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GERMANWATCH



Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy



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Draft Agenda

Agrofuels¹: Opportunity or Danger?

A Global Dialogue on U.S. and EU Agrofuels and Agriculture Policies and their Impacts on Rural Development in North and South

Agrofuels in the U.S. and the EU

Presently in the U.S. and the EU, the production and use of agrofuels are promoted using different policy instruments. Due to the demand for energy alternatives in the North, driven by limited oil reserves and high oil prices, agrofuels have emerged as lucrative new export crops on the agendas of many developing countries. Brazil has longstanding experience with the production and use of agrofuels, and other countries in the Global South are considering agrofuels as their new domestic energy source. The public debates and the positioning towards agrofuels vary regionally as well as among the different stakeholders – farmers, social movements, environmental and developmental groups, agribusiness, energy companies and automobile manufacturers.

Many farmer organizations in US and EU are responding positively to agrofuels as they see new market opportunities and receive higher prices for their crops. Other farmer organizations question and oppose the development of industrial agrofuels on the grounds of their economical, environmental, and energy inefficiency. In Europe, agrofuel concerns center around limited land use and the resulting competition between food and fuel. Environmentalists and development groups expose the dangers of agrofuels such as promotion of GMO technology, further monoculturalization, destruction of the rainforests, and increased hunger. They are joined by small-scale farmer groups from

¹ Initially, with the emergence of producing fuel from agricultural commodities, the term biofuels has been widely used both in developed and developing countries. During the past year, an increasing number of farmer groups, environmental and developmental groups in the Global South and in developed countries started to engage in this issue. More farmers have started to grow crops from which this fuel can be produced and investment to expand this production has tremendously increased. Farmer groups in the South and many environmental and development groups across the globe have started – for different reasons – to call biofuels “agrofuels”. Farmer groups from the South call them agrofuels, as they say fossil fuels have “organic” materials as a basis, and hence are also agrofuels. Environmental groups claim that biofuels suggest – in particular e.g. within the EU where “bio” is often a synonym for “organic” that they are ecologically sustainable. To avoid this misunderstanding of a larger, not well informed public, they decided to use the term agrofuels. With this dialogue meeting taking place in Europe, we decided to honor the local assessment of this term, and decided to use “agrofuels”.

many developing countries who see their access to land, water, food and other crucial resources threatened by large scale agrofuel production.

As the U.S. and the EU set mandatory agrofuel production targets, it is clear that their roles and responsibilities regarding the development of agrofuels production and the agrofuels market are key. Their policies do not only affect farmers, consumers and the environment in their own countries, but also countries in the Global South. EU companies are already investing in Southeast Asia to satisfy the EU agrofuels demand. An energy partnership with Africa is also about to be developed. The U.S. government is reaching out to the Latin American countries for agrofuel plantations.

This two and a half day meeting shall bring together farmer groups, environmental and consumer organizations, and development organizations from the U.S., EU and the Global South in order to continue a global dialogue on agrofuels which began in May 2007. It will assess the impacts of agrofuels and farm policies in the respective regions, and examine issues that have not yet been publicly addressed in depth. The meeting will offer a space to discuss the feasibility of agrofuel promotion and the criteria and elements on how to ensure a sustainable approach to agrofuels, that takes into account the interests of farmers, citizens and the environment both in the South and the North.

Objective of the meeting:

- To gain a better understanding of policies and instruments in the U.S. and EU that promote the production and use of agrofuels in their regions and elsewhere
- To gain a better understanding of the different actors and their interests, in particular corporations (agribusiness, energy companies and automobile manufacturers, etc.)
- To examine impacts of increased agrofuels production on rural development, small farmers, food security, the reduction of greenhouse emissions, commodity and food prices, etc.
- To define to what extent and with which criteria agrofuels can be part of a “renewable energy shift” in the U.S., the EU and the Global South, and what this would imply for policies and instruments used by the U.S. and the EU
- To define a possible sustainable vision for a agrofuels and bioenergy, that takes into account the interests of farmers, consumers and the environment in the U.S., the EU and the Global South

Date: 12 to 14 December 2007
Venue: Hotel Christophorus-Haus, Schoenwalder Allee 26
D-13587 Berlin-Spandau
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Wednesday 12 December 2007

Agrofuels and Rural Development in the South

13.30

Welcome to participants, setting the context, and introduction of objectives of the dialogue and agenda for the meeting

14:00 – 16.00

Agrofuels in Africa – Current dynamics and views of different actors

What positions and strategies do African governments have regarding agrofuels? What is the strategy and approach of the U.S. and EU governments? What are farmers and other civil society groups thinking?

- **Jospeh Ssuna, Participatory Ecological Land-use Management (PELUM)**
- **Saliou Sarr, Western African Network of Farmers and Agricultural Producers Organisations (ROPPA), Senegal (tbc)**
- **Annie Sugrue, Citizens United for Renewable Energy and Sustainability (CURES), South Africa (tbc)**
- **René Massé, Réseau international pour les Energies durables en Afrique (RIAED), France (tbc)**
- **Peter Riggs, Forum on Democracy and Trade, US (tbc)**

Facilitator: Alexandra Spielloch, IATP

16:00 – 16.30 **Coffee Break**

16:30 – 17.30

Perspectives from Latin America and Asia

Comparison of the situation on agrofuels in their regions such as the role of imports, export promotion, domestic use, corporate strategies, impacts on small farmers. What are their governments' strategies regarding agrofuels and Africa?

