



A CIVIL SOCIETY WORKSHOP TO CRITICALLY ASSESS & RESPOND TO THE 'SA BIOFUELS STRATEGY'

held at Diakonia Centre, Durban
on the 5th March 2007

convened by the **African Centre for Biosafety** in collaboration with
the UKZN Centre for Civil Society and Timberwatch
with the support of
GRAIN and the Third World Network

16th March 2007

Dear participant

Thank-you for participating in the biofuels workshop in Durban, especially those of you that travelled so far to be with us. We hope that you found the workshop stimulating and that it provides a foundation for you to ensure that the development of a biofuels industry in South Africa occurs within the context of environmentally sustainable and equitable rural and urban development.

Please note that the Department of Minerals and Energy (DME) are allowing an extension for responses to the 'South African Biofuels Industrial Strategy' to the end of March.

Please see the 'Workshop Statement'

In this pack you will find the proceedings of the discussion section of the workshop, as well as contact details to facilitate networking. The hosting team are working on an 'information booklet' on biofuels that will provide an overview of the information that was covered in the morning presentations. We will post this to you as soon as we have it ready.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions that you may have,

Thanks again

The hosting team: Elfrieda, Jenny, Mariam, Vanessa and Wally

WORKSHOP SIGN-ON STATEMENT

Please confirm your organisation's support for this statement by contacting Vanessa on black@ispace.co.za or 082 472 8844 with your organisation's name by the end of Friday the 23rd March 2007.

Please also feel free to send along a paragraph together with your sign on outlining any points you would like to make in addition to supporting this statement that are specific to your organisation. For example, Timberwatch will make additional points relating to plantations that we didn't have time to discuss and agree on at the workshop.

RURAL COMMUNITIES EXPRESS DISMAY: "LAND GRABS" FUELLED BY BIOFUEL STRATEGY

March 2007

After a meeting of more than sixty people in Durban on March 5 2007 the South African government's Draft Industrial Biofuels Strategy was discussed, and the undersigned representatives from NGOs, farmer organisations and rural communities from KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Mpumalanga, express our extreme disquiet and consternation with the strategy.

We believe that both the Biofuels strategy and the associated public consultation process are fundamentally flawed. As affected rural communities and organisations, we are astounded that we have not been properly informed and consulted about the strategy. What makes it all the more unforgivable is that the anticipation of a subsidised Biofuels industry is precipitating massive "land grabs" of municipal commonages and traditional communal / tribal land in the former independent homelands. While the DME pays lip service to developing Biofuels to meet local energy needs, deals have already been struck for large-scale plants to export Biofuels to the EU. In the process rural farming communities are coerced into signing over their land for a pittance for industrial plantations of canola, maize and soya¹.

¹ For instance in the Eastern Cape, the Provincial Biofuels Task Team and Eastern Cape Development Corporation, revealed plans to plant canola on 500,000ha of the most arable non-irrigated commonage and

We note that the draft strategy aims to contribute to South Africa's development goals through job creation, transformation as well as reducing the negative impacts of energy consumption on the environment, but find little detail in the strategy on how this will be achieved. Instead we have found the strategy to be preoccupied with economic instruments that will facilitate large corporate involvement in Biofuels with trickle down economic benefits to the poor at best, and potentially disastrous consequences due to the expansion of industrial agriculture into new areas.

We call on government to redraft the Biofuels Strategy in its entirety, including full participation of potentially impacted communities so that a new strategy emerges that emphasises the development needs and priorities of poor communities, particularly in rural areas.

In particular, we demand that the Biofuels strategy aims at:

- addressing energy poverty within a context of integrated energy planning and rural development, with the genuine participation of rural communities, particularly women;
- adopting an integrated energy planning approach, which must include "true green Biofuels" such as biogas and ethanol gel and so forth;
- making an unequivocal commitment to improving public transport systems with a view to reducing South Africa's dependence on fossil and now, liquid fuels;
- Providing the economic enabling environment for decentralised, community-owned Biofuels plants based on biodiverse and organic agricultural production that ensure rural energy and food security;
- Ensuring that economic instruments (subsidies, levy reductions and tax incentives) are targeted specifically to create small and cooperative Biofuels enterprises premised on best social and ecological practice;
- Including strategies to improve infrastructure, training, technical support, marketing and access to the Biofuels market in rural areas for rural communities; and

communal land in the former Transkei and then process it into bio-fuel at a plant in the East London industrial development zone. R1.5 billion will be spent on fencing and liming this land to prepare it for monoculture. Furthermore, while local communities forego their existing diverse food gardens and communal grazing lands, multinational companies like Monsanto will collect on government agricultural subsidies through the Massive Food Production Programme by providing seed, chemical inputs and even mechanisation on the farmer's behalf. The EC Premier's State of the Province Address for 2007 confirms that an initial 70,000 ha of irrigated land in the Umzimvubu valley is to be placed under canola monoculture in the next season.

