

eco

Friday
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Slip Sliding
Away

World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa

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Slipping Away— (a mid-summit assessment)

As the first week draws to a close, Eco offers a series of pieces analysing what progress, if that's the right word, has been achieved so far and what must happen if this summit is to be a success.

“Lifestyles of the Rich and Voluntary”

As governments celebrated the newest international holiday—“Partnerships Day”—the question facing them is this: Will corporate accountability be a key outcome of the summit, or will governments just take the next six days off to celebrate the lifestyles of the rich and voluntary?

The critical words ‘intergovernmental framework’ for corporate accountability suddenly went on holiday (apparently, off to Bali from whence they had



“Let's face it, gentlemen, we're out to own the Earth, not to save it.”

Stan Eales, *The Ecologist*

first come). The US, of course, stuck to its longstanding insistence that everything's got to be very voluntary (including, of course, leaving a very relaxing

ranch in Texas). And one has to wonder: Will the EU end up just following along, or go somewhere different?

The EU finally seems to have recognised the importance of seriously getting down to work on this issue. The question is whether the EU is going to take its rhetoric seriously and actively support the development of international agreements addressing corporate behavior. The G77 put forward a proposal to promote corporate accountability by

monitoring public/private partnerships. But—the proposal's good intent to address the luxurious freedom of partnerships aside – that approach doesn't quite equal true corporate accountability. What's needed is a shot-gun marriage of sorts between the EU and the G77—a serious approach to promoting corporate accountability and serious oversight for partnerships. But we all know how hard it is for couple to travel together on holiday. Such a union will only work out in

Editorial: Out of Gas?

As the first week of the vaunted Johannesburg World Summit draws to a close, it is increasingly hard to believe that this high-priced gathering, on which so many hopes had been pinned, will justify its cost. Not to speak of its hype. We are left asking whether the heads of state, when they arrive next week, will be presiding over a baptism or a funeral.

Too strong for your taste? Let's review the advance billing. Far from being a tired retrospective on Rio, the Johannesburg Summit was touted as a ‘forward-looking meeting—one that would embrace the challenges and the changes of the world since the Rio Summit, and set a powerful agenda for sustainable development in the 21st Century. And certainly the need is there. Again and again we have heard the environmental, economic, and social assessments that show that, though some societies and elites have prospered over the last decade, many have not. The poverty gap has in fact increased, the natural and living resources that support us all are being systematically degraded, and the number of people without access to clean water or renewable energy has grown, not shrunk.

But does anyone with any knowledge of the current implementation plan discussions really believe that they will bring us to a programme that can conquer these challenges? In sector after sector, timidity and self-interest have prevailed. In paragraph after paragraph, the ‘actions’ that survive are watered down versions of commitments already made in other fora. And that's not the worst. In key areas such as biodiversity and chemicals, we are going backwards, and agreeing to language that is weaker than commitments made in the CBD, the OSPAR Convention, and other established instruments.

It's hard not to conclude that the multilateral approach to sustainable development, which was sparked in Stockholm and got a head of steam in Rio, is running out of gas in Johannesburg. So the question remains: Will the heads of state, in the full pomp and circumstances of next week, be launching a vehicle which can carry (fuel efficiently) a renewed effort to fulfill the promise of sustainable development, or will they be caught watching helplessly as this rather large, cumbersome diplomatic sport utility vehicle runs out of gas? And where will the road lead after that?

the end if it's accompanied by a commitment to develop real rules for corporate behavior. As we went to press, negotiators were once again presented with a text that looks headed for divorce court: corporate accountability through the promotion of public/private partnerships. Let's remind everyone who thinks that partnerships could be the icing on the cake: Icing without the cake is a real mess.

Slipping Away—

Negotiators: Do Not Give up on Precaution

At the 1992 Earth Summit, the Precautionary Principle was adopted in Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration, bringing to the global stage an emerging paradigm shift. Following Rio, a number of conventions and other soft law agreements incorporated the precautionary approach into their provisions, and still other agreements were actually negotiated on a precautionary basis, including the Climate Change Convention.

Precaution is embedded in a growing number of legally binding international agreements, involving toxic chemicals, fisheries, climate, fish stocks and biodiversity. However, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, where precaution should be at the very heart of agreements—including with respect to natural resources, chemicals and trade—governments are trading this principle away.

