



NATIONAL PLATFORM FOR SMALL SCALE FISHWORKERS

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National Platform for Small-Scale Fish Workers Rejects Ocean Geoengineering Calls Upon All States to Stop Resorting to False Solutions and Experimentations to Resolve Climate Crisis

Within a few hours of the start of the Conference of Parties (COP) 27 climate summit, it has come to light that the conference is already heading down the road of false solutions and experimenting with untested technological fixes to the climate crisis. The Advisory Body of the Article 6 of the Paris Agreement has approved 'Carbon Dioxide removal through Ocean Geoengineering' as a mechanism for the carbon market. National Platform for Small-Scale Fish Workers (NPSSF) rejects this approach as providing a genuine solution to the climate crisis. More so, NPSSF strongly believes that technical fixes such as those proposed via Ocean Geoengineering will have violent ecological and social impacts and will lead to further destruction of the global ocean biodiversity and abundance as well as displacement and marginalisation of small-scale fishing communities, in fact on major fisheries too.

NPSSF firmly rejects the approval of Ocean Geoengineering for the following reasons:

- Ocean Geoengineering is a nascent and untested technology and its large-scale expansion into the open ocean ecosystem is ill-advised. Moreover, there are many issues that have been identified with the technology. One of those is its extremely low efficiency, thus placing into question the benefits/risks that this technology's deployment involves. A second is that the absorbed CO₂ is likely to return to the atmosphere as methane, a far deadly contributor to GHG emissions. And finally, this technology only focusses on the absorption of CO₂, taking away focus from the importance of limiting the concentration of other gases in the atmosphere.
- There are two main reasons why the oceans are unable to sequester the amount of carbon that is needed to currently reach the targets of the Paris Agreement. The first is that GHG emission levels are far from their reduction targets. The world's economies continue to emit GHGs at alarmingly unsafe levels, also increasing their emissions over the post COVID years. Second, the oceans are deeply impacted by the climate crisis via the disruption of horizontal movement (currents) and vertical movement (up- and down welling). Induced through changes in salinity, density, temperature and composition, the capacity of the oceans to absorb GHG emissions is severely curtailed. Ocean Geoengineering cannot act as a substitute to these two dynamics.
- In the last major experiments with Ocean Geoengineering for Carbon Dioxide Removal or CDR, jointly conducted by Indian and German govt. research institutions in collaboration with scientific institutions from France, Chile etc, no significant increase in ocean bed deposition of the fertilized phytoplankton bloom, which was thought of as the mechanism for CDR, was observed.
- Marine ecosystems, through the complex interplay of marine life, have been vital in maintaining a healthy ocean. However, in the last century, the industrial expansion of whaling and fishing operations have had catastrophic impacts on the oceans through the decline of major cetacean and marine mega fauna populations. The continued depletion of fish resources by subsidised industrial fishing firms further hampers the oceans' capacity. Without a pivot to sustainable and just approaches to how the oceans' fisheries are managed, the scaling back of industrial fisheries, a redistribution of fishing effort to small-scale fisheries and a long-term vision to rebuilding the

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Oceans biomass, the climate crisis cannot be averted. Technical fixes such as Ocean Geoengineering steer the approach away from this direction.

- It is pertinent to stop using oceans as the greatest sink for waste and pollutants. Polluted seas lose their capacity to sequester carbon. Non-point source pollution, release of toxic wastes from industries, oil spills, littering and ocean mining are disrupting marine eco-systems. It is far more important to stop ocean pollution and help the oceans in restoring and increasing their capacities to sequester carbon than resorting to false and risky experiments.
- Finally, the oceans must be seen in relation to the land. Rivers, estuarine regions, coastal ecosystems interact with the oceans and are part of this dynamic ecosystem. If processes of dealing with the climate crisis, such as through the reduction of GHG emissions or through building climate stocks, are to be achieved as outlined in Article 6 (of the Paris Agreement), then the land and the oceans must be seen together and approach holistically in policy and in the negotiations. To treat the oceans as a mere carbon sink, such as through Ocean Geoengineering, is to neglect this important co-constitution of land and sea.

Ocean Geoengineering as a technical solution that promotes the trade of carbon credits is an approach that diverts attention away from real climate solutions. The real solutions involve implementation of binding commitments to phase out fossil fuel emissions, a recognition of historical injustices, such as through the processes of colonisation and imperialism, abiding to the principle of Common and Differentiated Responsibility, and committing to financing a global just transition. In the absence of these solutions, NPSSF rejects Ocean Geoengineering as a solution to the climate crisis. It merely creates an illusion of progress, an illusion behind which the small-scale fishing communities shall be compelled to continue to bear the brunt of the climate crisis on the one hand, and the big business and corporate will continue to profiteer from the crisis on the other.

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