- Specifically excluding the use of staple food crops, large industrial plantations of monocultures, genetically engineered organisms and prime agricultural land in the production of Biofuels in South Africa.

We further call on government to place an immediate moratorium on large-scale bio fuels projects and to stop the "land grabs".

SIGNED

African Centre for Biosafety

Earthlife Africa eThekweni

GRAIN

Timberwatch

TWIG

BIOFUELS WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

Background to the workshop

Given the increasing cost of oil and concern over climate change, there has been a growing global interest in biofuels, which have far less pollutants than fossil fuels when burnt. Oil hungry economies in the north are increasingly seeking land and crops for producing biofuels to both maintain their energy intensity and reduce their carbon emissions.

In 2005 the South African cabinet appointed a Biofuels Task Team (comprising national departments and state entities) to develop an industrial strategy for biofuels, targeted at creating jobs in the energy crops and biofuels value chain. A draft strategy was released for public comment in November 2006. The Draft Strategy proposes a 4,5% biofuels industry development in South Africa. The strategy identifies maize and sugar (Ethanol), as well as Soya bean and sunflower (Biodiesel) as the key crops to deliver biofuels, as well as suggesting research into other crop varieties and crops 'enhanced' through biotechnology, which will further increase the country's production levels.

Although touted as a 'green' fuel there are a number of issues relating to biofuels that should be debated by South Africans. These include:

- the impact on the price of staple foods as wealthy nations compete with the poor for grain supplies
- although the strategy emphasises job creation, mass biofuel production is likely to increase the acreage of crops grown with industrial agricultural methods, seriously impacting on both natural and sustainably cultivated environments and yielding few jobs.
- further multinational control over local land & agriculture
- introduction of genetically modified & other invasive species into the environment
- the role biofuels could play in poverty alleviation & the reduction of energy poverty if biofuels were developed within the context of genuine, integrated rural and urban development.

There is insufficient information and public debate concerning the possible positive and negative consequences of engaging in biofuel production. The DME has been holding stakeholder consultation processes, however, there has been little notice of this process or any attempt to build capacity on this issue in potentially impacted communities. Vulnerable communities and small and medium scale farmers have had little opportunity to discuss and formulate viewpoints on the biofuel agenda with regards to land rights, industrial agriculture, implications for food security and access, and environmental degradation.

Purpose of the workshop

Civil society, academic, rural community and government representatives working in areas potentially affected by biofuel production, were invited to the workshop for the purpose of:

1. sharing information on what biofuels are, how they are made and appropriate and inappropriate source materials
2. identifying and exposing important biofuels issues and players
3. providing a space within which we can discuss and formulate strategies to protect farmers, consumers and the environment from unsustainable biofuel production.

Workshop programme

1	Welcome and introduction	Vanessa Black
2	Introduction to biofuels: biodiesel, ethanol & ethanol gel, biogas – what are biofuels and how are these made.	Mark Wells Richard Pocock
3	The national biofuels industrial strategy process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the national biofuels task team process, – summary of the strategy & key issues/gaps, – energy balance issues, how suitable are biofuels as a renewable energy – certification 	Annie Sugrue
4	The global context influencing the biofuels agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Multinational biotechnology & chemical agendas: the connection to genetically engineered crops – Plantations & Industrial monoculture 	Mariam Mayet Wally Menne
5	Lunch: Video on carbon trading	
6	Alternative approaches to biofuel production – Zero Waste agriculture for integrated rural & urban development.	Mark Wells
7	Discussion & workshopping: a response to the Biofuel Industrial Strategy	participants
8	Wrap up & way forward	

Consolidated outcome of workshop discussions

What we want to see in a South African Biofuels strategy

Full involvement of communities in making decisions about biofuels:

- o Community stakeholders must be informed. There must be full consultation with all stakeholders especially rural communities. Consultation includes proper communication and participation of communities.
- o Local government, land affairs, Dept of Agriculture and the tribal authority must get involved in working with communities.
- o Involvement and ownership by communities of biofuels projects
- o There must be community workshops.
- o We need transparency from community representatives and government about this issue.

