

# eco

Wednesday  
4 September 2002

That's All,  
Folks

## World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, Issue 8

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# Cancun or Bust!

Buried in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation is a short sentence affirming that the fate of almost every enforceable environmental agreement that the United Nations has produced since the original Stockholm conference will now be unilaterally decided by the World Trade Organization, whose next ministerial is in September 2003, in Cancun, Mexico.

Some people have wrongly understood that the autonomy of international environmental law was safely rescued from the jaws of free trade by the recent removal of language in Paragraph 17 of the Trade Chapter calling for "WTO consistency". This deletion was truly a victory in damage control and needs to be claimed. But the following paragraph (18), which contains the document's only reference to multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) finds the UN bowing "in support of the work programme agreed through the WTO".

By agreeing to this text, Johannesburg has produced a cowardly reinforcement of the WTO's dangerously unbalanced Doha mandate. Remember that, in Doha, governments mandated the WTO to unilaterally clarify the relationship between trade rules and the trade measures that enforce MEAs. Negotiations are to take place under WTO auspices, with Trade, not Environment, Ministers leading negotiations, and where MEA Secretariats are given only "observer" status. Doha also deemed that the outcomes "shall not add to or diminish the rights and obligations of Members under existing WTO agreements," which would seem to imply that, since no trade

rules can be changed, then it can only be the MEAs that will be modified. If not modified, the WTO might forge agreement among Members to enforce MEAs only in a "least trade restrictive" manner, which would effectively subordinate everything from Rio, as well as conventions on trade in toxic waste and endangered species, among others to global trade rules.

Governments should have used

Johannesburg to introduce some balance into the WTO process by giving the UN an equal voice with the WTO to reconcile the discrepancies between the international regimes governing trade and environment. The central concern here is "who decides?" And the answer to this question often determines the results. Letting the fate of the MEAs be decided

*Please turn to page 2.*

## Eco's Verdict

We began the WSSD with a brown cloud hanging over Asia, massive flooding in parts of Europe and China, and severe drought in Southern Africa. Governments at the Summit had a chance to make a real difference on these global issues—finding a way to tackle poverty and environmental degradation.

But what have we accomplished? Governments have now agreed a Plan of Implementation that is the equivalent of putting a bandaid over a gaping wound. Where is the vision? Where is the leadership? Where is the creativity and innovation? The deal struck here provides little value-added and in fact has moved us backwards in some instances. With regard to some of the Rio Principles, for instance (precautionary principle, common but differentiated responsibilities), the Rio text was opened for debate. This signals an active agenda by some countries to eliminate or water down existing commitments.

*Eco* feels that Joburg signifies a missed opportunity to address key global challenges, for instance:

- ▶ Reorienting global economic policies towards sustainable development—but short-term economic interests have once again taken primacy over sustainable development
- ▶ Corporate accountability—agreeing to a global legally binding framework
- ▶ Shielding international environmental agreements from WTO rules

Heads of State over the past two days have made visionary statements and grand pronouncements on issues from renewable energy to making globalization work for sustainable development. There is a huge disconnect between their words and the deals struck by their negotiators and Ministers.

The Eco-Equity coalition believe in the multilateral system—it's not the system that's broken. The problem is that countries have acted in their own short-term national economic interests rather than genuinely working together to forge a sustainable development path for the future.

The coalition hopes that progressive countries will now work together to match their rhetoric with action by working both globally and domestically, and to ultimately lift the bar within the UN. We cannot allow the laggards in the international community (you know who they are!) to continue this race to the bottom.

by the global trade body derides the very concept of checks and balances that is so central to good governance.

The greatest impact of Johannesburg is the destruction by governments of the United Nations as a forum where civil society can fight *for* something rather than *against*. Indeed, governments might never discuss sustainable development unless peoples' groups pressured them to take action. The relationship between civil society and the UN is quite different from what activists who spend their time fighting WTO/IMF/WB often experience, who are accused of being always "against" everything and never saying what it is we "want".

WTO's capture of this unique and strategic space in the international architecture forces civil society into only criticizing rather than proposing, and robs us of our forum for advancing alternatives. WSSD's failure means that civil society's energy spent on building binding UN agreements to protect people and the planet must be taken to the WTO. If the thousands of people who came to Johannesburg do not get directly involved in the growing global movement to challenge the WTO, there will be no meaningful voice to defend the MEAs as the WTO decides their fate. So, see You in Cancun!

—Victor Menotti, *International Forum on Globalization*

## WSSD on Energy

### Nothing for the Poor, Nothing for the Climate

In the middle of the night, Monday, it became clear that the Joburg Summit had failed to agree on commitments to deliver energy to the 2 billion people on this planet with no access to energy services, and to kickstart the renewable energy revolution that is required to protect the climate.

As the Summit draws to a close, the US, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Canada, and Australia can congratulate themselves that they have succeeded in protecting their fossil fuel interests. Meanwhile, Brazil, Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, and some EU member states spoke of their disappointment at the failure to move forward on this critical issue.

*Eco's* view is that the energy section in the Plan of Implementation does not represent a single step forward. The Summit's Bush energy plan isn't worth the carbon in the paper it's written on.

## China, Russia Announce Ratification of Kyoto

*Eco* would like to congratulate China's Premier Zhu Rongji and Russia's Chairman of the Government Mikhail Kasyanov for their announcements, yesterday in plenary, that both countries are ready to ratify Kyoto. Mr. Kasyanov said that Russian ratification would take place "as soon as possible".

After Jean Chrétien's announcement Monday that the Canadian parliament will be asked to vote on ratification before the end of the year, the isolation of the US and Australia is almost complete, and the prospect of the Kyoto Protocol entering into force by the end of the year, a real possibility. We urge Canada, China, and Russia to speed up their respective processes.

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### Climate Change: Comparisons

#### *The official statements*

'It is recommended that Governments be mindful of activities in which there is an appreciable risk of effects on climate.' (UN Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, 1972)

'Governments should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind.' (UN Conference on Environment and Development, Rio, 1992)

#### *The official promises*

'The ultimate objective of this Convention is to achieve ... stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.' (Stockholm, 1972)

'Annex I Parties [of industrialised countries] commit to ... the aim of returning individually or jointly to their 1990 levels of ... anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases...[by the year 2000].' (Rio, 1992)

#### *The reality*

By 2000, CO2 emissions had risen 18.1 per cent above 1990 levels in the US; by 10.7 per cent in Japan; 12.8 per cent in Canada and 28.8 per cent in Australia.

Weather-related disasters (such as droughts, windstorms and floods) have increased by 160 per cent between 1975 and 2001, killing 440,000 people and causing \$480 billion worth of damage in the 1990s alone.

The IPCC warns that temperatures could rise by a global average of 5.8°C by 2100.

Matilda Lee in *The Ecologist*

# 50 ways to screw a summit

(with apologies to Paul Simon)

The problem is all inside your head,  
the US said to me,  
The answer is easy if you  
take it corporately  
I'd like to help you in your  
struggle to compete  
There must be 50 ways to  
screw a summit.

The US said it's really not  
my habit to [openly] intrude  
Futhermore, I hope my meaning  
won't be lost or misconstrued  
But I'll repeat myself at the  
risk of being crude [oil]  
There must be 50 ways to  
screw a summit

First stay at home George,  
Listen to your right wing,  
Declare a war, boy,  
Make a new plan, John Ashe  
Hop on the bus, Colin  
You don't need to discuss much,  
Just drop off all targets  
And get yourself free.

US said it grieves me so to  
see the world in pain  
I wish there were something I could  
do about precautionary principles  
And renewables with no targets  
to make you smile again.  
The US said I appreciate that  
you came all this way, in vain  
And would you all please explain  
[again] about my Doha ways  
There must be 50 ways  
to screw a summit

The US said why don't we both stay  
with voluntary partnerships tonight  
And I believe that after we all go home,  
Kyoto won't be such a big to do in life,  
And the US's lack of timetables  
was a way to flex its might  
And even though big business  
felt timetables were right  
There must be 50 ways to  
screw a summit.  
50 ways to screw a summit.

# Letters

## Mining Industry Off the Hook

Communities from around the world suffering the impacts of destructive mining projects will take little comfort from the official outcomes of the WSSD. The text on mining in the Plan of Implementation essentially endorses the existing operations of the mining industry globally and requires no change to the status quo. For villagers downstream of the Ok Tedi mine in Papua New Guinea, victims of blood diamonds in Angola, or aboriginal landowners fighting Rio Tinto's attempts to develop the Jabiluka uranium mine in Australia, the likely WSSD outcome will be extremely disappointing. The only possible explanation for this outcome seems to be that the mining industry, with representatives on many of the national delegations, stitched up the mining-related outcomes prior to the Summit. With Rio Tinto on the British Government delegation, BHP-Billiton on the Australian Government delegation and Anglo-American a major sponsor of the Summit, three of the largest mining houses in the world are in the perfect position to ensure that the Summit does not affect 'business as usual'.

Greenwash reached new heights at the Summit with the industry's oxymoronic 'Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development' report. Meanwhile, however, activists from environment and social justice organisations around the globe are coordinating their campaigns in Joburg. The consensus amongst these groups is clear—as long as the mining industry continues to talk 'sustainable development' without actually changing the way it operates, it will fail to develop the credibility it needs to continue operating in the 21st century.

Mark Wakeham

Coordinator, Environment Centre of the Northern Territory, Australia

## Africa and NEPAD

Both Mr. El Hadj Omar Bongo, the President of the Gabonese Republic, and Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, referred to NEPAD (New Partnership for African Development) in conjunction with sustainable development on Tuesday. NEPAD is now a synonym for the 'threat' of foreign investment and its

negative impact upon the African environment. Partnerships with G8 'big business' could conflict with sustainable development, which encourages looking within for solutions. Africa could rethink its strategies, and develop sustainably. Civil society and some governments at this Summit have demonstrated a myriad of impressive and well-trying sustainable methodologies which could allow governments to be more imaginative with regard to environmental strategies.

And in this revolution there can be no losers.

Joan Aronowitz

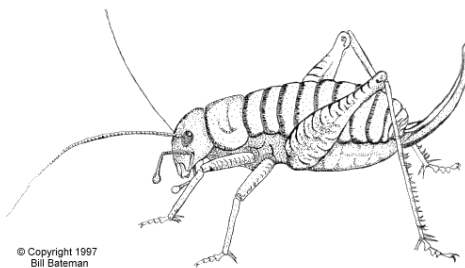
*EJNF Delegate to the Provincial Development Council of the Western Cape*

## US Youth Commit, Delegates Quit!

Who better to lead the US to commit to a genuine path of sustainable development than the youth and the youth-at-heart? Jan Pronk, the self-professed youth-at-heart, joined US youth Tuesday morning in signing the US 80-square-foot Youth Plan of Action to make the commitment to a sustainable future. Signatories to the US Youth Plan of

Action denounce the irresponsible energy policies pursued by the US delegation and make a commitment to achieve a renewable energy target and meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol commitments in their local communities and campuses. In a clear message of disappointment to her country's delegation, the US's only official youth delegate, Lauren Inouye, became the first signatory. Her solidarity with the rest of the US youth only goes to show the serious misalignment between the lack of vision and leadership by the US delegation and the will of youth to promoting sustainable living all across the country. US youth have been, and continue to call for, their government to take a proactive stance in promoting clean renewable energy. When it comes to sustainable development, the US fails to realize that the well-being of its youth should be the focal point, and not the interests of the fossil fuel industry, which receives billions in subsidies, allowing it to dominate the energy market. Finally, let it be known that US youth commit while delegates quit!

Maggie Loo



## Parktown Prawn

An informal poll conducted by *Eco* over the past 24 hours has found that most civil society members blame everybody but themselves for the failure of the Summit. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 50 percent.

George W. Bush was blamed by the largest fraction of our sample. Eighty-seven percent of those polled agreed that "the dunce from Texas deserves the lion's share of the blame for the lack of progress in Johannesburg." (Some lions objected to being

mentioned in the same sentence with the President.)

The European Union came in second in the blame sweepstakes, being named by 72 percent of respondents. Charges levelled at the EU included selfish defense of spoiled farmers and a failure to stand up to the US when the chips were down.

The G77 came in for its share of criticism (62 percent) for its opposition to human rights language, its subservience to OPEC, and its failure to change its name to reflect the fact that it has far more than 77 members.

Thirty-six percent blamed BMW for taking over so much space in the middle of Sandton Square, making skateboarding and ultimate frisbee impossible.

Nineteen percent named Dick Cheney, of the Halliburton Cheneys, for overseeing the creation of an energy policy for the US that ignores renewables in favor of oil and coal, thus making it impossible for the US to sign the Kyoto Protocol.

Sixteen percent named Condoleezza Rice, US National Security Advisor, for undue influence on US policy based on her former position on the board of directors of Chevron.

Twenty-two percent blamed Maurice Strong for not running this conference as he did Rio and Stockholm.

## Tragedy or Farce?

Many civil-society representatives began leaving Joburg on Tuesday, believing the Plan of Implementation represented at least one marginal improvement on Agenda 21—corporate accountability.

The need for an international framework for corporate accountability and liability entered the discourse in Joburg, thanks to civil society.

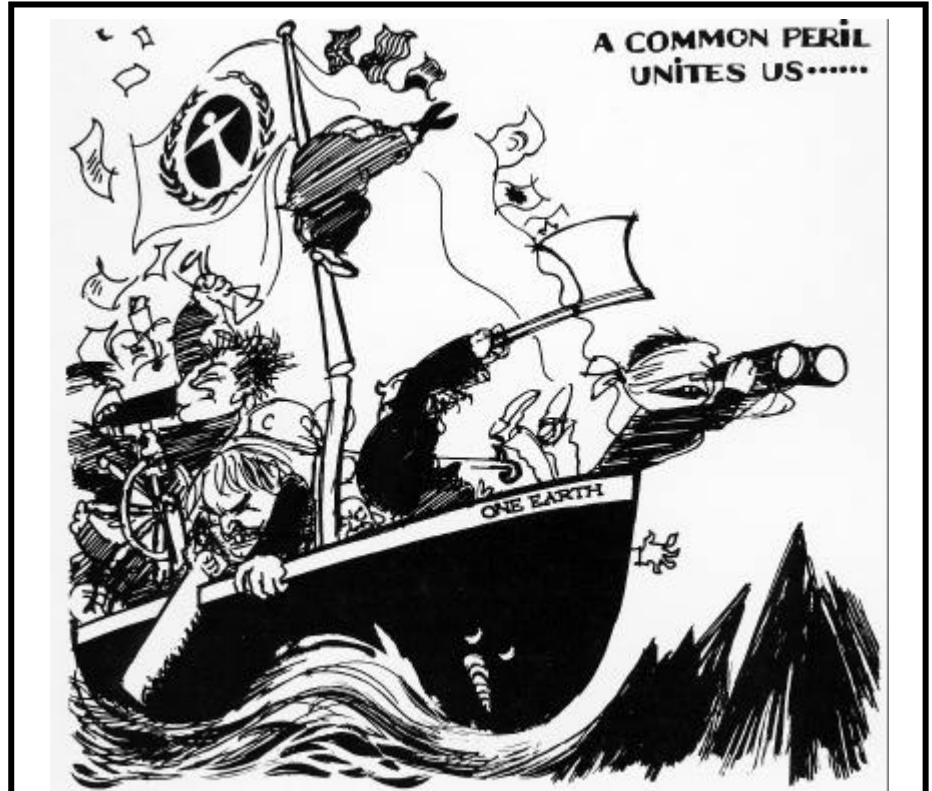
After long and hard lobbying by civil society, what emerged was a text that was by no means an appropriate response to the Bhopal and other industrial tragedies. But at least it addressed corporate responsibility and accountability in a regulatory manner as distinct from voluntary initiatives, spoke of an international framework, and opened the door for future development of these measures.

If you thought the unsatisfactory nature of the rest of the text could be lived with, if at least corporate accountability was addressed, think again! Even after a compromise text was worked on, consensus forged, and approved in the Ministerial on Saturday, the US was at

work again, undermining consensus.

Tuesday, there emerged a letter of interpretation from the Chairperson of the Contact Group, stating that the consensus of the contact group was that the collective intention was to restrict implementation to existing international agreements/initiatives. Unfortunately, there are no such existing agreements. We can't blame you for thinking this is Kafkaesque—but truth is stranger than

fiction. When the matter came up again at 1:30 a.m. today, Ethiopia and Norway opposed the chair's formulation, not least of all because the contact group does not legally exist and was contrary to the text of clause 45 (terr). The chair then decided to send 45 (terr) to the plenary as approved.



## eco-equity

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*Eco* is posted on several websites including [greenpeace.org](http://greenpeace.org), [rio10.dk](http://rio10.dk), and [earthjustice.org](http://earthjustice.org).

## Thirty Years Ago in Eco

No doubt to everyone's great relief, today is that last day of UNCHE. So what has it achieved? Nothing, doctrinaire detractors will probably reply, and its defenders, no less doctrinaire, will cast around in desperation and probably persuade us that the Declaration, the Action Plan, and the support for the whales were sufficient justification for it all.

Perhaps they were. In our opinion, however, to have expected concrete results or fragments of a Grand Design, would have been absurdly naive. Awareness of ecological reality has too recently been a quality of too few politicians for anyone to have reasonably expected anything but directions to emerge from this Conference.

And once one has swept away the mountains of amendments and procedural details, clear directions there are. The conference has shown us that

there are no longer grounds for either sentimental optimism or sentimental pessimism. Hopes for global cooperation are premature, but the prospects of bicontinental and multinational agreements are good. Fundamental differences between rich and poor, industrial and nonindustrial countries, have been made too obvious for anyone to discuss ecological disruption or resource depletion, and make these differences a central feature of their analysis. The industrial countries have a clear obligation to make sacrifices on behalf of the non-industrial ones, if there is to be any qualitative improvement of societies and environments. Rich nation politicians had better start thinking now how they are going to persuade their electorate that radical changes are necessary.

*Eco* 1, Number 5, Stockholm,  
10 June 1972

# attention seeking

A special Eco insert from the groups listed below

## SUMMIT NOT IN VAIN

At least, civil society in the South has proved itself able to cooperate and make inroads where the G77 let its people down.

Goodbyes were made in myriad languages and cultural gestures, after civil-society delegates from Asia, Latin America, and Africa held their last joint WSSD briefing and strategy session. The Summit has been the culmination of two years of networking within the framework of the Rio+10 Project, facilitated by the Danish 92 Group, but coordinated by civil-society focal points in each country and subregion of the developing world. Efficient lobbying requires clear priorities and good organisation. Compared to the PrepComs in New York and Bali, the Southern civil-society delegates found that their group dynamics in Joburg had worked much better, highlighting the cooperation's nature as a learning process.

"As for the results achieved by our statesmen," said Van Hung Le from Vietnam, "it has proved too difficult for a giant constellation like the G77, with so many powerful interests, to really represent the views of the majority of poor people in the South, and to give enough

voice to the least developed countries, which ought to be its priority. But at least our own civil-society



work has been a successful test of world democracy in action. It has been inspiring to work with people from so many different backgrounds."

"This has also been a chance to assess the progress and problems since Rio 1992," emphasised Richard Kimbowa from Uganda. "The WSSD process has focused on the linkage between poverty, environment and water, on bringing stakeholders together, on our different responsibilities. Of course, carrying it out in practice is a different matter. The Summit's concrete targets and commitments have been watered down too much, especially on energy and trade. But the challenge that we want to concentrate on now is to make the most of it on the ground."

"This collective effort has prepared us to consolidate alliances and put across our message to decision-makers," thought Mensah Todzro from Togo. "Now we want to work harder on direct contacts between developing countries, bypassing the Danish network facilitation."

"This has been an amazing experience, but there is a lot left for us to

do, so we shall keep working together to influence our political leaders,” pledged Iván Azurdia from Guatemala before proceeding to latino-style handshakes and kisses with his Asian and African colleagues.

After days of extremely serious work with extremely serious people, Liliana Hisas from Argentina was even more effusive in putting some positive spin on the WSSD as far as the Southern civil-society representation was concerned.

“Just look at us! All these handsome men and beautiful women!” she exclaimed, raising her arms and saluting the heavens. “The *Eco* newsletter ought to make a special supplement on that alone!”

## Postcard From Nasrec

*By Stephen Law, Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG), South Africa*

Since arriving at Nasrec a week ago, I've had my ups and downs. Today was a down day, the result of a question that wouldn't go out of my head. Why does Nasrec look so much like Sandton? Sure there are some differences. We generally don't wear suits here, there are no glittering shopping centres, and the police and military have a much lower profile. But a few things still bother me.

The Global Forum is supposed to be a place for “the people” to meet, debate, and strategise. Yet many of “the people” are not able to get in because of the R700 (\$70) registration fee. I heard of a colleague who spent two hours trying to convince the registration desk that a group of villagers from Lesotho should not have to pay R700 each. Delegates from Lesotho, while proudly independent from South Africa, are hardly on a par with delegates from Europe and America when it comes to budgeting an extra \$70. There are plenty of opportunities to discuss poverty, it's just that you won't actually hear any poor people speak. Just like Sandton, we have access problems here too.

There are plenty of opportunities to discuss the spread of global corporations, and the threat to food security and local livelihoods. And when one gets tired of that, one can nip over to the hotdog stand for a cold Coke and a plate of trademarked fast food. Don't get me wrong, Coke has a killer product, but shouldn't we at least stop and wonder why there are no stands selling fresh fruit juice, organically grown by small-scale farmers and GM-free? No stalls of traditional food, cooked by local people? I overheard someone talking of a group of fisherfolk, well-prepared for a full and tiring day of discussions, who had brought their own food with them. They were stopped at the entrance and told they could not bring it inside because of

“health concerns”. I suspect it had more to do with the protection of the fast-food franchises that dot the open spaces of Nasrec. Our shops and kiosks are not quite so obscenely tarted-up as those in Sandton. But they are here nevertheless, and we are a captive audience. Have a nice day!

On Wednesday we had commissions discussing things like “transparency” and “participation”. But it has been a real struggle to find out who the leaders and decision-makers of the Global People's Forum are. They are called the International Steering Group, but search as I may, I have not yet found a list of their names and portfolios, or any sign of where they meet and what they discuss.

To be sure, organising the Global People's Forum was a huge task, done under difficult circumstances, and I don't mean to belittle that effort. I'm also not suggesting we close down the Coke and hot-dog stands; or throw the doors wide open (although it wouldn't be such a bad idea). But let's at least stop and think about what we are doing here. Let's at least accept that our best intentions in “saving the world” are fraught with contradictions. And more importantly, let's learn some lessons for the future. I'm reminded of Mohatma Gandhi once gently reminding us to “become the change we want to see.”

This insert aims to give more voice at the Summit to civil society in developing countries. This springs from the Rio+10 Project, facilitated by the Danish 92 Group, working in Africa, Latin America and Asia through a series of national and subregional networks coordinated by the following organisations.

Southern Africa: EMG; Mozambique: ABIODES; Namibia: Desert Research Foundation within the NANGOF NGO Forum; South Africa: ENJF, ENDABA and the WSSD NGO Secretariat. East Africa: EcoNews, Kenya; Zimbabwe: Zero Regional Environmental Organisation; Uganda: The Rio+10 Coalition; Kenya: EcoNews and ELCI; Tanzania: JET; West Africa: Friends of the Earth Togo and networks in 11 countries. Ghana: ICA. South East Asia: WWF-Philippines, alongside WWF in Indonesia (with IPF), Malaysia, Thailand (with NGO COD), Vietnam and national NGO networks. South Asia: CSE India; Nepal: Forum of Environmental Journalists; Bangladesh: Forum for Environmental Journalists; South America and Argentina: Fundación Ecológica Universal; Brazil: Vitae Civilis; Ecuador: Fundación Natura and IUCN Quito; Bolivia: Fundación Tierra; The Amazon: Coordination of Indigenous Organisations in the Amazon including rainforest peoples in Peru, Guyana, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, Venezuela, French Guyana, Surinam, and Colombia. Central America and Costa Rica: CICAFOC, supported by UNES and Enlace Sur Sur; Nicaragua: Centro Humboldt; Guatemala: Fundación Solar; El Salvador: UNES.

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