

NGOs Call Decisions of Brazil's Biological Diversity Convention Illegitimate

Contributed by Thaís Brianezi
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Members of NGOs at the 8th Conference of the Parties to the Biological Diversity Convention (COP-8), being held in Brazil, complain that their participation has been minimal.

There are 3,600 delegates from 173 countries at the conference. Brazil has a delegation of 160 people, of which 73 are representatives of civil associations.

Everyone can present opinions and observations, but the actual negotiations take place within a very restricted group of people. In the case of Brazil, eleven diplomats are the country's official representatives.

"The structure of the COP is hegemonic, favoring the interests of capital and people who see natural resources as marketplace goods for private use," sentences Roberto Baggio, a coordinator of the Via Campesina, an international alliance in favor of land reform.

"Civil society and the people are not represented. And for that reason, the decisions made here are not legitimate."

Meanwhile, Grace Dalla Pria, an environmental analyst at the National Industrial Confederation, called the participation of the Brazilian farm sector "timid."

"It is not easy to get a businessman to participate in a discussion of the environment that goes on for ten days. The industrial sector should be more engaged in this debate.

We are present in domestic forums, such as the National Environmental Council (Conama [Conselho Nacional de Meio Ambiente]), the National Biodiversity Council (Conabio [Conselho Nacional de Biodiversidade]), the Genetic Property Management Council (CGEN [Conselho de Gestão de Patrimônio Genético]) and the National Forest Council (Conaflor [Conselho Nacional de Florestas])."

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