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Greenpeace: "Dead Fish Swim with the River"

Greenpeace Deutschland gave a presentation at the *Chefsache Issues Management Conference*, sponsored by F.A.Z.-Institut, Berlin, 7 June 2002. *Barometer* was there.

"Greenpeace believes that conflict is often necessary," reported **Fouad Hamdan**, communication leader, "and the following are indicators" that NGO/Corporate relationships may require confrontational tactics:

1. Many companies think dialogue is an end in itself.
2. Companies want dialogue, but no conflict.
3. They want dialogue only if they can make short-term profits, too.
4. They have the attitude that they won't dialogue with radical NGOs.
5. People who think only in terms of money and power have a problem accepting that NGOs have a certain credibility within the modern democratic society.

"If constructive dialogue does not work with companies who still poison and pollute, etc., we will turn to confrontational dialogue," promised Hamdan. "When talks that have begun behind closed doors, as the company prefers, do not lead to fruition, we will bring them into the public eye. We will systematically torture these companies until they change their stance. Only dead fish swim with the river.

"We are, however, careful to assure local populations that we are not trying to close a company and omit jobs, but that we are working for the long-term good of the community. In Ecuador, we took care to show that our issues also are a concern for local

people, not just white, European NGOs.

"We like to personalize a campaign when possible," said Hamdan. One technique is to put a billboard of the boss's photo in front of a gray building, saying, "This building houses this man who supports this horrible policy."

"Greenpeace is trying to represent those who do not have a voice of their own, such as nature, a variety of species, and continuation of life. We start campaigns only with a scientific basis," continued Hamdan. "That is why when you look at the poll results of the most trusted institutions in Germany, the top of the list includes:

1. Amnesty International
2. Greenpeace
3. World Wildlife Fund

"Greenpeace has 2.5 million active supporters, and it is important not to get a campaign wrong," Hamdan said. "We receive no funding from government ministries and are fully independent politically and economically speaking. Unlike political parties, we don't stand for re-election every four years. Once we start a campaign, it can go on for 20 years."▲

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