

News Release - 21st April 2010 - For Immediate Release

Hands Off Mother Earth!

Civil Society Groups announce new global campaign against
geoengineering tests – urge public to join in.

www.handsoffmotherearth.org

Cochabamba Bolivia - On the eve of UN Mother Earth Day, over sixty national and international organizations today threw their weight behind a common statement launching a global campaign to prevent real world deployment of geoengineering experiments.

Geoengineering refers to large-scale intentional tinkering with the climate and earth systems to counteract global warming. The 'Hands Off Mother Earth' campaign (or H.O.M.E. campaign) regards such geoengineering schemes as dangerous and unjust. It is urging individuals and organizations to speak out in opposing them.

"With rich governments and industrial interests jockeying for open-air geoengineering tests it is time to draw a line that should not be crossed." affirmed Silvia Ribeiro of ETC Group, Mexico. *"Mother Earth is our common home whose integrity should never be violated by geoengineering experimentation - it should never be a laboratory for these risky and unjust schemes."*

Ben Powless of the Mohawk Nation (Canada) representing the Indigenous Environmental Network explained:

"For too long our peoples' bodies and lands have been used to test new technologies. Now, in response to climate change, these same people want to put Mother Earth at risk with geoengineering technologies. We can't afford to threaten our planet in this way, especially when simple, just and proven solutions are at hand."

Ricardo Navarro, from CESTA, El Salvador speaking on behalf of Friends of the Earth International, said:

"The same countries and companies that have neglected climate change for decades, are now proposing very risky geoengineering technologies that could further disrupt the weather, peoples and ecosystems. For them geoengineering is a "perfect" excuse to claim they can keep on heating the planet because later they will cool it off with dangerous experiments. As global environmental movements, we cannot allow the geoengineers to experiment with the planet and its peoples."

Launched in Cochabamba Bolivia at the Peoples' Conference on Climate Change and The Rights of Mother Earth, the H.O.M.E campaign features an interactive website <http://www.handsoffmotherearth.org> where individuals can 'lend a hand' to the

campaign, leaving messages and uploading images of themselves. The site features a public portrait gallery of individuals with open palms calling a halt to geoengineering. This gallery is expected to swell as the focus of the campaign moves from Cochabamba this week to upcoming UN talks culminating in the next meeting of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Cancun Mexico in December. A facebook group for the H.O.M.E. campaign has also been launched.

“We do not need to test geoengineering because we know that it is a fundamentally unjust technology” asserted Pat Mooney, Executive Director of ETC Group speaking at the campaign launch. *“Could you imagine, in your wildest dreams, that the governments who have spent decades denying or avoiding climate change; who have failed to meet even the minimal requirements of the Kyoto Accord; who lack the courage to tell their societies to change their lifestyles; have either the integrity or the intellect to manipulate the oceans or the stratosphere in any way that could be either environmentally-effective or socially-equitable for the world? Should their hand be on the global thermostat?”*

A press conference launching the campaign in Cochabamba will be held today 21st April at 4pm Edificio del Rectorado y Vicerectorado, Planta Baja - UNIVALLE. (Sala de Prensa)

The website of the Hands Off Mother Earth Campaign can be viewed online at <http://www.handsoffmotherearth.org> The list of organizations and individuals signing the campaign statement can be found at this address. A Spanish language website <http://www.NomanipulenlaMadreTierra.org> will follow shortly.

The Facebook page is public and can be joined at

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=115648685121721>

The campaign can also be followed via twitter @HandsOffMotherE

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Background Notes:

The Hands Off Mother Earth (H.O.M.E.) Campaign has been established in response to clear indications that government, military and industrial players are attempting to move the climate debate towards embracing geoengineering as a “Plan B” to supplement action on emission reductions:

- Last year Russian scientists led by controversial climatologist Yuri Izrael, a key science advisor to President Vladimir Putin, announced they had undertaken the first outdoor experiment to release sulphate aerosols in the atmosphere for geoengineering purposes. They hinted that larger follow up experiments were in the offing.ⁱ
- In September 2009, a panel of geoengineering advocates convened by the UK’s Royal Society published an influential report calling on governments to contribute millions of dollars towards establishing a ten-year international programme of geoengineering research – including real world field trials.ⁱⁱ
- Since 2007 former Microsoft chairman Bill Gates has channeled millions of dollars of private funds to several teams of geoengineering researchers. Microsoft’s former chief technical officer, Nathan Myhrvold, has also become an outspoken champion of the field. Myhrvold’s firm Intellectual Ventures already has several patents pending on geoengineering techniques.ⁱⁱⁱ
- In the past six months the Science Committees of the UK House of Commons and US Congress have held joint committee hearings into establishing a geoengineering research programme, including outdoor experimentation.^{iv}
- In March 2010, 175 self-selected geoengineers from 14 countries met in Asilomar California to develop “voluntary guidelines” for experiments in geoengineering the planet. The meeting was organized by a group associated with the commercial geoengineering firm Climos Inc. Over seventy civil society groups issued an open letter opposing the aims of this meeting.^v

For further information about geoengineering or the H.O.M.E. campaign visit <http://www.handsoffmotherearth.org/about>

ⁱ See Chris Mooney, “Copenhagen: Geoengineering’s Big Break?” <http://motherjones.com/environment/2009/12/copenhagen-geoengineerings-big-break>. See also Yu A. Izrael et al., “Field Experiment on Studying Solar Radiation Passing Through Aerosol Layers”, *Russian Meteorology and Hydrology*, 2009, vol 34, no. 5, pp. 265-273.

ⁱⁱ See Royal Society, “Geoengineering the climate: Science, governance and uncertainty” Sept 2009 available at <http://royalsociety.org/Geoengineering-the-climate/>

ⁱⁱⁱ See Eli Kintisch, “Bill Gates Funding Geoengineering Research,” *Science Insider*, 26 January 2010 available at <http://blogs.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2010/01/bill-gates-fund.html>. For Patent information see ETC Group, *Retrofitting the Planet? Climate Chaos in a Geoengineering Age*, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, 2009, p. 30.

^{iv} See Press release, “Sub-Committee Examines Geoengineering Strategies and Hazards” at <http://science.house.gov/press/PRArticle.aspx?NewsID=2741> and Press release, “MPs CALL FOR EARLY ACTION ON GEOENGINEERING REGULATION” at http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/science_technology/s_t_pn26_100318.cfm

^v See ETC Group News release “Top-down Planet Hackers Call for Bottom-up Governance”, Feb 11th 2010 available at <http://www.etcgroup.org/en/node/5073>