



planetdiversity

WORLD CONGRESS ON THE FUTURE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE **BONN** GERMANY 12-16 MAY 2008

Basic Information

What is Planet Diversity?

Just as the World Social Forum has become the alternative summit to the World Economic Forum, Planet Diversity intends to act as the alternative summit to the UN negotiations on safety in genetic engineering and biodiversity. While in the Bonn Maritim Hotel liability regulations in genetic engineering are debated, Planet Diversity will call attention to fundamental risks. Genetic engineering means industrialised agriculture, monocultures and dependency on a small number of corporations. Diversity, however, offers an opposite concept to agro-industry. It is a concept that promises farmers independence from industry; it enables global food security, while at the same time contributing to the conservation of natural diversity on this planet. For five days, our diverse planet will be presented in Bonn – as a lively contrast to the UN negotiations - in the conference rooms at the Gustav-Stresemann-Institute, which is located in close vicinity to the UN venue.

What are the aims of Planet Diversity?

Planet Diversity presents global perspectives for the future of food security and diversity. While this will not result in an increase of corporate profits, it will be of benefit for general prosperity. Food security according to the principle of diversity is cost-effective for all and technologically manageable, sustaining cultural and biological diversity on all continents. The biological principle of adaptation to changing conditions has stood the test of time, while genetic engineering has already shown to produce more problems than solutions. For biofuels, it is becoming apparent that monocultures, pesticides and displacement mechanisms on the fields of poorer countries are causing more problems than technology is able to solve. Biofuels cannot stop climate change nor can they satisfy the world's hunger for energy. Instead, regional diversity and free seed exchange must be conserved, without genetic engineering and patents on natural organisms. This is the future for our diverse planet.

Planet Diversity will present the diversity of

- fauna and flora, the basis for agriculture and food economy
- cultures and methods of cultivation and nutrition
- traditional knowledge of nature's bounty
- natural innovations.

Who organises Planet Diversity?

Diversity is organised by the Foundation of Future Farming on behalf of several German and international organisations concerned about the future of our planet:

- German Family Farmers Union (ABL)
- Friends of the Earth Germany (BUND)
- European NGO Network on Genetic Engineering (GENET)
- Church Development Service, Germany (EED)
- Forum on Environment and Development, Germany
- Gene-Ethical Network, Germany, (GeN)
- Greenpeace
- Heinrich-Böll Stiftung, Germany
- GMO-free Seed Syndicate, Germany (IG Saatgut)
- Federation of German Scientists (VDW)
- International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM)
- Foundation of Future Farming (Save our Seeds)

An international advisory committee ensures that globally relevant issues are appropriately considered at all Planet Diversity events.

Planet Diversity is organised by the secretariat of
Zukunftsstiftung Landwirtschaft (Foundation of Future Farming)

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What are the activities of Planet Diversity?

This congress wants to send out a clear message for diversity on this planet. This is why Planet Diversity will kick off with a demonstration “For biodiversity – local, fair GMO-free” where participants from all over the world will demonstrate the diversity we must protect.

The demonstration starts on May 12, at 10:00 am in the Rheinaue Park in Bonn, followed by a colourful festival of diversity – diversity of life, diversity of tastes, in contrast to transgenic monoculture.

From May 13 to 16, delegates of the people whose futures are at the same time negotiated by the UN delegates will meet, including farmers, consumers, food producers, gardeners, seed savers, environmentalists, members of indigenous populations, genetic engineering critics and anti-globalisation activists, human rights, development and women organisations and many more. Scheduled are plenary discussions and workshops.

<http://www.planet-diversity.org/de/programm.html>

Who will meet at Planet Diversity?

Planet Diversity is an event for all who want to know more about a liveable and just future on this planet. Everybody is welcome to delight in diversity - regardless of social background, qualification or status. Diversity thrives in and with people. Official delegates from government organisations are just as welcome as small-scale farmers and consumer – diversity matters to all. Diversity is expressed by all.

What are the issues and main topics?

During the congress on the plenary stages and in the workshops, most topics will concern agriculture and food. The European view point will be expanded by small-scale farmers from other continents reporting on their struggle for survival and their successes. The opportunities provided by GMO-free food will be demonstrated from a European and an international point of view. The “paradigm of diversity” will bring it all together – the chance that diversity offers to the world. The participants will develop strategies and implementation methods to realise this paradigm.

What makes Planet Diversity a true contrast to the UN negotiations?