Capacity building & information on biofuels issues

- o Capacity building for local communities
- o Training for local communities with info packs in own language
- o Skills development in community-based biofuels
- o Research into small-scale systems

Land rights issues:

- o Protection of indigenous landowners from abuse and exploitation.
- o Full tenure and access to land for communities that were previously dispossessed
- o There must be partnerships with landowners so that fair royalties are paid

Government's role

- o Government must regulate the biofuels industry to ensure benefit to indigenous communities
- o Inter-governmental coordination of departments e.g. DME, DWAF, DALA so that policies are in sync between departments

Subsidies & tax incentives

- o Subsidies for rural poor and BEST practices
- o Make sure subsidies do not interfere with normal activities and food security
- o Subsidies mustn't go to multinational companies but must be invested in local communities

Energy issues

- o Reduce fuel consumption by improving public transport
- o Safe and clean fuels

Job creation & economic development

- o Maximum job and income generation in a sustainable manner
- o Clean & healthy jobs
- o Co-operatives using 'Ubuntu strategy'
- o Integration with rural development
- o No regulation or tax for SMMEs

Development issues

- o Energy sovereignty for rural communities
- o Multi-disciplinary support systems – access to markets, markets not driven by big business, need infrastructure to be put in place
- o No patents of agricultural crops & biofuels processes
- o Strategy must benefit families & household level
- o Local production for local use
- o Simple and small systems
- o Have development officers – marketing, monitoring and evaluating

Appropriate farming systems

- o Must ensure Food security & food sovereignty
- o Biodiverse, intensive, Zero Waste, organic farming systems

What we do NOT want in the South African Biofuels strategy

The current Biofuel strategy and the process to develop it are flawed

We say NO to:

- food crops for biofuels
- Fuel production competing with food production
- genetically modified organisms to be used in biofuel production
- monoculture in growing biofuels raw materials
- prime agricultural land being used for biofuels
- pesticides

- Subsidies for Big business
- monopolies or big corporations experts advising government from companies known to be guilty of damaging people and planet

- benefits to multinationals and a few individuals
- control of rural projects by large business
- poorly paid jobs
- child labour
- exploitation of workers

- exclusion of communities in decision-making
- divided communities – decisions must include all
- stringent laws, systems and procedures of operation that will prevent small community businesses from entering the biofuels market
- Communities displaced by biofuel development

- Tampering with natural resources e.g. streams and water resources

What we should do to be heard and mobilise others

Immediate steps:

1.	Tell other people about biofuels and potential problems shared at this workshop	everyone	as soon as we get home
2.	Distribute workshop proceedings	Workshop hosting team	
3.	Write a statement from this workshop to be submitted to government and as a media release stating that: the current biofuels strategy and consultation process are highly flawed we demand that the finalisation of the strategy is delayed to allow for meaningful participation of affected farming and rural communities in shaping the strategy noting what we want excluded and included in a strategy noting that numerous highly problematic large-scale projects are going ahead around the country which must be halted until a national strategy is in place	Workshop hosting team to draft All participants to comment and provide mandates – those groups who are not comfortable with a strongly worded statement will draft their own statement leaving out those bits they don't agree with	by Friday 9 th March by 16 th March
4.	Translate and circulate statement to provincial media	volunteers to help translate statement in official languages	
5.	Try and get an article based on Zero Waste agriculture and other biofuel alternatives into the media so that these become accepted as mainstream		
6.	Compile an information booklet on biofuels and related issues (starting with information presented at the workshop) for wider distribution	Workshop hosting team	

Medium to longer term

How can we get our viewpoints heard?

