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Joint press release with the Federal Ministry for Environment (BMU)

Global treaty on biopiracy in sight United Nations agree on draft protocol

The signatories to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have come one important step closer to a global agreement on biopiracy. Delegates from the 194 states met in Cali, Colombia, and agreed on a common basis for negotiation of an international regime on access and benefit sharing of genetic resources. Its purpose is to create a global legal framework that regulates both access to genetic resources and the distribution of the profits made through their commercial use.

A treaty to combat biopiracy is necessary as there are ingredients and genetic information contained in many organisms that can be commercialized, for example for pharmaceutical drugs or in biotechnology. A large share of Earth's biological diversity is in the developing world. If products resourced there are developed into profit-making products around the world, the source countries must have a right to share in those profits. A comprehensive treaty to combat biopiracy, whilst protecting biodiversity, would not only ensure a fair balance between industrialised and developing countries, but also fair sharing with poorer countries of their own economic potential.

Some 600 delegates from all over the world met in Cali last week to prepare the resolution of such a treaty at the next Conference of the Parties. All signatory parties accepted a draft text as the basis for decisive negotiations in to be held in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010. Prior to that there will be another round of negotiations at the CBD Secretariat in Montreal, Canada. Germany currently holds presidency of the UN Convention on Biodiversity and has made the resolution of such a treaty one of its top priorities.

For more online information go to www.bmu.de/1738.php.

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