

PRESS CONFERENCE: HOME Alliance says no to ‘removals’ and geoengineering in UNFCCC Article 6.4

November 15, 2022



WHO: Global Forest Coalition (GFC), Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN), ETC Group, Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF), Centre for International Environmental Law (CIEL), Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBF)

WHERE: COP27, Press Conference Room 2 Luxor

WHEN: Thursday, 17th November at 16:30-17:00 GMT+2 (local Egypt time)

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Sharm El Sheikh – The Hands Off Mother Earth Alliance (HOME) is coming together to denounce the draft recommendations of the Supervisory Body on Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement. They argue that incorporating any form of “removals” in carbon markets can push the door open to risky land and geoengineering-based schemes, which present dangerous risks to ecosystems and communities. Since the Supervisory Body concluded its third meeting on Saturday 6th November with draft recommendations on removal activities to the CMA (also known as the Conference of Parties to the Paris Agreement), there has been active debate about the text itself and issues related to public participation in the meetings themselves. Speakers will address the current state of negotiations and what lies ahead for Article 6.4.

At the start of COP27, HOME released a statement calling on the CMA to keep geoengineering out of carbon markets and reject the current recommendations from the 6.4 Supervisory Body on “removals,” among other demands. The groups argue that the draft opens the door for “all removals,” which in an information note under consideration, includes land and engineering-based activities ranging from bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS), direct air carbon capture and storage (DACCS), enhanced rock weathering/ocean alkalisation and ocean fertilisation. Worryingly, this would welcome marine geoengineering via ocean carbon dioxide removal (CDR), which is in direct opposition to the London Convention London Protocol, which already prohibits ocean fertilisation and is evaluating other geoengineering techniques for regulation. Further, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), following a precautionary approach, agreed on a moratorium on all climate-related geoengineering in 2010.

Through the HOME manifesto, the HOME Alliance has scrutinised and challenged the nature of different removal activities, based on their practices which require large amounts of land, water and energy. The resources required

for these practices would surpass our carbon budget when considering their full life cycle and would have serious implications for human rights, including the rights of Indigenous Peoples. HOME has also rejected land-based carbon offsetting, which this mechanism endorses and enables.

Speakers: Souparna Lahiri (GFC), Peg Putt (EPN / Biomass Working Group), Panganga Pungowiyi (IEN), Neth Daño (ETC Group), Nnimmo Bassey (HOMEF), Erika Lennon (CIEL)

Live webcast available: <https://unfccc.int/event/global-forest-coalition-2>

You can view the statement here:

<https://www.geoengineeringmonitor.org/2022/11/unfccc-article-6-4-no-to-legitimizing-geoengineering-and-land-based-offsets/>

Hands Off Mother Earth (HOME) is an alliance of 200+ civil society organisations, climate justice movements and Indigenous Peoples in 45 countries which opposes geoengineering as a dangerous, unnecessary and unjust proposal to tackle the climate crisis.

Quotes

Indigenous Environmental Network, Director, Tom Goldtooth states:

“Carbon trading is the privatization of air. Before you can trade anything, you’ve got to determine whose property right it is. Carbon trading, cap and trade, carbon offsets, carbon tax. These are all part of a colonial capitalistic system that privatizes our Father Sky, our air. That’s why there’s this question about technologies, like capturing carbon. First of all, in our network, we are opposed to it, we reject it, we fight it.”

As IEN, we have studied these different forms of carbon capture technologies, and we’re very concerned, because they’re not proven, there’s a lot of assumptions in how those technologies are effective or not, and they’re still experiments. What are the protocols and Indigenous ethics when we talk about the sacredness of Mother Earth, and even even the perception of how technology draws out that liquid, that gas, that breath within Mother Earth. That’s violating the sacredness of Mother Earth already. Article 6.4 violates the sacredness of our Mother Earth.”

ETC Group’s Neth Daño comments:

“The most recent proposal for Article 6.4 opens the carbon market up to geoengineering – injecting capital into projects that damage ecosystems and don’t address the root cause of climate change. Ocean fertilization is one technology that is being considered, even though it has been banned in other UN fora because of the damage it causes to marine ecosystems and the livelihoods of fisherfolk.”

Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), Senior Attorney, Erika Lennon adds:

“The Article 6.4 Supervisory Body cannot include recommendations that potentially throw open the door to geoengineering schemes that risk undermining the integrity of the Paris Agreement and setting the world on a course to blow past 1.5°C. Betting on these activities will delay the much-needed climate action necessary to prevent catastrophe and impact human rights. The science is clear: We need urgent reductions, not some far-off scheme that won’t make a dent in emissions. So rather than push through a document that potentially opens the door to a host of issues, they should be sent back to the drawing board and focus on what will help meet the present crisis.”

