



## ETC Group News Release

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### *New Report on Global Governance of Nano-scale Technologies: ETC Group's "Little" Contribution to the Big Conversation in Dakar*

When activists, social movements and civil society organizations came together in Porto Alegre, Brazil for the first World Social Forum (WSF), governments had just begun pouring money into nano R&D. Now, a decade later, public investment has surpassed US\$50 billion and averages \$10 billion a year.

Meanwhile, an estimated 50,000 people have come together to learn, debate and strategize at the WSF in Dakar, Senegal. ETC Group brings a new report – *The Big Downturn? Nanogeopolitics* – to that very large discussion. Executive director Pat Mooney explains why: “An urgent topic in Dakar is the proper governance of emerging technologies and how society can best respond to threats – social, environmental, health – that new technologies may pose. Nanotechnology is a case in point, having been rolled out with virtually no government oversight or public debate.”

Mooney adds, “Our first major report on nano-scale technologies, *The Big Down*, made its debut at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre eight years ago. We’ve brought *The Big Downturn?* to Dakar because nano commercialization and investment are increasing while the regulatory vacuum persists; nano’s risks and impact need fuller discussion.”

ETC Group’s 68-page report, available for download from [www.etcgroup.org/en/node/5245](http://www.etcgroup.org/en/node/5245), provides a current snapshot of global investment, markets, governance and control, including patenting. Though the impact of tiny tech is especially difficult to discern given the lack of an agreed-upon definition for “nano” and the absence of labeling requirements, ETC Group’s report finds:

- Worldwide, there are more than 2000 nanotech enterprises researching and/or manufacturing nanoparticles.
- Even while the majority of consumers remain in the dark about the existence of nano-scale ingredients in commercial products, the number of product lines far exceeds the 1500 or so that have been identified by publicly available market surveys.

- At least 60 countries have state nanotech initiatives, including newcomers Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. The United States' public and private sectors together spend the most money; China fields more scientists. Meanwhile, Russia has suddenly emerged as the biggest public spender.
- While analysts tout a whopping \$224 billion nano-market, the actual market figure is drastically lower – perhaps by more than ten times.

*The Big Downturn? Nanogeopolitics* surveys current regulatory forays (e.g., baby-steps toward mandatory reporting requirements), standards development, public engagement schemes as well as activity by the world's most generous awarder of nano-patents, the US Patent & Trademark Office.

The report concludes that even though the nano-industry is nervous about its health and environmental exposure and some governments are having second thoughts about their decision to fast-track nanotech, no one is willing to retreat from a technology they've claimed will help end the global recession and usher in a "green economy" – and rake in trillions of dollars in revenue.

For more information, contact:

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