

No to Solar Geoengineering and Meaningless participation!

July 31, 2020



HOME Campaign Statement on the SCoPEX Advisory Committee and its legitimization of Solar Geoengineering

Blocking the sun on a vast scale to cool the planet: that's the idea being pushed by a small group of geoengineers. Solar geoengineering is a dangerous set of proposals that could have disastrous effects, particularly in the Global South. And geoengineering will do nothing to address the structural causes of climate change; that's why it has the enthusiastic backing of the fossil fuel industry.

Extreme caution should be taken with regard to these kinds of experiments. The full effects of a deployment of solar geoengineering are uncertain. For example, abruptly halting the full-scale deployment of solar geoengineering could cause a sudden increase in global temperatures – known as “termination shock”. Unintended, devastating impacts on plant, animal and human life worldwide are also possible.

The “small” open-air experiments cannot be uncoupled from the advancement of the full-scale technology. The experiments that are proposed today will tell us little about the technology's effects on the climate. They will, however, make large-scale implementation more likely.

Solar geoengineering technologies pose uncertainties, and carry high environmental and social risks. Like Carbon Dioxide Removal technologies, they would entrench problematic techno-solutions and policy ideas for the climate crisis. Meanwhile, corporations such as oil, coal, gas and agri-business would be less likely to be held accountable for their role in creating the crises we find ourselves in. They could benefit from the development and deployment of these new technologies.

Because of its many potential impacts, solar geoengineering is subject to a de-facto moratorium backed by 196 countries – the parties to the UN Convention on Biodiversity (CBD). The US is not a party to the CBD.

The Stratospheric Controlled Perturbation Experiment (SCoPEX), a project for testing equipment for solar geoengineering based at Harvard University, is attempting to circumvent this call for precaution. By creating an “Advisory Committee” that would engage with the public and provide “advice,” they are attempting to avoid a real discussion on the dangers and governance of solar geoengineering.

The Committee's mission is “to ensure that the SCoPEX project is undertaken in a transparent, responsible, and legitimate manner.” The committee, by definition, cannot do this. It has no qualifications and no jurisdiction to do so. All of the members of the advisory committee are based in the United States, and most of them are academics. They were selected by a panel of three scientists known to be supportive of geoengineering research.

Previously, 40 organizations sent a letter to each member of the SCoPEX Advisory Committee, appealing to them to stop providing legitimacy to a project that flies in the face of the will of the majority of the world. The letter reads,

in part:

Decisions about geoengineering require global, democratic, transparent governance, and while we understand the Advisory Committee's aim is to contribute to a consideration of some of the global dimensions of this project, it should be clear that an appointed body cannot replace global, democratic and transparent governance of a geoengineering project that has far-reaching implications.

The Committee never responded to this letter, and instead, they are now calling for comments on the project to be sent to them in a process that totally lacks transparency – incredibly, only the committee will see the comments! We consider this a mockery of participation, and a clear step towards legitimating the project. We therefore refuse to participate in this charade.

This technology, if developed and implemented, has the potential to negatively affect billions of people. Researchers say that solar geoengineering could have the following effects (among many others):

- Droughts and flooding in Africa and South America
- Disruption of the Monsoon in Asia
- Unanticipated feedback effects that destabilize the global climate
- Increased political and economic power for the fossil fuel industry
- Military and geopolitical uses by countries who control the technology

The effects of developing solar geoengineering technology, in other words, are global. They are part of an attempt to unilaterally open a pathway to solar geoengineering, which is a threat to humanity.

We call instead for a halt to SCoPEX and all other geoengineering open air experiments. A global bottom-up debate with broad grassroots and Global South participation should be the starting point of any discussion of its governance. This debate should address not only the negative effects of geoengineering, but open the question of whether it is something that should be explored at all.

To add your organization to the signatories below, email coordinator@handsoffmotherearth.org

Read the [HOME Manifesto](#)

More information about geoengineering [here](#).