**Sergio Schlesinger, FASE, Brasil
NN, Asia (tbc)**

Facilitator: Liane Schalatek, Heinrich Boell Foundation

17.30 – 18.30

What is the impact of agrofuels on small-scale farmers and rural development in the South, especially in Africa?

General Discussion

19:00 Dinner

Thursday 13 December 2007

09.00 to 11.00

Agrofuels on the rise: markets, key actors, and political forces promoting the expansion of agrofuels in the U.S. and the EU

Objective: to provide an overview of the current dynamics in the agrofuels sector – the key actors and their interests, potential production sites, the markets, what technologies are promoted, and agrofuels' contribution to mitigate or enhance climate change

**Nina Holland, Corporate Europe Observatory
Raya Wijedona, WorldWatch Institute US (tbc)**

Facilitator: Tobias Reichert, Germanwatch

11.00 to 11.30 **Coffee break**

11.30 to 13.00

Policy fields and policy instruments to promote the production and use of agrofuels in the U.S. and the EU

Objective: to provide an overview of the different policy fields and instruments used to promote agrofuels and how those policies are linked (agriculture policies, trade policies, energy policies, scientific policies, development policies etc.), including the state of discussions in these policy arenas

Speakers

**Imke Luebeke, Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) (tbc)
Jetta Wong, Environmental and Energy Study Institute, US**

Facilitators: Alexandra Strickner, IATP

13.00 to 14.30 Lunch

14.30 to 16.00

Agrofuels and its impact on commodity and food prices & Agrofuels and the expansion of the agroindustrial model, land use and small-scale farming systems. What are the impacts for rural development?

Commodities/Food Prices: to what extent do agrofuels contribute to the increase of commodity and food prices? What are other factors? How to assess the critique on increased commodity and food prices from e.g. OECD, industry and consumers in relation to their interests, and what can be a way forward?

Expansion of agroindustrial model: to what extent do agrofuels contribute to the expansion of the agroindustrial model and its negative impacts? What are other factors of the advancement of that model? What is needed to halt this overall trend? Will the critical

debate and work around agrofuels help to stop this trend? How could this work be an element to trigger a broader resistance against the agroindustrial model?

Speakers

For Commodity and Food Prices:

**Daniel de la Torre Ugarte, University of Tennessee, APAC
NN, FAO (tbc)**

For Expansion of agroindustrial model:

**Philipp McMichael, Cornell University, US
Sergio Schlesinger, FASE, Brasil**

Facilitation: Liane Schalatek, Heinrich Boell Foundation

16.00 to 16.30 Coffee Break

16.30 to 18.30

Small working group discussions

WG: Agrofuels and its impact on commodity, food prices and land use. What impacts for rural development?

Objective: to provide a more in-depth discussion of the current dynamics of agrofuels and commodity and food prices; to highlight the positive and negative aspects of that dynamic (including the gender dimension); and to identify agrofuels' role in current price increases, and identify other contributing factors.

WG: Agrofuels and the expansion of the agroindustrial model, land use and small-scale farming systems. What are the impacts for rural development?

Objective: to contextualize the environmental impacts of agrofuels within the larger context of the current agro-industrial model (or asked differently: will the problems addressed by the environmental community stop if agrofuels would not be promoted?)

Friday 14 December 2007

9.00 to 10.00

Presentation of key findings/results of working groups of previous day

10.00 – 11.30

Civil Society perspectives on agrofuels: opportunity or fate?

Can agrofuels play a positive role in a new energy approach?

If so, can there be a common vision for a sustainable agrofuels model, that is supportive to the realization of human rights?

Objective: to hear different perspectives and concerns from CSO groups from the U.S., the EU and the global South (farmers, environmentalists, consumers etc.) and to debate the different views

Speakers

- **Patrick Sadones, Confederation Paysanne/CPE, France**
- **Pedro Christoffoli, Landless Movement (MST), Brazil**
- **Jutta Kill, FERN, UK**
- **Shelby Matthews, COPA/COGECA, Europe**
- **NN, American Corn Growers Association (tbc)**
- **Karen Lang, Instituto Brasileiro de Defesa do Consumidor (IDEC), Brazil (tbc)**

Facilitator: Alexandra Spielloch, IATP

11.30 to 12.00 Coffee Break

12.00 to 13.00

Towards a joint strategy on agrofuels and related policies (in working groups)

Presentation and discussion of visions/proposals that could promote an alternative vision on agrofuels, that is in the interest of family farmers, citizens and the environment

Elaboration of possible joint next steps

13.00 to 14.30

Lunch

14.30 to 15.30

Continuation of working groups

15.30 to 16.00 **Coffee break**

16.00 to 17.00

Presentation of the discussions and results in working groups

17.00 to 18.00

Definition of next steps

Closing of meeting