Precaution was a part of Rio. This is an implementation conference. When do we get to implementation?

Common But Differentiated Responsibility—How Radical!

Principle 7 of the Rio Declaration recognizes the differing responsibilities that rest with developed and developing countries as well as those with economies in transition. It is a central tie that binds when it comes to the negotiation of international commitments. In fact, both conventions that emerged out of Rio (Biodiversity and Climate) clearly and unequivocally included language on this principle.

The spirit of Rio certainly does NOT live on in Joburg. The legally binding conventions agreed ten years ago contain more substantive language on prin-

ciples than the non binding draft Johannesburg Implementation Plan. Sad but true.

Governments need to re-read agreements they have already signed up to—hopefully before they head back into the negotiating sessions.

Slipping Away—

Follow-up Process: Where Art Thou?

It's all well and good to talk targets—but what happens once they are agreed? (If they are agreed?) What sort of institutional arrangements will be made to take forward the Johannesburg plan of action? As we approach the end of the first week of negotiations, it is timely to consider “post Joburg processes.” Unless there is a mechanism set up BEFORE we leave here to ensure reporting, monitoring, and accountability for commitments, then all those hard fought victories won after hours in the conference room will result in a document that isn't worth the paper it's printed on.

Countries need to meet and report annually on the steps being taken to implement their Johannesburg commitments, including, for instance, provisions on water and energy access, increasing corporate accountability, aid and finance, reducing consumption, and other issues. Whether it is through the Commission on Sustainable Development or some other body, governments need to turn their minds to this issue, lest all this fuss over targets and timetables become a moot point.

Slipping Away—

But There's Been No Back-Sliding on Trade!

The latest draft Means of Implementation text on Trade and Finance mentions:

▶ “The Doha work programme” **22 times.**

▶ “In a manner consistent with WTO rights and obligations” **three times** (in crucial places!)

▶ “Public-private” **14 times.**

In sharp contrast, where are the earlier references to:

▶ Promoting initiatives to ensure

coherence between the rules of the multilateral trading system and multilateral environmental agreements “consistent with the goals of sustainable development.” (see Bali text para. 122 (c))?

▶ Apply “in decision-making” the precautionary principle as established in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development “and further developed in international law in order to protect health and environment.” (see Bali text para. 45 (e) alt.)?

▶ An “international mechanism” to stabilise commodity prices for coping with the instability of commodity prices and declining terms of trade (see Bali text para. 82)?

Slipping Away—

Debt Sustainability Unhinged from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The US and the EU seem to have forgotten their commitment to achieving the MDGs by 2015. Revised language in paragraph 9 of the draft Means of Implementation text obscures the critical connection between debt and the resources that governments have available to tackle poverty and environmental concerns.

Heavy debt burdens prevent nations from providing public services in the health, education, and environmental conservation sectors. Determining debt sustainability based only on a country's balance sheet fails to advance the goals of sustainable development.

A commitment to provide countries committed to poverty reduction with the necessary funds needed to reach the MDGs was lauded as one of the major positive outcomes of Monterrey. In Monterrey, governments also agreed that “future reviews of debt sustainability should also bear in mind the impact of debt relief on progress towards the achievement of the development goals contained in the Millennium Declaration.” This commitment was reflected in the June 12th Bali Means of Implementation text, but has been removed from the current draft.

The best alternative to full cancellation of unsustainable debt is basing the assessment of the level of debt cancellation on the resources a country needs to achieve the MDGs, enhanced by targets on sustainable development. Developing

and China in their efforts to get the US on board in reaffirming the Monterrey commitment to the linkage between debt sustainability and the MDGs. Why this reluctance all of a sudden?

Four days into the WSSD it should be clear to all that poverty is multidimensional, and closely linked to other development concerns such as social equity and the environment. The concept of sustainable development connects these different dimensions. The EU and US must seize the opportunity to take a step forward in Joburg and bring together the different dimensions of sustainable development in relation to debt sustainability. *Eco thanks Eurodad for their contribution to this article.*

Slipping Away—

US Stained consumption. . .

