

Fri. May 9 - Sat. May 10 2008 at the BUKO 31 in Dortmund

University of Dortmund, Emil-Figge-Str. 50, Dortmund (Campus Nord) - from Main Station (Hbf) with „S1“

Opposing the Looting of the Biological Wealth of Asia

Biopiracy, Biological Diversity and Food Sovereignty in India, Pakistan and China

From May 19th -30th, the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will take place in Bonn. The objectives of the CBD are the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources.

The latter will be in the centre of this year's Conference of the Parties. This Benefit Sharing is supposed to compensate indigenous communities for the extraction of active ingredients from plants they watched over for centuries and which lead to huge profits of the pharmaceutical industry. But the concept of a monetary benefit sharing is opposed

by the indigenous communities in the South, since they have a very different understanding of how to deal with nature and knowledge, which does not include any private acquisition.

We have invited resource persons from India, Pakistan and China to our workshops. The aim is to trigger a discussion on alternatives to the privatisation of nature and knowledge.

Friday, May 9: 3-6 pm (dt/en)

Introductory Lecture: What is Biopiracy?
with activists of the BUKO-Campaign against Biopiracy

Saturday, May 10, 10-11.30 am: Workshops (en/dt)

1. Biopiracy in Kerala – Benefit Sharing for whom?

with Ms. Ushakumari Jayakumar (Thanal, Kerala), Coordinator of the Indian Campaign on Rice and active member of the network GM Free India.

The benefit sharing deal with the Kani people was internationally highlighted as a prime example for a successful benefit sharing deal, not least at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg 2002. But the reality on the ground is quite different...

2. Conservation and Threats to Biodiversity in China

with Dr. Yang, Song (PEAC, Yunnan Province, China)

The Southern province of Yunnan is one of the biodiversity hotspots in China. The introduction of genetic engineering, esp. in the case of rice, is a major threat to this biodiversity.

Saturday, May 10, 12-1.30 pm: Workshops (en/dt)

3. Seed Diversity and Food Sovereignty in India

with Mr. Jacob Nellithanam (Richharia Campaign, Chattisgarh, India)

In 2002, farmers and representatives of civil society were successful in forestalling the attempt of the Swiss multinational company Syngenta to take over one of the most important gene banks from Dr. Richharia. But the struggle for their own seeds is not over.

4. Biopiracy in Pakistan

with Dr. Farzana Shahid (Lok Sanjh, Pakistan)

In Pakistan, it is particularly the women struggling for the control over their own resources. Genetic Engineering and Biopiracy are threatening the local knowledge as well as the livelihoods of marginalised farmers.

Saturday, May 10, 3-6 pm: Round Table-Discussion (en/dt)

Alternatives to the Commodification of Nature and Knowledge

with Jacob Nellithanam (India)
Deepika D'Souza (Human Rights Law Network, Mumbai)
Dr. Yang Song (China)

Ms. Ushakumari Jayakumar (Thanal, Kerala)
Debjeet Sarangi (Living Farms, Orissa, India)
Ms. Farzana Shahid (Pakistan).

The concepts of any monetary benefit sharing are radically opposed by the indigenous communities of the South, since their way of dealing with nature and knowledge is quite different and does not include private property over resources. Therefore, the commodification of nature and knowledge, i.e. dealing with biodiversity as a commodity that can be bought and sold, is understood as an attempt of western countries to not only control their resources, but also to force them to accept a western paradigm.

How can we organise the transfer of nature and knowledge in a way that does not consider them as a commodity? This open question will be discussed with the participants, in order to look ahead at the expected results of the Conference of the Parties and how to deal with them?

Samstag, 10. Mai, 6-7 pm: Discussion (dt/en)

„From Monday on in Bonn...” - Actions to critique of the Earth Summit

We want to strategise what kind of actions are appropriate to tackle the Conference of the Parties (COP 9) and the MOP 4 (Members of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety) from 12th to 30th of May.

with Thanal (India) and the BUKO-Campaign against Biopiracy

supported by EED as a side event to Planet Diversity