

This statement was initiated at the World Social Forum in Belém, Brazil in January 2009. ETC Group released it on March 10, 2009 on the eve of a geo-engineering panel at the Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change: Global Risks, Challenges & Decisions. The list of organization endorsing this statement includes only those received before March 10. Any additional organizations wishing to sign on should send an email to veronica@etcgroup.org before March 17, 2009.

The better world we seek is not Geo-engineered!

A Civil Society Statement against Ocean Fertilization

Since the World Social Forum last met in Nairobi in January 2007, civil society organizations from around the globe have confronted an alarming new threat to our rights and biodiversity: the threat of unjust and high risk geo-engineering schemes and specifically ocean fertilization. We are facing off against several multimillion-dollar private and government-backed projects that aim to re-engineer our climate and oceans. We will soon face other attempts to intentionally alter our soils, deserts and other ecosystems on a large scale in the name of climate protection and profit-making, including the lucrative carbon trade.

In June 2007, we learned that Planktos Corporation of USA was planning to dump iron in the oceans west of the Galapagos Islands in order to fertilize the sea to spur the growth of plankton blooms. Concerted civil society action prevented this dump and forced Planktos out of business. In November 2007 we learned that another ocean fertilization outfit, Ocean Nourishment Corporation of Australia, was intending to dump hundreds of tons of industrially produced urea in the Sulu Sea in the Southern Philippines. Once again concerted action by hundreds of civil society groups put a stop to that dangerous experiment. Even as some of us meet in Belém, a German-Indian expedition, codenamed LOHAFEX, is dumping iron sulphate over 300 square kilometres of water in the Scotia Sea. LOHAFEX is flouting an international moratorium on such experiments and acting against the wishes of the German Environment Minister. We have also learned that geo-engineers closely linked to Ocean Nourishment Corporation will be trying again to dump urea – this time in the Tasman Sea near Australia – in early March and that Climos, Inc. of the USA are in the planning stages of another dump.

We, the undersigned are opposed to the LOHAFEX experiment currently taking place in the Scotia Sea and all other ocean fertilization schemes. We call on the world's governments and civil society:

- To strengthen the global moratorium on ocean fertilization agreed to at the 2008 meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity to ensure that LOHAFEX will be the last ocean fertilization experiment that goes ahead.
- To oppose ocean fertilization and other high-risk geo-engineering schemes as potentially devastating to people and ecosystems and the wrong answer to climate change.
- To oppose the geo-engineers who want to turn our oceans into a vast, open-air experiment and the carbon credit profiteers who support this for the purpose of carbon-trading.

We remind geo-engineers and their backers that not only is our world not for sale – it is not for them to tinker with either.

The fundamental solutions to the climate crisis lie in the protection and stewardship of our forests, oceans and soils, respect for the rights and practices of indigenous peoples, small farmers and forest peoples, and putting an end to all forms of over-consumption. The way forward lies in choosing truly renewable, equitable and non-exploitative forms of energy and other climate change responses that do not involve risky techno-fixes and carbon trading. Ocean fertilization and other unjust and high risk geo-engineering schemes are the wrong answer to the challenge of global climate change.

The better world we seek is not geo-engineered!.