The issue of sustainable consumption and production advanced from near non-existence to having a prominent position as a crosscutting issue during the PrepComm negotiations. While the issue took on a life of its own, it also suffered several setbacks, notably related to the insertion of the US' alternative vocabulary—"as appropriate," "promote," and "advance"—used to replace "commitment," "develop," and "affirm." The most recent sacrifice on this issue is the disputed 10 year programme which might be facing a sudden death at the hands of a few countries in the G77 who have taken a 180 degree turn on the issue and no longer think that it is such a great idea.

Other concepts like "ecolabeling" and the "life cycle approach," are also on their way out due to a combined effort by the US and the G77. This is despite the fact that both concepts were agreed on by these countries in the Rio + 5 document and in section G on sustainable consumption of the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection. Why address the issue of consumption and production at all at the WSSD one could ask? Instead of a lengthy response from Eco, we will let the figures speak for themselves.

<u>The Cost of Providing</u>	<u>Spending on</u>
Basic education for all US: \$6 billion	Cosmetics in the US \$8bn
Water & basic sanitation for all: \$9bn	Ice cream in Europe \$11bn
Basic health & sanitation for all: \$11bn	Pet food in Europe \$17bn

Slipping Away—

Biodiversity: Down the Drain?

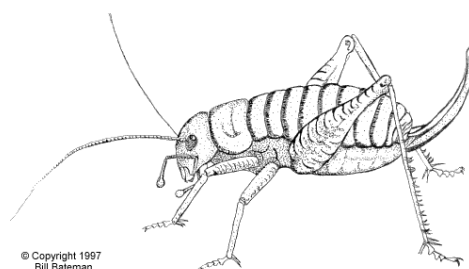
The CBD was one of the three international framework Conventions signed at Rio in 1992. It has been ratified by 185 countries, most, if not all, present here. Commitments made by party states to this Convention include:

The Precautionary Principle is included in the Convention on Biological Diversity and its related Protocol on Biosafety. The Protocol develops the principle in this case to facilitate implementation by stating that, "Lack of scientific certainty due to insufficient relevant scientific information and knowledge regarding the extent of the potential adverse effects of a living modified organism on the conservation and sustainable use of biological

diversity in the Party of import...shall not prevent that Party from taking a decision...in order to avoid or minimize such potential adverse effects."

In spite of this, the current bracketed text includes waffle words such as, "[based on sound science, risk assessment and principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development [and other [relevant] international instruments]]. The bracketed text in paragraph 23 is the same as the CBD.

The 2000 Conference of Parties in Nairobi adopted the ecosystem approach as the primary framework for action under the Convention. In paragraph 23 of the WSSD text, the bureaucrats' here have bracketed the ecosystem approach. Have 185 countries been overruled?



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Bill Bateman

Parktown Prawn

At the end of a fluffy briefing on the magnificent partnerships the US is offering to help feed the world, eradicate AIDs, abate air pollution, encourage energy conservation, build housing in South Africa, and save the Congo Basin, a pointed question intruded. "I just wanted to clarify something," the questioner asked. "Is it true that the agricultural partnership involves the biotechnology industry and will mean the spread of genetically modified foodstuffs?"

Yes indeed, said Claude Allen of the US Department of Health

and Human Services. GMOs are safe, he insisted, and in the case of corn safer than the natural item. Prawn admires candor, but thinks this whole program deserves another look.

Late Wednesday night a draft emerged from a session on Means of Implementation. The time marked on the paper was "one minute to midnight." Prawn hopes the author was being literal, not symbolic, but both are probably the case.

Prawn particularly enjoyed this comment from American Congressman George

Miller at Thursday's press conference, commenting on the US delegation's earlier press conference on partnerships, "The greenest thing the United States is doing at the summit is recycling old ideas and old money."

Lord Richard Holme, BASD's deputy chairman, said:

"The UN would like a lot of new partnerships. But business is really showcasing partnerships that are already in existence." (Financial Times London 29th). What more can we say?

Mary Robinson praised the increasing linkages between human rights and the environment in plenary yesterday. Good on her—and Eco supports this linkage wholeheartedly. Funny that exactly that linkage was dropped as "progress" was made on para 152.

Biodiversity loss reversal by 2010

CoP 6 agreed to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional, and national levels as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth.

