

Dear Fellow Laureates,

In the quarter-century since I received the Right Livelihood Award, I've never felt that I had an issue that would require me to write to all my fellow laureates at one time. Now, however, I am writing to you to ask for your support in opposing the newest and, possibly, most imminent threat to our peoples and planet – geoengineering. You might well wonder what is geoengineering or, if you've heard about it before, question whether it is anything more than a figment of sci-fi imaginations. Let me explain briefly and refer you to some of ETC Group's research for more information.

I should also be clear about my request. If you agree, I'm asking you as an individual to sign on to the protest at www.handsoffmotherearth.org and, if possible, to send a digital photograph with your hand up blocking geoengineering. This photo, with your name and the notation that you received the RLA, will be posted on the rapidly growing gallery of photographs at this website. In the next few days and weeks you will read more about this campaign as it moves on from where I am now at the climate change summit now taking place in Cochabamba to the Biodiversity Convention's scientific meetings in Nairobi en route to further intergovernmental negotiations leading to a global confrontation on climate change and geoengineering in Cancun, Mexico at the end of November this year. I hope we will have some time to discuss the issue and the campaign when we all gather together for the 30th anniversary of the RLA in Bonn this September.

Geoengineering is the intentional, massive manipulation of major planetary or ecosystems with the goal of redressing climate change. The best known geoengineering experiments involve more than a dozen efforts to spread iron particles or urea on large areas of the ocean surface in the hypothetical hope of creating phytoplankton blooms that could sequester carbon dioxide. These (often commercial) gambits were halted in 2008 when ETC Group and many partners persuaded the 191 member UN Convention on Biological Diversity to unanimously adopt a moratorium on the dangerous practice. A second form of geoengineering can come with massive changes in land use to develop, for example, artificial or genetically modified forests to (again, theoretically) suck up greenhouse gases. The form of geoengineering that is now being most actively discussed by government agencies and parliamentary/congressional committees in such countries as the UK and USA involves the manipulation of the stratosphere to block or reflect sunlight in order to temporarily lower temperatures - for example by ejecting clouds of sulphate particles into the upper atmospheric layers.

These ideas, I know, sound implausible but they are in active consideration. The Copenhagen debacle at the end of last year opened the door to private companies and some major governments arguing that a multilateral UN-negotiated climate change strategy was "off the table" and that a new "coalition of the willing" would have to implement Plan B - geoengineering. Even geoengineering's most enthusiastic advocates acknowledge that tampering with the ocean or the stratosphere could prove extremely risky and might fail but nevertheless argue that governments have no option. After all, they point out, the "proof of principle" that geoengineering works is that we have already inadvertently "geoengineered" our earth into its current conundrum. Why not geoengineer ourselves out of the mess, they suggest?

We are all alarmed by the pace of climate change and the threat of multiple "tippings" in various sensitive Earth systems. Aren't geoengineers simply being realistic?

The attached briefing, I trust, will be convincing that geoengineering is scientific hubris at its worst and corporate greed at its highest. ETC Group in partnership with The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation has also recently published a larger introductory report to geoengineering entitled "Retooling the Planet? Climate Chaos in the Geoengineering Age". For more background I encourage you to download and read this report from the internet at <http://www.etcgroup.org/>

en/node/4966. Let me reiterate one point you will read in this documentation: 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?

The HOME campaign ("Hands Off Mother Earth!") will be introduced this week during the Cochabamba, Bolivia, Peoples' Summit on the Rights of Mother Earth. We are asking supporters of HOME to sign on at our website and to send us a digital photograph of your hand held up to block geoengineering. Many people are writing a message on their hand such as "Hands Off Mother Earth"; just the word "HOME"; or a similar message in your own language. Again, there will be more information at www.handsoffmotherearth.org which launches on Wednesday 22nd April. You can lend your support by joining up at this website, emailing join@handsoffmotherearth.org or replying to me.

I do apologize for imposing so heavily on our shared RLA website. In 25 years, I have never done this before. I wouldn't do so now if I were not convinced that political and commercial momentum is emerging that will turn geoengineering into a commercial cause célèbre by the end of this year. I hope you'll consider my invitation to join the campaign.

Wherever this goes, I will be going to Bonn this September and I will very much look forward to talking with you then!

Yours sincerely,

Pat Mooney,

RLA 1985