Signatories to the statement:

1. Abibiman Foundation (AF) – Ghana
2. AbibiNsroma Foundation (ANF) – Ghana
3. Acción Ecológica – Ecuador
4. Acción por la Biodiversidad – Argentina
5. African Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) – South Africa
6. African Ecofeminists Collective – Africa
7. African Water Commons Collective – South Africa/Africa
8. Agricultural Policy Network-Kenya
9. Fundacion Aguaclara – Venezuela
10. Alianza por la Biodiversidad en América Latina – International
11. Alliance for Empowering Rural Communities (AERC) – Ghana
12. Amigos de la Tierra (Friends of the Earth) – Spain
13. Association Adéquations – France
14. BASE IS – Paraguay
15. Biofuel Watch – UK and USA
16. Blue Planet Project (BPP) – Canada
17. Censat Agua Viva / Friends of the Earth – Colombia
18. Centro de Protección a la Naturaleza y la Multisectorial Paren de Fumigarnos – Argentina
19. Centro Ecológico – Brazil
20. Colectivo por la Autonomía – Mexico
21. Colectivo Viento Sur – Chile
22. Congo Basin Conservation Society CBCS-NETWORK – Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

23. Consumers Association of Penang – Malaysia
24. Corporate Accountability International (CAI) – USA
25. Corporate Accountability & Public Participation (Africa) – Nigeria
26. Desarrollo Económico y Social de Los Mexicanos Indígenas, a.c. (DESMI, A.C.) – Mexico
27. ETC Group – International
28. Fórum Mudanças Climáticas e Justiça Socioambiental – FMCJS – Brazil
29. Friends of the Earth Australia – Australia
30. Friends of the Earth International – International
31. Friends of the Earth Malaysia – Malaysia
32. Friends of the Earth Scotland – Scotland
33. Fundacion Aguaclara – Venezuela
34. Fundación La Negreta, República Dominicana – Dominican Republic
35. Fundación Terram – Chile
36. Geoengineering Watch – USA/International
37. Global Justice Ecology – USA
38. Global Justice Now – International
39. Grain – International
40. Grassroots Women Initiative Network – Kenya
41. Growth Partners Africa – Kenya
42. Grupo de Estudios Ambientales (GEA AC) -Mexico
43. Grupo Semillas – Colombia
44. Gobierno Territorial Autonomía de la Nación Wampis – Peru
45. Health of Mother Earth Foundation – Nigeria
46. Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBF) – International
47. IGAPO Project – France
48. Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) – Turtle Island (North America)
49. International Association of People's Lawyers – Australia
50. Red Internacional Descolonialidad del Poder y Autogobierno – SocialJusticia
51. Ambiental (JA!) – Mozambique
52. Kenya Food Rights Alliance – Kenya
53. Kenya Peasants League – Kenya
54. La Asamblea Veracruzana de Iniciativas y Defensa Ambiental – México
55. La via Campesina (LVC) Southern and Eastern Africa
56. Marcha Mundial de las Mujeres / World March of Women – Chile
57. Movimiento Ciudadano frente al Cambio Climático (MOCCIC) – Peru
58. No REDD in Africa Network (NRAN) – Africa
59. NOAH / Friends of the Earth – Denmark
60. Núcleo de Agroecología de Brasil (GWATÁ) – Brazil
61. Oilwatch International
62. Oilwatch Togo – Togo
63. Programa de Pos Grado em Geografia, UEGoiás (PPGEO/UEG) – Brazil
64. Red de Coordinación en Biodiversidad – Costa Rica
65. REDES-AT / Friends of the Earth – Uruguay
66. Regional collective / La Via Campesina – Colombia
67. Research and Support Center for Development Alternatives-Indian Ocean (RSCDA-IO) – Madagascar.
68. Santa Cruz Climate Action Network – USA
69. South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA) – South Africa
70. Southern Africa Green Revolutionary Council (SAGRC) – South Africa
71. Sustainability and Participation through Education and Lifelong Learning (SPELL) – Philippines
72. The LEAP – Canada
73. Third World Network (TWN) – International
74. TONATIERRA – USA
75. WhatNext? – International
76. Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO) – USA
77. WoMin African Alliance – Africa
78. World Rainforest Movement (WRM) – International
79. Young Christian in Action for Development – Togo
80. Youth for Environment Education and Development Foundation (YFEED Foundation) – Nepal