Astonishingly, paragraph 42 of the WSSD text does not adopt this approach but has an assortment of bracketed text - [Achieving a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss [by 2010] includes actions at all levels to][With a view to having instruments in place to stop the current alarming biodiversity loss [by 2010] actions are required at all levels to]

It is outrageous that all references to the above issues in the Draft Implementation Plan are in brackets.

Quoting from an African proverb, "credibility maketh men and institutions". We call on governments to live up to their commitments.

eco-equity

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Ten Percent Alliance Takes Off—Brazilian Energy Initiative Picks up Steam

Eco applauds the ministers from Argentina, Mexico, Norway and the Philippines who joined forces with Brazil yesterday to launch the Brazilian Energy Initiative, calling for 10 percent of global primary energy supply to come from 'new' renewables, or as a Japanese

Late Breaking News

The EU set off an alarm clock in the Summit's evening session by calling for 14 or 15 issues to be passed on for Ministerial consideration. *Eco* agrees that the negotiators in the Sandton Centre certainly needed a shakeup. We only hope they don't now get grumpily out of bed and make things worse.

journalist clarified, 'real' renewables, by 2010. The new alliance, which is expected to grow over the next several days, understands that the only sustainable energy future is one in which a rapidly increasing share of our energy comes from wind, solar, geothermal, small-scale hydro, marine energy and modern, sustainable biomass. These are the basic technologies that must be the basis of the renewables revolution.

Setting a new renewable energy target in the Johannesburg plan of action must ensure that THESE technologies are the ones that receive the fiscal and regulatory support they need to 'take off' the way the wind and solar industries have over the past 5-7 years. Any other kind of renewable energy target is just so much hot air.

Blame It On the Media

Well, it seems we've been wrong all this time. The fact that Canada is a charter member of the "Axis of environmental Evil" has nothing to do with the fact that its greenhouse gas emissions have increased by some 20 percent between 1990 and 2000. It's because of the media, more specifically because the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation only reports criticism from environmental groups and not Canada's shining success dealing with environmental problems.

The truth was revealed at a press conference by the Canadian Environment Minister, David Anderson.

Greenpeace released a survey yesterday which revealed that 63 percent of Canadians believe the Prime Minister should apologize to the world for Canada's broken Rio commitments. When a CBC journalist asked the good Minister what he thought about the result of the survey, he replied, "I'm too old to deal with stupid questions like that, and the problem is the media only broadcasts criticism from environmental groups instead of the real story."

Had he stopped there, perhaps the hemorrhage would have been prevented, but he also referred to the question as being "dumb" and then went on the attack by saying he thought the CBC was getting too much funding and that it should be cut to put more money into environmental issues. Little did the poor Minister know that the same day, in Canada, another poll was released revealing that in fact Canadians think the CBC should be getting...more money!



Thirty Years Ago in Eco

Tossing the Secretariat's draft Declaration on the Human Environment to the closed Working Group has been like dropping it into a school of piranha.

In the first two days of sittings at least 16 formal amendments have been proposed. If even half were adopted the text would be both unrecognizable and virtually unintelligible. The Conference Secretariat, recoiling from the consequences, has refused to put forward a new draft proposal. The most they are willing to do is collate the thickening sheaf of amendments into a resumé.

Eco 1, Number 7, Stockholm,
13 June 1972

attention seeking

A special Eco insert from the groups listed below

DON'T RUSH NEPAD THROUGH

By Njogu Barua, Coordinator,
East African NGO Coalition on WSSD

It is hardly a year since a select team of African Heads of States and Government embarked on an ambitious campaign of marketing the New Partnerships for Africa's Development to their people. The African civil society is concerned by the fast pace at which NEPAD has been moved by these governments, despite the fact that there is no regional consensus on the initiative, since not all African governments have endorsed it. It is also noticeable that NEPAD is being pushed by key Western governments and institutions, as opposed to evolving naturally from within Africa itself.

As the least developed, and hence the poorest continent in the world, development initiatives that will solve Africa's endemic problems and uphold the dignity of the African people certainly are most welcome. However, before embracing such initiatives, Africa needs to borrow from experiences of past "projects" such as the Structural Adjustment Programmes that have weakened our societies. The question is: Can NEPAD pass the test this time round?

One of the biggest issues of concern is that there has not been adequate consultation with civil society over NEPAD. The only limited consultations that have taken place favoured business corporations at the expense of the NGOs and CBOs, who are closer to the local communities. This is clearly in breach of the principles of Agenda 21.