Linda Schneider from Heinrich Boell Foundation comments: *“It is no surprise to see that geoengineering enters the UNFCCC through the Article 6 market mechanism, proponents have long pushed for that. However, carbon markets have long proven to undermine the rights and livelihoods of local communities and Indigenous Peoples, while also being ineffective at reducing emissions. Including dangerous geoengineering technofixes and land-based removals into new global carbon markets will only make climate chaos worse. The only way forward is a fast and comprehensive phase-out of fossil fuels, with rich producing and consuming countries leading the way, and a deep transformation of our economies towards climate justice. Geoengineering can never be the solution and needs to be kept out of the UNFCCC!”*

Friends of the Earth International, Climate Justice & Energy Program Coordinator, Sara Shaw commented:

“As if including nature-based and land-based offsets in a global carbon market weren’t outrageous and troubling enough, this latest set of recommendations for Article 6.4 would also embed dangerous and unproven technofixes as offsets. Both types of ‘carbon removals’ are extraordinarily risky, undermining efforts to make real emission reductions and threatening communities around the world. These Article 6.4 recommendations must not be pushed through under the radar: governments must reject them.”

Biofuelwatch, Americas Program Coordinator, Gary Hughes shared:

“The severe risks and large-scale side-effects for ecosystems, communities and the climate that are inherent in BECCS are described vividly by the IPCC’s WG I & WG II reports yet the CMA continues to ignore this evidence. The threat of BECCS worsening the impacts of warming is clear. The CMA needs to firmly insure that BECCS is excluded from Article 6.4 as well as any other articles of the Paris Agreement.”

Health of Mother Earth Foundation, Director, Nnimmo Bassey says:

“Climate change is the outcome of systemic failure. Geoengineering seeks to maintain the system of exploitation, pollution by pretending to be able to control planetary systems and the complex intricacies of Nature. Sneaking carbon dioxide removal and others into the climate negotiations will further tilt the geopolitical balance against vulnerable nations who are already victims of climate change. It is obnoxious that anyone would think of the oceans as reservoir of mindless human pollution. Our ocean, our land and sky should not be grabbed as carbon sinks while our people sink in the morass of exploitation and oppression. Stop emissions at source. Change the system now!”

Peg Putt, Environmental Paper Network / Biomass Working Group

“We’re so far away from holding climate change to the minor catastrophe of 1.5°C temperature rise that relying on speculative, ill defined and damaging “removals” to sweep away the problems as a trade off for too little action taken too late isn’t to be treated as feasible. Embroiling such fantastic notions in a market mechanism is so unacceptable the Parties have had to slow the headlong rush.”

You can find more critique of carbon markets, carbon offsetting, net-zero and geoengineering in these briefings and reports:

- **COP27: What’s at stake regarding false solutions?**

Friends of the Earth International, November 2022

https://www.foei.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/COP27-Whats-at-stake-regarding-false-solutions__ONLINE.pdf

- **COP27: A Turning Point for Climate and Human Rights**

Heinrich Boell Foundation and Centre for International Environmental Law, November 2022

<https://www.boell.de/en/2022/11/01/cop27-turning-point-climate-and-human-rights>

- **False Solutions Alert: Geoengineering in the Climate Negotiations**

ETC Group, November 2022

<https://etcgroup.org/content/false-solutions-alert-geoengineering-climate-negotiations>

- **Fossil futures Built on a House of Cards**

Friends of the Earth International, June 2022

<https://www.foei.org/publication/fossil-futures-built-on-a-house-of-cards/>

- **Chasing Carbon Unicorns: The deception of carbon markets and “net zero”**

Friends of the Earth International, April 2021

<https://www.foei.org/publication/chasing-unicorns-carbon-markets-net-zero/>

- **The Land Gap Report**

Dooley K., Keith H., Larson A., Catacora-Vargas G., Carton W., Christiansen K.L., Enokenwa Baa O., Frechette A., Hugh S., Ivetic N., Lim L.C., Lund J.F., Luqman M., Mackey B., Monterroso I., Ojha H., Perfecto I., Riamit K., Robiou du Pont Y., Young V; November 2022

<https://www.landgap.org>

- **Beyond the Limits: New IPCC Working Group II Report Highlights How Gambling on Overshoot is Pushing the Planet Past a Point of No Return,**

Centre for International Environmental Law and Heinrich Boell Foundation, February 2022

<https://www.ciel.org/reports/ipcc-wg2-briefing/>

- **IPCC Unsummarized: Unmasking Clear Warnings on Overshoot, Techno-fixes, and the Urgency of**

Climate Justice

Centre for International Environmental Law and Heinrich Boell Foundation, April 2022

<https://www.ciel.org/reports/ipcc-wg3-briefing/>