

Indigenous Peoples Denounce Emergency of GMO Trees at United Nations

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New York – Alarmed that Brazil has legalized 7 varieties of genetically engineered eucalyptus trees, which could devastate their forests, Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations denounced the emergency of GMO trees for their forests and biodiversity.

In the framework of the UN Forum on Indigenous Issues, Global Justice Ecology Project, the Campaign to STOP GE Trees, and the National Commission of Indigenous Territories (CNTI) of Colombia kicked off Indigenous Peoples' worldwide campaign to stop GMO trees.

Indigenous Peoples' territories include 80% of the world's biodiversity. GMO trees could have potentially irreversible impacts on Indigenous Peoples, forests and biodiversity such as massive land grabs and expropriation of territories, displacement of communities, violation of human rights, depleted and contaminated water, increased risk of forest fires and destruction of native forests.

Gustavo Ulcué Campo of the Nasa People and the National Commission of Indigenous Territories (CNTI) of Colombia shared his concern GMO trees. "GMO trees threaten the way of life, ancestral knowledge and food systems of Indigenous Peoples. Defending territories is defending life!" Five of the seven GMO trees that Brazil has legalized are genetically modified to be resistant to the toxic herbicide glyphosate, that was sprayed on the Colombian Amazon with devastating impacts for indigenous communities in the Colombian Amazon.

Heather Lee of the Campaign to STOP GE Trees and Global Justice Ecology Project denounced that *de facto* moratorium of the Convention on Biological Diversity against GMO trees is not being respected threatening the biodiversity of the world. She also noted that "the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change allows GMO trees to be used in carbon credit schemes, a false solution to climate change." Carbon credits projects have violated the rights of Indigenous Peoples and harmed Indigenous Peoples.

Casey Camp-Horinek, Ambassador on the Environment, Ponca Nation, stressed that GMO trees must be stopped immediately. "Everything that has to be done, has to be done now. The urgency is here." The distinguished Indigenous elder and actor beloved for her role in the hit series *Reservation Dogs* was utterly appalled by GMO trees. "Who has the foolishness [and] ugliness to take the seed from this relative and alter it in whatever manner they do and whatever way those laboratories allow them? It hurts how these humans are coming up with these false solutions to what they have created – what they call climate change."

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Panelists (left to right): Celerina Sánchez, Ñuu Savi/Mixteca, Poet, Oaxaca, Mexico; Casey Camp-Horinek, Ambassador on the Environment of the Ponca Nation; Heather Lee, Campaign to STOP GE Trees and Global Justice Ecology Project, Gustavo Ulcué Campo of Nasa People and the National Commission of Indigenous Territories (CNTI) of Colombia.