Workshops and training
Government to forward funds for training cooperatives etc

Marches and campaigns
Use the media: TV, newspapers, radio

Lobby influential members of government
Engage government in a united way through civil society working together (NGOs, CBOs etc) to strategise & taking message to their respective communities
Talk to & educate local Councils and MPs
Imbizos with relevant MECs
Consultations with communities, chiefs, all stakeholders
Establishment of structures at local, regional and national levels
Involve religious leaders & business

Eagerness to form cooperatives
Experts from multi-disciplines who put people and planet first

How can we mobilise others on this issue?

Word of mouth – tell people!
Give feedback and proper reports back to our communities and organisations

Use Media like radio, TV & newspapers – get in touch with journalists
Establish websites
Distribution of pamphlets and flyers – pamphlet drops. We urgently need pamphlets in different languages

Form pressure groups – join with others e.g. SMMEs, NGOs, political parties, church groups, PELUM etc
Hold meetings: with community, with tribal authorities
Lobby government structures

Coordination & networking
Exchanging of information

Fast & intensive education (who are the stakeholders)
Conduct workshops & seminars
Self-development and then empower others

Farmer's forum
Farmer to farmer extension

Go to the Ombudsman

RESOURCE ORGANISATIONS

The African Centre for Biosafety (ACB)



The African Centre for Biosafety (ACB) is a non-profit organisation, based in Johannesburg South Africa. It provides information, research and policy analysis on issues relating to genetic engineering, biosafety (a holistic approach to the assessment and regulation of GM and GMOs, based on the precautionary principle) and biopiracy in order to protect Africa's biodiversity, traditional knowledge, food production systems, culture and diversity, from the threats posed by biotechnology.

The ACB has generated a significant body of information on GMOs and biosafety issues in Africa that is freely available on the ACB website, and which can be used to inform civil society activism on these issues. Information includes analysis of biosafety legislation in Africa, detailed analysis on specific GMO applications in South Africa and briefing papers on a number of African and international biosafety issues. See <http://www.biosafetyafrica.net/portal/>

Contact Mariam Mayet on Email: mariamayet@mweb.co.za or call 083 269 4309 for assistance on the above issues.

GRAIN



GRAIN is a small international NGO working to strengthen farmers' control of agricultural biodiversity and local knowledge. Elfrieda Pschorn-Strauss works regionally in South and East Africa, supporting farmers, and groups working with farmers through information, capacity building, policy analysis and advocacy where needed. We work from a position of supporting people's initiatives rather than pushing our agenda. So, GRAIN (Elfrieda) would be available to assist communities/participants on the above issues and processes, but will also be looking at the situation in the rest of Africa and see where the links, lessons and actions are. Just ask!

Contact Elfrieda Pschorn-Strauss on Email: elfrieda@grain.org and Cell 082 413 0502

Timberwatch



The Timberwatch Coalition is a voluntary alliance of South African NGO's and individuals, formed in 1995, which is concerned about the negative impacts of industrial timber plantations on people and the environment. Timberwatch co-operates with overseas organisations with similar aims such as the World Rainforest Movement (WRM), the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) and the Global Forest

Coalition (GFC)

What does Timberwatch do?

- Timberwatch monitors, researches and reports on the socio-economic and environmental impacts of alien industrial timber plantations.
- Calls for the removal of illegally established plantations and those plantations that have an unacceptably high negative effect on communities and the environment.
- Opposes applications for new timber plantations that could be detrimental to the environment and may not be of benefit to local communities.
- Opposes the establishment of industrial-scale monoculture alien tree plantations as carbon sinks and for the production of biofuels. Carbon trading and the development of bio-fuels are perceived as lucrative new industries. Plantations are being promoted in order to earn carbon credits under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol, and as a possible source of bio-fuel. There is no evidence that timber plantations are effective in absorbing Co2.
- Opposes the use of genetically engineered plantation trees, on both socio-economic and ecological grounds.
- Timberwatch believes governments, industry, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the UN must work to transform timber plantation policy, practice and governance. Industry efforts to portray highly destructive, industrial timber plantations as able to provide the same socio-economic and environmental benefits as biodiverse natural forests are a misrepresentation, as are claims of new job creation, empowerment through outsourcing, infrastructure development and preserving the environment.

Contact Timberwatch for more information, workshops and assistance to prevent the spread of plantations in your communities:

Postal address: PO Box 30577, Mayville 4058, South Africa

Tel/Fax (031) 207 1356

E-mail timberwatch@iafrica.com

Website www.timberwatch.org.za



TWIG (Third World Investment Gateway)

TWIG provides information and support on issues relating to Zero Waste Agriculture and agricultural chemicals, focusing on the problems with Glyphosate (Roundup). TWIG has been instrumental in establishing the BEAT Cooperative.

