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## PCFS LAUDS ISABELA PEOPLE, PEASANT GROUPS FOR SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN VERSUS DESTRUCTIVE BIO-ETHANOL PLANT

Written by Administrator | Friday, 31 August 2012 13:41



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### News Release August 30, 2012

The People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS) extends its heartfelt congratulations to the success of the militant campaign by the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) and the Danggayang agiti Mannalon ti Isabela (DAGAMI-Isabela) against the biofuels project in San Mariano, Isabela which has been the subject of an [International Fact Finding Mission](#) (IFFM) on landgrabbing last year, and now has been shut down.



PCFS reiterates its gratitude to the IFFM team which helped in greatly exposing the true nature of the biofuels project and ASTM for making the IFFM possible. PCFS also recognizes the support of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food and the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples Rights for raising the profile of the [Isabela case](#).

The biofuel project has been a contentious issue in Isabela since 2008 when it was first proposed. For a long time, local farmers and the Agta indigenous peoples in San Mariano have been fighting to protect their land from Green Future Innovations (GFII). The local communities have fought to prove that the land was not uninhabited as claimed by Green Future Innovations and that the project would not offset carbon credits. In 2011, a team was gathered to carry out a fact-finding mission on the true nature of the bio-fuels project. The team found that the project would not offset carbon as it would involve the clearing of thousands of hectares of semi-forested land and small-scale low-carbon emitting farms. It also involved the displacement of local small-scale farmers and Agta Indigenous peoples. The UN Special Rapporteurs' on the Right to Food and the Right of Indigenous Peoples expressed their alarm at the biofuels projects and called for the Philippines' government to respect the land users' rights.

PCFS welcomes the closure of the bioethanol plant and supports calls for the Green Future Innovations to withdraw from the land in San Mariano.

**(IFFM Team:** People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS); IBON International; Asian Peasants Coalition (APC); Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP); DAGAMI-Isabela; Action Center for Development and Rights - Japan; Advocates of Science and Technology for the People (AGHAM); Anakpawis Partylist; Asian Peasant Coalition (APC); Friends of the Earth - Japan; Global Forest Coalition; Kaduami Northern Luzon; Organic Consumers Association-USA; Sentro para sa Tunay na Repormang Agrayo (SENTRA); Southeast Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment (SEARICE); Action Solidarite Tiers Monde

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## **Farmers' militant actions victoriously shut down the bioethanol plant**

### **Demanding the EcoFuel to immediately vacate their land**

Manila, PHILIPPINES – In a joint statement today, the Asian Peasant Coalition (APC), the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) and the Danggayang dagiti Mannalon ti Isabela (DAGAMI-Isabela), said that because of the farmers' militant actions the Bio-ethanol plant was victoriously shut down in San Mariano town in the province of Isabela in northeastern Philippines.

At the forefront of the bio-ethanol project is Green Future Innovations Inc. that put up a 54- million liter ethanol plant in San Mariano amounting to \$120 million dollars. The bio-ethanol plant used sugarcane as feedstock sourced from 6,000-hectare farmlands now converted into a nursery in San Mariano and Delfin Albano towns in Isabela. The Green Future Innovations (GFII) is a venture between Japanese companies Itochu Corp. and JGC Corp. Joining them are Philippine Bioethanol and Energy Investments Corp. and GCO, a holding company from Taiwan.

“The farmers' militant struggle against land grabbing and bioethanol plant which was led by KMP and DAGAMI resulted in favor of the farmers and the people of Isabela. On August 2, the bio-ethanol plant was shut down. When the bioethanol plant started its operation on May 2012 it polluted the air, produced unpleasant smell and it released its toxic waste in the surrounding farmlands and Pinacanauan River causing sickness among the residents and successive fish kills in Barangay (village) Lucban in Benito Soliven town,” remarked Cita Managuelod, Executive Director of the Sentro para sa Tunay na Repormang Agraryo (Center for Genuine Agrarian Reform) or SENTRA-Cagayan Valley.

Managuelod is one of the speakers during the National Conference on Food Security held on August 29 to 30 at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. The conference is sponsored by the Philippine Network of Food Security Programmes Inc. (PNFSP) with the theme “ Ensure Our Food, Strengthen Our Agriculture, Secure Our Future!.

### **EcoFuel should vacate farmers land**

Wilfredo Marbella, KMP deputy secretary general stated, “during DAGAMI's rally in front of the office of the EcoFuel Land Development Inc. on August 7, the farmers and indigenous people demanded that the EcoFuel should immediately vacate their lands. Those lands are the primary source of livelihood for farmers and their families, providing harvests of vegetables, bananas, pineapples, indigenous rice crops, and corn varieties.”

The KMP leader added, “the beneficiaries of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), Indigenous Peoples with claims to ancestral domain, and land patent holders, were displaced by the sugarcane plantations. Most of [those with] certificates of land ownership awards are facing foreclosure by Land Bank..”

### **Bioethanol plant operating without a permit**

Managuelod stressed, “ that the GFII and the EcoFuel admitted during a closed door meeting with the DAGAMI leaders on July 26, 2012, that both companies are still at a loss on how to solve the unpleasant smell which has already reached the town center, public market and other populated areas nearby the bioethanol plant. The GFII also said that they do not have the required technology to solve these environment and health related concerns.”

“Worst, we've found out that the bioethanol plant has been operating without a permit from the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB). The company violated Republic Act (RA) 8749 pollution subject to the Implementing Rules and Regulation must have a valid permit to operate issued by the EMB Regional Director,” stated Diony Yadao, DAGAMI-Isabela Chairperson.

The farmer leader added, “The GFII also violated Rule 27.1 of the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004 which states that discharge permit must be secured for operating facilities that discharge regulated water pollutants.”

Both KMP and DAGAMI leader remarked, “we hold the landlord President liable for the sufferings faced by the farmers and the people of Isabela brought by the land grabbing

and bioethanol project. President Aquino stated that capital infusion for the bio-ethanol plant was one of his good news” from his 2010 Japan visit.” otherwise known as the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 which states that all sources of air “This is also a success of the struggling peasants in Asia. Though we believe that this is just an initial victory, we were inspired to continue our struggle against land grabbing, land-use conversion, militarization and imperialist globalization. We call on all APC members to continue its militant assertion of their rights to land and to heighten its campaign for genuine agrarian reform,” stated Rahmat Ajiguna, APC deputy secretary general.

“We congratulate the KMP and DAGAMI for leading the struggle against land grabbing and the bioethanol project in Isabela. We thank all other local and national organizations who supported their struggle. We express our gratitude to the office of Rep. Rafael Mariano (Anakpawis Partylist) for helping KMP and DAGAMI and for bringing the issue at the House of Representatives. We are grateful to the international groups, especially the Peoples Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS), Friends of the Earth (FOE-Japan), IBON International, Action Solidarite Tiers Monde (ASTM), International League of Peoples Struggle (ILPS), and all other groups for their help. Finally, to the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, James Anaya, for their statement raising alarms on the rapidly expanding agrofuel plantations in South-East Asia,” ended Rahmat.



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