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1 February 2012

NOTIFICATION

Online Discussion Forum for Indigenous and Local Communities on the possible impacts of geo-engineering techniques on biodiversity and associated social, economic and cultural considerations

Dear Madam/Sir,

The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted decision X/33, which includes the issue of climate-related geo-engineering as it relates to the achievement of the objectives of the CBD. The relevant paragraphs are annexed.

In particular, the Executive Secretary was requested to compile and synthesize available scientific information, and views and experiences of indigenous and local communities and other stakeholders, on the possible impacts of geo-engineering techniques on biodiversity and associated social, economic and cultural considerations, and options on definitions and understandings of climate-related geo-engineering relevant to the CBD; and to make it available for consideration at the meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), 30 April - 5 May 2012, Montreal, Canada, as well as COP 11 .

In order to assist with this, I have the pleasure to inform you that an Online Discussion Forum on the possible impacts of geo-engineering techniques on biodiversity and associated social, economic and cultural considerations for indigenous and local communities will be held from 2 February to 2 March 2012 through the Climate Frontlines Online Forum (www.climatefrontlines.org).

The Climate Frontlines online forum is an electronic participation tool developed by UNESCO, in partnership with Secretariat of the CBD, the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to draw attention to community level observations of climate change and to strengthen the voices of vulnerable communities in global climate change debates.

In order to participate, please visit the Climate Frontlines online forum link on geo-engineering at www.climatefrontlines.org. An abstract has been posted to the web-page in order to provide context and stimulate discussion. Participants, particularly those not familiar with the issue, may also wish to read the draft background studies at <http://www.cbd.int/climate/geoengineering/review/>. Participants are encouraged to register in advance by contacting Ms Jennifer Rubis at j.rubis@unesco.org .

To: CBD National Focal Points, indigenous and local community organizations, non-governmental organizations, academics, other interested parties

I wish to invite all National Focal Points, indigenous and local community organizations, non-governmental organizations, academics, other interested parties, and in particular indigenous and local communities and their representatives to participate in the discussions.

I thank you in advance for your participation and for your continued support to the work of the Convention.

Please accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Ahmed Djoghlaif
Executive Secretary

Annex

Decision X/33

8. *Invites* Parties and other Governments, according to national circumstances and priorities, as well as relevant organizations and processes, to consider the guidance below on ways to conserve, sustainably use and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services while contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation:

(w) Ensure, in line and consistent with decision IX/16 C, on ocean fertilization and biodiversity and climate change, in the absence of science based, global, transparent and effective control and regulatory mechanisms for geo-engineering, and in accordance with the precautionary approach and Article 14 of the Convention, that no climate-related geo-engineering activities** that may affect biodiversity take place, until there is an adequate scientific basis on which to justify such activities and appropriate consideration of the associated risks for the environment and biodiversity and associated social, economic and cultural impacts, with the exception of small scale scientific research studies that would be conducted in a controlled setting in accordance with Article 3 of the Convention, and only if they are justified by the need to gather specific scientific data and are subject to a thorough prior assessment of the potential impacts on the environment;

(x) Make sure that ocean fertilization activities are addressed in accordance with decision IX/16 C, acknowledging the work of the London Convention/London Protocol;

9. Requests the Executive Secretary to:

(i) Compile and synthesize available scientific information, and views and experiences of indigenous and local communities and other stakeholders, on the possible impacts of geo engineering techniques on biodiversity and associated social, economic and cultural considerations, and options on definitions and understandings of climate-related geo-engineering relevant to the Convention on Biological Diversity; and

(m) Taking into account the possible need for science based global, transparent and effective control and regulatory mechanisms, subject to the availability of financial resources, undertake a study on gaps in such existing mechanisms for climate-related geo-engineering relevant to the Convention on Biological Diversity, bearing in mind that such mechanisms may not be best placed under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

** Without prejudice to future deliberations on the definition of geo-engineering activities, understanding that any technologies that deliberately reduce solar insolation or increase carbon sequestration from the atmosphere on a large scale that may affect biodiversity (excluding carbon capture and storage from fossil fuels when it captures carbon dioxide before it is released into the atmosphere) should be considered as forms of geo-engineering which are relevant to the Convention on Biological Diversity until a more precise definition can be developed. It is noted that solar insolation is defined as a measure of solar radiation energy received on a given surface area in a given hour and that carbon sequestration is defined as the process of increasing the carbon content of a reservoir/pool other than the atmosphere.

