



# A Congress of Local Hopes and Global Dreams

Along with climate change, loss of natural and agricultural diversity represents the greatest ecological challenge in human history. The dimensions of species loss are comparable to the end of the age of dinosaur. 75% of the cultivated plant varieties our great-grandparents used a hundred years ago have since disappeared.

Against this backdrop, representatives from 190 governments will meet in Bonn, Germany, in May 2008 to negotiate means to protect biological diversity under the UN Conference on Biological Diversity and its related Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

As negotiations begin, the Planet Diversity Congress will bring together farmers and grassroots activists, local and regional government officials and representatives of agricultural, environmental, development and consumer organizations world-wide to discuss practical alternatives for survival.

Center stage: the way food is produced and consumed today. Current policies touting industrial growth at all costs destroy millions of small farmers' livelihoods annually, north and south. With them entire communities disappear, along with traditional knowledge and culture. Small and middle-sized farms remain the most efficient food producers when measured in terms of people fed per acre/hectare of land. Yet, when measured in terms of profit per worker and hectare, they have no chance of competing with the energy, water and chemical-intensive, often genetically-modified crops of corporate-driven monocultures. Is there an alternative to the destruction of natural and human resources through this system of industrial monoculture? Yes, thousands of them! Millions of people are working on both traditional and innovative forms of agriculture and food production, furthering diversity while minimizing CO2 production, use of water and other precious resources. And they are building sustainable communities. For this salt of the Earth "Planet Diversity" will be a place for exchange, debate and consideration of joint strategies and perspectives.

## Planet Diversity themes and issues:

the paradigm of diversity • food sovereignty and small farmers' successes • regional self-determination: local, diverse, GMO-free • diversity and climate change • patents on life • farmers seed rights • agro-fuels • corporate monocultures • gardens of the future • food diversity • organic and eco-agricultural innovation • indigenous rights • diversity of knowledge systems

# Who's coming? 500 participants from more than 90 countries. Here are some of them:

Percy Schmeiser, Canada • Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Tebtebba Foundation, Philippines • Tewolde Berhan Gebre Egziabher, Minister of Environment, Ethiopia • Jakob von Uexküll, World Future Council, Germany • Susanna Cenni, Agricultural Minister of Tuscany, Italy • Vandana Shiva, Navdanya Seed Movement, India • Hans Herren, Millennium Institute, USA • Mamadou Lamine Coulibaly, National Coordination of Peasant Organisations, Mali • Hubert Weiger, BUND, Germany • Ibrahim Abouleish, SEKEM, Egypt • Christine von Weizsäcker, Ecopora, Germany • Dominique Guillet, Kokopelli, France • Friedrich-Wilhelm Graefe zu Baringdorf, European Parliament, AbL, Germany • Edith van Walsum, ILEIA, Netherlands • Elisabeth Bravo, GMO-free Latin America, Ecuador • Eric Holt-Giminez, Food First, USA • Chee Yoke Ling, Third World Network, China • Lyudmila Stebenkova, Moscow City Parliament, Russia • Mamadou Goita, IRPAD, COPAGEN, Forum Nyéléni 2007, Mali • Annemarie Volling, GMO-free Regions, Germany • Maria Blas Cakari, Assoc. of Producers of Organic Maize de La Meseta P'Urepecha, Mexico • Mariam Mayet, African Centre for Biosafety, South Africa • Marjorie Chola Chonya, Participatory Ecological Land-Use Management, Zambia • Maya Graf, Swiss Parliament, Swiss AG Genetic Engineering, Switzerland • Miguel Altieri, University of California, Berkeley, USA • P.V. Satheesh, Deccan Development Society, India • Parichart Suwanbubha, Mahidol University, Thailand • Pat Mooney, ETC Group, Canada • Professor Günter Altner, Germany • Ryoko Shimizu, Seikatsu Club Consumers' Co-operative, Japan • Shinji Asada, Vice-Governor of Hokkaido, Japan • Suprabha Seshan, Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary, India • Tonderai Andrew Mushita, Community Technology Development Trust, Zimbabwe • V.S. Vijayan, Kerala State Biodiversity Board, India • Assétou Founé Samaké, IRPAD, Mali • Song Yang, Pesticide Eco-Alternative Center Yunnan, China • Abilé Romain Houehou, League for the Defense of Consumers, Benin • Adriano Canci, Microbacias de la Cooperativa de Técnicos Unitaqri, Brazil • Agnes Lintao, SEARICE, Philippines • Anna Gyorgy, Women and Life on Earth, Germany • Maria Isabel Manzur Nazal, Fundacion Sociedades Sustentables, Chile • Vicente Guaman, Organizaciones del Pueblo Kichwa Saraguro, Ecuador • Benny Haerlin, Foundation on Future Farming, Germany • Bruno Heinzer, Greenpeace, Switzerland • Cathy Rutivi, Consumers International Africa, Zimbabwe • Claire Bleakley, GE Free New Zealand • Daniel Maingi, Kenya Biodiversity Coalition, Kenya • Louise Luttkiholt, IFOAM, Germany • Debjcet Sarangi, Living Farms, India • Farida Akther, UBINIG, Bangladesh • Felipe Iniguez Perez, MAELA, Mexico • G. Agoramoorthy, Sadguru Water & Development Foundation, Taiwan • Gabriel Fernandes, AS-PTA, Brazil • Guy Kastler, Peasant Seed Network, France • Georgina Catacora-Vargas, Tierra Viva, Bolivia • Hartmut Meyer, GENET, Germany • Ibrahim Ouédraogo, Inades Formation/Copagen, Côte d'Ivoire • Georg Janssen, AbL, Germany • Isied Dawoud, Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Jordan • Helena Norberg-Hodge, Int. Soc. for Ecology and Culture, UK • Jacob

