

**Press release**  
-for immediate release-

**10% biofuel targets a betrayal, say environmentalists and peoples' organizations**

**Biofuelwatch, February 17<sup>th</sup> 2007**

A massive coalition of environmentalists and humanitarian NGOs is now ranged against Thursday's agreement by EU energy ministers to increase biofuel targets to 10% by 2020.

The EU has admitted that such targets will require imports to be fulfilled. The EU's existing targets are increasingly being fulfilled with imports from sugarcane and palm oil, whose expansion is linked to rainforest destruction around the tropics.

This month, Indonesia announced plans to convert 5.25 million hectares of "idle" land for biofuel production. European biofuel incentives have created a major speculative incentive for new biofuel plantations in the region<sup>1</sup>. Biofuelwatch<sup>2</sup> estimates that producing biodiesel from South East Asian palm oil is, on average, causing between 2 and 8 times as much CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as that of the mineral diesel it replaces, by reversing the role of the area's peatlands as a carbon sink<sup>3</sup>.

Biofuel targets are already forcing up food prices. The US's incentives for ethanol have already led to a corn price rise of nearly 70%, though its ethanol production is currently only one sixth of what would fulfil President Bush's alternative fuels obligation<sup>4</sup>.

Not only are the food price rises hurting the poor<sup>4</sup>, but communities are also being steadily displaced from common lands for biofuel crop monocultures in the global south. Numerous environmental and peoples' organizations in developing countries have already delivered appeals to the European Union imploring against a rise in biofuel targets.<sup>5</sup>

Prior to their recent meeting, all EU energy ministers were written to highlight these concerns.

A joint declaration<sup>5</sup>, calling on the EU to abandon biofuel targets, has now been signed by over 160 organisations from both north and south., including World Rainforest Movement, World Development Movement, Sustrans and the branches of Friends of the Earth in Indonesia, Hungary, Austria, Denmark, Slovakia and Finland. Other signatories include eco-campaigner-writers Mark Lynas and Mayer Hillman, author of "How We Can Save The Planet".

Helen Buckland, UK coordinator of the Sumatran Orangutan Society, said: "Any politician who is supporting rising biofuel targets now is betraying the environment. They will be seeking biofuel production no matter how much this accelerates rainforest destruction and drives up both greenhouse gas emissions and world food prices."

Eco-analyst Jim Roland said: "For years we've known that biofuels are by far the most land-intensive of any renewable energy source, yet they introduce rising targets for this technology and no other, to an extent that will force destruction of rainforests and other carbon sinks. It's a Judas moment for the environment."

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**Notes:**

1. See "CPO Prices Seen Up In 06 As Biodiesel Fuels Demand", <http://sg.biz.yahoo.com/060224/15/3yy2x.html>
2. Biofuelwatch is a UK campaign which seeks regulation to ensure that only sustainably-sourced biofuels can be sold in Britain in the European Union. See [www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/](http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/)
3. See [www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/resources.php#calc2](http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/resources.php#calc2)
4. US ethanol production is currently around 5.5 billion gallons, see [http://www.earth-policy.org/Updates/2007/Update63\\_data2.htm](http://www.earth-policy.org/Updates/2007/Update63_data2.htm). President Bush announced an alternative fuels obligation of 35 billion gallons by 2017 last month. On the rise in corn prices and protests in Mexico: [http://www.checkbiotech.org/root/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&doc\\_id=14414&star](http://www.checkbiotech.org/root/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&doc_id=14414&star).
5. See joint declaration at <http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/resources.php#2007Jan31>, which also details various preceding petitions.
6. For introduction to the land requirements of biofuels/biomass versus other energy sources, see Pimentel et al, 2002 <http://dematerialism.net/pimentel.pdf>, esp. table 2.