Zero-Waste Agriculture is the optimal use of nature, in the form of plants, animals, bacteria, fungi and algae, to produce biodiverse-food, energy and nutrients in a synergistic integrated cycle of profit making processes where the waste of each process becomes the feedstock for another process. Zero-waste

agriculture is a decentralised, people based solution and is best implemented in a model of intensive utilisation of small farms to produce a diverse range of products.

The BEAT (Best Ecological Agricultural) Cooperative

The Eastern Cape BEAT Cooperative has been established by twelve farmers to practice ZWA in the Chintsa region of the Amatola district. The cooperative model is seen as the best method for Zero-waste farmers to equitably capitalise on their diverse outputs. Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity.

The BEAT Cooperative will serve ZWA family owned farmers by managing more complex agri-processes such as biodiesel production, assisting with marketing and distribution of products, technical support and training, liaising with government to accelerate agrarian reform and research and development of new local ZWA solutions.

For further information on Zero Waste Agricultural systems, problems with agricultural chemicals like Roundup and making biodiesel and biogas in a sustainable way contact:

Mark Wells on Email: mark@twig.org.za, or Call: 0835006276



Earthlife Africa (ELA)

Founded in 1988, Earthlife Africa was the first organisation in South Africa to address issues of environmental justice. ELA is a mostly voluntary, membership-based organisation with branches in Cape Town, eThekweni, Johannesburg and Windhoek. Key campaigns include a Renewable Energy and climate change project, an anti-nuclear campaign currently focused on the new Pebble Bed reactor, Zero Waste including campaigns relating to toxic substances and the banning of incineration, water justice and support for dam affected communities and a campaign against genetic engineering.

The eThekweni branch coordinates the campaign against genetic engineering and can support participants through accessible information and workshops on genetic engineering, sustainable agriculture and community activism.

Contact Vanessa Black on Email black@ispace.co.za or Cell 082 472 8844

CURES (Citizens United for Renewable Energy & Sustainability) Southern Africa

Organisations meeting at an NGO workshop in Bad Honnef, Germany, in October 2003 to prepare for the WSSD follow up conference - Renewables 2004 in Bonn decided to form a new network, "Citizens United for Renewable Energies and Sustainability" to bundle their proposals and to strengthen their position.

CURES calls for ambitious programs to promote renewable energies to stop climate change and to foster decentralised energy generation, which has positive spin-offs such as increasing job creation and reliability.

In preparation for Renewables 2004, the CURES-NGOs agreed to develop common strategies and demands for this conference and therefore drew up a declaration: "The Future is Renewable". It calls on all governments not to allow themselves to be blocked any longer by obstructive governments and lists many policies and measures, such as the phasing out of subsidies for fossil and nuclear energies and effective steps and frameworks for renewable energies.

CURES Southern Africa has been instrumental in developing a Southern African NGO position on Biofuels, and can be contacted for detailed technical information relating to Biofuels production and local and global policy issues in this regard.

Contact Annie Sugrue Tel: 011 702 2273 Cell: 082 895 5101 Email: annie@ecocity.org.za
Website: www.cures-network.org

Biowatch

Biowatch South Africa was established in 1997 as a national non-governmental organisation to publicise, monitor and research issues of genetic engineering and promotes biological diversity and sustainable livelihoods. The organisation has its head office in Cape Town and rural offices in Elandsdraal in Limpopo Province (serving the Sekhukhune District) and Mtubatuba in KwaZulu Natal (serving northern KZN). Both rural offices work with small-scale farmers on sustainable agriculture, food and seed security and farmers' rights

Biowatch South Africa's Outreach Coordinators have focused on promoting organic or low-cost farming methods including seed saving, composting, mulching, trenching, natural pest control and nursery development among small-scale farmers and rural households. Biowatch can also assist by providing train-the-trainer workshops on these issues as well as providing information about genetically modified crops, biodiversity and sustainable development.

Contacts:

Telephone: +27 (0) 21 447 5939, Fax: +27 (0) 21 447 5974, Email: biowatch@mweb.co.za Website: www.biowatch.org.za