left it." In other words, Green Revolution technologies were inappropriate for the needs and resources of African farmers. ETC... [Read more](#)

Categories:

[News Release: Food Sovereignty or Green Revolution 2.0?](#)

Type: News Item
Date: 04/16/2007
Language: English

Download PDF:
 131.7KB

ETC Group News Release April 16, 2007 www.etcgroup.org

Food Sovereignty or Green Revolution 2.0?

This time the "silver bullet" has a gun

ETC Group today releases a 16-page review of five new initiatives intended to launch what ETC dubs "Green Revolution 2.0" in Africa. Leading the charge is a plan to construct four Centers of Excellence together with a second initiative called the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. "The Green Revolution that followed World War II focused on semi-dwarf, high-yielding plant varieties" says Pat Mooney, ETC Group's Executive Director. "It was a one-size-fits-all, take-it-or-leave-it silver bullet," Mooney adds, "Africa left it." In other words, Green Revolution technologies were inappropriate for the needs and resources of African farmers. ETC Group's... [Read more](#)

Categories:

[Green Revolution 2.0 for Africa?](#)

Type: Communiqué
Date: 04/16/2007
Language: English

Download PDF: 2.7MB

March/April 2007 Issue # 94

Green Revolution 2.0 for Africa?

This time the “silver bullet” has a gun

Issue: Everybody’s trying to jump-start science – and, especially, agricultural science – in Africa. Starting with the G8 meeting in Canada five years ago – and pledges by four of its members to build new centers of scientific excellence in Africa – the Syngenta Foundation, CGIAR, Jeffrey Sachs’s Earth Institute, and now, Google, Gates, and Rockefeller are all pushing new initiatives for the continent. While there is no denying that Africans deserve support in their struggle to address hunger, disease and climate change, science and technology are no “silver bullet” to resolve Africa’s problems. Yet, when the G8 meets this June in Germany they are expected to announce a new research agenda that will again propose scientific solutions to the world’s – and, particularly... [Read more](#)

Categories:
