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Mr.
Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif
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LOHAFEX Experiment by German Alfred-Wegener-Institute and CBD COP 9 Decision IX/16 on Ocean Fertilization

Dear Mr. Djoghlaif,

as you have been informed by a copy of a letter of the ETC Group to the German Minister for the Environment, Sigmar Gabriel, dated 7th of January, the German Vessel "Polarstern" is underway in order to release 20 tons of iron sulphate over an area of 300 square kilometres in the Southern Ocean in order to find out what happens if you fertilize the Ocean in this way.

The German NGO Forum and several of its member organisations share very much the concerns raised in this letter that this action constitutes a breach of CBD Decision IX/16, Chapter C. We acknowledge that this is a scientific, non-commercial project, but we doubt whether this is – as required – "small scale" and we do not know whether the required prior assessment as required in para 4 has been done:

("...and should also be subject to a thorough prior assessment of the potential impacts of the research studies on the marine environment, and be strictly controlled, and not be used for generating and selling carbon offsets or any other commercial purposes;").

Further, the experiment is planned in the southern Atlantic Ocean and not in coastal waters.

The Experiment has been granted permission by the German Government which currently holds the CBD presidency. We see a severe problem in the fact that the same institution which presently chairs the CBD and should thus play a model role in following CBD regulations seems now itself be breaching the rules. If this contradiction remains, it can lead to a severe weakening of the CBD because it is obvious that even those in charge of the CBD ignore its decisions.



Interventions of the ETC group and of ourselves have so far caused no reaction from the German government. We think it would be very helpful if you as the secretariat could express your views on this issue and urge the German government and the Alfred-Wegener Institute to respect the decisions of the CBD and to change their plans. Furthermore, it could prove helpful to better define "small scale" and "coastal waters" for future cases.

The worst thing for the CBD and our common cause would be if the affair which has received quite a lot of public attention by now remains uncommented.

Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you in advance for your kind consideration of the matter.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Friedrich Wulf". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial 'F'.

Friedrich Wulf
Coordinator of the Working Group on Biodiversity
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