## What is the Convention on Biological Diversity?

In May 2008 representatives from national governments will meet in Bonn for the 9th Conference of the Parties to the CBD (May 19-30). First negotiated at the 1992 Rio Summit in Brazil, the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is intended to protect biological diversity in all its forms, ensuring both sustainable use of biological resources and a fair sharing of benefits arising from this use.

One goal of the CBD is to stop or at least "significantly reduce" the dramatic loss of species by the year 2010. The UN estimates that almost a third of all species are threatened with extinction in this century. A main point of contention is the use of genetic resources and their patenting. Indigenous communities and small farmers should benefit from the results of their work in sustaining and promoting diversity over centuries. Yet 16 years after Rio there is still no agreement on a system of benefit sharing, and the theft and patenting of indigenous knowledge and biological material (biopiracy) continues.

From May 12 to 16 the 4th Conference of Parties to its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety will negotiate about a global regime of liability for damages caused by genetically engineered organisms. The Biosafety Protocol, which sets minimum standards for import and export of GMOs, was established in the year 2000. At that time, industrialized countries promised liability rules by 2007. Presently negotiations on such rules are deadlocked as no insurance company world-wide is willing to cover possible damages from GMOs.

For more information see: [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int) and [www.biodiv-network.de](http://www.biodiv-network.de)

Nellithanam, Richharia Campaign, India • Janani Hasda, Nari Rashmi Samaj, Association of Indigenous Women from Orissa, India • Javier Rivera, Red Ciudadana frente a los Transgénicos, El Salvador • M. Coulibali, University of Bamako, Mali • Javiera Rulli, Base Investigaciones Sociales, Paraguay • Jorge Rulli, Grupo de Reflexión Rural, Argentina • Lamine Biaye, Association of Producers of Peasant Seeds, Senegal • Melaku Worede, Seeds of Survival, Ethiopia • Meriem Louanchi, AREA-ED, Algeria • Paula Alvarez Roa, Grupo Semillas, Columbia • Zung Ting, Myanmar • Rambati Pujari, Orissa Nari Samaj, India • Edith Lammerts van Bueren, Louis Bolk Institute, Netherlands • Reiner Braun, Association of German Scientists, Germany • Rudolph Buntzel, Protestant Church Development Service, Germany • Ruth Tippe, "No Patents on Life!", Germany • Salvatore Cecarelli, ICARDA, Syria • Witoon Lianchamroon, Biothai, Thailand • Sevinj Mammadova, Ganja Association, Azerbaijan • Siegrid Herbst, IG Seed Initiative, Germany • Ushakumari Jayakumar, THANAL, India • Ute Sprenger, VERN, Germany • Victoria Kopeykina, Eremurus Club/ Biosafety Alliance, Russia • Werner Mueller, eco-risk, Austria • David Llewellyn, Minister of Agriculture, Tasmania, Australia

"We cannot solve the problems that we have created with the same thinking that created them." (Albert Einstein)

