

Biodiversity Under Threat: the Gates Foundation, Philanthrocapitalism, and the Capture of African Agricultural Biodiversity

Topic: Biodiversity for Development

In recent years there has been a marked increase in the influence of private philanthropic actors in agricultural development programs across the Global South and specifically in Africa. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, with resources that dwarf most countries' economies, is of major concern, in particular due to their agricultural programs' threats to biodiversity. With its corporate partners, the Gates Foundation is pushing a neoliberal, chemically-intensive, "high-tech" agenda for agricultural development – one that has been described by practitioners as "philanthrocapitalism." However, critics have noted that--in addition to issues of food sovereignty and indigenous/communitarian rights--this agenda poses a fundamental threat to the biodiversity of both local agricultural varieties as well as the natural environment. This side-event will provide a status update on this contentious topic. Presentations will include: a review of the definition and characteristics of philanthrocapitalism; a discussion of the Gates Foundation and the issues of transparency and accountability posed by a non-state actor of this scale; and case studies of problematic Gates Foundation projects in Africa, such as WEMA (Water-Efficient Maize for Africa) and the N2Africa program's threat to legumes.

Friday, December 9, 2016, 18:15

Universal Building of Moon Palace Resort, Main Floor, Room 3

Speakers:

- Mariam Mayet, African Centre for Biodiversity
- Phil Bereano, Washington Biotechnology Action Council
- Angelika Hilbeck, European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental Responsibility (ENSSER)
- Daniel Maingi, Kenya Food Rights Alliance
- Moderated by Heather Day, Community Alliance for Global Justice

Hosted by Washington Biotechnology Action Council

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