The world comes together at Planet Diversity. Peasant farmers from Columbia will discuss with organic farmers from Germany, people from Africa will campaign for their way of life and Asian representatives will talk about their daily life. Mutual acceptance of individual differences and the desire to conserve global diversity is what unifies all. Planet Diversity is a congress against leveling, against destructive and threatening developments in agriculture, land use and food production. Planet Diversity is a congress of people who wish to explain again and again to their UN representatives how sustainable the world wide concept of diversity is.

How can visitors – spontaneously - contribute?

Everybody is welcome to Planet Diversity, to participate in workshops or to revise a variety of future issues, to make a stand for diversity on this planet. Observers will also benefit. It will be interesting to listen to arguments of people such as Jacob von Uexkull (sponsor of the Right Livelihood Award) or Melaku Worede from Ethiopia, who will report on the secrets of Ethiopian seeds. Alejandro Argumedo will talk about the potato network of the Andes and Right Livelihood Award laureate Vandana Shiva from India will speak about food security, food sovereignty and climate change. Each of the about 50 speakers is an expert – as are most of the participants. Because everyone is part of cultural diversity, everyone can make a contribution to secure the future of this planet.

How can I get more involved in the issues?

Afternoons will be reserved for workshops. Twenty-seven are scheduled on a variety of topics – including UN negotiations on liability for GMOs, questions on competence building in biodiversity,

the distribution of GMOs around the world, their health effects, effects of the biofuel trend as well as organic farming and fair trade of agricultural produce.

Detailed information:

<http://www.planet-diversity.org/de/programm/workshops.html>

What have Planet Diversity and the UN negotiations on biodiversity in common?

Despite their different orientations, Planet Diversity and the UN negotiations on biodiversity are closely connected. They are both part of a joint process that started more than 15 years ago. Since 1992, this co-operation has become tradition. During the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, UN summit representatives met for the first time with members from NGOs to debate the future of the world. At that time, UN organisers were already well aware of the fact that governments alone cannot shape the future of the world – that a broad alliance was needed.

Since then, official government representatives as well as members of the public and NGO representatives have participated in follow-up summits. The NGOs share in the negotiations and organise their own negotiations and events. In Germany, this is done by Planet Diversity – for a diverse planet. Such an event is urgently needed. Official delegations continue to be lobbied extensively by global corporations. It is still a difficult task for the people living on this planet to stand up to global economic powers. Planet Diversity makes their voices heard in the now established tradition of NGO conferences – here people speak up who are directly confronted with political decisions, who need to protect their fields from genetic engineering, who are forced to watch nature being exploited for corporate profit without receiving their fair share of the benefits.

What exactly are the UN negotiations on biodiversity – what happens during the Bonn negotiations?

The basis: Convention on Biological Diversity – CBD

In 1992, one of the most important UN conferences took place in Rio. This conference, often referred to as “Earth Summit”, was a major conference, the first since 1972, dealing with environmental issues. This UN conference on environment and development was the basis for central progress in a global future planning. Results of this summit included the Convention on Climate Change, the Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD). CBD calls on signatory states to aim for three issues:

- conservation of biodiversity,
- sustainable use of diversity and
- development of regulations in access and benefit sharing of genetic resources.

Early on, it was determined that the CBD aims and their implementation was to be financed mainly by the developed nations. The convention was signed by 190 member states making the CBD one of the most successful international conventions. However, many states have yet to implement a national biodiversity strategy or they maintain only a rudimentary one and worst of all – CBD resolutions and working programs are often insufficiently implemented.

The Bonn Conference:

Every two years, representatives from the signatory states meet for a Conference of the Parties (COP). From May 19 to 30, Germany is inviting delegates from states that signed the Cartagena Protocol to attend the 9th conference of the parties (COP 9) in Bonn. Cartagena Protocol is the

name of the international agreement to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. See: www.cbd.int

What can Planet Diversity participants expect from the government negotiations prior to the UN conference?

Briefly: Less economic power means more opportunities for humans and nature.

The official delegations to the Bonn UN conference on biodiversity have to decide that natural and agricultural diversity must be protected and conserved. This is in direct contrast to the interests of agro-industry. To decide against strong lobbying from corporations and for the future of our planet, this is what people expect from the delegates from their governments.

For example: Indigenous populations – i.e. tribal people – must receive fair benefit sharing if aspects of their living environment are industrially developed and profitably marketed. Or: Security mechanisms and liability regulations must be decided upon which protect people from transgenic plants they do neither wish to cultivate nor eat. Or: Cultural diversity must be respected and protected.

Diversity is an elementary requirement for us and for future generations. By conserving, saving and developing this diversity, we are best prepared for future challenges.

To respect this concept, as dictated by the original declaration of Rio de Janeiro, this is what participants of Planet Diversity expect from the government delegations to the UN conference on biodiversity.