In addition, NEPAD relies heavily on external aid and international investments as opposed to home-grown initiatives. It does not adequately address poor governance and corruption on the continent, eradication of conflicts and wars, weak and incoherent leadership structures, debt cancellation and recognition of past wrong-doing to Africa, such as slavery and colonialism.

Furthermore, NEPAD glaringly ignores all past initiatives on Africa's development such as the Lagos Plan of Action and the roles of post-independence leaders. The call to our African leaders and negotiators at the WSSD is for a serious review of the initiative to rectify the inherent weaknesses and accommodate the vision of the African people. Any stage-managed attempt to push the initiative by force won't do. Africa must not be saved from its own people.

In a meeting of the East African Coalition on WSSD held in Uganda prior to the Summit, it was recommended that there should be further discussions on NEPAD with local authorities, legislative assemblies and regional political and economic blocks before it is adopted in any forum as an African position. Because this has not happened, the call is on slowing the pace of adoption and implementation of NEPAD, until adequate and sufficient consultations have been undertaken.

Let us remember that when a deal is

too good, think twice. This is for you African negotiators.

PARTNERS IN PLUNDER?

By Antonio Jacanamijoy, Coordinating
Committee of Indigenous Organizations
in the Amazon Basin, COICA

No one knows exactly how many Amerindian nations inhabited the Amazon before the Europeans arrived more than 500 years ago. But the number was surely a lot higher than today. The Amazon rainforest, encompassing nine countries, is now home to about 1.5 million indigenous persons, belonging to slightly more than 400 nations.

Most people know the history of European gold fever and its consequences for the original inhabitants of South America. Diseases, slavery and wars claimed the lives of millions of Amerindians in the first century after the Spaniards and Portuguese came to what they called the New World. Fewer people know that the hunt for resources has continued to this very day. Now, instead of just gold, firms and explorers are searching for oil, timber and knowledge of native plants. Today, as then, the foreign encroachment has far-reaching consequences for the indigenous peoples.

Oil companies wheel and deal with our governments, and gain legal access

to vast tracts of rainforest. Of course, as the companies well know, our people have defended their territory for centuries with spears wielded by brave warriors. But we do not want to isolate ourselves from the rest of the world. As all human beings, we also want to partake in the choices and opportunities of development. This desire is unscrupulously exploited by oil companies, as they approach our communities. To avoid dealing with our organisations, the legitimate representatives of our nations, they seek to form “partnerships” with much weaker counterparts, say, one single community, who are easier to bribe or bully, who are less likely to know their own bargaining position, and who certainly do not feel strong enough to just say: “no, we don’t want that here.” When the oil has been sucked up and sold, instead of development, we get pollution and devastated communities. To enter into meaningful partnerships with the outside world, to determine our own development, we need the right as well as the power to say no.

We reaffirm the vital role of indigenous peoples in sustainable development

WHO OWES WHOM?

By CICAFOC, Coordinating Body of Central American Indigenous Peoples and Small-Scale Farmers in Community Agroforestry

