

Seminar Wednesday 7 November

Biofuels - a growing solution or decomposing illusion?

Is the promotion of bio-fuels a way to secure energy needs and eliminate poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa, or does it in fact create hunger, reduce ecosystem services and increase competition of water and land resources?

With oil prices at an all-time high and few alternative fuels for transport, the European Union, United States, and developing countries such as Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, and Malaysia have embarked on aggressive state-supported programmes to produce liquid biofuels: ethanol and biodiesel. Because the feedstocks have alternative uses as food or animal feed, biofuels are increasing food prices and competition for land and water resources. The market value of land will probably increase, land grabbing may intensify and land conversion from e.g. forests or rangelands into large scale plantations occur. There are already examples of agreements between governments and companies allowing for large scale plantations of "energy crops" where the local livelihoods, land titles/rights of poor people are completely disregarded. On the other hand, there is also a potential for local production and consumption that could benefit the local population.

Professor **Judi Wakhungu**, the Executive Director of the African Center for Technology Studies (ACTS) in Nairobi, Kenya will talk about recent developments within this area in Sub-Saharan Africa. Wakhungu's research interests include energy resources management; materials; energy policy and development; science, technology, and development; and gender issues in science and technology policy.

Krister Holm, Acting Director, International Department, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, will give some perspectives on current Swedish discussions around biofuels as well as from some environmental NGOs in the South.

For more information, please contact Karin Gerhardt: Karin.Gerhardt@cbm.slu.se, 018 67 13 44

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7 November

9.30-11.30

Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation

Övre Slottsgatan 2, next to the University Library - old yellow house inside yellow gate