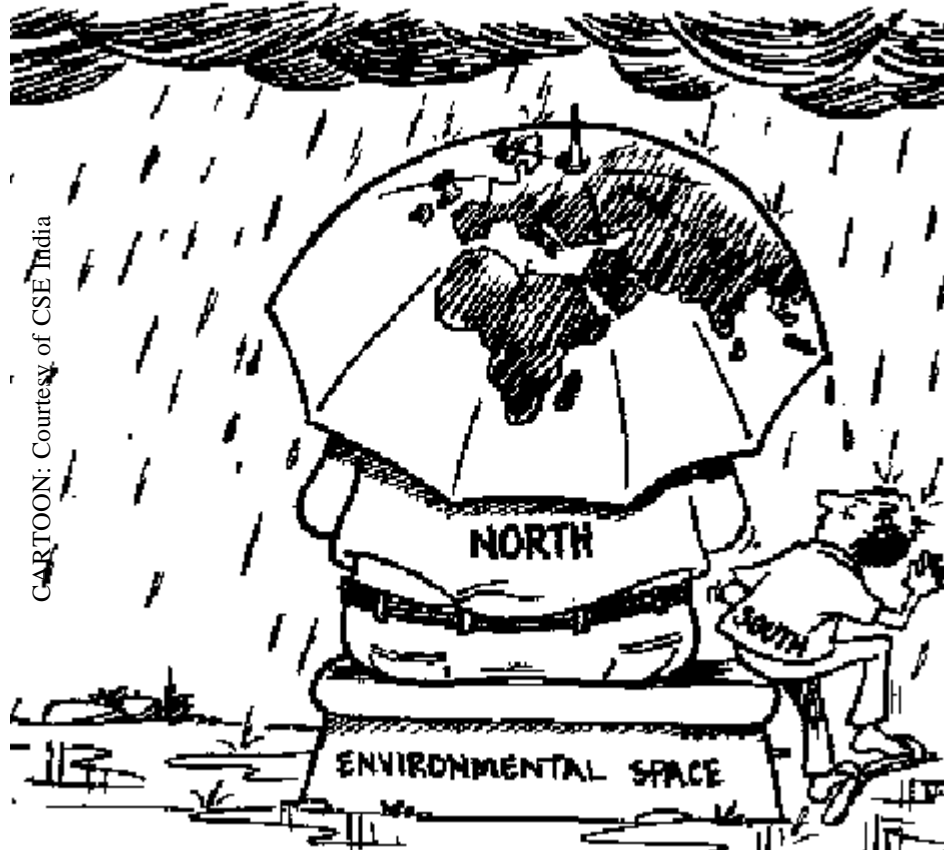
Central America has seven percent of the world’s biodiversity, 14 percent of

servicing this treasure is considerable.

This is why we need development assistance to preserve this heritage, because the cost of losing it is a lot higher, and will be paid by the whole world. For years, we have been made to believe that we are in debt to rich-country financial entities. But why doesn’t anyone acknowledge the huge ecological debt owed to us by industrialised countries, where most of the forest has been cut down during decades of pollution?

In Central America, 45 hectares of forest disappear every hour. Even so, it is very hard to tell a farmer with hungry kids not to clear land for his crops or hunt wild fauna.

If our forests are to be saved, we need a joint effort to combine sustainable natural-resource management with productive and social benefits.



wild flower species, abundant water resources, 35 percent forest cover, and eight percent of the planet’s wetlands. This is why, in pursuit of sustainable development, Central America demands ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and payment for environmental services.

We request recognition of our service to mankind by preserving our forests, making it possible to produce oxygen and sequester carbon. The cost of con-

ERRATUM

Our apologies for inadvertently citing the Philippine Civil Society Counterpart Council for Sustainable Development as author of the article “G77: Don’t Sell Out Our Small Farmers and Fishermen,” submitted by WWF-Philippines. Eco regrets the error.

All Southern NGOs are welcome to seek attention, as this insert aims to give more voice at the Summit to civil society in developing countries. This springs from the Rio+10 Project, facilitated by the Danish 92 Group, working in Africa, Latin America and Asia through a series of national and subregional networks coordinated by the following organizations.

Southern Africa: EMG; Mozambique: ABIODES; Namibia: Desert Research Foundation within the NANGOF NGO Forum; South Africa: ENJF, ENDABA and the WSSD NGO Secretariat. East Africa: EcoNews, Kenya; Zimbabwe: Zero Regional Environmental Organisation; Uganda: The Rio+10 Coalition; Kenya: EcoNews and ELCI; Tanzania: JET; West Africa: Friends of the Earth Togo and networks in 11 countries. Ghana: ICA. South East Asia: WWF-Philippines, alongside WWF in Indonesia (with IPF), Malaysia, Thailand (with NGO COD), Vietnam and national NGO networks. South Asia: CSE India; Nepal: Forum of Environmental Journalists; Bangladesh: Forum for Environmental Journalists; South America and Argentina: Fundación Ecológica Universal; Brazil: Vitae Civilis; Ecuador: Fundación Natura and IUCN Quito; Bolivia: Fundación Tierra; The Amazon: Coordination of Indigenous Organisations in the Amazon including rainforest peoples in Peru, Guyana, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, Venezuela, French Guyana, Surinam, and Colombia. Central America and Costa Rica: CICAFOC, supported by UNES and Enlace Sur Sur; Nicaragua: Centro Humboldt; Guatemala: Fundación Solar; El Salvador: UNES.

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